

ECA Report on Frontex

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News

On 7 June 2021, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a [special report](#) analysing Frontex's support to external border management. For the first time, the audit assessed whether Frontex carried out four out of its six primary activities effectively to implement European integrated border management and, in this way, support Member States in preventing, detecting, and responding to illegal immigration and cross-border crime. The four primary activities assessed by the audit concern information exchange, risk analysis, vulnerability assessment, and operational response. The report also examines the preparedness of Frontex to fulfil its new and expanded 2019 mandate.

Overall, the report finds that Frontex's support for Member States/Schengen-associated countries in fighting illegal immigration and cross-border crime is not sufficiently effective. Issues identified by the report include, for instance, problems with information exchange that prevent the agency from providing an accurate, complete, and up-to-date situational awareness of the EU's external border. Although migrant information dispatched by Frontex is timely and relevant, obstacles (such as the lack of information or poor technical standards for border control equipment) undermine the construction of a complete situational picture at the EU's external borders. Additionally, issues of data completeness and quality prevent the agency from providing precise assessments. Other issues identified involve deploying resources to counter cross-border crime and to adapt to the new mandate.

The report sets out the following recommendations to be implemented in 2021 and 2022:

- Improving the information exchange framework and the European situational picture;
- Updating and implementing the Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM);
- Securing access to other sources of information;
- Developing the potential of vulnerability assessment;
- Improving Frontex's operational response;
- Addressing the challenges of Frontex's 2019 mandate.

The ECA points out that the last external evaluation of Frontex's operations was carried out in 2015 and did not include Frontex's mandate as defined in the 2016 Regulation. In 2019, the ECA audited Frontex's return operations in [special report No 24/2019](#) on migration management in Greece and Italy. Later this year, the ECA will issue audit reports on the EU's migrant return policy and on combating migrant smuggling.

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