

European Border and Coast Guard

2015/0310(COD) - 13/06/2017 - Follow-up document

This report constitutes the **4th 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: this report examined the progress made since the **beginning of May 2017** on the **entry into operation of the European Border and Coast Guard**.

In particular, it highlighted the key actions which the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the Commission and Member States need to take in the coming months.

The Agency has completed the **baseline vulnerability assessment for almost all Schengen States** regarding their capacity to cope with the challenges at their EU external border sections. This led the Agency to **identify vulnerabilities in a number of Schengen States** and **recommendations** to remedy the identified vulnerabilities.

As set out in the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation, the Agency will carry out **simulation exercises** and continue emerging threat assessments in view of assisting the Schengen States in identifying vulnerabilities related to possible future or already emerging challenges at the external borders.

The Agency has been carrying out joint operations along the main migratory routes, notably in the **Central Mediterranean, the Eastern Mediterranean and further on the Western Balkans** route. It also launched a new joint operation to address the irregular migratory flows on the Western Mediterranean route.

Main conclusions of the report: the fourth 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 and manage effectively its external borders, has continued.

In particular, the Agency delivered a **first set of recommendations to almost all Schengen States** - with concrete measures proposed to 20 of them - to address vulnerabilities, identified in the first baseline vulnerability assessments.

Further progress has been made in the negotiations with **Serbia** on the status agreement that - once concluded - will provide for a clear legal framework for operational cooperation between the border guard authorities of the Member States and Serbia, facilitated and coordinated by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

However, **Member States still have to deliver their commitments regarding the full operational capability of the rapid reaction pools**, in particular to fill the gaps for the Rapid Reaction Equipment Pool. Further efforts are also needed to close persisting 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.

Member States are also encouraged to rapidly increase the use of the reinforced capacity of the Agency to assist them in the area of **return operations**.

The push factors from migration to Europe remain. Therefore ensuring as soon as possible a **reinforced EU capability** to protect and manage effectively its external borders, should be still further accelerated.

In this regard, the Commission invited the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council to review the progress achieved so far and invites the Council to encourage the Agency and the competent authorities of the Schengen States to take the proposed steps.

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

The Agency continues providing operational support on the ground to Member States in border management with over **1 600 border guards and other relevant staff being deployed at different sections of the EU external borders**. However, Member States' contributions are needed to boost efficiently and sustainably the overall capacity of the host Member States to protect effectively their EU external border section.