# Evaluation and future development of the FRONTEX Agency and a European Border Surveillance System EUROSUR

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The European Parliament adopted, by 429 votes to 76 with 58 abstentions, a resolution on the evaluation and future development of the FRONTEX Agency and of the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR).

The own-initiative report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Javier **MORENO SÁNCHEZ** (PES, ES) on behalf of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs.

Parliament recalls its point of view which is that illegal immigration is a common European challenge and therefore requires a common European policy. To this end, it calls on Member States to consider a **global approach** to the challenge of migration, seeking to achieve progress not only in stepping up **checks at the Union's borders**, in combating illegal immigration and returning illegal immigrants to their home countries, but also in **organising legal immigration** and measures to facilitate the integration of legal immigrants, in promoting a global partnership with third countries, and in establishing a consistent human rights policy at EU level.

Parliament considers that although FRONTEX is not a panacea for all the problems caused by irregular migration, however, it can help strengthen cross-border checks at the Union's borders. To continue to do so, the mandate of the FRONTEX Agency must be extended and resources, including financial, must be increased.

**Strengthening the mandate of the FRONTEX Agency**: Parliament calls on the Commission to review the mandate of the Agency in order to strengthen its role and make it more effective. It stresses the absolute need to increase the resources available to FRONTEX and regrets that some Member States have, so far, not demonstrated sufficient willingness to provide the necessary assets to FRONTEX. In this context, it calls on the Member States to formalise, as soon as possible, a system of **'compulsory and irrevocable solidarity'** of the Member States. It calls, in particular, for the removal of uncertainty as to the extent of the resources it can count on in real time and ask that Member States clearly define the material resources they can make available to the Agency (especially in terms of surface assets). In the event that those resources are not provided, Member States are called upon to take a rapid decision on altering the scale of FRONTEX's budget to enable it to carry out its missions. In this context, it recalls that it, as an arm of the budgetary authority, has already increased FRONTEX's budget since the Agency's inception and will ensure that the budget is correctly implemented.

Parliament also calls for the:

- development of logistic and administrative capacities through the setting up of **two distinct external offices** - one coordinating activities at land borders, the other for sea operations;
- establishment of permanent and uninterrupted operational joint surveillance patrols all year round in all high-risk areas, particularly at sea borders where there is a serious risk of loss of life;
- establishment of precise legal conditions for FRONTEX's **sea rescue operations**;
- extension of the Agency's scope to include the fight against **human trafficking**.

The Agency is also called on to:

- **Cooperate with third countries**: Parliament welcomes the major cooperation efforts that have been achieved by almost all the third countries with which FRONTEX has been called upon to cooperate but regrets that co-operation on immigration is still lacking in other cases, such as Turkey and Libya. It calls for measures to strengthen cooperation in the field of immigration with third countries and to conclude readmission agreements;
- **Respect human rights**: Parliament calls for the mandate of FRONTEX to explicitly include an obligation to meet international human rights standards and a duty towards asylum seekers in rescue operations at high sea. Cooperation with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and other relevant non-governmental organisations should also be formalised within the mandate. It calls on the Commission to fully evaluate FRONTEX's activities with regard to their impact on fundamental freedoms and rights, including the 'responsibility to protect'.
- **Strengthen its role in return operations**: FRONTEX should strengthen its role in supporting joint return operations. Member States should involve FRONTEX when planning and organising joint return flights.

**EUROSUR**: in the interest of coherence, FRONTEX should be given the task of assembling the available tools, and in particular of managing the secure web-based Information and Coordination Network for Member States' Migration Management Services (ICONET) and of resuming the work of the Centre for Information, Discussion and Exchange on the Crossing of Frontiers and Immigration (CIREFI). FRONTEX should also cooperate with Europol and other European agencies, as well as with other international bodies and third country border control authorities.

**Towards a common policy on border management**: Parliament considers the objective of truly EU integrated border management as legitimate and agree that it is important to continuously develop and strengthen it. It stresses, however, the need for an evaluation and assessment of existing systems and those under preparation before moving ahead with the new building blocks. It calls in particular for a comprehensive master plan, setting out the overall architecture of the **EU's border strategy**.

**Strengthening democratic control**: while Parliament calls for the strengthening of the role and impact of FRONTEX, it also calls for the strengthening of its democratic control by the European Parliament. It calls on the Agency to inform Parliament of negotiations to conclude agreements signed with third countries, to present tactical assessments focused on particular border regions, and to publish evaluation reports on joint operations and other coordinated missions. It also points out that democratic oversight of FRONTEX's activities would enhance its legitimacy.