

Brussels, 22 January 2015  
(OR. en)

5474/15

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COSI 8  
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COMIX 35

**NOTE**

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From:	Italian delegation
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Final report on Joint Operation "MOS MAIORUM"

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**DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (10.02.2015)**

**FINAL REPORT ON JOINT OPERATION “MOS MAIORUM”**

**1. BACKGROUND AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

Following the tradition well-established by previous EU Presidency Member States (MSs), on the basis of best practices, in the framework of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Central Directorate for Immigration and Border Police of the Italian Ministry of Interior organized the Joint Operation “MOS MAIORUM”, with the main goal to monitor the irregular migrations and to identify the link between irregular EU external border crossings and irregular migration within the EU and Schengen Area, as well as to focus on the “secondary movements” of irregular migrants who entered the Member States irregularly.

The Joint Operation “MOS MAIORUM” was prepared on the basis of the guidelines set out in the Guide for Joint Police Operation – JPOs (doc. 16825/10 ENFOPOL 343 JAI 995 COSI 76) and it was implemented from 13 to 26 October 2014 with the participation of 27 countries.

The operational area was identified with the territory of all Member States and SACs who agreed to participate in this Joint Operation (including air, land and maritime borders).

In accordance with the provisions of the doc. 11671/14 and of the “*MOS MAIORUM*” Operational Plan, each participating Member State was requested to:

- *carry out all the activities in a way that fully respects human dignity;*
- *maintain the highest standard of ethical conduct, professionalism and respect for human rights;*
- *- avoid discriminatory treatment on the basis of any ground such as sex, race, ethnic o social origin, religion, etc.;*
- *- take care throughout all operations of the special needs of vulnerable groups, such as women, unaccompanied minors, victim of trafficking or people in need of medical treatment.*

Before and during the operational phase of Joint Operation “*MOS MAIORUM*”, all participating countries were requested not to provide any kind of information to the media/press about the activities carried out in the operational area.

The Joint Operation was carried out using the available means of the Member States, with no additional costs.

## **2. COORDINATION AND SUPPORT**

The Joint Operation “*MOS MAIORUM*” was coordinated by the Central Directorate for Immigration and Border Police of the Italian Ministry of Interior.

In accordance with the provisions of the “*MOS MAIORUM*” Operational Plan, each participating Member State was requested to appoint a National Point of Contact to be responsible for gathering and forwarding the completed reporting templates to the “*MOS MAIORUM*” National Point of Contact/Operational Control Room (NPoC) that was implemented in Rome (at Italian MoI – Department of Public Security – Central Directorate for Immigration and Border Police – Border Division) to support all the participants.

The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX) supported the Italian authorities by providing a final analytical assessment concerning the illegal border crossings at the EU's external borders, as a chapter of the Final report of the Presidency.

### **3. PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES**

The Italian delegation invited all EU MSs and SACs to participate in the Joint Operation "*MOS MAIORUM*".

A total of 26 Member States and 1 Schengen Associated Country (SAC) agreed to participate in the Joint Operation "*MOS MAIORUM*". The participants in the J.O. were: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

### **4. OBJECTIVES**

The main aim of the Joint Operation "*MOS MAIORUM*" was gathering information from all participating countries on irregular immigration flows within the EU MSs and Schengen Associated Countries (SACs) focusing on irregular border-crossing. It also monitored the secondary movements of irregular migrants who entered Member States irregularly.

In particular, the Joint Operation "*MOS MAIORUM*" was focused on:

- apprehend irregular migrants and their facilitators and gather relevant information;
- identify migration pressure in various countries;
- give a clear and updated situation picture concerning the operational area, modus operandi, main trends and possible rapid changes in these aspects;
- consolidate joint measures to achieve an impact on irregular immigration (border checks and border surveillance activities);

- carry out (based on the outcomes of the risk analysis made by FRONTEX Agency) controls along the main routes of irregular immigration on the main routes followed by irregular migrant networks (within the Schengen Area and at the external borders);
- collect and analyze information related also to the so-called “secondary movement”;
- identify the countries of origin and transit of irregular migrants and their final destination countries.

## 5. DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

Data were gathered during the operation through two different reporting templates in the form of an Excel spread sheet:

- a **blue form** for irregular migrants intercepted at the **internal borders** or **inland**;
- a **red form** for the irregular migrants intercepted at the **external borders**.

The distinction was made to facilitate the risk analysis and to have a more clear picture of the so-called “secondary movements”. For the same reasons, bearing in mind the objectives of the J.O., the borders between a Schengen country and an EU country were considered as “internal borders”.

It should be noted that the reporting templates did not include any personal data.

In line with previous operations, carried out by the Belgian (*Hermes*), Hungarian (*Mitras*), Danish (*Balder*), Cypriot (*Aphrodite*) and Lithuanian (*Perkunas*) EU Presidencies and following the recommendations agreed with FRONTEX Agency regarding the reporting of relevant data, the Joint Operation “*MOS MAIORUM*” collected information mainly focusing on the following topics:

### Interception details:

- **DELETED**

— **DELETED**

**Intercepted irregular migrants:**

**DELETED**

**Routes:**

**DELETED**

**Modus operandi:**

**DELETED**

The forms were sent electronically by the National Point of Contact of each participating countries to the “*MOS MAIORUM*” National Point of Contact/Operational Control Room (NPoC) implemented in Rome on a daily basis.

All data reported by participating countries were gathered, processed, elaborated and analysed by the mentioned “*MOS MAIORUM*” NPoC.

The data were also sent to the Risk Analysis Unit of FRONTEX Agency that supported the Italian Authority in providing risk analysis.

6. OVERVIEW OF THE OPERATIONAL RESULTS

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During the implementation of the Joint Operation “*MOS MAIORUM*”, a total of **6002** incidents were reported (1538 at the external borders and 4464 at the internal borders), with a total number of **19234 irregular migrants intercepted**.



In particular, **DELETED**, the number of irregular migrants intercepted at the external borders reached **9890**, while **9344** were found at the internal borders/inland.

It should be noted that in the external border figures are included also the irregular migrant intercepted by the National Authorities of the participating countries during the border surveillance activities, at land and sea borders.

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Evaluating the figures it should be kept in mind that, according to the Operational Plan of the Joint Operation “*MOS MAIORUM*”, the borders between a Schengen country and an EU country were considered as “internal borders” as well as the borders between EU countries that are not applying Schengen. **DELETED**.

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- **Interception of irregular migrants, broken down by gender/category**

The overall number of interceptions (**19234** people) was subdivided by gender/category in relation to internal/external borders, to give a more clear picture of the trends at both type of border.

TOT	9890	9344	19234
	EXTERNAL	INTERNAL	
MALE	7179	7168	14347
FEMALE	1213	953	2166
MINORS	1498	1223	2721

Analysing the reported data, it can be observed that there is not a big difference between genders of irregular migrants detected at the internal or external borders. However, there is a significant difference between the number of male and the other two categories. Groups of families or people coming from the same geographic area were often intercepted while they were moving together to reach the external borders. No data were provided concerning the interception of unaccompanied minors.

- **Interception of irregular migrants, broken down by nationalities**

The overall number of intercepted irregular migrants, on external and internal borders, includes individuals originated from 137 different countries.

Syrian nationals (**DELETED**) were the most detected irregular migrants, followed by Afghans (**DELETED**), K-Serbians (**DELETED**), Eritreans (**DELETED**), Somalis (**DELETED**) and Albanians (**DELETED**).

A large number of people (**DELETED**) intercepted at sea during the border surveillance activities didn't state their nationalities, for this reason they were classified as "*unknown*".

Breaking down the number of each nationality into internal and external border, it could be verified that nationalities are more or less the same.

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**DELETED** almost the same number of Syrians, Afghans, Somalis, Iraqis and Sudanese were intercepted at the external and at the internal borders. While Moroccans, Algerians and Eritreans were intercepted almost exclusively at the internal borders, vice versa, the majority of Palestinians were found at the external borders.

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- **Facilitators apprehended**

During the implementation of the Joint Operation “*MOS MAIORUM*”, a total of **257 facilitators** were apprehended: **53** at the external borders and **204** at the internal borders.

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Apart from people that arrived **DELETED** by sea, the majority of irregular migrants were intercepted on foot at the **external border** and on board of trains at the **internal borders**.

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However, especially at the **internal borders**, a huge number of people tried to reach their final destination hidden in vehicles (**DELETED**).

- **Documents seized**

The **593** documents reported **DELETED** were detected and seized as false, falsified, stolen or used by “impostors”.

At the **external borders** the majority of documents seized were passports (**DELETED**), residence permits (**DELETED**) followed by identity cards (**DELETED**).

At the **internal borders** above all identity cards **DELETED**, followed by passports (**DELETED**), and residence permits (**DELETED**).

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**DELETED**

A total of 11046 people asked for asylum during or after their interception. Most of them were intercepted at the external borders, and 40% of them arrived by boat. Also at the internal borders a consistent number of people (3797) asked for asylum while 457 migrants were in possession of documentation attesting that they have already applied for international protection.

**DELETED**

It was reported only one case of minor fosterage and no incidents were related to unaccompanied minors.

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**DELETED**

The majority of migrants intercepted by sea (during the surveillance activities) didn't declare their final destination or stated generically "Europe", **DELETED**

**DELETED**

**➤ IRREGULAR MIGRATION AT THE EU’S EXTERNAL BORDERS**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The Operation MOS MAIORUM was organised by the Central Directorate for Immigration and Border Police of the Italian Ministry of the Interior in the framework of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union between 13 and 26 October 2014. The main aim of the Operation “MOS MAIORUM” was to gather information from all participating countries, on irregular migration flows within the Member States of the European Union and Schengen associated countries focusing on irregular border-crossings. In addition, focus was placed on monitoring the secondary movements of irregular migrants who entered the Member States irregularly.

All EU Member States and Schengen associated countries were invited to participate in the operation and report their data according to the data collection method agreed. The Italian Presidency submitted the data gathered during the Operation after the finalisation of the operation to Frontex’s Risk Analysis Unit.

As stipulated in the operation plan of “MOS MAIORUM”, the aim of the Frontex contribution to the final report of the Italian Presidency is to provide an overview of the situation concerning irregular migration at the EU’s external borders before and during the Operation “MOS MAIORUM”. For the purposes of this report FRAN data from January to September 2014 were taken into account in conjunction with data from the Joint Operations Poseidon Land, Poseidon Sea, Aeneas, Hermes, Indalo, Flexi Operational Activities and Focal Points Land for the month of October. In addition to this data, information from the European Union Document-Fraud Network (EDF), PULSAR as well as from the most recent publication of the Assessment for Operational Deployment<sup>1</sup> were also used to compile this report.

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<sup>1</sup> Ref R15292 Assessment for Operational Deployment 2015

## **2. IRREGULAR MIGRATION AT THE EU'S EXTERNAL BORDERS**

At EU level, during the first 6 months of 2014, detections of irregular border-crossings at the external land and sea borders<sup>2</sup> of the EU totalled 90 200, a level which shows an increase of 160% compared to the first half of 2013 despite a 30% decrease in the number of irregular migrant apprehensions at the land borders.

As of 31 October 2014, this number had risen to approximately 229 000. This enormous increase is due to the unprecedented scale of irregular migratory flows at sea across the Central Mediterranean and to a lesser extent to the increasing number of irregular migrant apprehensions on the Eastern Mediterranean sea route.

### **2.1. Irregular Migration Routes**

#### *2.1.1. Eastern Mediterranean Route*

Over the past few years the Eastern Mediterranean region remained a hotspot of irregular migration. Detections have been concentrated at the Greek-Turkish land border and to a lesser extent at the sea border.

However, in August 2012 following the implementation of the Greek operation Aspida at the Greek-Turkish land border and the implementation of the Special Police Operation in Bulgaria at the Bulgarian–Turkish land border at the beginning of November 2013 together with the implementation of Frontex coordinated Joint Operations, the number of irregular migrant apprehensions dropped significantly at the Greek-Turkish and Bulgarian-Turkish land borders. Thus far in 2014 on the Eastern Mediterranean route, the highest number of apprehensions has clearly been registered at the Greek-Turkish maritime border.

In regard to the nationality of irregular migrants recorded in the Eastern Mediterranean - Syrian, Afghan, and Somali nationals were the top nationalities as of 31 October 2014.

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<sup>2</sup> Data collected through the Frontex Risk Analysis Network on persons apprehended for irregular border crossings at the external sea and land borders of the EU out of official border crossing points.

### *2.1.2. Maritime Border*

The shift of irregular migratory flows, which started after the strengthening of land border surveillance activities at the Greek–Turkish land border in August 2012, towards the Greek-Turkish sea border continued during 2014. From 1 January to 31 October 2014, more than 35 000 irregular migrants crossed the Greek-Turkish sea border. This figure shows a 330% increase on the Greek Eastern Aegean Islands compared to the same period of 2013. In addition, the Greek authorities apprehended 191 facilitators and prevented the crossing of more than 300 migrant boats, which had departed from the Turkish coast.

Moreover, the Turkish authorities have continued patrolling the Aegean Sea intercepting migrants, typically aboard inflatable boats, before they could reach Greek territorial waters.

From 1 January to 31 October this year, the highest migratory pressure was reported from the Greek Eastern Aegean Islands, with nearly 98% of the total number of apprehensions reported in this region, while only 2% of the irregular migrants were apprehended on or off the west coast of Greece, south Peloponnesus and Crete.

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Thus far in 2014, the **most targeted islands** have been, as last year, Lesbos (9 324), Samos (6 164) and Chios (5 918). However, during 2014 facilitation networks operating on the Turkish coast have also started to target other islands in the Eastern Aegean Sea, which reported low numbers of irregular border-crossings during 2013. **DELETED**

Following the implementation of the special operations at both the Greek and Bulgarian land borders with Turkey, facilitation networks operating in Turkey have increased their activities on the west coast of Turkey and are now specialising in sea crossings.

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As far as vulnerable groups are concerned, the Syrian migrants arriving in family groups on the Greek Aegean Islands comprise a high number of women and children.

Apart from irregular migration, the Eastern Mediterranean Sea region is also affected by smuggling activities, namely cigarettes and drugs. In this regard, it is worth mentioning one of the largest hauls of cigarettes detected in Greek territorial waters, containing 10.9 million cigarettes. On 23 June, aircraft deployed under the JO Poseidon Sea detected two suspicious vessels in the area of Marathopoli (south-west coast of Peloponnesus in Greece). A Hellenic Coast Guard vessel arrived in the area and following a pursuit intercepted and seized a speed boat laden with cigarettes (many different brands were seized). A cargo ship, also laden with cigarettes, was intercepted and seized after a pursuit with 6 Ukrainian crew members on board, while a lorry used for transporting the cigarettes was found abandoned in the coastal area.



## *Secondary movement from Greece to the EU*

The secondary movement of irregular migrants via the Balkan route from Greece across the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to Serbia and then to the EU via Hungary is still relevant. The vast majority of irregular migrants detected at the Hungarian-Serbian border claim to have departed from Greece and to have travelled on the aforementioned route.

The organisation of secondary movements from Greece usually starts from Athens where facilitation networks composed mainly of Afghans, Pakistanis, Syrian nationals of Kurdish ethnicity and Albanian nationals offer various options for further travel to other EU Member States.

### *2.1.3. Greek-Turkish Land Border*

From 1 January until 31 October 2014, a total of 1563 irregular migrants were apprehended along the Greek–Turkish land border section. This represents a 130% increase compared with the same period in 2013. In other words, whilst in 2013 the average monthly figure for apprehended irregular migrants at this border section was around 60, the number increased during the first 10 months of 2014 to 156 migrants per month. In addition, several incidents were reported concerning the detection of irregular migrants inland, within a few kilometres from the border, mainly on highways. It is worth noting that these migrants had successfully crossed the border irregularly.

The **main hub** for irregular migrants, who gather before travelling onwards to Greece, remains Istanbul. In the centre of Istanbul facilitation networks offer numerous routes to enter the EU. The **Turkish** authorities **reported** a decrease in migration pressure at the Bulgarian green border during the first 10 months of 2014. At the same time, the **Turkish** authorities reported an increase in detections at the Turkish land border section with Greece<sup>3</sup>.

The **main nationalities** of migrants apprehended during the first 10 months of 2014 were Syrian (986) followed in descending order by Iraqi (224), Afghan (137), Pakistani (48), Georgian (33) and Eritrean (21).

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<sup>3</sup> This information was confirmed by the Turkish authorities during a bilateral meeting with the Greek authorities where the Turkish Police reported that a total of 11 000 migrants were apprehended on Turkish territory in the Police District of Edirne from 1 January to 16 June 2014.

Syrian nationals, who also represented the highest number of irregular migrants apprehended in Bulgaria, mainly travel from Syria to Turkey. Primarily, these migrants travel via the cities of Van, Urfa and Gaziantep and further by local bus or by making use of a facilitator to Istanbul or Edirne.

**DELETED**

Recently the operational areas **affected the most** by irregular migration have been the operational areas of **Orestiada and Didimoteicho**. **DELETED**. The *modi operandi* used to enter Greece have not changed significantly in the past year. Mainly inflatable boats are used by irregular migrants to cross the Evros River. **DELETED**.

Before the operation Aspida was implemented, irregular migrants usually crossed the river border on their own without the assistance of a facilitator and reported themselves to the police after their irregular border-crossing. This has changed due to amendments in Greek migration law and the increased length of time in which irregular migrants can be detained after apprehension. For this reason irregular migrants try to avoid apprehension and make use of arranged transportation from the border area along the Egnatia highway to major cities and seaports such as Athens and Thessaloniki or Patras.

#### *2.1.4. Bulgarian-Turkish Land Border*

In 2013, irregular migration pressure at this border section reached its peak with a total of 856 apprehended migrants in one week during October. The implementation of the Special Police Operation in Bulgaria and the deployment of approximately 1 600 additional officers starting on 11 November 2013 resulted in a sharp decrease in the number of irregular migrant detections at the Bulgarian–Turkish land border.

This decreasing trend along the green border continued during the first 10 months of 2014. The total number of apprehended migrants from 1 January until 31 October 2014 was 3 213, this represents a decrease of more than 60% on the same period the previous year.

The main nationalities apprehended from 1 January to 31 October 2014 were nationals from Syria (2 372) followed by migrants from Afghanistan (536) and Iraq (137).

**DELETED**

Thus far in 2014, the main areas of apprehension have been similar to last year: for instance, the BCU Malko Tarnovo reported the highest number of irregular migrant apprehensions followed by the BCU Elhovo and the BCU Sredets. **DELETED**

Since the crossing of the Bulgarian-Turkish land border has become more difficult facilitation networks have started to smuggle migrants hidden in lorries to Bulgaria via the BCPs Kapitan Andreevo and Lesovo and further to other EU Member States.

#### *2.1.5. Central Mediterranean Region*

The disproportionate increase witnessed in the Central Mediterranean in 2014 has been related to migrants departing mainly from the Libyan coast towards the Italian Islands of Lampedusa and Sicily. Over 86% of them were rescued in the Search and Rescue area outside the operational area, most of them by Italian Naval assets deployed in the framework of Operation Mare Nostrum (MN).

This trend increased rapidly during the second and third quarters of 2014. By the end of October more than **150 000 irregular migrants** were reported in the region targeting Italy. The figures for the whole region are about five times higher than in the same period of 2013, including detections by Malta for which Operation MN has caused a reduction in the number of irregular migrants arriving (about 659 arrivals during 2014 compared to the 2 090 arrivals reported during 2013) on the island, roughly 60% less than last year.

In 2014, Libya has clearly become the main departure point to the EU for tens of thousands of irregular migrants mainly from Syria, Eritrea, Mali, Nigeria, Gambia and many other sub-Saharan, Middle Eastern and Asian countries. All together more than 53 different nationalities have been identified.

The unprecedented increase in the irregular migratory flow from Libya is associated to a series of reasons. On the one hand, the growing presence in coastal areas of Libya of a large number of migrants from sub-Saharan and Horn of African countries, as well as Syrian, Palestinian refugees and Bangladeshi nationals willing to migrate to the EU. This is linked to the unstable situation in Libya, the increased level of violence and the lack of public order since the fall of the Gaddafi regime, making life in Libya unbearable for migrants, mainly for those coming from sub-Saharan and Horn of African countries that are constantly abused by Libyan citizens.

The presence of the assets of the operation Mare Nostrum, patrolling closer to the Libyan coast with the aim of preventing the loss of migrants' lives, has been exploited by facilitation networks in Libya, who have been able to push an increasing number of migrants to depart in unseaworthy vessels, with the expectation of being rescued soon after departure.

From April to September this year, the number of migrants targeting Italy mainly from the coast of Libya, has remained high with an average of ~4 650 migrants per week. According to intelligence, many Syrians are travelling from Istanbul, and to a lesser extent from Beirut and Amman to Algiers in order to reach Libya via land.

**DELETED**. Several migrants mentioned that the facilitators operating in Catania and Milan are linked to the networks in Libya, Turkey or Egypt.

In many cases migrants have to stay in safe houses for certain periods of time which can vary from a few days to a few weeks. The reason why migrants have to wait is to give facilitators the time to gather enough migrants together as they intend to use the boats to their full capacity by overloading the boats with migrants, in this way maximising the financial gain.

In 2014, there has been more than a fourfold increase in irregular migration from Egypt to Italy across the Central Mediterranean from 8 433 to 14 405 irregular migrants. Despite this fourfold increase the total number of migrants is on a smaller scale than irregular migratory flows from Libya. Most of the migrants along this route are Syrian and Egyptian and these Egyptians often claim to be Syrian in order not to be repatriated to Egypt and to be able to obtain asylum. The main final destinations of these migrants were Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands.

In relation to boats/incidents stemming from Tunisia, they all involved small fibreglass or inflatable boats with not more than a dozen migrants on-board that were targeting either Pantelleria or Lampedusa. Despite the favourable weather conditions for sea crossings, the low number of arrivals is related to the traditionally good level of cooperation between the Tunisian and Italian authorities as well as effective border controls conducted on the Tunisian coast by the local authorities and the non-existence of facilitation networks. Moreover, Tunisian migrants are aware of the readmission agreement between Tunisia and Italy and the fact that they will be repatriated immediately upon apprehension by the Italian authorities.

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### *2.1.6. Western Mediterranean Route*

The Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic regions have been less affected by irregular migration compared to other sea border areas of the Central or Eastern Mediterranean over the past number of years.

The trends and figures concerning this route have to be carefully assessed taking into consideration the interventions reported by the Moroccan authorities with regard to the prevention of departures of would-be migrants as well as the number of migrants deterred. The detection figures confirm the irregular migratory pressures, mainly from Morocco, despite the fact that the overall number cannot be considered high compared with the number of irregular migrants apprehended in other regions.

From 1 January to 31 October 2014, the number of irregular border-crossing incidents increased from 142 in 2013 (1 492 persons) to 238 in 2014 involving the apprehension of 2 760 irregular migrants.

Of the total number of apprehended irregular migrants in irregular border-crossing incidents in 2014, 407 were Algerian, 246 were Moroccan, and the remaining migrants were almost without exception from sub-Saharan countries with a special reference to Cameroonians – 602, Chadians – 250 and Central African Republic nationals - 144.

It is worth noting that during weeks 33 and 34, 134 incidents concerning irregular border-crossing were reported involving the apprehension of 1 342 irregular migrants. This represents the highest number of irregular border-crossing incidents ever registered in the framework of the JO Indalo. It also represents the highest number of apprehended irregular migrants both in the framework of the JO Indalo and in Spain.

### *2.1.7. Western Balkan Route*

Irregular migration in the Western Balkans is largely influenced by secondary movements along the Eastern Mediterranean route and also shaped by the visa and asylum policy of Member States towards Western Balkan migrants. Since, apart from Kosovars, migrants from Western Balkan countries are visa exempt to the EU, the region has been transformed from being largely a source area to mostly a transit area in terms of irregular border-crossings. The vast majority of detections of irregular border-crossing are related to irregular migrants transiting en route from Greece. This trend changed only in the first half of 2013 when there were more migrants apprehended from the Western Balkans (predominantly migrants from Kosovo<sup>4</sup> 5 031 and Albania 3 923). This trend however has not repeated itself since then.

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<sup>4</sup> “This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence”.



During the first seven months of 2014, the number Kosovar migrants dropped to an average of 160 migrants per month and became the third nationality group after Afghans and Syrians. The reasons for the drop are the measures implemented by EU Member States, particularly in Hungary such as changes in detention policy, accelerated asylum procedures, strengthened voluntary and forced return programs aimed at minimising the abuse of legal channels for entering the EU and residing irregularly.

In August 2014, the number of Kosovar migrants steadily increased and reached a peak in September. This increasing trend may be associated to an increase in the number of Kosovars travelling with their family members (the ratio of females and minors increased compared to the previous months of 2014).

The fact that Kosovo<sup>5</sup> represents the only Western Balkan country without a signed visa liberation agreement with the EU, makes it the main source country of irregular migrants from the region as roughly 70% of all Western Balkan migrants detected for irregular border-crossings at the EU's borders with the Western Balkans in 2014 were Kosovars.

From January to September 2014, along the EU's external land borders with the Western Balkans, by far the highest number of irregular border-crossings was reported from the HUN-SRB border section (12 169). This was followed by detections of irregular border-crossings at the HRV-SRB border section (1 081), indicating that roughly 98% of the irregular migrants detected at the EU's external land borders with the Western Balkans entered the EU from Serbia.

The total number of detected irregular border-crossings involving non-Western Balkan migrants that were reported at the Hungarian external border with Serbia, is much higher than the number of detections reported in Western Balkan countries along the Western Balkan route. This indicates that a large part of the migrants en route from Greece or Bulgaria and travelling across the Western Balkans remain undetected.

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<sup>5</sup> *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

As regards refusals of entry issued to migrants from visa-free Western Balkan countries, the number increased during the first seven months of 2014 compared to the same period of 2013. Of the 15 197 persons reported, most were refused entry because of a Schengen alert (5 099), and also for not having sufficient means of subsistence (3 511), and had already stayed for three months within the preceding six month period on the territory of the Member States of the European Union (2 907). Most of these refusals were issued at the border between Hungary and Serbia (6 362), Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2 984) and Greece and Albania (2 515).

**DELETED**

*Figure 5: Main areas of migrant apprehensions at the HUN-SRB land border from 1 Jan – 31 Oct 2014.*

#### *2.1.8. Eastern Border Route*

Despite the breakout of the Ukrainian crises which have turned into an armed conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine with 430 000 internally displaced people<sup>6</sup>, so far there has been no significant impact on border security at the eastern land borders. Nonetheless, Ukrainian border guards have continued their surveillance duties at the western borders of the country. Nevertheless, the Member States that share a border with Ukraine have prepared emergency plans in the event of a large influx of refugees from Ukrainian territory.

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<sup>6</sup> UNHCR estimates as of Thursday 23 October 2014 are that Ukraine's internally displaced population has risen to 430 000 people, some 170 000 more than at the start of September.

Thus far in 2014, irregular border-crossing<sup>7</sup> detections have remained low at the EU's Eastern land borders. From January to September 2014, only 720 cases of irregular border-crossings were recorded; this represents a 29% decrease compared to the same period in 2013 when 1 013 irregular border-crossing incidents were reported.

#### *2.1.9. Air borders*

The migratory situation at the air borders develops dynamically and is driven by many factors. However, the abuse of transit regulations and asylum procedures and the use of document fraud are persistent at the air borders. Migration pressure usually concentrates at airports having direct connections to third countries of migration or airports of major destination countries targeted by certain group of migrants. The large existing Diasporas in the EU, labour opportunities or social benefits provided to migrants and particularly the acceptance rate of asylum applications usually act as 'pull factors' and makes a MS a target for migrants.

The number of asylum claims in the first eight months of 2014 at the EU's air borders was 14 461; the top 5 nationalities were from Syria (6 801), Eritrea (1 721), Iran (582), Sri Lanka (498) and Afghanistan (464). The main affected airports were, in descending order: Stockholm (ARN), London (LHR), Frankfurt (FRA), Amsterdam (AMS) and Vienna (VIE). The weekly average of asylum claims in the first eight months of 2014 was 328 persons. The trend has slightly decreased if compared to the same period in 2013 when the average was about 366 persons per week. Overall, we have seen a decrease in the number of asylum claims due both to the Egyptian nationals claiming asylum in Germany and in Italy from August to October 2013 and the dwindling of the number of Eritrean nationals claiming asylum in Sweden in 2014.

In relation to refusal of entry, the total number was 32 988 persons; the top refused nationalities came from Albania (2 381), the United States (1 883), Brazil (1 742), Algeria (1 305) and Nigeria (1 247). The main airports reporting refusals were Paris (CDG), London (LHR), Madrid (MAD), Rome (FCO) and Frankfurt (FRA). The decreasing trend of Brazilian nationals refused entry started in 2012 when the average was 50 persons per week; thus far in 2014 the weekly refusal rate of Brazilian nationals has stabilised at 40 persons. The drop is related to the economic crisis primarily in Spain and Portugal. The top nationalities refused entry in the EU are almost all refused due to a

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<sup>7</sup> Total number of irregular border-crossings between BCPs and Irregular border-crossings at BCPs (FRAN data).

lack of sufficient means (Brazilians) or have no appropriate documentation justifying the purpose and conditions of stay (Albanians, Algerians and Nigerians), and are coming to the EU to seek better living conditions. The exception is nationals from the United States who are almost all refused in the United Kingdom due to a lack of work permits. The trend remains almost at the same level as in 2013 with an average of about 43 refusals of entry per week.

During the first eight months of 2014, most of the cases at the air borders related to Syrian and Eritrean nationals but also to Albanians and Algerians. Syrian and Eritrean nationals were the main nationalities claiming asylum during the first eight months of the year whilst Albanians and Algerians reported the highest increase as persons refused entry.

Nationals from Syria have been the main nationality claiming asylum at the EU's air borders thus far in 2014; by the end of October, 6 801 Syrians claimed asylum. An average of 155 Syrians applied for asylum at EU airports each week during the first eight months of 2014, the main affected airport by far was Stockholm (ARN) followed by Frankfurt (FRA), Amsterdam (AMS) and Oslo (OSL). In Sweden, about 30% of the Syrian nationals who have claimed asylum have arrived by air in 2014.

Following Syrians, an average of 39 Eritrean nationals applied for asylum at EU airports each week during the first six months of 2014. After the peak of asylum claims submitted in May, the number of Eritrean nationals dropped. The main affected airports by far were Stockholm (ARN) and Oslo (OSL), followed by Stockholm (NYO), Amsterdam (AMS) and London (LHR) with a much lower number of claims.

The departure airports in the case of many Syrian and Eritrean nationals arriving at Stockholm (ARN) are unknown. It can be assumed that these migrants arrive on intra-Schengen flights since they are not detected and reported by the airport itself. The data was provided by the Swedish Migration Board mainly based on statements of the migrants recorded during asylum interviews.

When the route was known, Syrians mainly arrived from Istanbul (IST and SAW), or from other minor Turkish airports and from Beirut (BEY). However, increasing arrivals from other unusual locations, particularly from Newark (EWR), New York (JFK), Los Angeles (LAX), Beijing (PEK), Sao Paulo (GRU) and Belgrade (BEG) were also reported.

Travel document abuse, including passports, visas, identity cards, residence permits and travel documents issued to non-nationals is on the rise in the European Union. Pulsar data indicates that there has been an increase in the detection of document abuse at the entry controls of the EU, foremost in regard to passports and visas.

Passport fraud is the most detected document abuse at the EU's air borders; impersonation using genuine documents is increasing, and as last year this has remained the foremost in regard to Syrian nationals. In relation to Syrian nationals, they mainly use Swedish, Syrian, Turkish, Danish and Bulgarian passports, followed by Belgian identity cards and Swedish residence permits. Examining the countries of issuance of passports which were used for attempted irregular entry, overall the most reported passports have been from France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria.

Visa fraud is the second highest reported type of document abuse at the EU's air borders; the visas detected are mainly fraudulently obtained, followed by counterfeit and forged. In regard to fraudulently obtained visas the main issuing countries are: Germany, France, Italy, Greece, Spain and Poland. Counterfeit visas are mainly of German, Italian and French origin while forged visas are mainly French and Italian. The main nationalities abusing visas are, in descending order, from: the Russian Federation, Nigeria, Afghanistan, China, Iran, Turkey, Libya and Syria.

## 7. **DELETED**

### 7.1 **Conclusions on irregular migration at the EU's external borders** (made by FRONTEX Risk Analysis Unit)

- The continuing crises in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, the source countries of the main apprehended nationalities as well as the political and security situation in migrants' countries of origin are having a heavy impact on the dimension and composition of the irregular migratory flow on the Eastern Mediterranean land and sea routes and also affect the Central Mediterranean Sea route and Hungary.
- The implementation of operation Aspida in Greece in August 2012 and the Special Police Operation by the Bulgarian authorities at the beginning of November 2013 resulted in a sharp decrease in the number of irregular migrant apprehensions at Greek and Bulgarian land borders with Turkey during 2013 which continued in 2014. At the same time, the increased activities of the Greek and Bulgarian authorities caused a clear displacement effect of irregular migration flows from the land border to the Greek–Turkish sea border during 2014.
- The Central Mediterranean route is the most important route for irregular border-crossing at the European Union's external borders, being targeted by boats departing from Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Syria and Greece. Any changes in terms of increase and decrease have a significant impact on the overall picture of irregular migration towards European Union Member States. Consequently, any activities targeting irregular border-crossings and focused only in this area have an important influence on the overall number of irregular migrants irregularly entering the European Union.

- Libya has been plagued by instability since the fall of the Gaddafi regime, this instability is affecting the number of migrant's boats departing from Libya. At the moment, different factions, militias and high ranked officials are taking advantage of irregular migration. There is no central authority to implement effective measures to control migratory flows in Libya and it is unlikely that one will be formed in the short-term.
- Irregular migration in the Western Balkans is largely affected by developments at the EU's external land borders with Turkey and along the Eastern Mediterranean sea route. Therefore, it is likely that the irregular migratory flow generated by the unstable situation in the Middle East and Afghanistan will further reverberate its effects on the Western Balkans with a large number of irregular migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.
- It is expected that the main migratory routes across the Western Balkans will continue through Serbia and across the green borders of Hungary and Croatia. The number of incidents involving clandestine entry in sealed trucks across Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary to Austria may grow further due to enhanced border surveillance at the green border of Bulgaria with Turkey.
- As regards the Western Mediterranean region the patrolling activities of the Moroccan police and, at the same time, the high level of cooperation between Spain and Morocco are two of the main pillars with regard to preventing and curbing irregular migration in this region. Should these patrolling activities and/or cooperation levels decrease, the number of migrants arriving in Spain might increase significantly.
- In general terms there are no indicators to suggest that the Eastern land borders as a region will develop into a hotspot of irregular migration in 2015. Irregular border-crossings by migrants from neighbouring Eastern border countries towards the EU are low and are expected to remain low in 2015. This trend is likely to continue provided that legal travel channels are available through growing visa issuances and local border traffic agreements. Abuse of legal travel channels will remain the main method of trying to reach the EU by irregular means, resulting in a high number of refusals of entry.

- The high pressure at the air borders in regard to Syrian, Eritrean, Afghan, Sri Lankan and Iranian nationals claiming asylum will most likely continue and might even increase. Long-standing large-scale displacement continues to press humanitarian needs due to recent events in Iraq; therefore, it is very likely that an increasing number of Iraqi nationals will claim asylum at the external air borders.
- In relation to document fraud, an increase in the use of genuine documents as impersonation foremost in regard to Syrian and Stateless nationals from Syria is expected. The increased abuse of transit without visa as a modus operandi will most likely continue in 2015, especially if the conflict continues to escalate in the Middle East.

7.2 **DELETED**



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➤ Comparison with the J.O. “PERKUNAS”

Comparing the TOP 10 countries of the Joint Operation “*MOS MAIORUM*” with the TOP 10 countries of the Joint Operation “*PERKUNAS*” it seems that the trend has not changed a lot as the majority of the reporting countries in the first 10 positions are the same.

**DELETED**

➤ Mass media attention

For unknown reasons, the Joint Operation “*MOS MAIORUM*” captured the attention of the mass media that labeled it as an operation aiming at arresting migrants even if its aims were to target the criminal networks that facilitate the irregular migration and to monitor/check the most used routes followed by them. These goals were achieved (as a total of 257 facilitators were apprehended).

Moreover, in line with the Operational Plan, all participating countries were required to carry out all the activities in full respect of the highest standard of ethical conduct, professionalism and respect of human rights, taking also into account the special needs of vulnerable groups (as unaccompanied minors, victim of trafficking or people in need of medical treatments).



### ➤ Goals achieved

It can be concluded that the aims and objectives of the Joint Operation “*MOS MAIORUM*” were largely achieved.

The participation was extensive, involving 27 countries (26 MS and 1 SACs) that cooperated and supported the operation in an excellent spirit.

The experience of all the police officers from the participating countries, the deep knowledge of the modus operandi used by irregular migrants and of the main routes followed by criminal networks to transport people from one country to another permitted to intercept a huge number of migrants and apprehend a total of 257 facilitators. In particular it should be underlined that the number of facilitators intercepted at the internal borders is larger than the number of those intercepted at the external borders, despite the fact that it is more difficult to detect and apprehend facilitators during internal borders/inland checks than in BCPs.

Thanks to the professionalism, skills and competences of the above-mentioned police officers involved in the J.O., all the objectives and goals were successfully reached, with excellent operational results.

The good cooperation between participants and the Central Directorate for Immigration and Border Police of the Italian Ministry of Interior enabled also to gather a lot of useful information for intelligence and analysis purposes that were forwarded also to FRONTEX Agency.

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