



JHA AGENCIES NETWORK 2021

Work Programme

FRONTEx PRESIDENCY

I. THEMATIC PRIORITIES

In 2021, Frontex wishes to focus the JHA Agencies' Network activities on "JHA Turning Green", with "Digitalisation" as one of its important components. Moreover, Frontex will take the lead in continuing the priority topic of the Eurojust Presidency, namely the assessment of the JHA Agencies' Network that should facilitate the Network's reform.

A. JHA TURNING GREEN

The transition to a green, sustainable, climate-neutral and inclusive European Union is the key priority for the years to come. The [European Council's Agenda 2019-2024](#) recognises the climate change as "the existential threat" to our community and sets for the joint effort to build a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe. In December 2019, the newly elected European Commission announced the transition to a healthy planet to be among its [leading political priorities](#). For that purpose, it introduced a new growth strategy for the EU economy to become more sustainable – the [European Green Deal](#). The plan is to move to a clean, circular economy and to restore biodiversity as well as to cut pollution. This overarching direction for the green transition could be reflected in the area of Justice and Home Affairs, which shapes the Union's area of freedom, security and justice. The new draft of [EU Security Union Strategy](#) confirms this approach by recognising the climate change as an important factor that affects Europe's security.

In her 2020 [State of the Union address](#), President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen presented her vision for 2021 – a year where we need to go faster and do things better in order to achieve the green transformation, including how we treat nature, how we produce and consume, live and work, eat and heat, travel and transport.

In 2021, the European Commission plans to table new proposals for implementing the Green Deal. It will also enter the new Multiannual Financial Framework and start the COVID-19 recovery. All of it will have a direct and indirect impact on the JHA policy area, which, in parallel, will face its own transformation with the new Pact on Migration and Asylum, the implementation of the EU Security Union Strategy and the revision of mandates of some of the JHA Agencies.

In view of the above, in 2021 the Frontex Presidency of the JHA Agencies Network will focus on the Green Deal with an overall objective to raise awareness, integrate and fine-tune the elements of the European green transition to the work of the Network. This topic will be discussed by the Network for the first time and hence offers an opportunity to establish new synergies – from operational activities, such as the fight against environmental crimes (e.g. in EMPACT, marine pollution, illicit waste trafficking and wildlife trafficking amongst others), crimes that negatively effect on environment, such

as drug production, increased focus on green approach in research and innovation, to environmentally friendly internal policies of the JHA Agencies. The Network should also look internally and identify actions to reduce the Agencies' impact on the environment, consideration for green procedures (carbon offsets in terms of air travel) and provisions in procurement and in the Headquarters' design, work models, promotion and encouragement of environmentally friendly habits among staff.

Many of those activities are already taking place, but they need to be recognised as such, further encouraged and given more visibility, also towards the general public, showing our environmental consciousness.

Finally, we need to recognise that climate change and environmental deterioration will affect both our work and us as individuals. There is no reason why JHA community should remain inactive in the face of this overwhelming and complex challenge.

B. DIGITALIZATION

Digitalization has been put high on the main EU strategic political agendas for the upcoming years – it is one of the key priorities of the Commission's political guidelines for 2020-2024 and of the European Council's Strategic Agenda 2019-2024, as well as the [Trio Council Presidency's Programme](#) and the EU Security Union Strategy 2020-2025.

The importance and role of digitalization was also underlined by the Commission's President in her State of the Union address. It emphasised that similarly to the green approach, in 2021 the EU should move fast and lead the way to a Digital Decade that builds to a healthier, greener society with clear principles: the right to privacy and connectivity, freedom of speech, free flow of data and cybersecurity.

Digital technologies are connecting the world in new ways – they are transforming the way we communicate, live and work at an unprecedented speed. Digitalisation has far-reaching effects and therefore needs to be addressed coherently across the Union's internal and external policies. There is no doubt that the digital transformation is one piece of the big EU puzzle towards achieving the goal for a greener Europe. And while the EU is releasing its full potential in achieving a Green and Digital world for its citizens, the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies should also adapt and find the balance in this dual-transition, as well as between the flow and wide use of data while respecting privacy, security, safety and ethical standards. Finally, the pandemic forced JHA Agencies to rely more on IT tools – in our specific environment their safe and secure use for operations, training and strategic coordination is essential.

In 2020, the JHAAN identified a list of components of digitalisation: Artificial Intelligence (AI), joint web platforms for meetings and secure video-communication, exchange information in a secure way amongst JHA Agencies, digital capacity building, training tools and innovative learning, cybersecurity, interactive platforms, cooperation with the networks, current and future challenges in the processing of large operational datasets.

Two of them were discussed at the annual Heads of Agencies meeting on 20 November 2020 – AI and digital capacity building, training tools and innovative learning. In 2021, the JHAAN will aim to address some of the components within the work of its Working Groups or in the regular meetings of the contact points.

C. ASSESSMENT OF THE JHA AGENCIES' NETWORK

The Network has been functioning and growing for ten years, contributing greatly to establishing a constructive and effective JHA family, which is based on trust and transparency. The Network was established to ensure that the agencies do not work in silos, that they cooperate and are aware of each other's activities. Nowadays, such cooperation is commonplace, and the countless bilateral and multilateral projects are testimony to it. After a decade, it is necessary to look afresh at the Network and see what new tasks are ahead of it. The assessment process started still under Eurojust Presidency. In November 2020, the JHAAN contact points agreed on a concept, methodology and timeline for the assessment. Frontex is expected to take over from Eurojust and lead on the assessment of the JHA Agencies' Network under its Presidency in 2021.

II. NETWORK MEETINGS

In accordance with the established practice, three regular meetings of the Network and one annual meeting of the Heads of JHA Agencies are scheduled as follows:

- First meeting (26 March 2021)
- Second meeting (21 June 2021)
- Third meeting (24 September 2021)
- Heads of JHA Agencies meeting (22 November 2021)

There will also be meetings of dedicated thematic Working Groups (see below).

III. ACTIVITIES

GENERAL SCOPE

Frontex intends to:

- Give more prominence and visibility to **operational activities** regarding phenomena such as maritime pollution, waste trafficking, and relevant cooperation with customs.
- Increase focus of **research and innovation** on green topics.
- **Increase awareness** of JHA community on environmental issues.
- Promote **environmentally friendly behaviour** among staff.
- Exchange views on **workplace management policy** in order to reduce its carbon footprint.
- Increase the **perception among general public** that the EU, including its JHA components, is truly conscious and committed to the environment.

Activities would be arranged in three main dimensions:

- Operational dimension
- Research and Innovation
- Administrative dimension

1. OPERATIONAL DIMENSION

Proposed activities:

- **A questionnaire to the Network**

The aim of the questionnaire will be to identify and map ongoing activities related to environmental crime.

- **Seminar on environmental crime**

The seminar will have a three-fold objective:

- To present ongoing activities related to environment, such as cases and operations, based on the questionnaire.
- To promote and explain existing tools supporting such activities, such as EUROSUR Fusion Services, maritime dimension of Frontex, Europol analysis (Envicrime).
- To promote existing projects and networks, such as for law enforcement and prosecution. The seminar should lead to the identification of synergies between different activities and establishment of contact points.

The event could take place during the EU green week scheduled for **the first week of June**.

2. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Proposed activities:

- **On-line seminar “Understanding the influence of climate change on Justice and Home Affairs”**

The seminar will be focused on the impact of climate change on terrorism, organised crime, migrations as well as its consequences for vulnerable groups. It will primarily serve the presentation of ongoing research projects, with Academia in the lead.

The Seminar has been tentatively scheduled for **16 February**.

- **Frontex Industry Days 2021**

Frontex (Research and Innovation Unit) regularly organises industry days (I-Days) allowing companies to present new technologies or innovative solutions relevant for the work of EBCG, and has also organised thematic industry days, to which companies representing a particular sector or offering a required type of product/service were invited. The following two such events reflect the priorities of the Presidency and all JHA Agencies to be invited:

- **I-Days on Innovative Green Solutions**

It is proposed that one of the thematic I-Days in 2021 will be focused specifically on **innovative green solutions** relevant to EIBM. Frontex will publish a call for the expression of interest to companies interested in presenting green technological solutions for EIBM, and the received proposals will be evaluated based on the product’s demonstrated comparative advantages in terms of environmental impact, novelty of the proposed products and the relevance of the technology to the EBCG operations. The solutions receiving the highest scores will be presented during the thematic I-Days on Green Technologies for EIBM. The event is planned for the **1st semester 2021**, with the participation of experts from MS, COM, Frontex and other European agencies, including in the JHA area.

- **I-Days on Digitalisation of Training Tools**

Another planned I-Days event will address the **digitalisation of training tools**. The I-Days for Training, also organised in the first half of 2021, will scope the market for software applications for eLearning, training delivery and administration. We will be looking for innovations and on the market solutions for setting up virtual classrooms, training administration, micro learning, peer communication, feedback analysis and others. We would also like to share experiences and insights with Member States to make an inventory of the e-learning technologies already in use, which may indicate potential synergies with Frontex and JHAA e-learning and educational technology programmes and practices.

Experts from Member States, Commission, Frontex and other European Agencies, including in the JHA Area will be invited to participate.

- **Research study for European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) and Frontex with a focus on green solutions – “How our community can become greener?”**

The aim of this research study is to support the EBCG community in reducing the environmental footprint of its facilities, operations and services in order to support the EU efforts to become a leader in the fight against climate change.

This study will identify Green Deal principles and practices relevant to the EBCG and will present a roadmap for implementation of practical and feasible actions focused on digitalization efforts. Digital technologies have the potential to facilitate a faster transformation towards a green work model (by fostering decarbonisation, multiplying resource and energy efficiency, and reducing physical material consumption and thus reducing waste).

The Frontex Research and Innovation Unit plans to conduct the study in a timeframe enabling the presentation of its conclusions in the **3rd meeting of the JHAAN in September 2021** and a wider presentation/dissemination at the Heads of JHA Agencies meeting (November 2021).

- **Research study “Artificial Intelligence (AI) based capabilities for the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG)”**

The overall objective of this study was to explore the ways in which the EBCG could maximise the opportunity provided by AI to support the management of the European Union’s external borders. It also examined how Frontex could support the EU’s wider goals to become a global leader in the development and deployment of cutting-edge, ethical and secure AI.

In the study nine AI-based technology areas were explored for adoption into border security. These cases were assessed to provide an understanding of opportunities and challenges for the EBCG, provide an assessment of potential impact and feasibility of implementation, and outline requirements, potential barriers and pathway to adoption.

In **Q2** a seminar of JHA actors will be organised, so the methodology and the main findings of the report can be presented. This meeting will also offer an opportunity to take stock of other AI-related initiatives undertaken by JHA Agencies.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE DIMENSION

Proposed activities:

- **Green Training**

It will be organised in cooperation with DG ENVI and dedicated to JHA staff. Its objectives – raising awareness and targeting staff on adopting green behaviours in everyday and working life.

- **Seminar on “How to make the JHA Agencies administrations carbon neutral by 2030?”**

The seminar will be focused on presentation by JHA Agencies, which are advanced in this field, could be considered (e.g. Europol and Eurojust are certified green buildings), as well as by DG HR/EMAS team. Another discussion point will be on how Frontex intends to integrate in its new Permanent Premises sustainability and energy efficiency aspects in order to reduce the carbon footprint, make use of new technologies at the office and overall, the innovative approach for New Permanent Premises. The discussion will aim at the exchange of views, experience and best practice.

- **Promotion of JHA green activities to the public**

This is to be achieved via Communications Working Group activities and might include:

- Joint statement/commitment of the Heads of the JHA Agencies.
- “Joint Green Day” when all JHA Agencies engage in a green activity: tree planting, beach/forest cleaning, etc.
- Dedicated space on the website where green activities are mentioned (recent examples: detections of maritime pollution, beach cleaning).
- A leaflet/booklet with the list of best practices for JHA Agencies to adopt – may be used as a guideline for other EU agencies.

4. WORKING GROUPS

Frontex plans the following Working Groups to convene during 2021 and contribute to the work of the Network. The dates of the meetings remain to be proposed by the respective Chairs. Below key topics are indicated, but working groups’ agendas will be developed further by respective Chairs.

- **ICT and Cybersecurity**
 - Synergies amongst JHA Agencies to improve information sharing.
- **Diversity and Inclusion (possibly with additional focus on Fundamental Rights)**
 - Possible inclusion of JHAAN D&I working Group to the newly established EUAN D&I Working Group.
 - Implementation of [Joint Statement on Diversity & Inclusion](#).
 - Implementation of the [Joint Statement on Fundamental Rights](#).
- **Training** (*Working Group chaired traditionally by CEPOL, the topics below are suggested by CEPOL and Frontex*)
 - Discussion on how to maximize the impact of inter-agency training, identify potential for joint initiatives in the area of training, and preparation of a dedicated seminar.
 - Sharing good practice in training design based on sectoral framework competences.
 - Sharing concepts of training the trainers.
 - CEPOL proposed beyond the regular meeting, to also have thematic on-line meetings (most likely in the second semester) devoted to the topic of digital capacity-building and training tools and innovative learning within the thematic priority of Digitalization, as a follow-up to the Heads of Agencies meeting last November.
- **Communication**
 - Promotion of JHA green activities to the public, as above.
 - HCIN network meeting for JHA Agencies to be held in Q1/Q2 of 2021.
- **External Dimension**
 - Exchange on International Cooperation Strategies.
 - Synergies in implementing technical assistance and capacity building projects in third countries.
- **Data Protection**
 - In the framework of digitalization: Frontex input to the e-signature project from data protection point of view.

- Challenges in processing large operational datasets (*invitation to Europol to lead the discussion*).
- **Public Access to Documents**

Sharing best practices in managing and processing sensitive operational information. In particular:

 - Inter-agency aspects
 - Exchange of Information between EU Agencies and Member States
 - Operational and technical parameters
 - Exceptions
- **Situation Centres**
 - Exchange views among the Agencies and Institutions, discussing lessons learned during COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Way forward in EU within the framework of crisis preparedness and response.

Moreover, Frontex takes note of Europol's suggestion to establish a **group on information management (IM)** and recognises the importance of the subject for JHA Agencies. The need to establish the group and its possible modalities will be discussed by the Network in the first months of 2021.

5. OTHER EVENTS OF RELEVANCE (FRONTEX NOT IN THE LEAD)

- Eurojust will lead the efforts to continue and finalise the 2020 priority topic of the protection of victims of human trafficking.
- Drug production and its contribution to pollution, climate change and waste of natural resources will be discussed during the Third European Conference on Drug Supply that EMCDDA will hold in Q3/4 of 2021.

FRONTEX JHAAN TEAM

A dedicated team within Frontex' International and European Cooperation Division is there to help you and facilitate a successful **and green** work of the Network in 2021.

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