

FRONTEX EVALUATION REPORT 2017

Joint Operation Flexible Operational Activities land 2017 on Border Checks

Done at Warsaw

[signed]
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Table of Contents

1. Background information	3
1.1. Brief Risk assessment	3
1.2. Operational aim	3
1.3. Period of implementation and operational areas	3
1.4. Participants	4
2. Achievement of objectives	4
3. Link to other Frontex activities and best practices	4
3.1. JO Focal Points 2017 Land	4
3.2. JO Flexible Operational Activities 2016 Land on border surveillance	4
4. Operational Results	5
5. Financial information	6

1. Background information

1.1. Brief Risk assessment

The concept of the Joint Operation Flexible Operational Activities Land on Border Checks is specific when compared to other joint operations due to the nature and duration of the seconded Team Members (sTMs) deployment. These elements provide a long-term strategic value to the operation.

The deployments (and redeployments if necessary) of seconded Team Members provided constant operational support at the specific Focal Points located in the operational areas. The risk assessment and emerging operational needs at the particular Focal Points were assessed prior to the deployments and redeployments in order to provide tailored and efficient operational support to the host MSs.

1.2. Operational aim

The aim of JO was to provide a constant operational presence of sTMs at the specific Focal Points located in the operational areas facing high irregular migration pressure and/or having the higher passengers traffic and high numbers rated to the cross-border crimes detected at the border crossing points. The risk assessment and emerging operational needs at the particular Focal Points was considered prior the deployments in order to provide tailored and efficient operational support to the host MSs.

The main objectives of the joint operation were achieved by deploying sTMs with different profiles, in particular Second Line Officers (SLO), Advanced Level Document Experts (ALDO) and Stolen Vehicle Detection Officers (SVDO) and by combining different types of operational activities, namely: border checks, second line control and intelligence gathering.

1.3. Period of implementation and operational areas

The joint operation was implemented during the period 1 February 2017 - 31 January 2018.

During the operation 25 Focal Points were activated at the following border sections:

- Estonian - Russian
- Latvian - Russian
- Lithuanian - Belorussian
- Polish - Belorussian
- Polish - Ukrainian
- Slovakian - Ukrainian
- Hungarian - Ukrainian
- Croatian - Serbian
- Croatian - Bosnian
- Croatian - Montenegrin
- Romanian - Moldovan
- Romanian - Serbian
- Bulgarian - Serbian
- Bulgarian - Turkish
- Greek - Albanian
- Greek - former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

1.4. Participants

JO Flexible Operational Activities 2017 Land on Border Checks was hosted by Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia (10 Host Member States). Seconded Team Members from Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain (10 Home Member States) were deployed, in total 38 experts with profiles advanced-level document officer, stolen vehicle detection officer, second-line officer. The deployment period from 3 till 7 months with additional continuation in 2018.

2. Achievement of objectives

- Enhance border security - The objective has been achieved.
- Enhance operational cooperation - The objective has been achieved.
- Enhance exchange of information - The objective has been achieved.
- Identify possible risks and threats - The objective has been achieved.
- Establish and exchange best practices - The objective has been achieved.
- Support establishment of permanent structures - The objective has been achieved.
- Support provision of trainings - The objective has been achieved.

3. Link to other Frontex activities and best practices

3.1. JO Focal Points 2017 Land

Within the framework of JO FOA 2017 BCP sTMs were working in close cooperation with TMs deployed in the framework of JO Focal Points 2017 on daily basis and exchanged information and experience with local staff of activated Focal Points. While the reporting system remained exclusively under JO Focal Points 2017 land, sTMs were providing to Frontex Monthly Reports as well as daily activity reports in JORA. Both reports included information about sTMs daily/monthly performance, observations, recommendations and statistics.

STMs with three different profiles, in particular Second Line Officers (SLO), Advanced-Level Document Experts (ALDO) and Stolen Vehicle Detection Officers (SVDO), were deployed and in case of need redeployed or extended for a longer period. Longer deployments allowed to respond better to the border related challenges. They were also available 24/7 over the phone to check persons, documents and vehicles involved in facilitation of irregular immigration and/or cross-border crimes.

3.2. JO Flexible Operational Activities 2016 Land on border surveillance

Within the framework of JO FOA 2017 BCP the deployments of sTMs took place in SE and WB operational area. When being deployed in the operational areas of JO FOA 2017 BCU, sTMs were supporting the reporting system established within this operation as well as they followed the chain of command accordingly. Exchange of information among TMs/sTMs deployed in both flexible operations took place on daily basis. Experts deployed in

the same operational area participated in the same local briefing meetings that from the very beginning facilitated the operational cooperation by strengthening the exchange of information process. Additionally, upon requests sTMs provided trainings on stolen vehicles or/and verification of travel documents. They were also available 24/7 over the phone to check persons, documents and vehicles involved in facilitation of irregular immigration and/or cross-border crimes, both at BCPs and border surveillance.

4. Operational Results

The analysis exclusively used operational data submitted and validated between 1 February 2017 and 31 January 2018. This analysis only used operational data from the same Focal Points that were active in JO Focal Points 2017 Land or/and JO Flexible Operational Activities 2017 land on Border Checks. The data collection process has been agreed with Member States and the JORA reporting system was used for submitting statistical data to Frontex.

Operational results of the JO Focal Points 2016 Land/JO FOA 2016 BCP in comparison with the JO Focal Points 2017 Land/JO FOA 2017 BCP are shown in the table below.

	2016	2017
Refusal of entry	114 176 persons were refused entry.	A total of 72 656 ^[1] persons were refused entry at the Focal Points activated during the operational period of the JO FOA 2017 BCP. This represents a decrease of 36% compared with year 2016 (114 176 refusals reported from all FPs).
Overstay	12 837 overstayers were reported.	19 805 overstayers were reported. This figure is higher (+54%) than the figure recorded over the previous year operation.
Clandestine entries	713 clandestine entrants were apprehended.	A total of 390 incidents involving persons hidden in transport means were reported during the JO FOA 2017 BCP. Overall, 981 persons were apprehended hiding in vehicles at seven border sections; this represents an increase (+22%) compared to the figure recorded during the JO FOA 2016 BCP.
Asylum applications	7 815 asylum applicants were reported.	During the JO Focal Points 2016 Land, 1 591 ^[3] asylum claimants were reported. It represents a significant 80% decrease compared with the number of asylum claimants reported during the JO FOA 2016 BCP.
Falsified documents	3 083 falsified documents were detected.	A total of 3 192 falsified documents were reported during the JO FOA 2017 BCP with the indicator ' <i>Falsification/document fraud</i> '. Comparing to the JO FOA 2016 BCP, a 3.5% increase can be noted.

^[1] The total number of reported persons may differ from the total sum of persons per incident type as some persons might be included in more than one incident type (e.g.: Refusal of entry, Illegal border-crossing, Asylum, and so forth)".

^[3] The total number of reported persons may differ from the total sum of persons per incident type as some persons might be included in more than one incident type (e.g.: Illegal border-crossing, Asylum, and so forth)".

Stolen vehicles	322 stolen vehicles were reported.	During the JO Focal Points 2016 Land, 301 stolen vehicles were detected. It represents a 6% decrease compared with 322 cases reported during the JO FOA 2016 BCP.
Smuggling of goods	973 smuggling incidents were reported.	During the JO FOA 2017 BCP, 834 incidents, involving 864 persons, related to smuggling activities were reported. Most of the incidents (616 cases) were related to cigarettes smuggling, followed by 57 incidents reported as 'other' (associated with the smuggling of fresh meat or cheese, fox fur, waste as well as the detection of cars with the status of end-of-life, the detection of stolen bikes or industrial tool reported in SIS as stolen), 54 cases reported as 'other drugs (smuggling of ecstasy, medical pills and anabolic steroids), 49 incidents related to marijuana smuggling, 20 to weapon smuggling, 11 to alcohol, 7 to tobacco, 6 to hashish, 6 to heroine, 4 to ammunition, 3 to cocaine and one to opium smuggling.

5. Financial information

Final budget: 709,000.00 EUR