Frontex and European Space Agency Strengthen Cooperation on Satellite-Based Border Surveillance

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News

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On 13 October 2026, Frontex and the European Space Agency (ESA) signed a joint letter expressing their intention to explore closer cooperation on the use of satellite data for border surveillance.

While the letter builds on the two agencies' existing collaboration, which dates back to 2015, it does not establish a new operational framework.

Since 2015, ESA has provided access to satellite data on behalf of the European Commission for the border surveillance service operated by Frontex under Copernicus, the EU's satellite-based monitoring programme. Frontex uses satellite images and related information to monitor the situation at the EU's external borders and provides this information to national border authorities through its European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) services. The agencies have also tested new satellite-based technologies developed by European companies to assess their suitability for border surveillance.

The two agencies now intend to explore further possibilities for using satellite technology to support border surveillance and broader security needs. The joint letter also refers to the planned establishment of an ESA centre in Warsaw, where Frontex is based. The centre is expected to facilitate technical exchanges between the agencies and is intended to develop satellite-based technologies supporting civilian security, crisis management and Europe's ability to respond to security threats. Preparations for its establishment are ongoing, with initial activities planned from 2027.

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