

# First Report from Frontex's Fundamental Rights Office



**Cornelia Riehle**

## News

On 27 August 2021, Frontex published its first [Annual Report](#) on the activities of its Fundamental Rights Office (FRO) and its Fundamental Rights Officer in 2020. The report gives a situational overview of migration data and fundamental rights at the EU's borders. It looks at the fundamental rights compliance in Frontex's operational activities, the Agency's fundamental rights monitoring, and cooperation involving European Integrated Border Management (IBM). Information on the complaint mechanism is annexed.

The report concludes that 2020 was a very challenging year during which the landscape of migration was reshaped by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic also limited monitoring by the team of the Fundamental Rights Officer, especially regarding on-site visits to review Frontex's operational activities.

2020 was also marked by accusations of malpractice, including alleged serious and persistent violations of the fundamental rights of persons irregularly crossing (or attempting to cross) the Schengen borders. According to the report, the Fundamental Rights Office consistently monitored the situation, proactively gathered reliable information on these issues, and advised the Agency and the EU institutions accordingly.

Another key feature of the past year 2020 concerned the procedural and administrative changes within the Agency to expand its mandate. The Fundamental Rights Office accompanied the process by paying strict attention to fundamental rights.

The Fundamental Rights Office made multiple observations on operations and made recommendations regarding Frontex's involvement in operational activities. It revised and enhanced the components of the Agency's fundamental rights promotion and monitoring system. It accompanied the development of new rules for the Agency's complaints mechanism and the relevant elements of the Standard Operating Procedures and worked on the Agency-wide Fundamental Rights Strategy.

Lastly, by the end of 2020, the Fundamental Rights Office had also finalised its Fundamental Rights Due Diligence Policy – an internal tool for fundamental rights impact assessment and a basis for the advisory capacity of the Office.

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