FRONTEX EVALUATION REPORT

JO Coordination Points 2018 Sea

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[signed]
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In recent years, according to the data reported in the WB-RAN network, the migratory pressure at the Albanian sea borders has been considerably low, with only 1 irregular migrant reported in 2015, 17 irregular migrants in 2016 and 8 irregular migrants in 2017. In 2018, only 2 irregular migrants were reported to be involved in an illegal border crossing during the first quarter of the year.

However, the data provided by the Albanian authorities in 2018, indicated the following operational situation at the maritime borders in 2017:

- 49 incidents on illegal border crossing;
- 8 incidents on trafficking in human beings, with 15 persons identified as victims of trafficking in human beings;
- 93 incidents on falsification/document fraud, involving 95 persons;
- 23 incidents on stolen vehicles;
- 11 incidents on smuggling of goods.

The numbers of incidents related to document fraud increased by 144% in 2018 compared with 2017, when only 36 incidents were reported.

The Ukrainian maritime borders

The level of migratory flows at the Ukrainian sea borders is low, with no significant changes in the recent years. In 2015-2017, Ukraine reported only 26 illegal border crossings at its sea borders (21 irregular migrants in 2015, 3 irregular migrants in 2016 and 2 irregular migrants in 2017). In the same period, additional 26 clandestine entries at its maritime BCPs were reported. In addition, a total of 1 288 persons were refused entry in 2017, mainly from Syria (281), Morocco (116) and Algeria (113).

1.2. Operational aim

The operational aim of the joint operation (JO) was to maintain and further develop the platforms for exchange of information and experience related to the early detection of recent, actual and future illegal immigration trends towards the EU through the territory of Third Countries (TC) as well as any form of cross-border crime in relation to the components of the European integrated border management, in accordance with the mandate of Frontex.

The operational aims had been implemented in full compliance with the relevant EU law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the relevant international law, including the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees from 1951, the respect for fundamental rights, in particular the access to international protection, and the compliance with the principle of non-refoulement and taking into account the recommendations of the Frontex Consultative Forum.

1.3. Period of implementation and operational areas

The JO was implemented during the period from 5 June until 27 November 2018. The deployment periods and operational areas were as follow:

BCP in Albania

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Commencement	5 June 2018	12:00 (local time)
Termination	28 August 2018	12:00 (local time)

BCPs in Ukraine

Commencement	25 September 2018	12:00 (local time)
Termination	27 November 2018	12:00 (local time)

1.4. Participants

The JO was hosted by Albania and Ukraine.

2 Member States (MSs)[1], namely Bulgaria and Italy, participated in the JO by deploying 5 Team Members (TMs) as EU Advisers/Observers.

One national authority from each MS participated in the JO.

1.5. Financial information

The budget initially planned for the JO amounted to 100,000€. After adjustments, the estimated operational budget amounted to 27,090€.

2. Achievement of objectives

Enhance border security - <u>Partly achieved</u>:

- Supporting the national authorities in disclosing cases of smuggling of migrants, trafficking in human beings and other cross-border crime.

Enhance operational cooperation - <u>Partly achieved:</u>

- High level of MS participation in the operational activities;
- Enhanced cooperation between national authorities of host TC as well as on an international level.

Enhance exchange of information - <u>Partly achieved</u>:

- Collection of operational information from all actors involved in order to obtain intelligence;
- Distribution of operational information to all involved actors through authorized channels;
- Implementation of fully automated online reporting system; seeking standardized format and quality of the reports;
- Use of the "Guidelines for JORA Incident Template" giving detailed information on definitions and establishing a sets of priorities when selecting the appropriate attributes.

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[1] *For the purposes of the present document, the term "Member State" includes also the States participating in the relevant development of the Schengen acquis in the meaning of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and its Protocol (No 19) on the Schengen acquis integrated into the framework of the European Union, that is Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Iceland.*

Identify possible risks and threats – <u>Partly achieved</u>:

- Monitoring political, economic and social situation in the countries of origin and transit.

Establish and exchange best practices – <u>Achieved</u>:

- Delivering and supporting workshops, ad hoc trainings, meetings, operational briefings, and other networking events to participants;
- Delivering and supporting operational briefings/debriefings to all participants of the joint operations including information on the fundamental rights and access to international protection;
- Supporting targeted training activities.

3.   Link to other Frontex activities and best practices

Positive synergies stemming from previous cooperation between TCs and Frontex had been achieved and provided increased value, as the national authorities of the host TCs were already familiar with the Frontex coordinated JOs (JO CP 2018 Land), which facilitated the smooth planning and implementation of the JO CP 2018 Sea.

4.   Assessment of joint operational activities

Coordination Points were established at the BCPs within seaports of Albania and Ukraine, where deployed TMs from the EU MS acted as EU Advisers/Observers, with the aim to enhance operational cooperation between MS and respective TC.

The deployed TMs had provided support and advice to the TC local officers in border checks, during the second line checks at the seaports. In many cases, the request to support consisted of checking (in the EU MS data bases – i.e. SIS) the presence of records related to TC nationals intending to leave the country.

The JO CP 2018 Sea in Ukraine had been implemented with strong support and cooperation from the European Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (hereinafter – EUBAM), acting as backup and liaison body between the EU Advisers/Observers deployed in the framework of the JO when requested/needed.

The Albanian maritime border

During the JO 19 incidents were reported by respective Albanian BCPs, as follows:

- Detection related to migration
  - 10 incidents related to falsification/document fraud, involving 10 irregular migrants;
  - 1 incident related to migrants avoiding border controls involving 2 irregular migrants.

- Cross-border crime
  - 2 cases related to smuggling of drugs;
  - 5 cases related to stolen vehicles;
  - 1 case related to the seizure of 3.340.000 EUR and 80.000 CHF. It is suspected that the money had been connected to drug smuggling.

The Ukrainian maritime borders

No incidents were reported in the course of the implementation period at the Ukrainian BCPs.