

Background Information on FRONTEX - European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders

Purpose and background	<p>Frontex, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders was founded in 2005.</p> <p>It is the external border security agency of the European Union. Frontex is responsible for coordinating the activities of the national border guards in ensuring and strengthening the security of EU's borders with non-member states.</p> <p>It also coordinates the 'Rapid Border Intervention Teams' to be used when EU Member States face extreme difficulties in controlling their external borders. This enables the member state to use the expertise and manpower of border guards of other member states on a temporary basis.</p>
Tasks	<p>The main objectives of Frontex are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate cooperation between Member States concerning the management of EU's external borders• Assist in the training of national border guards• Carrying out risk analyses• Follow up the development of research relevant for the control and surveillance of external borders• Assist member states when increased technical and operational assistance is needed at their external borders, e.g. 'Rapid Border Intervention Teams'• Support member states in organising joint return operations
Structure	<p>The headquarters are located in Warsaw, Poland. At present Frontex has a 62 member staff. In five years' of time the agency is expected to have grown to double size.</p> <p>The Executive Director is Mr. Ilkka Laitinen.</p> <p>The agency became operational in October 2005 and was established by Council Regulation in 2004.</p> <p>The Frontex Regulation foresees close cooperation with other Community and EU agencies and institutions active in the field, such as EUROPOL, CEPOL, OLAF and customs service.</p>
State of play	<p>Currently it has been assigned by the EU to help address the flow of illegal immigrants heading towards Europe, in particular the immigrants heading towards Spain's Canary Islands and Malta.</p> <p>It is thereby fulfilling one of its main tasks to coordinate operational emergency border control assistance.</p>