

## XXIV FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OFFICER REPORT TO MANAGEMENT BOARD

Reporting period: (June 2019 -October2019)

1. Joint Operations
2. Return Operations
3. Capacity Building Activities
4. International and European Cooperation Activities
5. Cooperation with the Consultative Forum (CF)
6. Individual Complaints Mechanism (CM)
7. Relations with External Actors
8. Miscellaneous

### 1. JOINT OPERATIONS

Pursuant to Article 34 (1) of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation (EBCG) 2016/1624, the European Border and Coast Guard has the obligation to guarantee the protection of fundamental rights in all its activities. The Regulation further foresees that the Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO) has a task of monitoring the Agency's compliance with fundamental rights and of promoting its respect (Article 72 (1)). For this purposes, FRO regularly reports to the Management Board, and as such contributes to the mechanism for monitoring fundamental rights. Furthermore, FRO's role as part of the monitoring mechanism includes, *inter alia*, to act as a coordinator for Serious Incidents that involve alleged violations of fundamental rights as set by Frontex Standard Operating Procedure on Serious Incident Reporting (SIR).<sup>2</sup> To this end, FRO is deemed to provide an assessment and follow up the information received on the SIRs provided by the Agency and Member States.

Expression of concern:

FRO a.i. submitted the expression of concern with a comprehensive compilation of background documents and reports on the situation at the Croatian border to the Executive Director on 26 July 2019. A reply was received by ED on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019 and also shared with CF under a request for information in which ED stated that:

- The alleged violations referred to are coming from NGOs' border surveillance in between the border crossing points;
- Frontex is not operating in those border surveillance areas but only at BCPs and no incidents indicating violations of human rights have been reported;
- Concerns were shared with Operational Response Division for awareness.

#### Serious Incidents Reporting (SIR)

During the reporting period, six SIRs related to fundamental rights issues were received by the FRO.

1. The reported incident is related to the apprehension of twenty seven migrants by the Hellenic Police close to the Greek - Bulgarian border [REDACTED] on 13th of June. The migrants declared to be victims of threats, beating, the attack with dogs, robbery and violent deportation from Bulgaria to Greece by the Bulgarian law enforcement officers. Criminal investigation has been conducted by the Hellenic Police. FRO has been nominated as a SIR Coordinator in this case and sent a request to the Greek and Bulgarian authorities asking for further details. The Bulgarian Authorities replied denying any involvement of their officers in the reported incident.
2. During an interview held in a detention centre in [REDACTED] Bulgaria, an Algerian male claimed that while having crossed the Croatian-Bosnian border with a group of migrants (July 2019, exact date not specified), they were

stopped and beaten by Croatian officers. FRO has been nominated as a SIR Coordinator in this case and sent a request to the Croatian authorities asking for further details about the incident. The Croatian authorities informed that their officers were not involved in the reported incident, also emphasising that given the insufficient data provided on persons and locations does not allow for opening any national investigation procedures.

3. The reported incident is related to the apprehension of twenty six irregular migrants by Hellenic Police close to the Greek - Bulgarian border [REDACTED] on 12th of September. All migrants declared themselves as victims of threats, beating, biting by dogs, forced to take of their clothes, robbed and violently deported from Bulgaria to Greece by the Bulgarian law enforcement officers. Criminal proceeding has been conducted by BCU Orestiada. FRO has been nominated as a SIR Coordinator in this case and sent a request to the Bulgarian authorities asking for some more details about the case, also emphasising that given the insufficient data provided on persons and locations does not allow for opening any national investigation procedures.
4. According to reported information, on 4<sup>th</sup> of October, during the screening activities in JO FOA Western Balkans 2019 in Albania, a minor of Moroccan origin requested for medical care claiming that on 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2019, he and his cousin were arrested by the Greek police nearby [REDACTED] Greece), on foot. After release, they entered into Albania. The victim did not want to file a complaint and asked for a doctor, due to his pain. FRO has been nominated as a SIR Coordinator in this case and sent a request to the Greek authorities asking for some more details about the case. In this respect, FRO sent a request to the Greek authorities asking for some more details about the incident and received the reply that the Hellenic authorities are ready to further investigate the case in question.
5. According to reported information, during debriefing activities in JO FOA Western Balkans 2019 in Albania taken on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019, two Iraqi and one Iranian migrants provided the following information: one migrant stated that when they were in Greece they were apprehended by the Greek police on 1<sup>st</sup> of October in [REDACTED] Money and three mobile phones were confiscated. The police gave them "some paper" to sign. They allegedly spent there three days without any food. After that time, on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019, they were released and received back 100 EURO and one mobile phone. While having reached the Albanian territory, the Albanian Police transported them to Tirana Reception Centre. FRO has been nominated as a SIR Coordinator in this case. In this respect, FRO sent a request to the Greek authorities asking for some more details about the incident and received the reply that the Hellenic authorities are ready to further investigate the case in question.
6. The report on several incidents occurred in the course of a Joint Return Operation (JRO) from Germany to Ghana was submitted by the monitor from the pool of monitors who was present at this particular flight. According to the monitor, he witnessed several situations of non-compliance with the applicable procedure by escort officers and the whole organisation of the operational activity. FRO has been nominated as a SIR Coordinator in this case and is gathering more facts about the reported incidents.

#### **OPLANS & FRO Observations**

Under Article 71(3) of the EBCG Regulation, FRO shall be consulted on the operational plans drawn up in accordance with Article 16, 17 and 28 and Article 33(4) of the Regulation.

- a) **OPLANS received:**
  - Special Activity Plan Cyprus - JO Focal Points 2019 Sea
  - Special Activity Plan Neptune - JO Focal Points 2019 Sea
- b) **Observations by FRO provided to OPLANS for 2019/2020 operational activities:**
  - Special Activity Plan Cyprus - FRO comments submitted on 31.07.19
  - Special Activity Plan Neptune - FRO comments submitted on 07.08.19

#### **FERs & FRO Observations**

Pursuant to Article 26 of the EBCG Regulation, the Executive Director shall transmit detailed evaluation reports within 60 days following the end of the Agency's operational activities to the Management Board, together with the observations of the FRO. Hereby find below an overview of the FERs received as well as the FRO recommendations and observations provided to OPLANS and FERs.

- a) **FER JOs received:**
  - FER JO Poseidon 2018

- FER JO Indalo 2018
- FER JO Themis 2018

**b) Observations by FRO provided to Evaluations of JOs**

- FER JO Poseidon 2018 - FRO observations submitted on 12.06.2019
- FER JO Indalo 2018 - FRO observations submitted on 19.06.2019
- FER JO Themis 2018 - FRO observations submitted on 30.07.2019

In addition, FRO provided observations to Frontex annual report 2018 on the implementation of Regulation (EU) 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by Frontex (FRO observations submitted on 10.07.19).

FRO continued to consider the following aspects: referral mechanism, unaccompanied children, the need to enhance awareness on local fundamental rights situations in operational briefings, the need to step up the efforts on identification and prompt referral of potential victims of trafficking in human beings. In addition FRO considered the importance to enhance the availability of Frontex complaint mechanism as well as the obligation to use the serious incident reporting mechanism.

With regard to the report on the Regulation (EU) 656/2014, the FRO also noted that JO Poseidon 2018 and JO Hera 2018 operational plans contained a reference to assessments carried out for Turkey by the Hellenic authorities and for Senegal carried out by the Spanish authorities respectively. However, the FRO was concerned about the scope of the assessments, content and methodology. FRO advised they presented a conclusive assessment, analysis or references, on whether the practices on the third country could contravene fundamental human rights and the principle of non-refoulement as enshrined by Article 4 of the Regulation 656/2014.

**Other support to Frontex operational activities**

During the reporting period, FRO and the Team delivered presentations on fundamental rights as part of operational briefings for:

- Joint Operation Focal Points 2019 Land, Briefing for Third Country Observers on 13 June; Briefing for Team Members and Seconded Team Members to be deployed within the JO Focal Points 2019 Land, JO Coordination Points 2019 Land and Coordination Points 2019 Sea on 18 June
- II General Briefing for Air Border Joint Operations 2019 on 26 June

On 12-18 August, the FRO team carried out a field mission to the operational areas in Spain related to JO Indalo and JO Minerva 2019. During the mission FRO met the EBCGT members (approximately 50 officers in three different locations), Spanish authorities, UNHCR representatives as well as the civil society organisations. The following observations have been shared with the respective units within the Agency:

- **Disembarkation:** FRO was made aware that there is little time after landing to assist refugees and migrants, including EBCG teams to conduct screening, registration; fingerprinting, debriefing activities; they often go through several interviews in a few hours' time frame in a detention facility or outside on the spot soon after the landing while being tired, without shower, etc.
- **Screening:** FRO noted there is no standardized template for screening used by EBCGT members, the screeners are writing down on a piece of paper, in others they developed their own template; it would be advisable to harmonize procedures of the activities carried out in all areas (Almeria, Motril, Algeciras, Málaga) of the same operation;
- **Referral mechanism:** FRO noted that the referrals of vulnerable persons from EBCGT members to the team leader are not performed during operational activities, in consequence there is no data on the number of referrals; FRO also noted that there is limited knowledge on referrals especially in relation to THB and persons in need of international protection;
- **THB:** FRO was alerted on a high number of women entering through this border subjected to trafficking; FRO also noted difficulties in identification/referral of persons as potential victims/vulnerable persons; it is partly due to a fact that THB victims are afraid to talk, as they have no trust towards police/Frontex; FRO also noted there is not enough of women officers deployed to the operational area which could have positive impact on identification of women victims of THB; the victims are often referred to civil society organisations when they are already working and being exploited for some time in Spain.

On 21-25 October FRO team members carried out a field mission to the capital and the operational areas in Albania to familiarise with the Agency's activities under JO Flexible Operational activities 2019 in Albania, as well as to increase awareness on FRO work and Frontex complaints mechanism in particular. The FRO team met with Albanian authorities, namely the General Directorate of State Police, Department for Border and Migration, as well as those institutions

responsible for the national complaints mechanisms (People's Advocate as well as control and complaints service within the Ministry of Interior) in view of discussing coordinated structures under the coexistence of the Frontex and the national complaint mechanisms as stipulated in the Status Agreement with the Republic of Albania. Moreover, meetings were held with UNHCR, IOM, EBCGT members as well as civil society organisations. FRO participated in screening interviews of two families and participated in Frontex surveillance activities. A report with conclusions is under preparation.

## 2. RETURN OPERATIONS

### Consultations on Return matters & Return interventions

In accordance with Articles 28 and 33 of the EBCG Regulation, the Agency shall provide the necessary assistance and, at the request of one or several participating Member States, ensure the coordination or the organisation of return operations and return interventions. The Agency shall perform return activities with respect for fundamental rights and general principles of Union law as well as for international law, including refugee protection and children's rights.

FRO is also supporting the finalization of the Guide for readmission operations by sea.

In this context, FRO contributes to the establishment and selection of forced-return monitors for joint return operations. The selection procedure is organised by Pooled Resources Unit, following an open call addressed to relevant bodies in Member States. FRO Team contributed to the selection procedures on a monthly basis.

On 05 September FRO team participated in a kick-off meeting on the takeover of the FReM project, which was called by ECRET to discuss following topics:

- to assess the components from FReM-III to be actually taken over
- to provide to ED an assessment on the possibility/need to create a Secretariat for the management of the monitors from the pool

### FERs & FRO Observations

In compliance with Article 28(8) of the EBCG Regulation, FRO observations are annexed to the Executive Director's evaluation report, transmitted to the Management Board every six months, covering all return operations conducted in the previous semester. During the reporting period, FRO received 148 monitoring reports which also serve to provide concrete recommendations as well as to adjust training needs of those organising the implementation of return operations.

FRO presented the Observations to the return operations for the first half of 2019 to the MB on 10-11 September 2019. The Observations included an overview of the findings and conclusions from the 94 reports submitted by the forced-return monitors activated from the pool. FRO also highlights examples of good practices for the consideration of both the Management Board and the Executive Director as well as recommendations to act upon in order to ensure fundamental rights compliance during the Agency's return activities. In the reported period, in one return operation, a complaint was submitted to Frontex regarding alleged violation of fundamental rights of returnees (types of allegation: violation of the principle of non-refoulement). Furthermore, FRO notes that there were no Serious Incident Reports related to alleged violations of fundamental rights and officially submitted by participants in the operations. However, there have been a number of **incidents reported by the monitors**, which triggered follow up, including excessive usage of force, no availability of Frontex complaints form, no sufficient number of female escorts, interpreters, medical personnel, etc.

The observations were also presented for the occasion of 53<sup>rd</sup> Meeting with Direct Contact Points in Return Matters & 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting with Pre-Return Activities Network that took place on 17-18 September in Helsinki.

On 2 October, Associated FRO delivered a presentation on "Fundamental rights in return related activities" for the 5 Return Specialists who were to be deployed in 2019 to Italy, Rome.

On 16 October, FRO attended the 4th High Level Round Table on Return in Warsaw, to update on the forthcoming activities and new mandate on return matters.

## 3. CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

The FRO's role in supporting the Agency's initiatives in ensuring that all border guards and other relevant staff of the European Border and Coast Guard teams receive training in relevant Union and international law, including on fundamental rights and access to international protection falls under Article 36(2) of the EBCG Regulation. During the reporting period, FRO continued to actively contribute and support the Agency's activities in the field of capacity building as explained below.

During the reporting period, FRO took part in the following meetings and workshops of the Forced-Return Monitoring (FRm) III project:

- 25-26 June, 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Lessons Learned Meeting in Bratislava, Slovakia
- 12-13 September, Workshop on Reporting in Vienna, Austria
- 20 September, 2nd Project Steering Group Meeting, Berlin, Germany
- 24<sup>th</sup> October, meeting in Frontex HQ regarding the reporting tool for monitors and further development of the reporting application and database.

The FRm project is supporting the Agency to further establish the pool of forced-return monitors (Pool) in line with its Regulation. Furthermore, it will support Member States (MSs) in meeting their obligations under Art. 8(6) of the Return Directive, requiring them to provide for an effective forced return monitoring system.

#### Cooperation with Training Unit

FRO team participated as a lecturer in CEPOL Course 5/2019 on Trafficking in Human Beings - multidisciplinary approach, which was held from 20th to 24th of May at the premises of the Police Academy in Szczytno, Poland.

FRO provided input on the curricula for the EBCG Standing Corps. The standing corps curricula was designed based on the CCC which had been consulted with FRO and the CF, and is intended to integrate fundamental rights horizontally in this standing corps training.

On 11 September FRO team provided a presentation for the Border Surveillance Officer - Maritime Operations training III (MBSO) training.

On 19 September, Pooled Resources Unit organised an annual bilateral negotiations (ABN) with cooperating Third Countries 2020, with which Working Arrangements were concluded. During the meeting, Associated FRO provided a presentation on Fundamental Rights in Frontex.

FRO and the Team are continuously engaged in the **Induction trainings for new-comers**. Sessions were held during the reporting period on a monthly basis. The engagement in this activity is deemed as very important since the new Regulation has clearly stepped up the fundamental rights obligations of the European Border and Coast Guard. FRO team has jointly revised and reflected on the most efficient way to convey FR basic information and enhance the awareness of the Agency's staff on the matter, as the first step towards effective implementation of these obligations.

## 4. INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

Coordination meetings were held between FRO and IEC on 27<sup>th</sup> June and 8 October. The idea of this meeting was to discuss FRO's support at each stage of cooperation with TC (pre-cooperation, cooperation and post-cooperation) and the future of the cooperation after the entry into force of the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 April 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard (2018/0330(COD)). FRO offered notably its support in setting up a methodology to assess the impact of TC cooperation on FR.

On 22 August FRO team delivered a presentation for Australian Border Force and New Zealand Customs and Immigration Services representatives.

On 13 September, FRO delivered a presentation for the delegates from the US State Department's Bureau of Populations, Refugees and Migration.

On 17-19 September, FRO delivered a presentation for border and coast guard officers from Lebanon and Jordan. FRO provided FR assessments on the cooperation with the Republics of Nigeria, Iraq and Belarus.

FRO is also fully engaged in establishing a service level agreement with FRA for the development of fundamental rights monitors as foreseen in the Regulation EBCG v 2.0.

## 5. COOPERATION WITH THE CONSULTATIVE FORUM (CF)

Preparations were made by FRO in terms of the new CF composition, including a tentative timeline to launch the call for applications.

Experts from IOM were deployed to Berlin, Milan, Vilnius and Zagreb airports under the VEGA air project from 05th to 18th June 2019.

On 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019, the CF presented its 2018 Annual Report to the LIBE Committee and on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 it was presented to the Council's FRONTIERS Working Party.

On 8<sup>th</sup> July, the CF shared recommendations on "return in the activities of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency" with the Executive Director and the Chair of the Management Board.

The External Evaluation of 'the effectiveness and impact of Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights Final Report' was undertaken with an external consultancy service.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> September, the new CF Secretariat Assistant started her work.

Experts from IOM were deployed to Romanian/Serbian border within Vega Children Land from 9<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October (another two experts from IOM and Save the Children are to be deployed to Polish/Ukrainian border from 6<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> November).

Six experts from UNHCR were deployed to five airports in Italy, Portugal, Spain, Croatia and Lithuania under VEGA children Air from 09<sup>th</sup> October to 06<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

A final draft of Report on the Extent and Further Needs for Fundamental Rights Mainstreaming in Frontex Training Courses and Products was submitted to CF in September. It was followed by a presentation of the outcomes during 20th Consultative Forum meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> October.

A PAD request referring to CF meetings as well as to CF requests for information was received by Frontex in September. Open call for applications for the selection of civil society organisations to become members of the Frontex Consultative Forum has been launched on 18<sup>th</sup> October with the deadline for applications being 8 November, noon.

On 29-30<sup>th</sup> October, FRO presented her regular report in the framework of the 20th CF meeting.

## 6. INDIVIDUAL COMPLAINTS MECHANISM (CM)

During the reporting period, the FRO has received eight (8) complaints, out of which one (1) complaint has been declared admissible and has been forwarded to the relevant MS authorities and the Executive Director. Another complaint is currently under the admissibility assessment. In relation to complaints declared inadmissible, the FRO responds individually, and provides information on other remedies available, when known, in case complainants wish to address their complaints or concerns to other institutions or authorities, in accordance with the principle of good administration.

The FRO received two (2) requests regarding Access to Documents (PAD) under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 on access to public documents. The first request was related to cases of mistreatment or abuse of refugees or migrants by (a) Frontex personnel (b) other personnel seconded to Frontex or (c) other EU law enforcement or border agencies with which Frontex works. The second request covered all complaints submitted since March 2019 and the FRO reports to the Executive Director and the Management Board on findings and follow-up in respect of the complaints declared admissible, and the latest statistics in regards to the individual complaints mechanism.

In the reporting period the FRO complaints team has been working on the concept of how to deal with complaints regarding Frontex activities in the Republic of Albania. The Status Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Albania concluded that each party shall have its own complaints mechanism to deal with allegations of a breach of fundamental rights committed by its staff in the exercise of their official functions in the course of a joint operation. The coexistence of the two mechanisms, that of the Agency and that of the Republic of Albania, will lead to further developments. The FRO team will meet with competent national authorities in Albania in October to further discuss the coordination between both systems. The aim is to ensure a coordinated approach between the two complaints mechanisms.

As mentioned in the previous reports, the FRO complaints team is permanently working on the dissemination campaign to raise awareness about the existence of the mechanism. The FRO has finalised a new booklet on the complaints mechanism, the new edition will be available and ready for distribution at the beginning of 2020. Furthermore, the complaints team keeps on working on a video about the complaints mechanism for the general public to be informed and is reviewing the content of the recorded webinar on complaints for Frontex staff. Also, as part of the awareness raising strategy, during the reporting period the complaints team has delivered five (5) external presentations on the complaints mechanism, to sixteen (16) Civil Society Organizations in Greece and Spain, as well as four (4) internal trainings for Frontex deployed officers in Greece and Spain. Furthermore, the complaints team delivered an awareness session on the complaints mechanism in Frontex Headquarters to Intelligence Officers from four (4) Member States.

FRO complaints team also keeps on working in cooperation with the ICT unit to develop an online system for submission of complaints directly from mobile devices, as informed in previous reports.

### ACTION POINTS

- Finalising the video on the complaints mechanism.
- Finalising the review on the recorded webinar for Frontex staff.
- Follow-up on the editing/printing new booklet on the complaints mechanism.

- Follow-up on the online system for submission of complaints via smartphones.
- Follow-up on the JO activities in the Republic of Albania and further coordination structures with national authorities.
- Draft the new Rules on the Agency complaints mechanism, in line with item 11.3 of the Roadmap for the implementation of the EBCG 2.0 Regulation.

## 7. RELATIONS WITH EXTERNAL ACTORS

21 March 2019, Calais, FRO team participated in the IOM Training on the Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) for border guards, where both French and British border guards participated.

28-29 May 2019, Vienna, FRO team was invited to the 2nd advisory board meeting of ODIHR to discuss principles and promising practices for the implementation of NRM's. ODIHR had prepared together with selected experts 13 draft principles that should guide the creation of NRMs. During the 2 day meeting these principles were presented by the experts and discussed to further develop the NRM Handbook.

3-4 June, Associated FRO took part and delivered several sessions on fundamental rights and serious incident reporting in the course of the training for escorts, organised by ECRET in Kiev, Ukraine.

4 June 2019, Brussels, FRO team was invited by DG HOME/JUST to attend the inter-service group meeting on the rights of the child to discuss children in migration and alternative care systems. Also a discussion took place on the return of unaccompanied minors.

11 July 2019, Brussels, FRO team attended the Thematic Consultative Forum Meeting of EASO on gender-related persecution to explore how CSOs support persons in the EU+ Member States' asylum and reception systems who experienced gender-related persecution and to identify the main challenges and good practices.

On 22-24 July FRO team was invited by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) to deliver sections of fundamental rights training to border control authorities of Turkey in Greece and Bulgaria. The workshop was a part of the IOM project: "Regional Cooperation on Border Management with Greece and Bulgaria" (phase 2). Subsequent training session took place on 16-18 September in Ankara, Turkey.

On 24 September, Associated FRO delivered a presentation during a meeting on "Respecting human rights at the EU's borders" in Brussels with a focus on the Croatian border.

27 September, Vienna, FRO team participated in an International Round Table on THB on resilience vs vulnerability. The meeting was organised by the Regional Implementation Initiative, which is aiming at reinforcing the political commitments and legal obligations of the participating countries both to prevent and combat all forms of trafficking in human beings.

## 8. MISCELLANEOUS

### Staffing:

In view of the implementation of EBCG v 2.0, additional senior staff will be needed within FRO and additionally, at least 40 fundamental rights monitors are to be hired within a year after the entry into force of the EBCG 2.0 Regulation.

### Consultancies:

1. CF consultancy on CF role in FR mainstreaming of training products:

On 27<sup>th</sup> September, the consultant hired by the CF for the purpose of providing the CF with an independent expert assessment on the extent and further needs for fundamental rights mainstreaming in Frontex training courses and products delivered her final report.

2. Basic FR training for FX staff:

In August 2019, the FRO team revised in consultation with the external experts the concept of the fundamental rights training for staff and updated its content in line with the Regulation 2016/1624. FRO team delivered during the sessions which were held in October one module on Frontex tools for monitoring fundamental rights.

### 3. Gender aspects in the Fundamental Rights Strategy

Preparations for the commencement of a specific consultancy to enhance the gender aspects of the FRS have been completed. The consultancy follows specific recommendations from the CF on this matter from 2017.

#### Implementation of the Fundamental Rights Strategy

The FRO and FRO team have been revising the previous versions of the Fundamental Rights Strategy (FRS) to align it with the provisions of the new Regulation (EBCG v 2.0) as well as to the IBM strategy to ensure the FRS is a main document guiding Agency's action in guaranteeing of the "protection of fundamental rights in the performance of its tasks. According to the new regulation, the FRS is contingent on the endorsement of the FRO. The FRO is looking forward to supporting the inclusive and consultative development of the FRS as well as the structure for FRO endorsement of the document.

#### Implementation of ETIAS

A workshop took place on 10 October with Member States, COM and EU Agencies on setting up the ETIAS national units and central unit to which Frontex participated.

#### Upcoming activities

- 11-15 November: FReM III, 2<sup>nd</sup> Training for Forced-Return Monitors, Rome, Italy
- 12 November: High-level conference on "Making the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights a reality for all", Brussels, Belgium
- 21 November: Coordination Meeting with JHA agencies on trafficking in human beings, Brussels, Belgium
- 9-11 December: ODIHR - Final NRM Advisory Group Review Meeting, Warsaw, Poland
- 18-19 December: Mid-term workshop on the implementation of the FRA pilot project on the establishment of the fundamental rights monitors.

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Fundamental Rights Officer a.i/ FRO from 1st October