

Klaus-Heiner Lehne
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European Court of Auditors
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Our ref: ICO/JOMA/8149a/2019
Please quote when replying

Warsaw, 04 OCT 2019

Subject: Frontex' official replies

Dear Mr Lehne,

With reference to your letter dated 11 July 2019 enclosing the Preliminary Observations on "Asylum, relocation and return of migrants: Significant disparities between objectives set, actions taken and results achieved", please find attached the Agency's official replies. Please be informed that the translations of the replies will be provided shortly.

Yours sincerely,



Fabrice Leggeri

Executive Director

Annex: Frontex' official replies

The European Border and Coast Guard

Agency's reply

Potential of Frontex return support unrealised

101. The organisation of return operations by charter flight open to the participation of other Member States (whenever possible according to applicable bilateral/EU agreements with Third Countries of destination) has proved to be a good tool to mitigate the risk of underused capacity of aircrafts provided that possible higher numbers of returnees from different Member States increases the likelihood of last minutes replacement of passengers no longer able to depart.

Recommendation 4 – Adjust Frontex's return support and experts' deployment to the hotspots

Frontex accepts the Recommendation

a) In order to further increase Member States' awareness of the operational support that Frontex offers and to better exploit the complementarity of the funding and support available to the Member States through the Agency and AMIF, the Agency has defined and shared with Member States and the European Commission a catalogue of available Frontex services in the field of return. An even more coordinated approach has been defined for the upcoming new EU financial instrument for return-related activities (Asylum and Migration Fund will succeed to AMIF), where the role of the Agency in the assessment of Member States' annual programs has been foreseen;

b) Frontex has already significantly increased the share (almost 100%) of multi-profile forced-return escorts who support readmission operations from Greece to Turkey. When not deployed in readmission operations, the multi-profile escort officers carry out other duties based on operational needs (e.g. as finger-printers, border surveillance);

c) The number of Frontex experts supporting in the hotspots has been adjusted to the level of occurring arrivals there. Relocations of the experts towards other Joint Operations are made based on the operational needs. As of May 2019, Frontex has deployed Mobile Teams of Experts to Catania, with the capacity to support needed disembarkations throughout the operational area. Adaptation of the level of resources deployment is an ongoing process which is constantly further assessed.