

European Border and Coast Guard

2015/0310(COD) - 02/03/2017 - Follow-up document

This report constitutes the **2nd report** from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council on operationalisation of the European Border and Coast Guard.

Aim of the report: the aim of the report is to review the **progress made since January 2017** on the **entry into operation of the European Border and Coast Guard** and to reviewed the implementation of each of the steps laid down in the 1st progress report.

In particular, this report indicated that the Agency should continue to provide operational support on the ground to Member States in the area of border management. The new annual cycle for deploying the Agency's operational activities in the frontline Member States started on 1 February 2017 with around 1350 border guards and other relevant staff being deployed by the Agency at different sections of the EU external border.

Despite these important deployments, **the running operations continue to be confronted with gaps**, both in terms of human resources and technical equipment as compared to the needs assessed by the Agency in accordance with risk analysis.

These gaps have to be filled by Member States to ensure that the operational objectives of joint operations to provide the required support to the frontline border sections are not undermined and such a situation does not ultimately result in an emergency requiring the **launch of a rapid border intervention**.

The biggest deployments of the Agency are currently addressing the migratory pressures on the **Eastern Mediterranean, Central Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes**.

Main conclusions of the report: the second report showed that all stakeholders have continued to work intensively to roll out the activities and tools of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation to ensure a reinforced capability to protect the external borders is in place as soon as possible.

In particular, most of the Member States have provided the necessary data for the purpose of the vulnerability assessment which is an important step to achieve an effective preventive approach.

Equally, the fast progress in the Council in view of the expected swift adoption of the decisions by the Council authorising the Commission to **start the formal negotiations** with Serbia and the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** on the status agreements shows the continued **political priority** given to operationalising the European Border and Coast Guard.

However, further steps should be taken by the Member States to urgently ensure the full operational capability of the rapid reaction pools, in particular to fill the gaps for the Rapid Reaction Equipment Pool, as well as to continue joint efforts in **supporting the frontline Member States** (Greece, Italy and Bulgaria) in the effective management of the external borders with the requested deployments for the on-going joint operations.

Member States need also to exploit the potential offered by the reinforced Agency to assist in the area of return operations by notifying their indicative planning on return operations.

The Commission invited the Council to discuss progress on the basis of this report and endorsed the proposed concrete steps to bring forward the operationalisation of the European Border and Coast Guard.

The Commission will report again on the progress made to reinforce the external borders in Spring 2017.