European Border and Coast Guard

2015/0310(COD) - 25/01/2017 - Follow-up document

The Commission presented a report to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council on the operationalisation of the European Border and Coast Guard.

The report recalled that the European Border and Coast Guard was established in **record time** given that on 15 December 2015, the European Commission presented a legislative proposal and that the Regulation on European Border and Coast Guard entered into force on 6 October 2016. The rapid reaction and return pools became respectively operational on 7 December 2016 and 7 January 2017.

The Regulation establishing the European Border and Coast Guard grants the primary role to the Member States in reinforcing the control at the external border, on the basis of their own existing capacities of more than **100 000 border and coast guard officers.**

Objective of the report: the report takes stock of the progress made in three months in the set priority areas and identifies next steps to be taken. It is the first in a series of regular reports which will serve to contribute to have the right tools and responses in place for a **much better protection of the external borders**.

Based on the pre-existing pools of the European Border and Coast Guard teams and of Technical Equipment, the Agency provides the biggest operational support in the frontline Member States that it has provided so far.

Main conclusions of the report: to reinforce the manpower of the responsible national border guard, currently more than 1550 members of the European Border and Coast Guard Teams are deployed in regular joint operations by the Agency at the external borders of the frontline Member States. By way of example, this means that the numbers deployed to Greece join up with the approximately 10 000 Greek border and coast guard officers. These teams are assisted by 24 boats and vessels, 6 aircrafts and helicopters, more than 80 patrol cars and 13 thermo-vision vehicles.

The report also reviews other major achievements of the Agency in three months, including the establishment (*inter alia*) of:

760 officers deployed to Greece in order to assist in border control, implementation of the hotspot approach (registration points and emergency migration zones);

600 officers deployed to Italy and the operations in the Central Mediterranean.

The report recalled the Agency’s priorities and the next steps to be taken.

Further priority areas were identified by the report:

1. putting in place the mandatory pooling of resources to enhance the Agency’s rapid reaction capability;

2. carrying out preventive vulnerability assessments based on a common methodology;

3. enhancing the support for return activities;

4. establishing the complaint mechanism;

5. paving the way for better operational cooperation with priority third countries by setting a model status agreement for deploying the Agency's operational activities in third countries.

The process for the preventive mechanism for detecting and addressing Member States' vulnerabilities, which forms an essential part of this new approach for a much better border protection, has now been started. Early results of this work need to feed into fixing as a matter of priority the **most urgent vulnerabilities being identified**.

Delivering on returning irregular migrants is another priority where the Agency must considerably enhance its support alongside stepped-up efforts by the Member States. Building on the good results already achieved, it should develop new tools to provide enhanced support on return.

The Commission will report again on the progress made to reinforce the external borders on 1 March 2017.