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FRONTEX EVALUATION REPORT 2018

Pulsar Concept Joint Operation Pegasus 2018

Operational Response Division
Field Deployment Unit

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[signed]
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1. Background information

1.1. Brief risk assessment and operational concept

Joint Operation Pegasus 2018 was based on the operational concept which had been introduced in 2014. This concept consists in deploying Frontex Seconded Team Members with specific skills at selected airports in order to interview targeted irregular migrants and assess the level and the nature of a possible threat. The purpose of the analysis performed by Frontex was to propose relevant operational activity or to put forward suggestions as to how to tackle a possible threat.

Seconded Team Members who were deployed during the Joint Operation at EU airports were requested to undertake second-line interviews with migrants whose profiles matched the threat/emerging phenomena which were identified in the first steps of the deployment.

Based on the threats identified by the Frontex Risk Analysis it was decided that 7 airports would take part in the Joint Operation (hence, the first wave of team members was deployed there).

EMPACT Joint Action Days (JAD) Olympus 2018

JAD Olympus was prepared within the framework of the EMPACT Illegal Immigration Operational Action Plan for 2018. The JAD was co-led with France with whom several bilateral meetings were held. A final briefing was held for country representatives on 26 September 2018 and the action took place between 8 and 21 October 2018. It specifically sought to identify organized criminal involvement in document fraud related to irregular migration. The activity itself was also undertaken within the framework of other Frontex joint air operations and involved the participation of partners from Europol and Interpol, and was performed at 9 MS/SAC airports.

1.2. Operational aim

Joint Operation Pegasus 2018 was implemented under the umbrella of the Pulsar Concept. The main aim of JO Pegasus 2018 was to focus upon and to provide operational support against identified threats at Member State airports as indicated by Frontex through the Pulsar information reaction mechanism.

1.3. Period of implementation and operational areas

The Joint Operation was implemented from 21 February to 31 December 2018 in the operational area formed by 7 airports of Member States.

1.4. Participants

A total of 6 Member States¹ with 7 participating airports took part in the Joint Operation Pegasus 2018. During the implementation, 5 *seconded Team Members (2 females and 3 males) and 2 International Organisation representatives* were deployed at these airports according to operational requirements for a total of 530 man-days covering the profiles of Second-Line Officer and Interview Expert.

1.5. Financial information

The total committed budget for JO Pegasus 2018 amounted to € 118 762.

2. Achievement of objectives

1. **Enhance exchange of knowledge among officers (Frontex and MS & SAC) - Achieved**
Deployment of Team Members and seconded Team Members.

¹ The 4 Participating Member States: Estonia, Italy, Portugal, Spain.

2. **Enhance border security (Frontex and MS & SAC) - Achieved**
Supported targeted response focusing on targets/ recommendations according to available capacities.
3. **Enhance exchange of information (Frontex, MS & SAC) - Partially Achieved**
Create Bi-weekly Analytical Updates
4. **Identify risks and threat - Achieved**
Interview selected passengers based on risk analysis indications & collect information with local authorities
5. **Maximise the potential of the EMPACT programme so that it meets the needs of Member State border guards- Achieved**
On the basis of intelligence received by Europol, JAD Olympus delivered 19 arrests for offences relating to facilitation of illegal entry, trafficking in human beings and document fraud.

3. Link to other Frontex activities and best practices

All activities within JO Pegasus 2018 were designed to allow parallel or complementary operational actions and to take advantage of other Frontex projects and products, especially the ones implemented by the Law Enforcement Sector and Field Deployment Unit (e.g. VEGA Countermeasures Handbook, Reference Manual or air border joint operations running concurrently).

4. Operational results

4.1. Situational Awareness

Threats and Risks, *modus operandi* and trends identified

The Joint Operation highlighted some aspects of irregular migration and trafficking in human beings at the EU's external air borders, some of them being already observed in the framework of other Frontex Joint Operations.

Total number of detected persons broken down according to indicators:

- 287 asylum
- 31 others
- 82 refusals of entry
- 2 facilitators

Statistics per nationality

The airports participating in the Joint Operation reported a total of **38** nationalities, including all indicators: asylum seekers, smugglers of human beings, irregular migrants, facilitated irregular migrants, over-stayers, victims of trafficking, others.

4.2. EU added value of the operational activity

This activity delivered the following main benefits:

- Increased targeted reaction capabilities;
- Better allocation of limited resources (officers with specific knowledge/expertise);
- Sharper perception of current illegal migration trends;
- Enhanced situational awareness leading to improved focused recommendations;

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- Flexible and more targeted reaction capabilities;
- Synergies developed with the activities of other key partners.