

FRONTEX EVALUATION REPORT

JO Focal Points 2019 Sea

Approved by
/ /2020

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Signature
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Executive Director



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GENERAL PART

1. Background information

In 2019, the Joint Operation (JO) Focal Points Sea was used as a platform for the implementation of specific and independent activities (the “Activities”) covered by the mandate of European Border and Coast Guard Regulation, in specific and distinct maritime areas (“Focal Points”), within the territory of the participating Member States (MS).

The Frontex Evaluation Report of JO Focal Points 2019 Sea is composed of the General Part and the Evaluation of each separately implemented Specific Activity.

During the implementation period of the JO, 4 different Activities have been implemented by activating various Focal Points, in locations not covered by the regular JO, as follows:

- Operational Activities in Cyprus.
- Multipurpose Maritime Operation in the Black Sea, in Bulgaria and Romania.
- Prevention and detection of cross-border crime activities in the Atlantic Ocean (Azores), in Portugal.
- Operational Activities Prevention and detection of FTFs and cross-border crime activities in the Mediterranean Sea (Neptune II), in Italy and France.

1.1. Operational aim

The operational aim of the joint operation (JO) was to provide increased technical and operational assistance to the host MS by implementing coordinated operational activities in the areas at the external sea borders, which were not covered by permanent large-scale maritime joint operations or complementing them in order to control illegal immigration flows towards the territory of the EU MS, to tackle cross-border crime and to enhance European cooperation on coast guard functions and law enforcement activities.

The operational aim was implemented in full compliance with the relevant EU and international law, guaranteeing the protection of 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.

1.2. Period of implementation and operational areas

1.2.1. Period of implementation

Commencement	07 May 2019
Termination	29 January 2020

1.2.2. Operational areas

During the implementation period of the JO, [REDACTED] were activated within 4 different Activities, as follows:

[REDACTED]

Commented [KB1]: The non-disclosed parts refer to details of the operational area and cannot be released. As ongoing operations tend to cover similar operational areas as the operations conducted in preceding years, disclosing details of previous operational areas would be tantamount to disclosing the current state of play. This would provide smuggling and other criminal networks with intelligence, enabling them to change their modus operandi, which would ultimately put the life of migrants in danger. Consequently, the course of ongoing and future operations of similar nature would be hampered by depriving the operations of any strategy and element of surprise, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of documents containing such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 .

[REDACTED]

Commented [KB2]: The non-disclosed parts refer to details of the operational area and cannot be released. As ongoing operations tend to cover similar operational areas as the operations conducted in preceding years, disclosing details of previous operational areas would be tantamount to disclosing the current state of play. This would provide smuggling and other criminal networks with intelligence, enabling them to change their modus operandi, which would ultimately put the life of migrants in danger. Consequently, the course of ongoing and future operations of similar nature would be hampered by depriving the operations of any strategy and element of surprise, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of documents containing such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

1.3. Participants

The JO was hosted by Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Italy, Portugal and Romania.

9 Participating MS with 11 different authorities took part in the JO, namely: Austria, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romanian and Slovenia.

1.4. Financial information

The estimated operational budget of JO Focal Points 2019 Sea amounted to 487,303 EUR.

I. Evaluation of Specific Activity

Operational Activities in Cyprus

JO FOCAL POINTS 2019 SEA

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1. Background information

The Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Sea (JO) Sea is the platform for the implementation of specific and independent activities covered by the mandate of European Border and Coast Guard Regulation in specific and distinct maritime areas (Focal Points).

The Operational Activities in Cyprus was implemented under the Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Sea.

1.1. Brief risk assessment

Irregular migrants traveling to Cyprus [REDACTED] Usually, the total number of arrivals to Cyprus is lower than on the other sub-routes in the Eastern Mediterranean, however, the impact of illegal immigration on Cyprus is high, given its small population, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Moreover, irregular migrants who go to Cyprus tend to stay for a long term, which increases the administrative burden of the local authorities.

[REDACTED] have made Cyprus attractive for illegal immigration.

[REDACTED] Between 1 January and 31 December 2019, 7 730 migrants arrived in Cyprus. This equates to a 66% increase compared to 2018, when 4 662 migrant arrivals were reported.

In 2019, 31% of the main nationalities arriving in Cyprus were Syrians, 15% Cameroonians, 12% Pakistanis and 12% Bangladeshis. In addition, a wide range of other nationalities (26%) were reported, among the most numerous being Georgian, Nigerian, Iranian, Congolese and Somali nationals.

Up until June 2019, Syrians were by far the main reported nationality [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In June, the Cypriot authority reported 479 Syrian arrivals, while in July, there were only 65.

[REDACTED] their number started to increase again. In September 2019, 114 Syrians were reported by the Cypriot authority, 120 in October (5% increase) and then 314 in November (162%). In December 2019 and January 2020, Cypriot authority reported 126 and 152 Syrian migrants respectively, showing a seasonal decrease [REDACTED]

The increasing trend in arrivals to Cyprus is likely to continue along 2020. In January 2020, 152 Syrian migrants arrived to the island [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Despite the fact that the number of Syrian arrivals is currently moderated, as soon as weather conditions allow for [REDACTED] a significant increase in Syrians arriving [REDACTED] is expected.

In 2019, a sharp increase in arrivals of irregular migrants from Africa was reported. With 1 124 arrivals, Cameroonians were the second-ranked nationality arriving in Cyprus, after Syrians. In 2019, the number of Cameroonians increased by 139% compared to 2018. The number of Nigerians increased as well by 286%, from only 84 arrivals in 2018 to 328 in 2019. Other African nationalities showed similar increasing trends. In addition, Pakistani and Bangladeshi nationals more than doubled their numbers in 2019 compared to 2018.

All these nationalities (with the exception of Syrians [REDACTED])

Commented [KB3]: The information related to this variable is also used for the development of risk analyses, which constitute a specific form of internal decision-making processes based on the intelligence derived from previous and presently ongoing activities and have a bearing on the conduct of current and future operations. Being an important base for determining the strategic orientation of the Agency, the possibility to conduct such analyses without interference is crucial for Frontex to effectively exercise its mandate. Consequently, releasing this information would enable third parties to gain insights into this decision making process and, with ascertainable likelihood, result in depriving Frontex of the possibility to conduct such analyses wholly independently, free from any external pressure or third-party influence. In sum, releasing this information would seriously undermine Frontex internal decision making-processes. As no overriding public interest that is objective and general in nature and not indistinguishable from individual or private interests for the release of this information is ascertainable in the present case, information pertaining to this variable cannot be released based on Article 4(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of criminal networks involved in the smuggling and migrants and trafficking in human beings. Its disclosure would jeopardize the work of law enforcement officials and pose a hazard to the course of ongoing and future operations aimed at curtailing the activities of such networks, ultimately obstructing their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime as well as to prevent unauthorized border crossings. The disclosure would thus undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down in Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

██████████ The situation may continue in the future with more migrants from Africa adding their increasing number to the Pakistani and Bangladeshi migration flows.

The presence of ██████████
██████████

Commented [KB4]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of criminal networks involved in the smuggling and migrants and trafficking in human beings. Its disclosure would jeopardize the work of law enforcement officials and pose a hazard to the course of ongoing and future operations aimed at curtailing the activities of such networks, ultimately obstructing their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime as well as to prevent unauthorized border crossings. The disclosure would thus undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down in Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

1.2. Specific operational aim

To provide technical and operational assistance to Cyprus in migration management and information / intelligence gathering activities.

The operational aim was implemented in full compliance with the relevant EU and international law, guaranteeing the protection of 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.

Commented [KB5]: The non-disclosed part contains sensitive information obtained in cooperation with a Member State of the European Union regarding the effectiveness of border security measures. The disclosure of such information would reveal existing vulnerabilities which, once public, could be explored by criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and thus undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down in Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

1.3. Period of implementation and operational areas

1.3.1. Period of implementation

Commencement	14 August 2019	12:00 (local time)
Termination	29 January 2020	11:59 (local time)

The Operational Activities in Cyprus started on 14 August 2019, with an initial duration of three months. The Activity was later extended until the end of the operational year of 2019.

1.3.2. Operational area

In order to implement the Operational Activities in Cyprus, ██████████
██████████

Nonetheless, the operational activities were performed by the deployed experts in other locations as well, ██████████
██████████

Commented [KB6]: The non-disclosed parts refer to details of the operational area and cannot be released. As ongoing operations tend to cover similar operational areas as the operations conducted in preceding years, disclosing details of previous operational areas would be tantamount to disclosing the current state of play. This would provide smuggling and other criminal networks with intelligence, enabling them to change their modus operandi, which would ultimately put the life of migrants in danger. Consequently, the course of ongoing and future operations of similar nature would be hampered by depriving the operations of any strategy and element of surprise, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of documents containing such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

1.4. Participants

The Activity was hosted by Cyprus.

5 Participating MS took part in the Activity, namely: Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Slovenia.

During the Operational Activities in Cyprus, ██████████
██████████

Commented [KB7]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

1.5. Financial information

A budget of 162,832.00 EUR was allocated by Frontex, for the implementation of Operational Activities in Cyprus in 2019.

2. Achievement of objectives

- **Enhance operational cooperation** - High level of MS participation in the operational activities; Enhanced cooperation between the national authorities of the host MS as well as on an international level; Enhanced cooperation with other Union agencies and bodies or international organisations in the frame of Activity.

Achieved

The Activity was the first time Frontex provided technical and operational support to Cyprus since the launch of the Agency. In this respect the activity provided new form of enhancing operational cooperation between Cyprus and other EU MS. Since Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Sea was not a part of the annual operational planning process, the resources which were needed for the implementation of the Operational Activities in Cyprus were redeployed from other maritime Joint Operations.

Representatives from the European Commission, EASO and Europol cooperated actively in the framework of the Activity, thus enhancing the inter-agency cooperation.

- **Support to migration management** - Assisting in screening of nationality, document checks and debriefing of third-country nationals.

Partly Achieved

The absence of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) dedicated to registration and identification procedures for third-country nationals in Cyprus, along with the existence of national measures in place

when supporting migration management activities in the area. Given the reasons above, the support to migration management could have been further enhanced by additional resources and support to the Cypriot authorities in creating the SOP and its implementation processes.

In terms of screening of nationality of irregular migrants detected on the island were screened during the implementation of the Activity.

Similar challenges were faced

Documents checks were performed by the deployed ALDO, who supported the local authority in verifying the authenticity of travel and other identity documents.

- **Enhance collection and exchange of information, including personal data** - Collection of operational information in a timely manner from all operational actors involved, in particular information on incidents reported in JORA; Processing of personal data relating to individuals suspected of involvement in the migrants' smuggling, traffic of human beings (THB), terrorism or other cross-border crimes at the EU level; Distribution of operational information to all operational actors through the respective authorized channels; Seeking standardized format and quality of the including debriefing interviews; Use of the "Guidelines for JORA Incident Template" giving detailed information on definitions and establishing a sets of priorities when selecting the appropriate attributes

Commented [KB8]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

Partly Achieved

With more than 48% of the incidents being reported in JORA [REDACTED]

Even so, the information inserted in JORA [REDACTED]

Personal data was collected [REDACTED]

During the implementation of the Activity, Frontex transferred to Europol a total of 31 personal data packages involving personal data [REDACTED] however, the transmitted data generated 0 hits in the Europol databases.

The debriefing information was inserted and validated in JORA [REDACTED]

- **Identify possible risks and threats - Carrying out** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Operational analytical products will be shared with relevant stakeholders to maintain and improve situational awareness and support operational planning and implementation; Detecting and reporting relevant cases of document and identity fraud, frauds concerning stolen transportation means and parts as well as modi operandi.

Achieved

Although the data collected in the framework of the Activity [REDACTED] the implementation of the Operational Activities in Cyprus facilitated the collection of important operational information. [REDACTED]

During the implementation of the Activity, the delivery of [REDACTED]

Even though forged documents were detected during the Activity, Frontex Document Alert (FDA) were not produced [REDACTED]

- **Establish and exchange the best practices -** Delivering and supporting workshops, meetings, other networking events to participants; Delivering and supporting operational briefings/debriefing to all participants of the Activity, including information on the fundamental rights and access to international protection; Building on MS operational capacity by implementing other supporting activities; Supporting targeted training activities.

Partly Achieved

During the implementation of the Activity, four operational briefings were provided to the participants. The operational briefings were complemented by Europol and EASO representatives. All TMs were debriefed at local level, at the end of their deployment.

Moreover, during each rotation, [REDACTED] In addition, [REDACTED]

Commented [KB9]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed part contains detailed information related to reporting tools and methods used by law enforcement officials to conduct border control tasks and counter criminal activities. Its disclosure would jeopardize the implementation of ongoing and future operations, and thus facilitate irregular migration and trafficking in human beings as the effectiveness of law enforcement measures would be significantly reduced. As disclosing this information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security, this part is not disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

[REDACTED] in the operational area. However, [REDACTED]

Additionally, on job trainings for drafting operational reports were provided by the deployed experts to the local officers.

Exchange of best practices should be significantly enhanced, particular through the implementation of Staff Exchange activities, which were not possible in 2019, due to national constraints.

Commented [KB10]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

3. Link to other Frontex activities and best practices

- To facilitate the organisational arrangements and logistics related to the deployment of resources, information about the hosting MS and the operational area of the Activity was uploaded on FOSS.

4. Assessment of joint operational activities

4.1. Supporting Response

4.1.1. Operational concept

During the implementation of the Activity, Frontex provided support in migration management activities to Cyprus through screening of nationality and documents checks of irregular migrants arriving to the island, including information gathering from the operational area.

Due to the absence of a SOP regarding the migration management process in Cyprus [REDACTED] a Working Group involving representatives from Frontex, Europol and EASO, was assigned to develop, in close cooperation with the Cypriot Authority and under the coordination of the European Commission, an SOP regarding the first reception capacities and procedures in Cyprus.

Additional challenges were also imposed by the expansion works done in the Temporary Reception Centre in Kokkinotrimithia (Pournara) aiming to ensure an adequate infrastructure, improved accommodation and working conditions in the Centre. [REDACTED]

In these conditions, the deployment of [REDACTED] with extensive experience in migration management activities at the hotspots in Italy and Greece had a high positive impact on the activities implemented, assisting and advising the local authority to enable an adequate level of operational response.

Thorough document checks were performed by the ALDO in order to support the detection of forged / falsified documents in the possession of irregular migrants arriving to Cyprus, thus providing significant support to the host MS's forensic/investigation teams.

Concerning the debriefing activities, [REDACTED]

Commented [KB11]: The non-disclosed part contains sensitive information obtained in cooperation with a Member State of the European Union regarding the effectiveness of border security measures. The disclosure of such information would reveal existing vulnerabilities which, once public, could be explored by criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and thus undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down in Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 .

Daily and ad-hoc exchange of information was carried out between Frontex, the operational actors and external stakeholders involved, with valuable support provided, in particular by Europol officers present on spot.

All participants in the Activity were instructed by the OT to pay particular attention to the identification of persons in vulnerable situations and to refer them to the Cypriot Team Leader (TL).

4.1.2. Operational results

Since the beginning of the Activity on 14 August 2019 until 29 January 2020, the Cypriot authority reported 3 574 irregular migrants (approx.) in the Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN), while only 1 440 irregular migrants have been reported in JORA.

For these reasons, the data below does not indicate the real picture of the illegal immigration in Cyprus nor the operational results during the implementation of the Frontex Operation.

During the implementation of the Activity, the Cypriot authority reported a total of 238 incidents, as follows:

Detections related to illegal immigration:

- 238 incidents of illegal border-crossing, involving 1 434 migrants.
- No people smugglers were arrested.

1 280 irregular migrants were detected

Cross-border crime:

- No incidents of smuggling of goods were reported.

Moreover, 407 travel and other identity documents were examined by the ALDO. Out of these documents, 9 ID Cards were considered forged

In addition, as a result of the extensive cooperation work of the Cypriot authority with Europol and Frontex, potential foreign fighters have been detected by the Cypriot authority, raising concerns about the impact of illegal immigration on the security at the EU external borders. Nonetheless, these cases were not inserted as incidents in JORA.

EU added value of the Activity

The added value of the Activity was reflected in the vital support provided to the migration management activities and building the operational capacity of the Cypriot authority in light of the increased migratory pressure in the island.

Cooperation with the European Commission and other EU Agencies, such as EASO and Europol was enhanced and further developed throughout the implementation of the Activity.

4.1.3. Operational coordination structures

The operational coordination structures were established in accordance with the Specific Activity Plan.

played a key role in the daily cooperation, allowing operational activities to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Specific Activity Plan.

The Cypriot authority responsible for leading and coordinating the daily operational activities to ensure the proper implementation of the Activity.

Commented [KB12]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information related to reporting tools and methods used by law enforcement officials to conduct border control tasks and counter criminal activities. Its disclosure would jeopardize the implementation of ongoing and future operations, and thus facilitate irregular migration and trafficking in human beings as the effectiveness of law enforcement measures would be significantly reduced. As disclosing this information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security, this part is not disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed parts refer to details of the operational area and cannot be released. As ongoing operations tend to cover similar operational areas as the operations conducted in preceding years, disclosing details of previous operational areas would be tantamount to disclosing the current state of play. This would provide smuggling and other criminal networks with intelligence, enabling them to change their modus operandi, which would ultimately put the life of migrants in danger. Consequently, the course of ongoing and future operations of similar nature would be hampered by depriving the operations of any strategy and element of surprise, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of documents containing such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

Commented [KB13]: Information cannot be released as it refers to details crucial for situational awareness at the external borders of the European Union which is used by Frontex to conduct its operational activities and to develop risk analyses. The disclosure of this information would hamper the effectiveness of Frontex operations and jeopardise the efforts carried out by the European Union and Member States to curtail criminal activities at the external borders. It would thus benefit criminal networks especially those involved in people smuggling and trafficking in human beings, which would put the life of migrants in danger. Hence, the disclosure of the information pertaining to this variable would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and has to be refused based on Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

Commented [KB14]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

[REDACTED] to ensure the coordination of migration management support activities in the area, including document checks and debriefing activities.

Regular meetings were organised between [REDACTED] in order to provide information and updates on the latest incidents, findings and operational developments and to address any particular operational challenge, thus contributing to the proper implementation of the operational concept.

[REDACTED] were deployed by Frontex to [REDACTED]

4.1.4. Resources deployed

Human resources

During the Activity, a total number [REDACTED] were deployed by Frontex, [REDACTED]

Participating MSs:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Assessment of capacity and performance of human resources

[REDACTED] was highly familiar with Frontex operational cycle and requirements, thus ensuring the effective implementation of the operational activities on spot.

[REDACTED]

In order to properly support the local authority and ensure the effective implementation of the operational activities, experienced sTMs with extensive knowledge were selected. Their experience proved valuable in assisting the local authority in managing the activities.

The [REDACTED] contributed to the establishment of the presumed nationality of the irregular migrants

[REDACTED]

In terms of [REDACTED], supported the national efforts in terms [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] experts assisted the local authority in collecting relevant operational information oriented [REDACTED]

Commented [KB15]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the technical equipment deployed in the operational area by Frontex and Member States. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the exact type and capabilities of the equipment and would enable third parties, e.g. by combining this information with other sources, to draw conclusions regarding usual positions and movement patterns. This would open way for abuse, as numbers and types of equipment used in previous operations are indicative of similar numbers and types for succeeding years. Releasing such information would thus benefit criminal networks, enabling them to change their modus operandi and, consequently, result in hampering the course of ongoing and future operations of a similar nature. This would ultimately obstruct the purpose of such operations: to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of information regarding the technical equipment deployed would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control [and/or coast guard duties]. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

[REDACTED]

Nonetheless, [REDACTED] Moreover, due to [REDACTED]

These limitations were often mitigated by the OT through field visits, meetings and awareness sessions.

The OT and the Cypriot authority successfully addressed these challenges [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] cooperated closely with the Europol staff present on the spot in regards to the detection former Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF). [REDACTED]

The deployment of [REDACTED] was highly appreciated in the frame of the Activity due to his extensive support provided in both screening and debriefing activities.

The ALDO was deployed in the operational area to support the detection of forged / falsified documents in possession of the irregular migrants arriving in Cyprus, [REDACTED] throughout the implementation of the Activity. The expert assisted in the examination of 407 travel and other identity documents detecting 9 forged ID Cards [REDACTED]

The [REDACTED] provided trainings and constant guidance to the local staff in terms of JORA reporting procedures. Considering the increased number of data reported in JORA, his work provided significant added value in the framework of the Activity.

The [REDACTED]

Technical Equipment

During the implementation of the Activity, Frontex deployed [REDACTED]

Some challenges were identified during [REDACTED]

Commented [KB16]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed part contains detailed information related to reporting tools and methods used by law enforcement officials to conduct border control tasks and counter criminal activities. Its disclosure would jeopardize the implementation of ongoing and future operations, and thus facilitate irregular migration and trafficking in human beings as the effectiveness of law enforcement measures would be significantly reduced. As disclosing this information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security, this part is not disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 .

The information related to this variable is also used for the development of risk analyses, which constitute a specific form of internal decision-making processes based on the intelligence derived from previous and presently ongoing activities and have a bearing on the conduct of current and future operations. Being an important base for determining the strategic orientation of the Agency, the possibility to conduct such analyses without interference is crucial for Frontex to effectively exercise its mandate. Consequently, releasing this information would enable third parties to gain insights into this decision making process and, with ascertainable likelihood, result in depriving Frontex of the possibility to conduct such analyses wholly independently, free from any external pressure or third-party influence. In sum, releasing this information would seriously undermine Frontex internal decision making-processes. As no overriding public interest that is objective and general in nature and not indistinguishable from individual or private interests for the release of this information is ascertainable in the present case, information pertaining to this variable cannot be released based on Article 4(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the technical equipment deployed in the operational area by Frontex and Member States. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the exact type and capabilities of the equipment and would enable third parties, e.g. by combining this information with other sources, to draw conclusions regarding usual positions and movement patterns. This would open way for abuse, as numbers and types of equipment used in previous operations are indicative of similar numbers and types for succeeding years. Releasing such information would thus benefit criminal networks, enabling them to change their modus operandi and, consequently, result in hampering the course of ongoing and future operations of a similar nature. This would ultimately obstruct the purpose of such operations:...

4.2. Situational Awareness

4.2.1. Threats and Risks, modus operandi and trends identified

Between 1 January and 31 December 2019, 7 730 irregular migrants arrived in Cyprus. This equates to a 66% increase compared to 2018, when 4 662 irregular migrant arrivals were reported. In terms of nationalities reported, 31% of the arrivals were Syrians, 15% Cameroonians, 12% Pakistanis and 12% Bangladeshis. In addition, a wide range of other nationalities (26%) were reported.

The [REDACTED]

The introduction of visas for Syrian nationals [REDACTED] led to a dramatic drop in the number of Syrians arriving.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The efforts of the national authority, supported by Frontex and Europol resulted in the detection of a significant number of former foreign terrorist fighters (FTF).

[REDACTED]

The rest of the nationalities arrived in Cyprus [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Commented [KB17]: Information cannot be released as it refers to details crucial for situational awareness at the external borders of the European Union which is used by Frontex to conduct its operational activities and to develop risk analyses. The disclosure of this information would hamper the effectiveness of Frontex operations and jeopardise the efforts carried out by the European Union and Member States to curtail criminal activities at the external borders. It would thus benefit criminal networks especially those involved in people smuggling and trafficking in human beings, which would put the life of migrants in danger. Hence, the disclosure of the information pertaining to this variable would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and has to be refused based on Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of criminal networks involved in the smuggling and migrants and trafficking in human beings. Its disclosure would jeopardize the work of law enforcement officials and pose a hazard to the course of ongoing and future operations aimed at curtailing the activities of such networks, ultimately obstructing their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime as well as to prevent unauthorized border crossings. The disclosure would thus undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down in Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 .

As migrants tend to stay in Cyprus, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

It is expected that the number of irregular migrants arriving in Cyprus from Syria, Cameroon and/or other African countries, as well as from Pakistan and Bangladesh will increase [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

4.2.2. Information gathering and exchange

Operational reporting and information exchange

During the Activity, constant information gathering and monitoring of the situational picture was provided, using standardized reporting forms and channels.

The deployment of human resources in the frame of the Activity enabled the collection of operational information and intelligence through operational reports, providing overviews on the daily and weekly activities performed on spot [REDACTED]

Thus, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

At the same time, the data provided in the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

During the implementation of the Activity, there were no Fronted Document Alerts issued, mostly due to the low-quality of the forgeries detected.

[REDACTED] expert resulted in high qualitative information gathered through debriefing and landing reports.
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The document was uploaded to FOSS and disseminated among the participants in the JO.

Reporting of personal data related to suspects of crime

The collection of personal data was carried out using the standardized JORA reporting templates. Personal data were processed and transmitted to Europol in accordance with the process defined within the Specific Activity Plan. During the implementation of the Activity, Frontex transferred to Europol a total of 31 personal data packages containing personal data [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] however, the transmitted data generated 0 hits within the Europol databases.

Reporting in JORA

JORA was used to report operational information within the Activity, making use of a standardized Incident Report.

Commented [KB18]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of criminal networks involved in the smuggling and migrants and trafficking in human beings. Its disclosure would jeopardize the work of law enforcement officials and pose a hazard to the course of ongoing and future operations aimed at curtailing the activities of such networks, ultimately obstructing their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime as well as to prevent unauthorized border crossings. The disclosure would thus undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down in Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 .

Commented [KB19]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed part contains detailed information related to reporting tools and methods used by law enforcement officials to conduct border control tasks and counter criminal activities. Its disclosure would jeopardize the implementation of ongoing and future operations, and thus facilitate irregular migration and trafficking in human beings as the effectiveness of law enforcement measures would be significantly reduced. As disclosing this information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security, this part is not disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 .

The Activity in JORA along with the incident template for the data collection were created and used but significant challenges were experienced in regards to reporting in JORA throughout the implementation of the Activity.

[REDACTED]

At the same time

[REDACTED]

In order to address

[REDACTED]

Starting with [REDACTED] was deployed in the operational area to further support the local officers with JORA reporting. As a result, the Cypriot authority started delivering [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

During the Activity, remote support in regard to JORA application was also provided by JORA Product & Service Management from Information Fusion Centre (IFC). Enquiries related to Incident Template or validation of incidents were timely directed to relevant units within the Agency.

Frontex-One-Stop-Shop (FOSS)

During the implementation of the Activity, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Serious incidents reporting (FSC - overview)

FSC was responsible to provide a prompt response on serious incidents, based on information received through JORA, operational reports and open source information, however, during the implementation of the Activity, no Serious Incident Reports (SIR) were reported.

4.3. Development

4.3.1. Operational cooperation

Cooperation between Hosting and Participating MS

The cooperation between hosting and participating MS was performed on a very good level. The participating MS showed a strong level of commitment in supporting the implementation of the Activity and reached the required flexibility in case of urgent needs.

The host MS demonstrated strong commitment in hosting the Activity and the deployed experts, along with high flexibility and dedication in addressing any challenges raised during the implementation of the Operational Activities in Cyprus.

Commented [KB20]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

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Cooperation with other Union agencies and bodies or international organizations

The cooperation with the Commission, EASO and Europol has been developed as follows:

- **The European Commission:** The Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission (DG HOME) deployed a staff member in Nicosia, to support the Cypriot authority in migration management activities, with whom Frontex has maintained regular contact and worked in close cooperation on the ground. A working Group (WG) reuniting representatives from Frontex, EASO and Europol was also established under the coordination of the European Commission, to support the Cypriot Authority in developing an SOP for first reception capacities and procedures in Cyprus, with Frontex providing specific technical support in drafting the document.
- **EASO:** The commonly developed tool on access to asylum procedures (guide, booklets, leaflets and posters) was published on Frontex website, presented to the participants and distributed to the operational areas. The representatives of both Agencies met regularly at the deployment sites and exchanged information. In addition, an EASO representative attended regularly the Frontex operational briefings organised on spot in order to present the mandate of EASO and the activities implemented on spot.
- **Europol:** Cyprus has been hosting Europol guest officers since April 2019, in order to assist the national authority in secondary checks of irregular migrants arriving on the island. In this regard, [redacted] cooperated intensely with Europol representatives, exchanging information in accordance with the Specific Activity Plan. Frontex transmitted to Europol all operational personal data received from the Cypriot authority. In 2019, Europol provided Frontex [redacted] [redacted] Europol representative attended regularly the Frontex operational briefings organised on spot, presenting the mandate and the activities of the Europol officers in the area. In addition, Frontex in close cooperation with Europol, initiated the development of a set of joint advices for daily cooperation, which is expected to be finalised on 2020.

Commented [KB21]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

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Cooperation with Third Countries

Cooperation with Third Countries was not foreseen during the implementation of the Activity.

Frontex coordination role

The Operational Team (OT) was composed of [redacted]

The team was completed by [redacted]

Moreover, staff from the [redacted] supported the overall financial management of the Activity.

[redacted] was responsible for the overall planning, monitoring and evaluation of the Activity, occasionally visiting the operational area in order to assess the situation on spot from the planning perspective, [redacted] was responsible for the implementation of the Activity, according to the provisions of the Specific Activity Plan.

[redacted] ensured the implementation of the Activity through constant cooperation with the host MS, occasionally travelling to Cyprus, in order to facilitate the communication with the national authority,

Commented [KB22]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

maintaining links with the local officers and addressing particular challenges faced during the ongoing operational activities.)

■ monitored the performance of ■ and issued an analytical product, presenting analytical findings and making recommendations related to the resources deployed, aiming to enhance the operational results.

During the implementation of the Activity, ■ actively cooperating, advising and guiding the participants in regard the information gathering and reporting. Moreover, the TMs have been also briefed on specific topics ■ via regular video-conferences.

4.3.2. Operational briefing / debriefing

■ were provided to all participants of the Activity, during the first day of the deployment, by Frontex and the Host MS representatives.

All participants were debriefed at the end of their deployments, at local level, either ■. The report from participant also facilitated to obtain feedback from the deployed experts.

EASO and Europol representatives complemented the Frontex operational briefings by providing up-to-date information on their activities in the area, thus maintaining the awareness of the agencies' mandates and responsibilities in the island.

Commented [KB23]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

5. Main conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
<u>Supporting Response</u>	
Via the established Focal Point in Cyprus, Frontex provided operational and technical support, including operational capacity building to Cyprus.	■
Considering the dynamic of the migration situation in the islands ■	■
■	■
■	■
The deployment of experienced sTMs provided constructive support to the local authorities, particularly in terms of gaining knowledge on Frontex operational procedures.	■

Commented [KB24]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Even though 9 forged documents were detected during the implementation of the Activity, Frontex Document Alert were not produced [Redacted]

Situational Awareness

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Commented [KB25]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The information related to this variable is also used for the development of risk analyses, which constitute a specific form of internal decision-making processes based on the intelligence derived from previous and presently ongoing activities and have a bearing on the conduct of current and future operations. Being an important base for determining the strategic orientation of the Agency, the possibility to conduct such analyses without interference is crucial for Frontex to effectively exercise its mandate. Consequently, releasing this information would enable third parties to gain insights into this decision making process and, with ascertainable likelihood, result in depriving Frontex of the possibility to conduct such analyses wholly independently, free from any external pressure or third-party influence. In sum, releasing this information would seriously undermine Frontex internal decision making-processes. As no overriding public interest that is objective and general in nature and not indistinguishable from individual or private interests for the release of this information is ascertainable in the present case, information pertaining to this variable cannot be released based on Article 4(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] The [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Development

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Commented [KB26]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

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FACT SHEETS - STATISTICS

1. Time schedule

Planning meeting with Host MS	23/07/2019
Operational briefing for the participants	[REDACTED] each deployment
Implementation of the joint operation	14/08/2019 - 29/01/2020
Evaluation meeting (All-in-one)	27/11/2019

Commented [KB27]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

2. Participation

2.1. Participating MS resources

Participating MS	Human resources	Number of officers	Total man-days
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1	1
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1	1
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1	1
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1	1
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1	1
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1	1
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1	1

Commented [KB28]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

2.2. Frontex owned / leased / co-owned technical equipment

Technical equipment	No TE / Asset-days	
[REDACTED]	1	1

In addition [REDACTED] the Agency delivered also [REDACTED] to the area, as listed below:

Light Technical equipment	No TE / Asset-days	
[REDACTED]	1	1

Commented [KB29]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the technical equipment deployed in the operational area by Frontex and Member States. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the exact type and capabilities of the equipment and would enable third parties, e.g. by combining this information with other sources, to draw conclusions regarding usual positions and movement patterns. This would open way for abuse, as numbers and types of equipment used in previous operations are indicative of similar numbers and types for succeeding years. Releasing such information would thus benefit criminal networks, enabling them to change their modus operandi and, consequently, result in hampering the course of ongoing and future operations of a similar nature. This would ultimately obstruct the purpose of such operations: to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of information regarding the technical equipment deployed would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

3. Financial information

Focal Point concept and JO Focal Points Sea Cyprus 2019 - budget		
Approved/Estimated on	Source of data	Amount
Approved on 26 September 2019	Activity Initiation and Financial Commitment for Focal Points concept	5,727,827.53 €
Estimated on 20 February 2020	JO Focal Points Sea Cyprus 2019 Estimated Operational Budget	162,832.00 €

* The amounts are reflecting the state of financial settlements with MS/SAC and Third Countries on 20 February 2020

4. Statistics

Figure 1: Monthly number of migrant arrivals to Cyprus (by sea or through the Green Line) in 2019 compared to 2018. (Figures based on FRAN data).



Figure 2: Total number of arrivals in Cyprus in 2019 compared to 2018. Main nationalities.

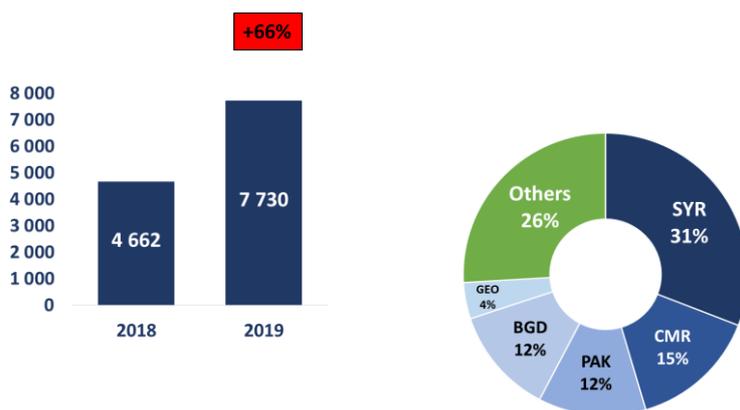


Figure 3: Initial insertion of incidents into JORA

The reporting performance shown below measures the timely transmission of operational data to Frontex: the time from the occurrence of an incident until insertion into JORA, validation on national level and acceptance by FSC. The timeframe given is 24 hours (1 day). During the operational phase 238 incidents were reported in JORA.

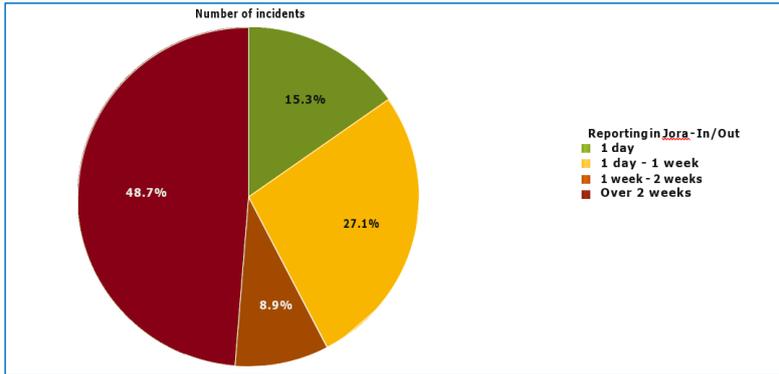


Figure 4: Intermediate validation on national level (LCC/ICC)

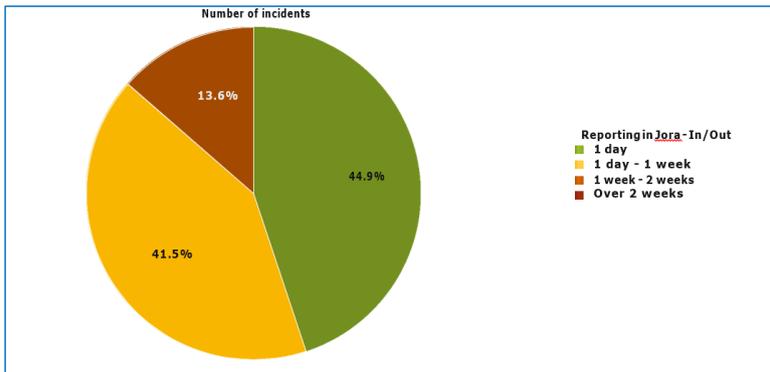


Figure 5: Summary of the entire reporting sequence, from insertion until FSC validation

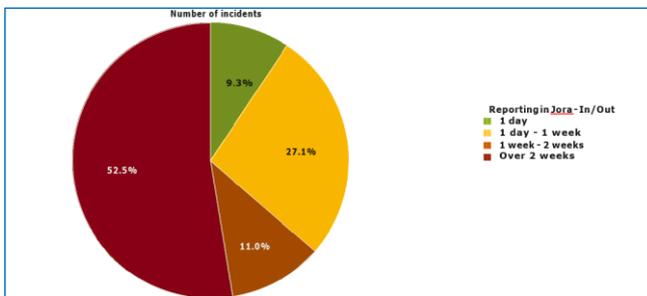


Figure 6: Summary of documents examined per month

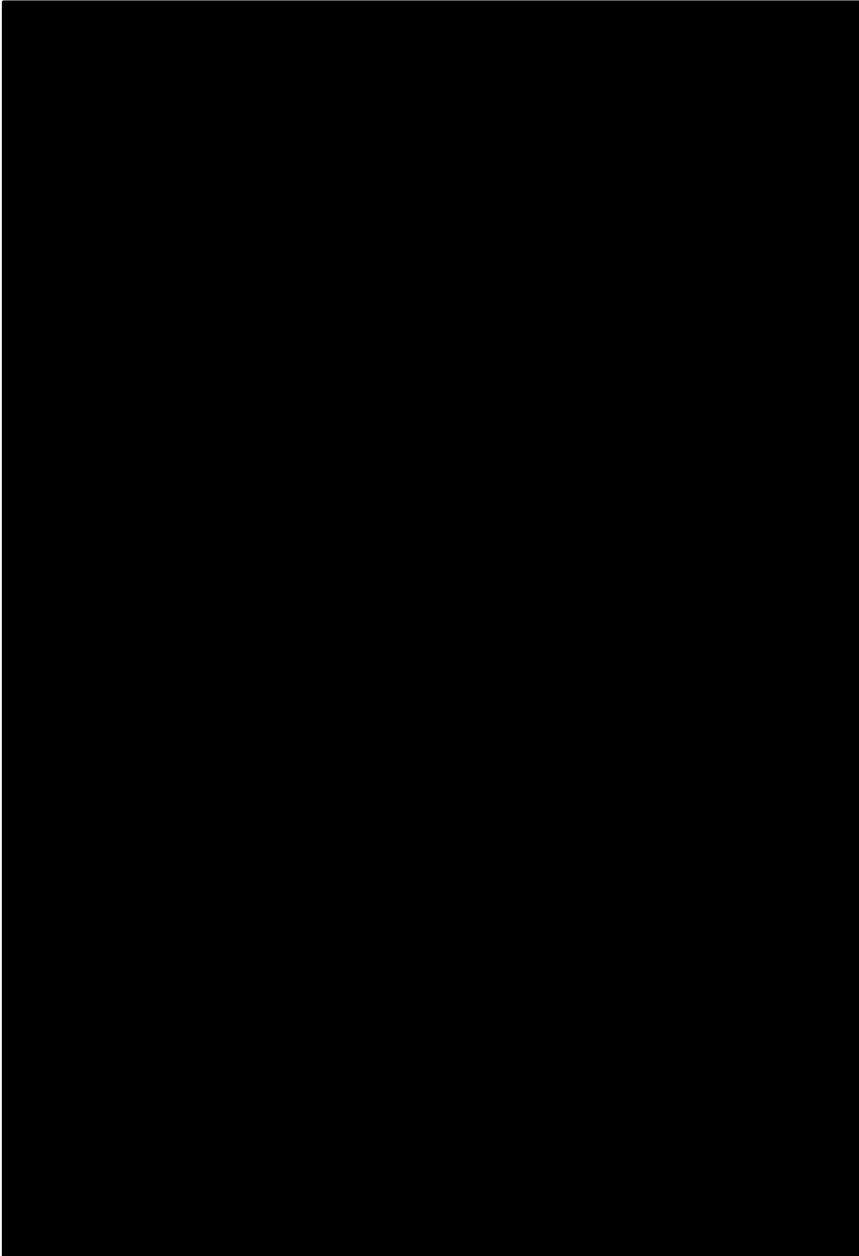


Figure 7: Documents detected with fraud

Commented [KB30]: The information related to this variable is also used for the development of risk analyses, which constitute a specific form of internal decision-making processes based on the intelligence derived from previous and presently ongoing activities and have a bearing on the conduct of current and future operations. Being an important base for determining the strategic orientation of the Agency, the possibility to conduct such analyses without interference is crucial for Frontex to effectively exercise its mandate. Consequently, releasing this information would enable third parties to gain insights into this decision making process and, with ascertainable likelihood, result in depriving Frontex of the possibility to conduct such analyses wholly independently, free from any external pressure or third-party influence. In sum, releasing this information would seriously undermine Frontex internal decision making-processes. As no overriding public interest that is objective and general in nature and not indistinguishable from individual or private interests for the release of this information is ascertainable in the present case, information pertaining to this variable cannot be released based on Article 4(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

4. List of acronyms

Abbreviation	Spelling
A	
ALDO	Advanced-Level Document Officer
C	
D	
DSR	Daily Situation Report
E	
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EU	European Union
F	
FCO	Frontex Coordinating Officer
FER	Frontex Evaluation Report
FIMO	Frontex Information Management Officer
FLO	Frontex Liaison Officer
FOSS	Frontex-One-Stop-Shop
FP	Focal Point
FSC	Frontex Situation Centre
FRO	Fundamental Rights Officer
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
H	
HR	Human resources
I	
IFC	Information Fusion Centre
J	
JO	Joint Operation
M	
MS	Member State
N	
NFPOC	National Frontex Point of Contact
O	
OA	Operational Analyst
OIS	Operational Implementation Sector
OM	Operational Manager
OPES	Operational Planning and Evaluation Sector
Opera	Operational Resources Management System
OPLAN	Operational Plan
OT	Operational Team
P	
PeDRA	Personal Data for Risk Analysis
R	
RAU	Risk Analysis Unit
S	
SAC	Schengen Associated Countries
SAP	Specific Activity Plan
SI	Serious Incident
SIR	Serious Incident Reporting
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
T	
TE	Technical Equipment
TL	Team Leader
TM	Team Members
sTM	Teams Members seconded to the Agency
W	
WG	Working Group

II. Evaluation of Specific Activity

Multipurpose Maritime Operation in the Black Sea

JO FOCAL POINTS 2019 SEA

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1. Background information

The Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Sea (JO) Sea is the platform for the implementation of specific and independent activities covered by the mandate of European Border and Coast Guard Regulation in specific and distinct maritime areas (Focal Points).

The Multipurpose Maritime Operation in the Black Sea (MMO Black Sea 2019) was implemented under the Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Sea.

1.1. Brief risk assessment

The efficient cooperation between the countries in the Black Sea, in particular between Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey allows for cooperation and information sharing between the participating countries.

Although the cooperation at operational level related to maritime safety and security issues is effective in the Black Sea, the political situation turns to be precarious. [REDACTED]

Migratory flows in the Black Sea

Since 2018, the Western and Eastern Mediterranean routes have been the most important entry points for migrants to the EU. In the Eastern Mediterranean, the sea route from Turkey to the Greek Islands is the most active route with over 33 000 irregular migrants in 2018, and almost 6 000 in the first quarter of 2019, whereas the Black Sea route remains inactive.

According to Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) data, the Black Sea route was inactive in 2018 and 2019. In 2017, several incidents related to illegal immigration were reported in the Black Sea by Romanian and Turkish authorities. Romanian authorities reported six boats involving 537 irregular migrants, most of them nationals from Iraq (495), and to a lesser extent from Iran (35) and Pakistan (3). [REDACTED]

Despite low overall figures in the Black Sea, this route should be taken into consideration with regards migratory flows from Turkey, [REDACTED]

As occurred in previous years, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The current Eurosur Impact Level Assessment (March 2019) assessed the sea border sections in Bulgaria and Romania as low level.

Cross-Border Crime & Unlawful Activities

Smuggling of drugs

Concerning the maritime cross-border crimes in Bulgaria and Romania, the smuggling of drugs is one of the main activities of concern. The level of risk related to smuggling of drugs in the current operational area is assessed as low/moderate, in particular the smuggling of cocaine and heroin. To a lesser extent, the precursors are also of interest as several cases of precursors arriving from China were reported.

Although, [REDACTED]

Commented [KB31]: The information related to this variable is also used for the development of risk analyses, which constitute a specific form of internal decision-making processes based on the intelligence derived from previous and presently ongoing activities and have a bearing on the conduct of current and future operations. Being an important base for determining the strategic orientation of the Agency, the possibility to conduct such analyses without interference is crucial for Frontex to effectively exercise its mandate. Consequently, releasing this information would enable third parties to gain insights into this decision making process and, with ascertainable likelihood, result in depriving Frontex of the possibility to conduct such analyses wholly independently, free from any external pressure or third-party influence. In sum, releasing this information would seriously undermine Frontex internal decision-making processes. As no overriding public interest that is objective and general in nature and not indistinguishable from individual or private interests for the release of this information is ascertainable in the present case, information pertaining to this variable cannot be released based on Article 4(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of criminal networks involved in the smuggling and migrants and trafficking in human beings. Its disclosure would jeopardize the work of law enforcement officials and pose a hazard to the course of ongoing and future operations aimed at curtailing the activities of such networks, ultimately obstructing their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime as well as to prevent unauthorized border crossings. The disclosure would thus undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down in Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 .

In March and April 2019, dozens of packages of cocaine were detected floating in the Black Sea. The amount of cocaine seized until April is estimated over 1.5 tons. [REDACTED]

In the last two years, some global assessments issued by international organizations that monitor the world drug markets have pointed out the increase in the drug trafficking across the Black Sea. [REDACTED]

According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) - European Drug Report 2018, the largest quantities of drug seized were reported in: Bulgaria (heroin and amphetamines), and Romania (cocaine).

Despite low overall figures in the amount of drug seized in Bulgaria and Romania in 2018, it is worth mentioning that in previous years some cargo vessels travelling from South-America were reported. For example, in 2016 a cargo of bananas from Colombia with over 2.5 tons of cocaine was seized in the port of Constanta.

The smuggling of cocaine and heroin has also been reported by other countries in the Black Sea Region. According to open sources, in March 2019, Ukrainian authorities reported in the port of Odessa, the interception of a banana shipment from South America and the seizure of 257 Kg of cocaine.

Smuggling of other types of illicit goods

Other types of illicit goods smuggled reported in the Black Sea region are mainly: cigarettes, tobacco, stolen vehicles (full car) and counterfeit objects, In addition, there are many cases of undeclared goods. The number of detections decreased in 2018 compared to previous year. [REDACTED]

Concerning cigarette smuggling, in 2018, the number of cases at the Romanian sea borders was higher than the previous years, whereas the number of pieces seized (over 2.6 million pieces) was lower than in 2017 (almost 20 million pieces). [REDACTED]

In 2018, the number of cigarettes seized in Bulgaria sea borders was over 2 million pieces, which represents a decrease compared to previous year.

The neighboring countries to the Black Sea with high risk related to smuggling of cigarettes are Greece, Ukraine, Turkey and Georgia.

Unlawful activities

The continuous increase in the maritime traffic of cargo ships increases the environmental pollution in this region. The oil pollution threatens the Black Sea coastal ecosystems and impacts on the fishing sector. In this regard it is worth mentioning the shipping jam reported in February 2019 in the Bosphorus Strait. The waiting time to cross the Strait has increased from 5-6 days up to 16 days, which generates long queues of merchant vessels.

A special threat comes from the large number of petrol tankers crossing the Black Sea, mostly carrying Russian oil. The Black Sea is one of the world's busiest waterways, with an estimated annual number of 55 000 ships (e.g. almost 6 000 oil tankers transiting through the Bosphorus Strait on yearly basis).

In addition to the regular merchant shipping, environmental crimes are reported in the region, such as the dumping of solid waste, waste oil, trash and grey water, and oil spills. Concerning the threat of oil spilling in the Black Sea, it is worth mentioning some of the latest incidents occurred in the eastern part of this sea basin.

In January 2019, two oil tankers went on fire while bunkering outside Russian territorial waters (see figure 3). These two tankers were burning for more than a month, and as a result of the fatal accident several fatalities were reported. According to open sources, the Russian authorities initiated an administrative violation case.

Commented [KB32]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of criminal networks involved in the smuggling and migrants and trafficking in human beings. Its disclosure would jeopardize the work of law enforcement officials and pose a hazard to the course of ongoing and future operations aimed at curtailing the activities of such networks, ultimately obstructing their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime as well as to prevent unauthorized border crossings. The disclosure would thus undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down in Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 .

In October 2018, a vessel loaded with scrap metal sank in the Black Sea (~50 miles from the Bulgarian coast), most probably due to a cargo displacement. According to open sources, the Bulgarian authorities took seawater sample to investigate if there is a case of oil spilling after the accident.

Blacklisted flag vessels

The blacklisted flag vessels (BLV) not only pose safety concerns due to the identified safety deficiencies but also pose security concerns. BLVs have been involved in 22.3% of the maritime illicit activities detected worldwide over the past four years, although they comprise only 1.1% of the world's fleet population. Thus, BLVs can have a major impact on EU security through their links to countries and their ports where they make port calls. The number of port calls as well as their geographical distribution is therefore relevant when describing these vessels and in combination with other risk indicators.

As a result of studying the pattern of port calls made by BLVs in Europe in 2018 (January to December), it was found that 844 BLVs (mostly cargo vessels) made at least one port call in Europe.

By breaking the list of port calls down further, it can be seen that the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea were more exposed to cargo BLVs' visits, being Romania the first in all Europe with over 1 600 port calls, while Bulgaria was the tenth with 700 (see figure 4).

However, not even the ports of the same country were affected homogeneously. For instance, three seaports in Romania registered over 90% of the ports calls made by BLVs in 2018: Constanta (57%), Sulina (17%), and Navodari (16%), while other Romanian ports were less exposed, such as Braila and Tulcea. In Bulgaria the main three seaports were Varna, Burgas and Balchic.

1.2. Specific Operational aim

The specific operational aim was the implementation of coordinated multiagency multipurpose maritime operational activities (MMO) at the EU external sea borders focused on combating illegal immigration, illegal fishing activities and marine pollution by providing relevant coast guard functions related services to Bulgarian and Romanian Border Police as well as Eurosur Fusion Services (EFS) and Maritime Analysis Tools in order to support risk and intelligence analysis and to provide and enhanced situation awareness.

The MMO Black Sea 2019 was focused on the implementation of the following Coast Guard functions:

- Border surveillance at sea, including support to Search and Rescue (SAR);
- Fisheries control by surveillance and joint checks following European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) Black Sea Joint Deployment Plan (JDP);
- Environmental protection.

1.3. Period of implementation and operational areas

1.3.1. Period of implementation

Commencement	7 May 2019	12:00 (local time)
Termination	15 June 2019	24:00 (local time)

1.3.2. Operational areas

Operational activities were conducted in Romania's and Bulgaria's territorial sea, contiguous zones and Economic Exclusive Zones) with the following coordinates:

[REDACTED]

- **Technical and operational assistance in SAR** - As a part of joint maritime operations concept assist MS respective authorities in conducting search and rescue operations in order to render assistance to persons found in distress at sea, whenever and wherever so required.

Achieved:

The operational coordination structures were created in accordance with the Operational Plan (OPLAN) and can be considered as generally effective, however, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Two SAR incidents occurred inside operational area with 6 persons rescued (1 BGR fishing boat and 1 UK sailing yacht). SAR cases were not linked to illegal immigration.

Deployed assets were always ready to assist during SAR incidents when required by the competent Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC).

- **Support MS on carrying out coast guard functions** - Establish and enhance cooperation with European Fishery Control Agency (EFCA) and European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and with the national authorities carrying out coast guard functions responsible for maritime safety, security, search and rescue, fisheries control, customs control, general law enforcement and environmental protection, to increase maritime situational awareness and to support coherent and cost-efficient action; Provide, in cooperation with EFCA and EMSA, services, information, equipment and training; To produce common risk analysis involving EFCA, EMSA and Frontex for emerging risks at maritime domain.

Partly Achieved:

Cooperation was established between Frontex EMSA and EFCA (nomination of dedicated Liaison Officers) for the practical implementation of coast guard functions at sea.

Total inspections of fishing vessels/boats: 121; Joint patrols with EFCA community (BGR and ROU national fisheries control authorities): 14; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

EFCA attended as observer to the SAR workshop in ROU and one boat from BGR National fisheries control authority was involved in the SAR workshop in BGR. EMSA community was involved for the both SAR workshops following the invitation from BGR and ROU border police, not from EMSA.

The cooperation between Frontex and EMSA was implemented within the use of Eurosur Fusion Services (EFS) to improve the common maritime situational picture.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- **Enhance operational cooperation** - High level of MS participation in the operational activities; Enhanced cooperation between the national authorities of the host MS as well as on an international

Commented [KB35]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the technical equipment deployed in the operational area by Frontex and Member States. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the exact type and capabilities of the equipment and would enable third parties, e.g. by combining this information with other sources, to draw conclusions regarding usual positions and movement patterns. This would open way for abuse, as numbers and types of equipment used in previous operations are indicative of similar numbers and types for succeeding years. Releasing such information would thus benefit criminal networks, enabling them to change their modus operandi and, consequently, result in hampering the course of ongoing and future operations of a similar nature. This would ultimately obstruct the purpose of such operations: to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of information regarding the technical equipment deployed would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 .

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The non-disclosed part contains detailed information related to reporting tools and methods used by law enforcement officials to conduct border control tasks and counter criminal activities. Its disclosure would jeopardize the implementation of ongoing and future operations, and thus facilitate irregular migration and trafficking in human beings as the effectiveness of law enforcement measures would be significantly reduced. As disclosing this information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security, this part is not disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 .

level; Enhanced cooperation with other Union agencies and bodies or international organisations in the frame of MMO; Seeking an active involvement of Third Countries in the MMO Black Sea 2019.

Partly Achieved

A high level of participation was achieved, according to MMO Black Sea concept, involving EFCA, EMSA and six BGR and ROU national authorities dealing with Coast Guard Functions (CGFs).

Cooperation between the main national authorities of the host MSs involved in the MMO Black Sea (Bulgaria: Border Police, Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquacultures (EAFA), Maritime Administration; Romania: Border Police/Coast Guard, National Agency for Fishing and Aquaculture (NAFA), Romanian Naval Authority border police, ROU Coast Guard, Guardia Civil and National Police) can be considered as fruitful.

UNHCR Representation in ROU attended as observer during the implementation of the SAR workshop in ROU.

Even that BGR and ROU agreed to receive [REDACTED]

- **Enhance collection and exchange of information, including personal data** - Collection of operational information in a timely manner from all operational actors involved, in particular information on incidents reported in JORA; Processing of personal data relating to individuals suspected of involvement in the migrants' smuggling, traffic of human beings (THB), terrorism or other cross-border crimes at the EU level; Distribution of operational information to all operational actors through the respective authorized channels; Use of the "Guidelines for JORA Incident Template" giving detailed information on definitions and establishing a sets of priorities when selecting the appropriate attributes.

Partly Achieved

In relation to the JORA template, the reporting of incidents was generally done according to the JORA Guidelines and in a timely manner [REDACTED]

According to the OPLAN [REDACTED]

No personal data collected during the MMO Black Sea; relevant personal data [REDACTED] has been further processed by the national authorities.

- **Identify possible risks and threats** - Operational analytical products will be shared with relevant stakeholders to maintain and improve situational awareness and support operational planning and implementation.

Achieved

[REDACTED] the analytical information was disseminated among BGR and ROU border police/coast guard, according to the provisions of the Operational Plan.

- **Establish and exchange the best practices** - Delivering and supporting workshops, meetings, other networking events to participants; Delivering and supporting operational briefings to all participants of the MMO including information on the fundamental rights and access to international protection; Building on MS capacity by implementing activities related with administrative solutions, standardization, fleet management and operational technologies as well as technical solutions/best practices linked with EUROSUR and/or EU CG Functions and other cooperation; Supporting targeted training activities.

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Achieved

Before and during the implementation period, Frontex organised [redacted] operational briefings for all participants to the MMO Black Sea, [redacted] together with local authorities. At the same time, 2 JORA/EFS trainings

- ✓ 5 EFS requested: MAS, Coastal Monitoring Service, Anomaly Detection, Vessel Detection Service and Tracking Vessels of Interest
- ✓ 2 Debriefing activities
- ✓ 2 SAR workshops with participation of different national authorities dealing with CGFs and speakers from ITA, GRC and ESP

3. Link to other Frontex activities and best practices

- To facilitate the organizational arrangements related to the implementation of the MMO Black Sea, the information about the new Focal Point Sea concept, MMO concept and operational plan were available on the Frontex One Stop Shop (FOSS).
- 2 JORA/EFS training activities conducted [redacted]
- Two-day-SAR workshops were organized during the MMO under the lead of Bulgarian Border Police [redacted] and Romanian Coast Guard [redacted] with the support of Frontex Coast Guard Sector. The following resources were involved in:
 - SAR workshop in Bulgaria: [redacted]
 - SAR workshop in Romania: [redacted]
- During the SAR workshops (for the rescue part) and during the operational activities, boarding operations (125) were conducted according to Boarding in Frontex coordinated Joint maritime operations: Best Practices and Guidelines providing up to date technical elements for the Frontex Boarding Handbook.

4. Assessment of joint operational activities

4.1. Supporting Response

4.1.1. Operational concept

The operational concept of the MMO Black Sea consisted especially in offering support to Bulgaria and Romania in carrying out coast guard functions, with priority on border surveillance at sea including support to SAR operations led by Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres, combating of illegal fisheries activities and environmental protection.

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The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 .

The surveillance assets [REDACTED] were deployed in order to achieve the earliest detections, as well as the highest rate of interceptions possible.

The patrolling area of the maritime assets took into consideration [REDACTED]

All the participating assets were coordinated by [REDACTED] according to MMO concept and the operational plan.

All the participating assets were always available to support any SAR incident in the area upon request of MRCC [REDACTED]

Support in border surveillance activities, the activated use of EFS contributed to an improved and updated situational picture in the respective areas of the EU external border. Daily and ad-hoc exchange of information between Frontex, all operational actors and external stakeholders involved was carried out.

Cooperation has been carried out in various coast guard functions among Frontex, EFCA, EMSA and 6 national authorities. In addition to border surveillance, these included: SAR, fisheries control, law enforcement and environmental protection. As a multi-purpose multi-agency operation, vessels and aircrafts deployed cooperated in the detection of possible illegal fishery activities, sea pollutions and other violations of maritime conventions which were further communicated to EFCA and EMSA, according to the provisions of the specific activity plan.

4.1.2. Operational results

During the implementation period of the MMO Black Sea, 4 incidents were reported in the operational area, as follows:

- Detection related to migration: 0.
- Illegal fishing activities: 1 incident with a TUR fishing vessels (crew: 8 TUR) detected [REDACTED]
- SAR: 2 operations for a BGR fishing boat having 2 people on board (POB) and an UK sailing yacht with 4 POB.
- Oil pollution: 1 possible oil pollution detected by [REDACTED]
- Navigation safety: floating buoy and navigational warning by BGR maritime administration for the [REDACTED] partly (24 hours) sunk.

Joint patrolling with EFCA community performed by the maritime assets: 14.

Total inspections of fishing vessels/boats: 121.

Total boarding operations performed by BGR and ROU border police/coast guard: 125.

During the MAS activities 2 (two) Fishing Vessel Sighting Forms concerning 2 (two) fishing vessels were submitted to EFCA.

Because before the starting of the operation, in the operational area was discovered approximately 2 tons of cocaine, [REDACTED] support was requested by the BGR and ROU authorities; [REDACTED]

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During the implementation period FSC provided to BGR/ROU National Coordination Centres (NCC) and FP Sea [REDACTED]

4.1.3. Operational coordination structures

The operational coordination structures functioned in accordance with the Specific Activity Plan. [REDACTED] In accordance with the MMO on European Cooperation on Coast Guard Functions concept, [REDACTED] There were no major shortcomings identified in that regard.

Focal Point Sea were activated in:

[REDACTED]

The coordination of the TE deployed in the OA was [REDACTED] supported the border surveillance activities [REDACTED]

4.1.4. Resources deployed

During MMO Black Sea a total number of [REDACTED]

Human resources

[REDACTED]

In general the level of contribution of HR can be rated as very good [REDACTED]

The coordination between [REDACTED] was very good, during the entire implementation period.

Technical equipment

During MMO Black Sea Frontex deployed [REDACTED]

The co-financed assets were suitable for conducting Coast Guard Functions related activities, focusing on border control, SAR operations, illegal fisheries and oil pollution.

Commented [KB41]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

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The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the technical equipment deployed in the operational area by Frontex and Member States. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the exact type and capabilities of the equipment and would enable third parties, e.g. by combining this information with other sources, to draw conclusions regarding usual positions and movement patterns. This would open way for abuse, as numbers and types of equipment used in previous operations are indicative of similar numbers and types for succeeding years. Releasing such information would thus benefit criminal networks, enabling them to change their modus operandi and, consequently, result in hampering the course of ongoing and future operations of a similar nature. This would ultimately obstruct the purpose of such operations: to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of information regarding the technical equipment deployed would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The assets were [REDACTED] In all locations were deployed [REDACTED]

Some unperformed patrolling hours of the assets were typically related to the bad meteorological conditions and sea state, as well as unexpected and non-scheduled maintenance needs due to the intensive use in the operation.

In general, the level of contribution with TE to the MMO Black Sea can be rated as very good.

4.2. Situational Awareness

4.2.1. Threats and Risks, modus operandi and trends identified

According to FRAN data, in April (one month before starting the JO), Romania reported one case related to illegal border-crossing (IBC), the first case detected in the Black Sea since November 2017. In 2017, Romania reported the largest number of IBC detections (over 500) ever recorded in the Black Sea since 2009 (first FRAN data collection).

Despite low overall figures in the Black Sea, and the 'low level' of risk assessed in the 'EUROSUR Impact Level Assessments' in 2019, the threat in this route remains medium with regards to migratory flows from third countries, and especially from Turkey where a new policy on illegal migration has been recently endorsed.

In July, three months after the elections, the Turkish Minister of Interior presented the new migration strategy. The new strategy will affect around 4.9 million people, of which over 3.6 million are Syrian nationals registered as being under temporary protection in Turkey as of May 2019. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

With regards the cross-border crime and unlawful activities, most of the incidents reported during the operational period were related to illegal fishery activities. Despite the level of risk related to smuggling of drugs is assessed as low/moderate at these border sections and the maritime surveillance systems in both MSs are fully operational [REDACTED]

Concerning the maritime traffic in the area, the main maritime corridor from Bosphorus Strait to the Ukrainian ports of Odessa and Chornomorsk, accounts for most of the marine traffic in the Black Sea. This heavy traffic [REDACTED]

Due to the high volume of maritime traffic of cargo ships and the high number of ports calls recorded in Bulgaria and Romania, [REDACTED]

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Commented [KB43]: The information related to this variable is also used for the development of risk analyses, which constitute a specific form of internal decision-making processes based on the intelligence derived from previous and presently ongoing activities and have a bearing on the conduct of current and future operations. Being an important base for determining the strategic orientation of the Agency, the possibility to conduct such analyses without interference is crucial for Frontex to effectively exercise its mandate. Consequently, releasing this information would enable third parties to gain insights into this decision making process and, with ascertainable likelihood, result in depriving Frontex of the possibility to conduct such analyses wholly independently, free from any external pressure or third-party influence. In sum, releasing this information would seriously undermine Frontex internal decision making processes. As no overriding public interest that is objective and general in nature and not indistinguishable from individual or private interests for the release of this information is ascertainable in the present case, information pertaining to this variable cannot be released based on Article 4(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

Concerning Maritime

4.2.2. Information gathering and exchange

Operational reporting and information exchange

During the MMO Black Sea, constant information gathering and monitoring of the situational picture was provided using standardized reporting forms and channels as well as the execution of several surveillance services including EFS Multipurpose Aerial Surveillance (MAS) creating actionable information in real-time. Weekly reporting package was composed of various operational reports and distributed to all recipients in accordance with the Operational Plan.

provided weekly information from the operational area, in particular, outcomes of JCB meetings, performance of assets, statistics on fisheries and pollution sightings, etc.

performed in common with other national authorities.

The 'incident template' implemented within the framework of the FPS/MMO operations, requires a review in order to collect and provide information in line with the operational and surveillance activities described in the objectives of the Activity Plan of the MMO operations.

The specificity of the MMO operations, compared to other Frontex sea operations, requires the collection of data and information on incidents observed during the patrolling and surveillance activities that are not fully considered in the current incident template, which focus basically on migration incidents. For example, several fishery sightseeing reports, some of them with potential illegal fishing activities, were issued, however this information was not inserted in the "JORA Incident Template".

In addition, some assets participating in this JO were reporting in two different 'incident templates'. In order to facilitate the monitoring of the operation and its further analysis, as well as to avoid either losing information or duplication of data, the gathering of information about incidents occurred should be reported in the same template.

In accordance with the Operational Plan, the exchange of operational information through the Joint Operations Reporting Application (JORA) was carried out without problems. Frontex Situation Centre (FSC) had the responsibility to manage close to real time data processing by collecting operational information, validating incident reports and providing a prompt response on serious incidents, based on information received through JORA, operational reports and open source information.

During the operational phase of MMO Black Sea, a total of 4 JORA incidents were reported to the FSC. Out of these, 2 incidents completed initial and intermediary reporting levels and reached FSC for final validation within 24 hours from the first reporting in JORA. The remaining 2 incidents reached final JORA validation within 4 and 20 days respectively.

During the operational phase of MMO Black Sea, no Serious Incidents were reported to FSC.

FSC provided a daily vessel tracking report to BGR and ROU authorities executing Eurosur Fusion Services. Additional Meteo and Maritime Simulation Module services were made available directly within JORA.

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4.3. Development

4.3.1. Operational cooperation

Cooperation between Hosting MSs (Bulgaria and Romania)

Different activities dealing with Coast Guard Functions were implemented by Frontex in Romania (May 2017) with a [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In the same time, BGR and ROU authorities are actively cooperating within Black Sea Cooperation Forum. So, BGR and ROU are experienced and familiar with operational requirements and procedures, thus the cooperation between BGR and ROU was performed on a very good level. BGR border police and ROU border police/coast guard (national authorities in the lead of the MMO Black Sea), were strongly committed in the planning and implementation of the MMO.

The activated [REDACTED] showed an excellent commitment to carry out their tasks and responsibilities within the MMO Black Sea and reached the required flexibility in case of urgent needs. The close collaboration between the [REDACTED] and FP Sea coordinators ensured the operational cooperation and flexibility at all times.

The staff of [REDACTED] and National Frontex Point of Contacts (NFPoCs) supported in the logistic and administrative procedures both during the field visits as well as during the deployments.

Tactical cooperation between hosting MS assets was conducted [REDACTED] This facilitated the communication between regional commanding structures and the link with [REDACTED]

Cooperation between national authorities of hosting MSs (Bulgaria and Romania)

The BGR border police and ROU border police/coast guard are direct partners of Frontex and have been responsible for all border control activities within the MMO Black Sea. Cooperation between border police, fishery authorities and maritime administrations at regional and local level was very good. Maritime and aerial surveillance planning were made by border police authorities and shared with above mentioned authorities.

Cooperation with other Union agencies or international organizations

- **EFCA.** Cooperation between Frontex and EFCA was established for the practical implementation of coast guard functions at sea and according to the provision of the Specific Activity Plan. [REDACTED] EFCA community - BGR and ROU national fishery control authorities - was actively involved in the operational authorities [REDACTED] The EFCA expert (BGR Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquacultures) delivered fishery related part to the MAS crews during the operational briefing [REDACTED] In addition, BGR national fishery agency was involved with experts [REDACTED] CPB during the SAR workshop implemented in Burgas/20-21 May and EFCA attended the SAR workshop implemented in Constanta 12-13 June.
- **UNHCR** RO representative attended as observer during the SAR workshop [REDACTED] 12-13 June.
- **EMSA.** Cooperation between Frontex and EMSA was established for the practical implementation of coast guard functions at sea and according to the provision of the Specific Activity Plan and consisted by providing Copernicus services via EFS/FSC.
EMSA community - BGR maritime administration and ROU naval authority - were both involved with HR and TE [REDACTED] during the SAR workshops organised [REDACTED] (20-21 May) and [REDACTED] (12-13 June).

Commented [KB45]: The non-disclosed parts refer to details of the operational area and cannot be released. As ongoing operations tend to cover similar operational areas as the operations conducted in preceding years, disclosing details of previous operational areas would be tantamount to disclosing the current state of play. This would provide smuggling and other criminal networks with intelligence, enabling them to change their modus operandi, which would ultimately put the life of migrants in danger. Consequently, the course of ongoing and future operations of similar nature would be hampered by depriving the operations of any strategy and element of surprise, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of documents containing such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

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Cooperation with Third Countries

As agreed with BGR and ROU authorities, TC observers from TUR and UKR were invited for the implementation of the SAR workshops but only UKR attended both events (1 expert for each SAR workshop).

Frontex coordination role

The Operational Team (OT) was composed of members from CGS sector as follows: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was responsible for the overall planning and implementation of activities of the MMO Black Sea according to the Specific Activity Plan. The implementation of the MMO was monitored and supported by [REDACTED]. Additionally, [REDACTED] performed a field visit to Bulgaria and Romania to facilitate the operational coordination with the hosting MS authorities.

FP Sea [REDACTED] were crucial operational players to ensure the proper coordination of deployed resources, maintaining links with local authorities and timely reporting the ongoing operational activities.

The operational cooperation between BGR, ROU authorities and CGS OT members was excellent.

4.3.2. Operational briefing / debriefing

[REDACTED] operational briefings were provided to all participants of the MMO by Frontex (General part) and Host MS (National Briefing) officers.

[REDACTED] debriefing meetings were held in [REDACTED] at the end of the MMO. Report from participant facilitated to obtain feedback from the deployed sTMs/FP Sea Coordinators/NCOs/OLO-TE/staff of FP Sea and Master of the Vessels.

5. Implementation of Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council

5.1. Disembarkation in Third Countries

The BGR and ROU maritime assets, were authorized to disembark the persons intercepted and apprehended in the Operational Area in Bulgaria, respectively in Romania. Disembarkation in third countries was not carried out during the implementation period of the MMO.

5.2. Assessment of the general situation in TCs

The assessment of the general situation in a third country was conducted by Host MSs and made available to Frontex on 12 June by Bulgaria (assessment on TUR) and on 1st July by Romania (assessment on TUR and UKR).

5.3. Communication and cooperation channels

[REDACTED] facilitated the communication flow between different entities. In case of search and rescue, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres

Commented [KB46]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

in Varna (BGR) and Constanta (ROU) took over the coordination and, in case of need, cooperated with each other.

6. Main conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
<u>Supporting Response</u>	
Good level of contribution with resources from Host MS that enabled to achieve a notable enhancement of the border security.	[REDACTED]
Moderate level of incidents related to coast guard functions despite the closure period for fishery activities (especially Turbot) in the Black Sea.	[REDACTED]
High volume of maritime traffic of cargo ships and the high number of ports calls recorded in Bulgaria and Romania.	[REDACTED]
<u>Situational Awareness</u>	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Two different 'JORA incident templates' were observed for this JO FPS 2019 - MMO Black Sea.	[REDACTED]
The particularities of the MMO operations require the collection of data and information [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Significant criminal activities are taking place in the Black Sea (e.g. multi-ton cocaine smuggling).	[REDACTED]
<u>Developments</u>	

Commented [KB47]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The bilateral cooperation between Bulgaria and Romania facilitated the implementation of the MMO.

[REDACTED]

Operational cooperation with EFCA and EMSA, and respective communities needs to be enhanced in order to achieve stronger synergies.

[REDACTED]

Good participation of different national authorities from EU/non EU MS and EU Agencies in the operational area, especially during the SAR workshops.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

FACT SHEETS - STATISTICS

1. Time schedule

Planning meeting with Host MS	[REDACTED]
Operational briefing for the participants	In first days of each deployment
Implementation of the Activity	07/05 - 15/06/2019
Evaluation meeting (All-in-one)	27/11/2019

Commented [KB48]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

2. Participation

2.1. Participating MS resources

2.1.1. Human resources

Participating MS	Human resources	Number of officers	Total man-days
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1	1

Commented [KB49]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

2.2. Frontex owned / leased / co-owned technical equipment

Technical equipment	No TE / Asset-days	Patrolling hours
[REDACTED]	1	[REDACTED]

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2.3. Host MS Resources

2.3.1. Human resources

Host MS	Human resources	Number of officers	Total man-days
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	1	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	1	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	1	[REDACTED]

Host MS	Human resources	Number of officers	Total man-days
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	1	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	1	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	1	[REDACTED]

2.3.2. Technical Equipment

Host MS	Technical equipment	No TE / Asset-days		Patrolling hours
██████	██████	█	█	██████
██████	██████	█	█	██████

Host MS	Technical equipment	No TE / Asset-days		Patrolling hours
██████	██████	█	█	██████
██████	██████	█	█	██████
██████	██████	█	█	██████

2.4. Third Country Observers

Participating TC	Location of deployment	Human resources	Deployment dates
██████	██████████	█	████████████████████
██████	██████████	█	████████████████████

3. Financial information

MMO Black Sea 2019 - budget per MS participating	
MS	Amount
Romania	€ 71,474.87
Bulgaria	€ 122,315.00
TOTAL	€ 193,789,87

Commented [KB50]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the technical equipment deployed in the operational area by Frontex and Member States. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the exact type and capabilities of the equipment and would enable third parties, e.g. by combining this information with other sources, to draw conclusions regarding usual positions and movement patterns. This would open way for abuse, as numbers and types of equipment used in previous operations are indicative of similar numbers and types for succeeding years. Releasing such information would thus benefit criminal networks, enabling them to change their modus operandi and, consequently, result in hampering the course of ongoing and future operations of a similar nature. This would ultimately obstruct the purpose of such operations: to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of information regarding the technical equipment deployed would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

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4. List of acronyms

Abbreviation	Spelling
B	
BGR	Bulgaria
BLV	Blacklisted Flag Vessels
C	
CG	Coast Guard
CGF	Coast Guard Functions
CPB	Coastal Patrol Boats
CPV	Coastal Patrol Vessels
E	
EAFA	Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquacultures
ECGFO	European Coast Guard Functions Officer
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
EFS	Eurosur Fusion Services
EGY	Egypt
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
EMT	European Monitoring Team
ESP	Spain
EU	European Union
EUROSUR	European Border Surveillance System
F	
FCO	Frontex Coordinating Officer
FER	Frontex Evaluation Report
FIR	Flight Information Region
FLO	Frontex Liaison Officer
FOC	Frontex Coordinating Officer
FOSS	Frontex-One-Stop-Shop
FP	Focal Point
FSC	Frontex Situation Centre
FRAN	Frontex Risk Analysis Network
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
FWA	Fixed Wing Aircraft
FV	Fishing Vessel
G	
GEO	Georgia
GRC	Greece
H	
HR	Human resources
I	
IBC	Illegal Border-Crossing
IFC	Information Fusion Centre
ICC	International Coordination Centre
ITA	Italy
J	
JCB	Joint Coordination Board
JDP	Joint Deployment Plan
JO	Joint Operation
JORA	Joint Operations Reporting Application
M	
MAS	Multipurpose Aerial Surveillance
MIC-RAN	Maritime Intelligence Community & Risk Analysis Network
MMO	Multipurpose Maritime Operation
MRCC	Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
MS	Member State
N	
NAFA	National Agency for Fishing and Aquaculture
NCC	National Coordination Centre

NCO	National Coordinating Officer
NFPOC	National Frontex Point of Contact
O	
OA	Operational Area
OLO-TE	Operational Liaison Officers for Technical Equipment
OPLAN	Operational Plan
OPV	Offshore Patrol Vessels
OT	Operational Team
P	
POB	People on Board
R	
RAU	Risk Analysis Unit
RCC	Regional Coordination Centre
ROU	Romania
RPAS	Remotely Piloted Air System
S	
SAP	Specific Activity Plan
SAR	Search and Rescue
SBGS	State Border Guard Service
T	
TC	Third Country
TE	Technical Equipment
THB	Traffic of Human Beings
TM	Team Members
sTM	Teams Members seconded to the Agency
TUR	Turkey
V	
Vol	Vessel of Interest
W	
U	
UK	United Kingdom
UKR	Ukraine
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

III. Evaluation of Specific Activity

Prevention and detection of
cross-border crime activities in
the Atlantic Ocean (Azores)

JO FOCAL POINTS 2019 SEA

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1. Background information

The Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Sea (JO) Sea is the platform for the implementation of specific and independent activities covered by the mandate of European Border and Coast Guard Regulation in specific and distinct maritime areas (Focal Points).

The cross-border crime operation in the Atlantic (Azores) was implemented under the Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Sea.

1.1. Brief risk assessment

Frontex is developing operations related to prevention and detection of cross-border crime activities in the Atlantic Ocean as from 2019. The experience gained in [REDACTED] both in provision to the expansion of cross-border crime activities related to drugs trafficking, contributed to develop the action in the Atlantic face of EU external borders.

This operation reinforces the implementation [REDACTED]

1.2. Operational aim

The specific operational aim of the Activity was to provide increased technical and operational assistance in cross-border crime operations in the framework of EMPACT drugs priority by implementing coordinated operational activities in Azores Islands, due to the strategic location in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

The operational aim has been implemented in full compliance with the relevant EU and international law, guaranteeing the protection of 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.

1.3. Period of implementation and operational areas

1.3.1. Period of implementation

Commencement	21 May 2019	12:00 (local time)
Termination	07 June 2019	12:00 (local time)

1.3.2. Operational areas

During the Activity, [REDACTED]

1.4. Participants

The Activity was hosted by Portugal.

Commented [KB51]: Information cannot be released as it refers to details crucial for situational awareness at the external borders of the European Union which is used by Frontex to conduct its operational activities and to develop risk analyses. The disclosure of this information would hamper the effectiveness of Frontex operations and jeopardise the efforts carried out by the European Union and Member States to curtail criminal activities at the external borders. It would thus benefit criminal networks especially those involved in people smuggling and trafficking in human beings, which would put the life of migrants in danger. Hence, the disclosure of the information pertaining to this variable would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and has to be refused based on Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

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1.5. Financial information

The budget for the Activity was initially planned at the level of € 152,444.00. After adjustments, the estimated operational budget amounted to € 114,685.

2. Achievement of objectives

- **Enhance border security** - Contribute to preventing and detecting serious crime with a cross-border dimension; Provide technical and operational assistance at the external borders in the fight against organised cross-border crime and terrorism; Targeting high risk pleasure crafts/crew members in the Atlantic.

Achieved

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] were tasked to perform [REDACTED] they have supported national authorities and contributed to identify and detect possible threats.

[REDACTED]

- **Enhance operational cooperation** - Enhanced cooperation between the national authorities of the host Member State as well as on an international level.

Achieved

Focal Point Sea is the platform with which Frontex has participated in EMPACT operation, contributing to achieve wider goals.

The inter-agency cooperation between Portugal, Frontex, MAOC-N and Europol, was active during the mission.

3. Link to other Frontex activities and best practices

[REDACTED] was available to support operations from [REDACTED] by using Frontex' services and resources. [REDACTED] is regularly used to provide technical and operational assistance [REDACTED]

4. Assessment of joint operational activities

4.1. Supporting Response

4.1.1. Operational concept

Focal point was activated [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Host Member State was responsible for all operational activities related to that location.

Commented [KB53]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the technical equipment deployed in the operational area by Frontex and Member States. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the exact type and capabilities of the equipment and would enable third parties, e.g. by combining this information with other sources, to draw conclusions regarding usual positions and movement patterns. This would open way for abuse, as numbers and types of equipment used in previous operations are indicative of similar numbers and types for succeeding years. Releasing such information would thus benefit criminal networks, enabling them to change their modus operandi and, consequently, result in hampering the course of ongoing and future operations of a similar nature. This would ultimately obstruct the purpose of such operations: to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of information regarding the technical equipment deployed would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

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4.1.2. Operational results

[REDACTED]

4.1.3. Operational coordination structures

The coordination structure was [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

4.1.4. Resources deployed

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] as instructed by
national authorities.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

4.2. Situational Awareness

4.2.1. Threats and Risks, modus operandi and trends identified

In line with the need to reinforce the EU external borders and Frontex's commitment with EU Policy Cycle/EMPACT, Frontex is supporting Member States in prevention and detection of cross-border crimes at external borders, including drugs trafficking, as one of the emerging threats in EU.

4.2.2. Information gathering and exchange

Taking into account that Focal Point Sea Azores [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

4.3. Development

4.3.1. Operational cooperation

The cooperation between participants in Focal Point Sea raised a very good level, good synergies and smooth and proactive participation between the actors involved in this small operation.

4.3.2. Operational briefing / debriefing

[REDACTED] received the Operational Briefing in each rotation. The last implementation day, a final Debriefing took place with all participants and Portuguese authorities presented the outcomes of the operation.

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5. Main conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
<u>Supporting Response</u>	
<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] This specific operation in which Frontex provided practical contribution [REDACTED] can be evaluated as positive and will support to the developing and implementation of future operations in the Atlantic.</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="710 918 1054 1008">○ [REDACTED]
<u>Situational Awareness</u>	
<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="710 1321 1054 1377">○ [REDACTED]
<p>[REDACTED]</p>	

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FACT SHEETS - STATISTICS

1. Time schedule

Planning meeting with Host MS	██████████
Operational briefing for the participants	██
Implementation of the Activity	21/05 - 07/06/2019
Evaluation meeting (All-in-one)	27/11/2019

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2. Participation

2.1. Participating MS resources

2.1.1. Human resources

Participating MS	Human resources	Number of officers	Total man-days
██████████	██	█	█

Commented [KB57]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

2.2. Host MS Resources

2.2.1. Technical Equipment

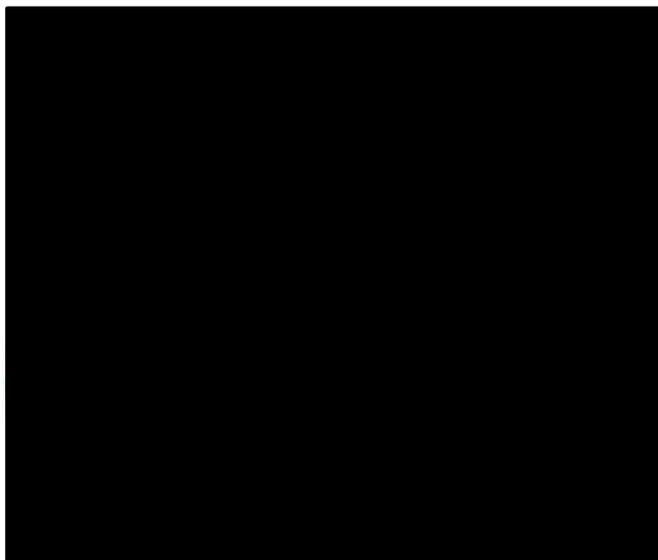
Host MS	Technical equipment	No TE / Asset-days	Patrolling hours
██████████	██	█	█

Commented [KB58]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the technical equipment deployed in the operational area by Frontex and Member States. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the exact type and capabilities of the equipment and would enable third parties, e.g. by combining this information with other sources, to draw conclusions regarding usual positions and movement patterns. This would open way for abuse, as numbers and types of equipment used in previous operations are indicative of similar numbers and types for succeeding years. Releasing such information would thus benefit criminal networks, enabling them to change their modus operandi and, consequently, result in hampering the course of ongoing and future operations of a similar nature. This would ultimately obstruct the purpose of such operations: to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of information regarding the technical equipment deployed would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

3. Financial information

Focal Points Concept and JO Focal Points Sea 2019 Azores - budget		
Approved/Estimated on	Changes	Amount
Approved on 26 September 2019 (amendment 2)	Activity Initiation and Financial Commitment for Focal Points concept	5,727,827.00 €
Approved on 19 December 2019 (amendment 5)	Activity Initiation and Financial Commitment of Law Enforcement Sector (logistics for meetings)	73,580.23 €
Estimated 18 March 2019	JO Focal Point Sea 2019 Azores (Op. Azul)	152,444.00 €
Actual costs		114,685 €

4. Maps



Commented [KB59]: The non-disclosed parts refer to details of the operational area and cannot be released. As ongoing operations tend to cover similar operational areas as the operations conducted in preceding years, disclosing details of previous operational areas would be tantamount to disclosing the current state of play. This would provide smuggling and other criminal networks with intelligence, enabling them to change their modus operandi, which would ultimately put the life of migrants in danger. Consequently, the course of ongoing and future operations of similar nature would be hampered by depriving the operations of any strategy and element of surprise, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of documents containing such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

5. List of acronyms

Abbreviation	Spelling
C	
CBCDO	Cross Border Crime Detection Officer
E	
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
EU	European Union
Europol	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
F	
FOC	Frontex Operational Coordinator
FER	Frontex Evaluation Report
FP	Focal Point
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
H	
HR	Human resources
I	
ISA-CBC	Investigation Support Activities - Cross-Border Crime (Pilot Project)
M	
MAOC-N	Maritime Analysis and Operation Centre - Narcotics
MS	Member State
S	
SAR	Search and Rescue
T	
TE	Technical Equipment

IV. Evaluation of Specific Activity

**Operational Activities Prevention
and detection of FTFs and cross-
border crime activities in the
Mediterranean Sea (Neptune II)**

JO FOCAL POINTS 2019 SEA

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1. Background information

The Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Sea (JO) Sea is the platform for the implementation of specific and independent activities covered by the mandate of European Border and Coast Guard Regulation in specific and distinct maritime areas (Focal Points).

The Operational Activities Prevention and Detection of FTFs and Cross-border Crime Activities in the Mediterranean Sea (Neptune II) was implemented under the Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Sea.

1.1. Brief risk assessment

FTFs - A complex global and omnipresent threat

The United Nations (UN) reports that the number of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs)² that have not returned to their countries of domicile or else are unaccounted for remains high. Of the over 40 000 foreigners that joined Islamist extremist groups in Syria and Iraq, the number of returnees remains lower than expected.

According to the UN, up to 30 000 of those who travelled to these conflict zones may still be alive. No other predominant conflict zone has emerged. The same reporting indicates that many fighters have melted back into the local population and have stayed there, while others lie low in certain neighbouring countries.

Many FTFs are still active in conflict zones or other less intensive areas of operations like Libya and the Sahel. Still, depending on developments, some may seek to move elsewhere or else be directed so. Irrespective of whether such travelling is sanctioned by the relevant groups' structures, the use of regular or irregular movements - or a mixture of both - is assessed to depend on a variety of chances and constraints.

Travelling terrorists - Exits, returns, relocations

Over the past three years the number of FTFs departing from Europe has decreased. In turn, FTFs have been returning home sporadically. Da'esh's loss of ground in Syria and Iraq - plus other factors - has contributed to over 30% of the ~5 500 FTFs, who left from Europe, to return. A few hundred FTFs are in detention in north-eastern Syria, Iraq and Turkey. Furthermore, about 1 400 FTFs are dead or unaccounted for.

FTFs wanting to return to their European countries of origin or domicile, after Da'esh's territorial defeat over the past year and a half, have resorted to both illegal border-crossings and document fraud.

This [REDACTED]

Reliable information from [REDACTED]

Others have reported instances where [REDACTED]

Commented [KB60]: The information related to this variable is also used for the development of risk analyses, which constitute a specific form of internal decision-making processes based on the intelligence derived from previous and presently ongoing activities and have a bearing on the conduct of current and future operations. Being an important base for determining the strategic orientation of the Agency, the possibility to conduct such analyses without interference is crucial for Frontex to effectively exercise its mandate. Consequently, releasing this information would enable third parties to gain insights into this decision making process and, with ascertainable likelihood, result in depriving Frontex of the possibility to conduct such analyses wholly independently, free from any external pressure or third-party influence. In sum, releasing this information would seriously undermine Frontex internal decision making-processes. As no overriding public interest that is objective and general in nature and not indistinguishable from individual or private interests for the release of this information is ascertainable in the present case, information pertaining to this variable cannot be released based on Article 4(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

² For a better understanding of the term, please vide UNSCR 2178 (2014) and the EU Directive on Combating Terrorism (2017/541).

The threat from travelling terrorists is not solely posed by European FTFs. Many non-European FTFs originate from neighbouring regions and countries that benefit from EU visa liberalisation agreements.

Given the dynamics of the phenomenon, Member States ought also to take cognizance of Council conclusions (10152/17) recommending security checks in case of irregular migration, adopted on 8 June 2017. Nonetheless, it is logical to deduce that certain irregular migration routes present inherent risks due to their proximity to conflict zones and other reasons. Hence, these considerations:

- Eastern Mediterranean: Proximity to active conflict zones (Syria, Iraq) and adjacent to countries with a high transiting risk and/or from where FTFs entry/exit conflict zones (Turkey).
- Central Mediterranean: Proximity to an active conflict zone (Libya) and adjacent to countries with a high transiting risk and/or from where FTFs entry/exit conflict zones (Tunisia).
- Western Mediterranean: Adjacent to countries with a high transiting risk and/or from where FTFs move to conflict zones (Morocco, Algeria).
- Western Balkans: Relatively high numbers of FTFs from the WB region and/or inherent spill over effects from the Eastern Mediterranean route.

While much of the focus on security related to travelling FTFs has been on airports and air travel, security threats may also come from the sea and via seaports. The threat to the maritime industry is of continuing concern especially from drug and firearms smugglers, human smugglers, human trafficking and currently more worrisome, the issue of the returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters. Therefore, as a follow up of the positive outcomes of the INTERPOL coordinated Operation Neptune, it has been decided to re-launch the operation under the name Operation Neptune II.

1.2. Operational aim

To provide operational assistance to Italy and France, in order to target the movement of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) from neighbouring North African countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria) during the implementation of the Interpol’s ‘Operation Neptune II’, as well as to strengthen border controls at identified key Mediterranean Sea ports that handle passenger ships (e.g. ferries, cruise ships etc.) to and from North Africa.

1.3. Period of implementation and operational areas

1.3.1. Period of implementation

The Implementation period (“activation”) of the Activity was as follows:

Commencement	24 August 2019	00:00 (local time)
Termination	8 September 2019	23:59 (local time)

1.3.2. Period of implementation

[Redacted text]

Commented [KB61]: The non-disclosed parts refer to details of the operational area and cannot be released. As ongoing operations tend to cover similar operational areas as the operations conducted in preceding years, disclosing details of previous operational areas would be tantamount to disclosing the current state of play. This would provide smuggling and other criminal networks with intelligence, enabling them to change their modus operandi, which would ultimately put the life of migrants in danger. Consequently, the course of ongoing and future operations of similar nature would be hampered by depriving the operations of any strategy and element of surprise, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of documents containing such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 .

1.4. Participants

The Activity was hosted by France and Italy.

2 Participating MS with 2 different authorities took part in the Activity, namely: Austria (Ministry of Interior/Police) and Italy (Polizia di Stato).

INTERPOL deployed

Furthermore these INTERPOL officers provided their support to the local authorities in terms of expertise and providing ready access to Interpol databases and products and services. The Frontex Team Members interacted with the INTERPOL officers in the same way.

1.5. Financial information

A budget of 8,202 EUR was allocated by Frontex for the implementation of Prevention and detection of FTFs and cross-border crime activities in the Mediterranean Sea.

2. Achievement of objectives

- **Enhance border security** - Carrying out border checks of all persons crossing the external maritime borders including means of transport and objects in their possession at Border Crossing Points enabling to intercept persons, refusing entry for third country nationals not fulfilling entry conditions; Contribute to preventing and detecting FTF and those persons potentially linked to serious crime with a cross-border dimension, such as migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and taking measures against persons, who have crossed the border illegally as well as reporting other illegal activities detected to the competent authorities.

Achieved

the officers that were deployed performed their tasks effectively

Of the incidents reported, there were 16 cases were linked to criminal offences, refusals of entry, hits in databases, and administrative/minor offences. Moreover, 15 persons suspected of being Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) were detected. (see 4.2.2 for further details)

- **Enhance operational cooperation** - High level of MS participation in the operational activities; Enhanced cooperation between the national authorities of the host MS as well as at an international level; Enhanced cooperation with other Union agencies and bodies or international organisations in the frame of JO.

Achieved

3 authorities from 2 MS took part in the JO. Italian Polizia di Stato, French National Police and Customs.

INTERPOL deployed

- **Enhance collection and exchange of information, including personal data** - Collection of operational information in a timely manner from all operational actors involved, in particular information on incidents reported in JORA; Distribution of operational information to all operational

Commented [KB62]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

actors through the respective authorized channels; Use of the “Guidelines for JORA Incident Template” giving detailed information on definitions and establishing a sets of priorities when selecting the appropriate attributes.

Partly achieved

JORA was used as the primary statistical reporting channel, followed by incident validations that were carried out in due time. Moreover, officers deployed by the Agency in this operation were sending daily reports [REDACTED].

- **Identify possible risks and threats** - Detecting and reporting important cases of document and identity fraud as well as fraud concerning stolen transportation means and parts.

Achieved

In the course of the implementation phase of this activity officers were able to [REDACTED] are being used to facilitate criminal activities and terrorism.

- **Establish and exchange best practices** - Delivering and supporting operational briefings/debriefing to all participants of the JO, including information on the fundamental rights and access to international protection.

Achieved

The Operational Briefing delivered to all participants of the JO the day before the JO started, allowed all participants to have a general overview of the operational area and procedures. Additionally, the booklet on Operationalisation of Common Risk Indicators on travelling FTFs has been provided to deployed sTMs and local officers. . The specific sessions on JORA Application and Utilities and on the Guidelines for the Incident Template provided the basic knowledge to the reporting officers on how to use the application and how to standardise the information inserted in JORA.

- **Support the protection and compliance with fundamental rights in activities encompassed by the JO FPs 2019 Sea** - Support the implementation of procedures whereby the persons in need of international protection, medical assistance, unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking in human beings, and other persons in a vulnerable situation, are referred to the competent protection mechanisms; Refer persons in a vulnerable situation to the competent national authorities for appropriate assistance via Team Leaders/Local Coordinators; Share expertise and best practices related to the protection and compliance with fundamental rights in the performance of border guard tasks; Provide information on Frontex complaint mechanism established under Article 72 EBCG Regulation and Frontex Serious Incident Reporting.

Achieved

Information on fundamental rights and access to international protection was provided to the deployed experts by Frontex officers during the operational briefings held on 23-24 August 2019 [REDACTED]. The Team Members and hosting authorities confirmed that they had understood the information and would act upon it in line with international law.

3. Link to other Frontex activities and best practices

The detection of FTF and those persons suspected of involvement of cross-border crime is embedded within Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Air, Sea and Land and JO Coordination Points 2019 Land Sea and Air and

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The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

is considered as a regular activity. This activity also provided an additional platform for the operationalisation of the Common Risk Indicators provided by Frontex Risk Analysis Unit for the identification of FTFs.

4. Assessment of joint operational activities

4.1. Supporting Response

4.1.1. Operational concept

Focal points were activated [REDACTED] in France and Italy identified as potentially relevant from the perspective of FTFs movement in this period of the year. Frontex deployed [REDACTED] who supported national authorities of the Host Member States which were responsible for all operational activities related to those locations. Deployed officers were [REDACTED]

4.1.2. Operational results

The overall operational results as conducted by Interpol in cooperation with the 3 MS and the 3 Non-EU countries delivered the following results across the whole operational area of Neptune II in which the Frontex contributed (see 4.2.2 for information provided by the Frontex deployed Team Members):

- 1,213, 577 searches in INTERPOL databases, (350000 searches in 2018)
- 31 Nominal hits (15 terrorism related) -5 nominal hits in 2018
- 134 SLTD hits (23 SLTD hits in 2018)
- [REDACTED]
- (15) Terrorism Hits

4.1.3. Operational coordination structures

The operational coordination structures were established in accordance with the Specific Activity Plan.

[REDACTED] played a key role in the daily operational cooperation, allowing operational activities to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Specific Activity Plan.

The Italian and French authorities appointed [REDACTED] responsible for leading and coordinating the daily operational activities, in order to ensure the proper implementation of Activity.

[REDACTED] was responsible of the coordination of duties and tasks performed by deployed sTMs, including advanced level document checks. Regular meetings were organised between [REDACTED] in order to provide information and updates on the latest incidents, findings, risk factors, operational developments and addressing any particular operational challenges, thus contributing to the proper implementation of the operational concept.

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The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

4.1.4. Resources deployed

Team Members were deployed to Team Members and local officers gave positive feedback in gaining knowledge from each other by sharing experiences and expertise on subjects related to maritime cross-border crime activities.

The contribution from Frontex through deployments of officers in Italy and France was highly appreciated by INTERPOL. France and Italy underlined the very good cooperation with Frontex and the high quality nature of the contribution from the deployed officers, their skills and commitment towards the detection of the FTFs.

4.2. Situational Awareness

4.2.1. Systematic database checks help track down suspects linked to terrorism

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency has supported Operation Neptune II. The sea border operation coordinated by Interpol

Building upon the Agency's involvement in the first operation in 2018, this year Frontex deployed experts in France and Italy. At the same time, Frontex provides tailored assistance to Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia in detecting suspect FTFs.

Operation Neptune II was conducted between 24 July and 8 September six participating countries, i.e. Algeria, France, Italy, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia.

Officials carried out more than 1.2 million searches against Interpol's databases for stolen and lost travel documents (SLTD), nominal data³ and stolen vehicles. These resulted in 31 active investigative leads, with 12 of these cases related to suspects linked to terrorism.

the operation resulted in a notable number of 'hits' against Interpol databases. Checking SLTD alone led to at least 130 confirmed matches, although most were linked to documents that were later used again by their rightful owners.

The number of matches against nominal data, which resulted against Interpol's databases, was also significant.

The Schengen Borders Code's (SBC) requirement to run systematic checks against the SLTD database was an essential development. However, travel documents that have been sold or given to others to be misused, i.e. document fraud, are unlikely to be reported to the authorities as stolen or lost.

When implementing the SBC, Member States and Schengen Associated Countries ought to consider the findings of this short operation, especially when applying the various derogations of the SBC, in particular Annex VI on specific check procedures for certain types of shipping.

Counter-terrorism efforts require that the international community collectively makes best use of all the systems that we have in place now. UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) emphasises this.

³ personal data and the criminal history of people subject to request for international police cooperation

Commented [KB66]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001.

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Commented [KB67]: Information cannot be released as it refers to details crucial for situational awareness at the external borders of the European Union which is used by Frontex to conduct its operational activities and to develop risk analyses. The disclosure of this information would hamper the effectiveness of Frontex operations and jeopardise the efforts carried out by the European Union and Member States to curtail criminal activities at the external borders. It would thus benefit criminal networks especially those involved in people smuggling and trafficking in human beings, which would put the life of migrants in danger. Hence, the disclosure of the information pertaining to this variable would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and has to be refused based on Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

4.2.2. Information gathering and exchange

A total of 16 JORA incidents were reported over the course of the specific activity: 14 incidents were inserted by [REDACTED] with a further two incidents reported by Reporting Unit Genoa.

The overall quality of incident reporting was good, particularly at LCC level, [REDACTED]

The daily reports containing overview of the daily activities in which deployed sTMs were involved including operational results were communicated to respective TLs and Frontex on a daily basis as stipulated in Specific Activity Plan.

Throughout the operational activity, no Serious Incidents were reported in JORA.

4.3. Development

4.3.1. Operational cooperation

Cooperation between Hosting and Participating MS

The cooperation between hosting and participating MS was performed on a very good level. The participating MS showed a strong level of commitment in supporting the implementation of the Activity and reached the required flexibility in case of urgent needs.

Cooperation with other Union agencies and bodies or international organizations

It is noted that during the implementation period, [REDACTED]

INTERPOL deployed officers to 3 EU MS (Spain, France and Italy) and 2 Non- EU countries (Morocco and Tunisia). The officers deployed by INTERPOL and Frontex were closely cooperating on a daily basis while performing border checks including relevant databases and screening passenger manifest data as well as travel documents.

The cooperation with Interpol and the hosting authorities was excellent and it is hoped that this will continue during future implementations. Neptune III planned for 2020 has been cancelled due to Covid-19 but it is expected to take place in 2021.

4.3.2. Operational briefing / debriefing

All relevant documents for the implementation of the activity (SAP, template for daily report...) were uploaded onto FOSS before the beginning of the activity. All participants of the Activity received operational briefings by Operational officers from Law Enforcement Sector along with the deployed Interpol officers on [REDACTED] During the operational briefing Frontex provided all participants with booklet on Operationalisation of CRI on travelling FTFs.

The Operational briefing was complemented by an Interpol representative by presenting their mandate and tasks within the area where the Frontex and Interpol are operating.

A full evaluation meeting for Operation Neptune II was organised by Interpol [REDACTED] which Frontex attended. A debriefing was held with the respective seconded Team Members the end of their secondment.

Commented [KB68]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information related to reporting tools and methods used by law enforcement officials to conduct border control tasks and counter criminal activities. Its disclosure would jeopardize the implementation of ongoing and future operations, and thus facilitate irregular migration and trafficking in human beings as the effectiveness of law enforcement measures would be significantly reduced. As disclosing this information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security, this part is not disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

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5. Main conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
<u>Supporting Response</u>	
The specific objectives of the operational activity were met.	[REDACTED]
The operational results were extremely good and impressive and were far beyond expectations.	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] were found to be very suitable in order to support the activities of the MS authorities involved.	[REDACTED]
The feedback with regards to the performance of the Frontex Team Members was very positive and provided great added value.	[REDACTED]
<u>Situational Awareness</u>	
This operation highlights [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
<u>Development</u>	
The operational cooperation was excellent and involved the national authorities of the two MS, as well as Interpol.	[REDACTED]
The operational briefings were conducted [REDACTED] they were conducted in conjunction with the Interpol and local briefings.	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

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FACT SHEETS - STATISTICS

1. Time schedule

Planning meeting with Host MS	██████████
Operational briefing for the participants	██████████ of each deployment
Implementation of the joint operation	24/08 - 08/09/2019
Evaluation meeting (All-in-one)	27/11/2019

Commented [KB70]: The non-disclosed part contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials performing border control and/or coast guard duties. Disclosing such information would expose the working methods applied in ongoing and future operations, thus obstructing their effectiveness in prevention of cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. In consequence, it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and thus, cannot be disclosed pursuant to Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

2. Participation

2.1. Participating MS resources

2.1.1. Human resources

Participating MS	Human resources	Number of officers	Total man-days
██████████	██████████	█	█
██████████	██████████	█	█

Commented [KB71]: The non-disclosed parts contain information regarding the number and profiles of officers deployed in the operational area. Disclosing such information would be tantamount to disclosing the weaknesses and strengths of Frontex operations and pose a risk to their effectiveness. As a result, the course of ongoing and future similar operations would be hampered, ultimately defeating their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border crime and unauthorized border crossings. Consequently, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security as laid down Article 4(1)(a) first indent of Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 .

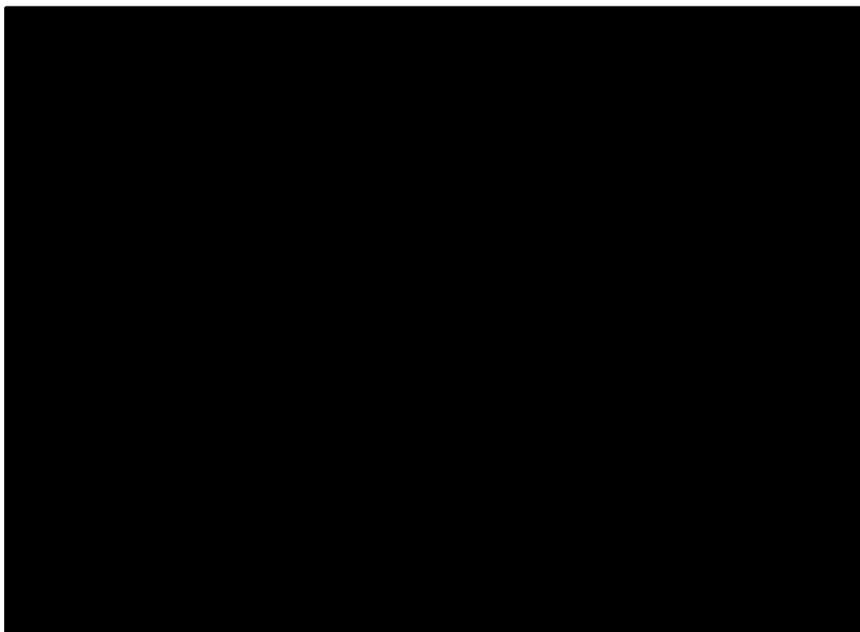
3. Financial information

Focal Point concept and Prevention and detection of FTFs and cross-border crime activities in the Mediterranean Sea - budget

Approved/Estimated on	Source of data	Amount
Approved on 26 September 2019	Activity Initiation and Financial Commitment for Focal Points concept	5,727,827.53 €
Estimated on 20 February 2020	Prevention and detection of FTFs and cross-border crime activities in the Mediterranean Sea - budget	8,202 €

* The amounts are reflecting the state of financial settlements with MS/SAC and Third Countries on 20 February 2020

4. Maps



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5. List of acronyms

Abbreviation	Spelling
A	
ALDO	Advanced-Level Document Officer
C	
CEC	Centre for Excellence for Combatting Document Fraud
CGLEU	Coast Guard and Law Enforcement Unit
CRI	Common Risk Indicators on Traveling Foreign Terrorist Fighters
D	
DSR	Daily Situation Report
E	
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EU	European Union
F	
FCO	Frontex Coordinating Officer
FDA	Frontex Document Alert
FER	Frontex Evaluation Report
FIMO	Frontex Information Management Officer
FLO	Frontex Liaison Officer
FOSS	Frontex-One-Stop-Shop
FP	Focal Point
FSC	Frontex Situation Centre
FRO	Fundamental Rights Officer
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
H	
HR	Human resources
I	

IFC	Information Fusion Centre
J	
JM	JORA Management
JO	Joint Operation
JORA	Joint Operation Reporting Application
M	
MS	Member State
N	
NFPOC	National Frontex Point of Contact
O	
OA	Operational Analyst
OIS	Operational Implementation Sector
OM	Operational Manager
OPES	Operational Planning and Evaluation Sector
Opera	Operational Resources Management System
OPLAN	Operational Plan
OT	Operational Team
P	
PeDRA	Personal Data for Risk Analysis
R	
RAU	Risk Analysis Unit
S	
SAC	Schengen Associated Countries
SAP	Specific Activity Plan
SI	Serious Incident
SIR	Serious Incident Reporting
SIS	Schengen Information System
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
T	
TL	Team Leader
sTM	Teams Members seconded to the Agency

ANNEX - Observations of Fundamental Rights Officer

Warsaw, 19.05.2020
FRO Obs. 12/2020

Joint Operations Frontex Evaluation Report JO Focal Points 2019 Sea

FRO Observations

- No reference to the implementation of Frontex complaints mechanism
- Lack of comprehensive fundamental rights related information in order to ensure assessment of compliance with fundamental rights related obligations
- No information as to how often referral procedures were activated by deployed officers related to potential victims of THB, children, persons in need of international protection and other persons in a vulnerable situation
- No gender and age disaggregated data with regard to migrants and refugees, including undocumented passengers

1. Implementation of JO FPs 2019 Sea

1.1. Frontex complaint mechanism

The Frontex complaint mechanism obliges the deployed officers to inform about the complaints mechanism, including information on the complaint form, the privacy statement and relevant leaflets on the applicable procedures to any person who expresses a wish to report an alleged fundamental rights violation against the staff involved in an activity coordinated or organized by Frontex as well as to ensure availability and using the hard copy of the complaint form in operational areas. However, the evaluation report does not make reference to the implementation of Frontex complaints mechanism (leaflets, complaint forms, posters available in the operational areas, information provision, etc.) which would allow FRO to assess its effectiveness and address potential gaps.

1.2. Data collection and fundamental rights related information

One of the specific objectives in the specific activity plans is "Delivering and supporting operational briefings/debriefing to all participants of the JO, including information on the fundamental rights and access to international protection". Except for the reference to the provision of fundamental rights related information during operational briefings in the Specific Activity Operational Activities Prevention and detection of FTFs and cross-border crime activities in the Mediterranean Sea (Neptune II), the evaluation report does not contain more data which would allow to evaluate impact on fundamental rights of the operation based on comprehensive data collection and not limited only to external and scattered information.

1.3. Identification and referral of vulnerable persons

The evaluation report does not contain any information as to how often referral procedures for potential THB victims, children, persons in need of international protection and other persons in a vulnerable situation were activated by deployed officers. It is of particular importance given that, according to the evaluation report, there were incidents related to trafficking in human beings during operational activities.

1.4. Gender considerations

FRO notes that the evaluation report does not reflect on gender composition of the Team members nor groups of refugees and migrants arriving at the EU external borders. Having in mind low numbers of women officers in other operations, FRO constantly encourages the respective entities to take and implement measures, including with regard to gender sensitive post vacancies for Frontex operational staff, in order

to address gender specific concerns as provided in the Handbook to the Operational Plan, Sea Border Joint Operations.

1.5. Assessment of general situation in non-EU countries

FRO notes that the assessments of the general situation in Turkey and Ukraine were made available to Frontex. Unfortunately FRO was not a recipient of these documents, therefore cannot refer to their content. Nevertheless FRO is aware of worrisome human rights situation in these countries from external sources.⁴ In this context, FRO welcomes the fact that disembarkation in the non-EU countries was not carried during FX operational activities (within the MMO).

2. FRO recommendations

- To conduct an assessment on the extent of the obligations related to the complaints mechanism in the evaluation report as set by EBCG Regulation and operational plan;
- To find suitable means for host Member States to collect and report on data in order to reflect in the evaluation reports information based on fundamental rights related indicators, including on the number of referral procedures activated by deployed officers related to victims of THB, children, persons in need of international protection and other persons in a vulnerable situation as well as on sex/gender and age disaggregated data of migratory flows in the Agency's operational areas and in the ICT tools;
- To guarantee that detailed information on national referral mechanisms is provided during the national operational briefings conducted prior to operational activities, in addition to the information available on FOSS;
- To support activities of gender mainstreaming of deployment policies with specific awareness sessions to ensure a special attention for gender specific concerns and cultural differences in the Agency's operational activities.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OFFICER
19 May 2020

⁴ In particular in Turkey, according to several reports of the independent human rights international organisations, including UN institutions, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/turkey>, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/turkey-syrians-illegally-deported-into-war-ahead-of-anticipated-safe-zone/>, <https://www.refworld.org/country,,,TUR,,5e1732e216,0.html>.