

# 2023 Annual Report of the Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer

**Cornelia Riehle**



## News

On 10 July 2024, the Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer released its [Annual Report for the year 2023](#).

In the first chapter, the report presents the main findings of the Fundamental Rights Officer's monitoring of Frontex in different thematic areas, e.g., return operations. In 2023, the Fundamental Rights Office conducted in excess of 1,600 days in the field, visited 24 countries and monitored almost 50 return operations - an increase of more than 70% compared to 2022. The Office played an important role in monitoring the pilot project on the new chain of command (→ [eucrim 2/2023, 133](#)).

The second chapter examines the reporting and accountability mechanisms and fundamental rights safeguards that guide the work of the Fundamental Rights Office. It also provides a statistical overview of the number and type of serious incident reports and complaints received. In 2023, out of a total of 217 reported incidents of alleged violations of fundamental rights, 55 serious incident investigations were launched, the majority in Greece. The main types of alleged violations of fundamental rights were related to collective expulsions and to inhuman and degrading treatment. Challenges related to the submission and follow-up of serious incident reports included the reluctance of national authorities to provide access to relevant data for the purpose of investigations and the default denial of any involvement in fundamental rights violations as well as reluctance to investigate or follow up cases. The Office also observed a significant underreporting of cases due to lack of awareness or knowledge, peer pressure, or fear of retaliation. The limited presence of Frontex in certain locations may also contribute to underreporting of possible fundamental rights violations.

Lastly, the report looks at the Office's policy, strategy, and capacity building during the past year. It summarises the recommendations made by the Fundamental Rights Office to the European Border and Coast Guard Community on rights-based border management, including those made in the past by the European Ombudsman, the European Parliament's Frontex Working Group (FSWG), and the Working Group on Fundamental Rights and Legal and Operational Aspects of Operations (FRa-LO). The setting of the Office's priorities for the year 2024 is also documented.

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Published in  
2024, Vol. 19(2) [eucrim](#)  
ISSN: 1862-6947  
<https://eucrim.eu>

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The project is co-financed by the Union Anti-Fraud Programme (UAFP), managed by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**