

# Group of Schengen States Discusses Challenges for External Land Border Management



## News

Thomas Wahl

At the JHA Council meeting of 7 June 2019, Norway provided information on the [joint statement](#) by “the Ministerial Forum for Member States of the Schengen Area with External Land Borders.” The Forum met in Kirkenes, Norway on 20-22 May 2019.

The Forum was established and had its first meeting in 2013 at Finland’s initiative. It is currently comprised of nine Schengen Member States – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, and Hungary. Ministerial meetings are organised once a year by a different Member State. The aim is to discuss common challenges that the countries are facing as Schengen members responsible for securing and managing the external land border of the entire Schengen area.

The ministers concluded in the joint statement, *inter alia*, that “[f]urther strengthened cooperation among national authorities carrying out tasks related to freedom, security and justice, and between the relevant EU Agencies, is of decisive importance. This will enhance returns, prevention of illegal immigration and cross border crime, improve third country cooperation and will further develop a comprehensive and cost-efficient European Integrated Border Management.”

Implementation of the new European Border and Coast Guard regulation will be challenging for the Member States and Frontex, which is why realistic priorities and coordinated timelines must be set. The increased capacities of the European Border and Coast Guard raises challenges for coordination, i.e., the proper balance between use of the capacities at the national level and those required by Frontex.

Common standards for external border surveillance must be developed in an effective and cost-efficient way and in close cooperation between the Member States, the European Commission, and Frontex.

Next year’s group ministerial meeting will be held in Romania.

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