

FRONTEX EVALUATION REPORT

Joint Operation Flexible Operational Activities 2018 Land on Border Checks

Operational Response Division
Field Deployment Unit

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[signed]
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1. Background information

1.1. Introduction

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.

The sTMs were deployed in the operational area of the JO Focal Points 2018 land at the selected land Focal Points. Their long term deployment as well as the high level of the expertise of the officers provided a tailored and flexible operational support to host Member States (MS).

Having in mind that sTMs were deployed in the operational area of the JO Focal Points 2018 land, the reporting of incidents was accomplished exclusively under the JO Focal Points 2018 Land and hence the same statistical data is generated by both JOs.

1.2. Operational aim

The aim of the 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 higher passenger traffic and high numbers rated to the cross-border crimes detected at the Border Crossing Points (BCP). The risk assessment and emerging operational needs at the particular Focal Points was considered prior to 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 First Line Officers, Second Line Officers, Advanced Level Document Experts and Stolen Vehicle Detection Officers and by combining different types of operational activities, namely: first line activities, second line control and debriefing.

1.3. Period of implementation and operational areas

The joint operation was implemented in the period from 31 January 2018 - 30 January 2019.

During the operation 26 Focal Points were activated at the following border sections:

- Estonian - Russian
- Lithuanian - Belorussian
- Lithuanian - Russian
- Polish - Belorussian
- Polish - Ukrainian
- Polish - Russian
- Slovakian - Ukrainian
- Croatian - Serbian
- Croatian - Bosnian
- Croatian - Montenegrin
- Romanian - Moldovan
- Romanian - Serbian

- Bulgarian - Serbian
- Bulgarian - Turkish
- Greek - Albanian
- Greek - North Macedonian
- Greek - Turkish

1.4. Participants

The JO Flexible Operational Activities 2018 Land on Border Checks was hosted by Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia (8 Host Member States). Seconded Team Members from Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Spain (10 Participating Member States) were deployed, totalling 32 experts with different profiles: Advanced-Level Document Officer, Stolen Vehicle Detection Officer, Second-Line Officer, First-Line Officer. The minimum deployment period was 3 months and the longest deployment lasted 12 months.

2. Achievement of objectives

- Enhance border security - The objective was achieved.
- Enhance operational cooperation - The objective was partly achieved.
- Enhance exchange of information - The objective was partly achieved.
- Identify possible risks and threats - The objective was achieved.
- Establish and exchange best practices - The objective was achieved.

3. Link to other Frontex activities and best practices

3.1. JO Focal Points 2018 Land

Due to the fact, that the JO Flexible Operational Activities 2018 on Border Crossing Points was implemented at the existing Focal Points the only difference was the length of the deployments.

Within the framework of the JO FOA 2018 BCP, sTMs were working in close cooperation with TMs deployed in the framework of the JO Focal Points 2018 on daily basis and exchanged information and experience with local staff of activated Focal Points. While the reporting system remained exclusively under the JO Focal Points 2018 land, sTMs were providing monthly reports as well as daily activity reports to Frontex using JORA. Both reports included information about sTMs daily/monthly performance, observations, recommendations and statistics.

sTMs with different profiles, in particular Second Line Officers, Advanced-Level Document Officers, Stolen Vehicle Detection Officers and First Line Officers, were deployed/redeployed from 3 up to 11 months. Longer deployments allowed flexibility and faster response to the border related challenges.

3.2. JO Flexible Operational Activities 2018 Land on border surveillance

sTMs deployed to Focal Points in the operational areas of Local Coordination Centres established in the operational structure of the JO FOA 2018 BCU were also following reporting and command and control system of the JO FOA 2018 BCU. The Focal Points sTMs participated in the briefing and debriefing meetings as well as in the weekly ICC meetings where they provided information on their activities.

The JO FOA 2018 BCP supported the implementation of the JO FOA 2018 BCU in information gathering and reporting process, interviews of passengers, irregular migrants or facilitators and providing any other necessary operational support.

Full integration of Focal Points sTMs in the established coordination as well as command and control structure of the JO FOA 2018 BCU were considered both by sTMs and the hosting Member States to be effective and beneficial having in mind its positive effect on information exchange.

3.3. JO Coordination Points 2018 Land

Communication between sTMs deployed to different Frontex coordinated operational activities was an important part of effective information exchange. In the course of implementation of the JO Coordination Points 2018 Land, deployed EU experts exchanged information and experience several times with the sTMs deployed to Focal Points and vice versa. The FOSS platform and its content regarding the JO Coordination Point 2018 Land was made available for all sTMs deployed.

4. Operational Results

The analysis exclusively used operational data submitted and validated between 31 January 2018 and 30 January 2019. This analysis only used operational data from the same Focal Points that were active in JO Focal Points 2018 Land or/and JO Flexible Operational Activities 2018 land on Border Checks. The data collection process had 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 2018 Land/JO FOA 2018 BCP in comparison with the JO Focal Points 2017/JO FOA 2017 BCP Land are shown in the table below.

Type of incident	JO FP 2017 Land	JO FP 2018 Land*	% change
Refusals of entry (persons)	72 708	52 374 ¹	-28 %
Overstay (persons)	19 805	18 754	-5 %
Clandestine entry (persons)	1 013	2 460	+143 %

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)".

Asylum applications (persons)	1 553 ²	865³	-44 %
False documents (incidents)	2 664	2 225⁴	-16 %
Stolen vehicles (incidents)	301	372	+24 %
Smuggling of goods (incidents)	834	979	+17 %

* JORA data as of 11 February 2019

5. Financial information

The estimated operational budget of Joint Operation Flexible Operational Activities land 2018 on Border Checks amounted to € 627,832.

² 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)".

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⁴ The term of false/falsified documents includes also fraudulently obtained documents, stolen blanks and impostors;