European Border and Coast Guard

2015/0310(COD) - 02/05/2017 - Follow-up document

This report constitutes the **3rd 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 report examined the progress made **since the beginning of March 2017** in the **operationalisation of the European Border and Coast Guard** and reviewed the implementation of each step identified in the first and second progress reports.

In particular, the report provided an update on the recently completed stages of the **vulnerability** assessment process and on the ongoing deployments to the **frontline Member States**. It also reported on the decisions and discussions held at the last meeting of the Management Board on 29-30 March 2017.

Lastly, the report outlined the important process to develop the central concept of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation, namely to **develop a strategic framework to ensure that the European Integrated Border Management** at the external borders is in place. This will further develop the principle of an integrated external border management system referred to in Article 77(2)(d) TFEU.

Main findings of the report: the third report showed that the roll-out of the activities and tools of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation to ensure as soon as possible a **reinforced EU capability** to protect the external borders has continued.

In particular, the Agency delivered the first baseline vulnerability assessments to almost all Member States, and will shortly make recommendations to the Member States concerned with concrete measures to **address the identified vulnerabilities**.

Equally, the swift adoption of the Council Decisions authorising the Commission to **negotiate with Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** status agreement and the immediate first round of the negotiations with Serbia show the continued political priority given to operationalising the European Border and Coast Guard.

However, **Member States have made insufficient progress in ensuring the full operational capability of the rapid reaction pools**, in particular to fill the gaps for the Rapid Reaction Equipment Pool. Similarly, further joint efforts are also needed to close continuing gaps for the deployments to the ongoing Joint Operations in support of the frontline Member States in the effective management of the external borders. These **gaps need to be addressed as a matter of priority**.

The Member States are also encouraged to better use the reinforced Agency's capacity to assist in the area of **return operations**.

Next steps: the report recalled that the European Border and Coast Guard Agency continues to provide operational support on the ground to Member States with over **1 500 border guards and others relevant staff** being deployed at different sections of the EU external borders.

In order to further organise this integrated border management, the Commission intends to:

- organise two dedicated workshops in June and September 2017, with the participation of representatives of the Member States and the European Parliament, to discuss the development of the policy framework for integrated European border management;

- adopt, by October 2017, a communication setting out the main elements of the policy framework for the European Integrated Border Management;

- include a Schengen evaluation on national strategies for integrated border management for 2018.

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency should:

- launch the process for the development of an operational and technical Integrated Border Management strategy in close cooperation with the Commission in the 2nd half of 2017;

- adopt the technical and operational strategy for the European Integrated Border Management by the Management Board, once the EU institutions agreed on the political Integrated Border Management strategy by February 2018;

- establish a special Schengen evaluation training for selected Integrated Border Management experts in close cooperation with the Commission.

Member States should:

- launch national processes to establish their national Integrated Border Management strategies in June-December 2017;

- align their respective national Integrated Border Management strategies with the political strategy and the technical and operational strategy within six months after the adoption of the latter;

- be prepared for a Schengen evaluation of their national Integrated Border Management strategies (starting late Autumn 2018).

The Commission looks forward to working together with the European Parliament, the Council and the Agency in **elaborating the strategic framework for a European Integrated Border Management**. It will report again on the progress made to reinforce the external borders in the summer of 2017.