

**FRONT****EX**

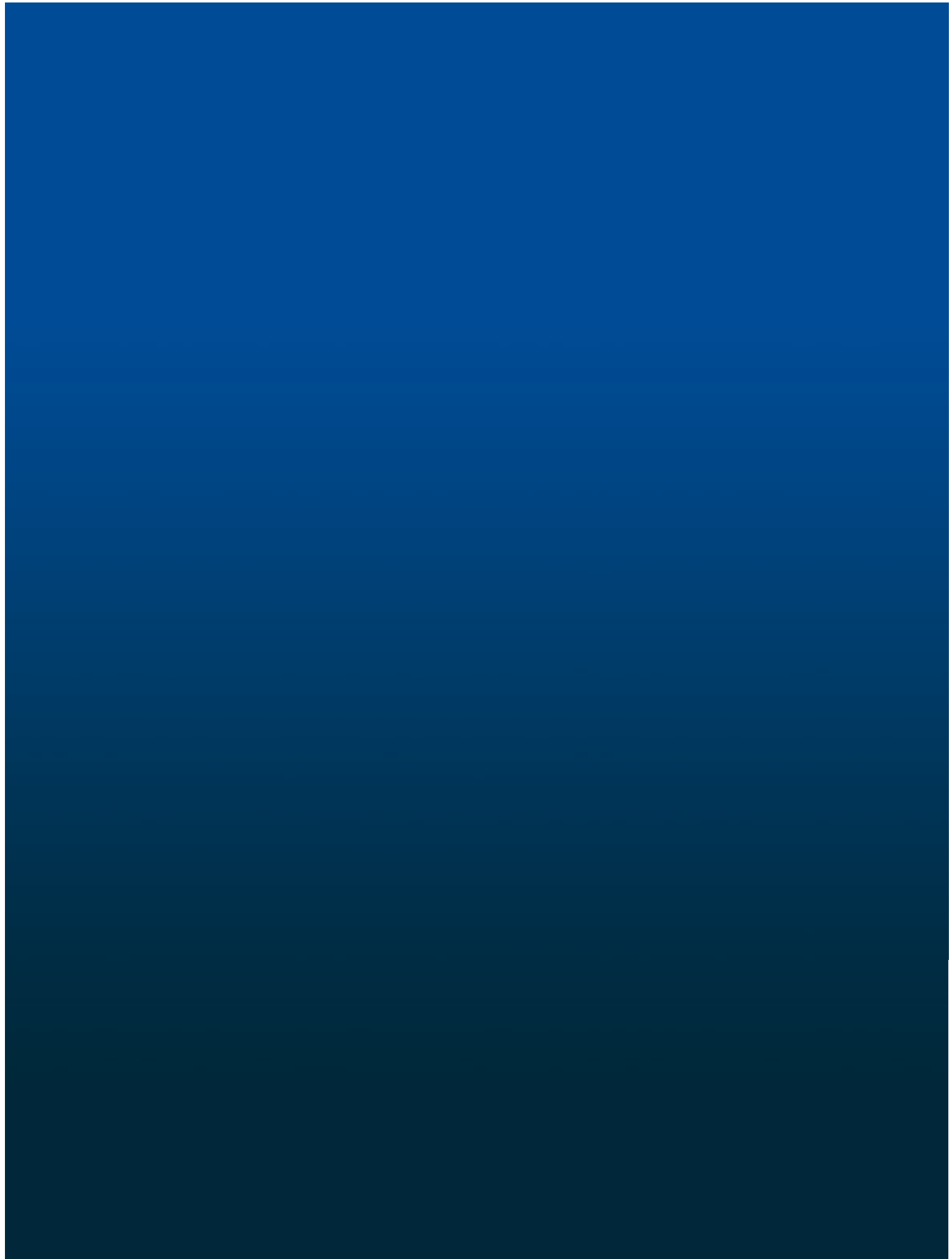


EUROPEAN BORDER AND  
COAST GUARD AGENCY

# 2022

**IN BRIEF**





# Why Frontex

# 1.

The recent threats and challenges at our external frontiers have tested the European Border and Coast Guard community. The war in Ukraine has transformed Europe and the way all of us see the Eastern borders, which until now have not experienced any events of this scale.

This first changed with the hybrid aggression by Belarus through the creation of an artificial migration route and was soon followed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine – which brought millions of refugees at the EU's doorsteps and border management challenges for years to come. These may include a rise in trafficking in human beings, especially children, as well as a rise of smuggling in weapons and other illegal goods.

Why does Europe need Frontex today? We are witnessing the highest number of illegal border crossings since 2016. We have seen how countries instrumentalise migration to achieve their political goals, and we have seen increasing violence at the borders.



Frontex, with more than 2000 standing corps officers working at the external borders each month, can make a difference. We have the expertise, we have the people, we have the equipment and capacities to support countries for the benefit of the whole European Union and the Schengen area.



FRONTEX, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, supports EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries in the management of the EU's external borders and the fight against cross-border crime.



With the **STANDING CORPS**, the European Union's first uniformed law enforcement service, Frontex has transformed into an operational arm of the EU. Hundreds of officers are taking part in operations at the external borders of the European Union and beyond.

# In transition

Frontex is an agency in transition. 2022 was marked by turbulences, not only at the borders, but also within Frontex. In a quest to improve the functioning and the accountability of Frontex, a number of measures have been taken that will be explored in this report.

Following the resignation of the previous Executive Director in May, Frontex has taken various actions to improve its activities. These actions

aim to enhance the agency as a workplace and an organisation with the central purpose of supporting Member States in securing the EU's common external borders. They range from improved budgetary and financial management to greater respect for fundamental rights throughout all of the agency's activities, to enhanced transparency to allow all stakeholders and EU citizens a better view and understanding of the essential activities of Frontex.



May 24

🇪🇺 needs a strong and well-functioning Frontex. I met standing corps officers at the external border and saw how much they are appreciated by the people they work with. I am proud of you – said EU Commissioner for Home Affairs @YlvaJohansson during an address to #Frontex staff.

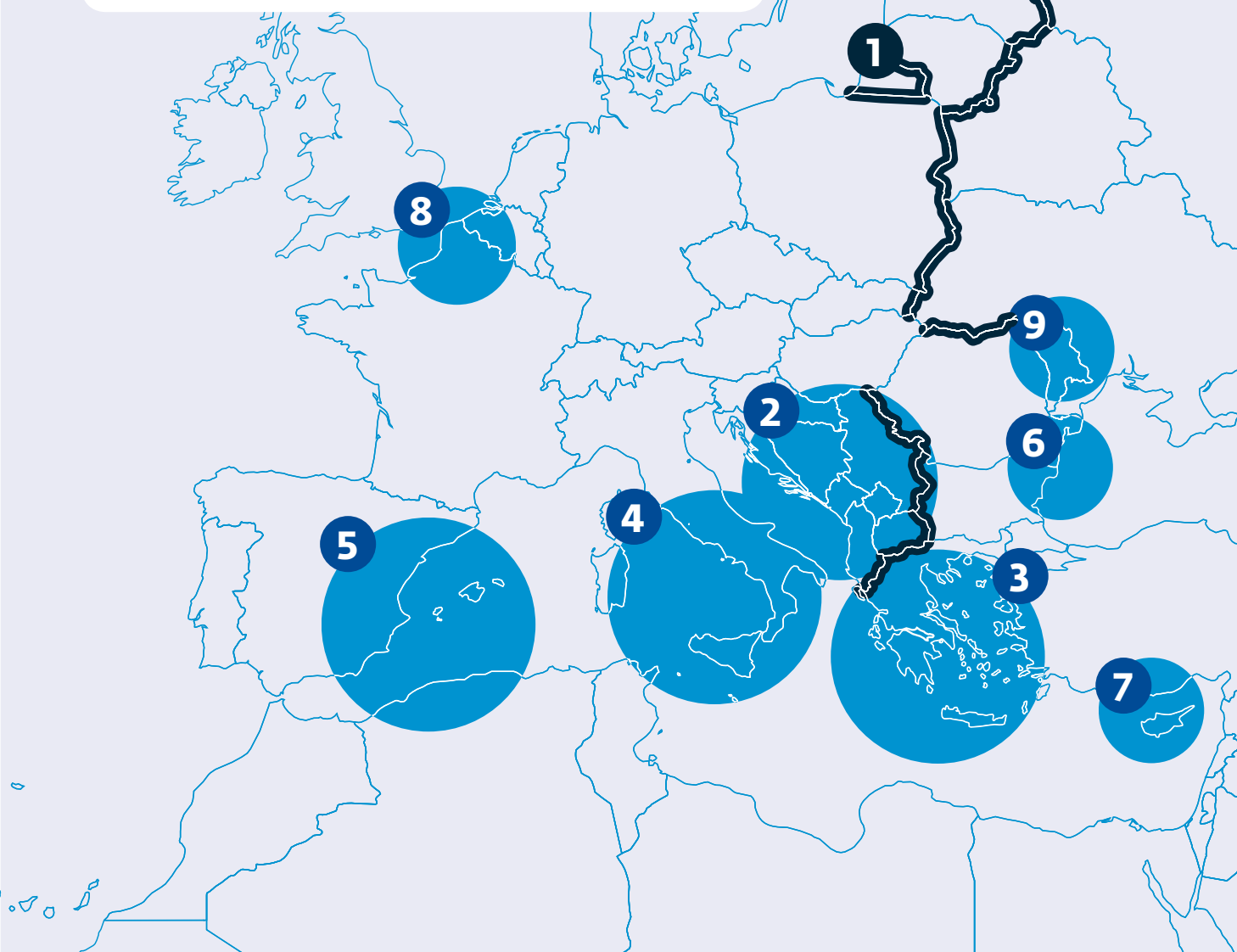
## CHANGES IN 2022

- Strengthening of the Fundamental Rights Office: creation of a network of fundamental rights focal points in all its entities to develop fundamental rights expertise in all areas of activity;
- Completion of the recruitment of 40 fundamental rights monitors;
- Establishment of an internal audit for better governance, compliance and accountability in Frontex;
- Revision of the Serious Incident Reporting mechanism in 2021 to improve the reporting on events at the external borders, including fundamental rights violations;
- Prioritising the well-being of staff and fostering a change of management culture within the agency.

# Where we are

# 2.

- 1 Land Operation Terra
- 2 Western Balkans
- 3 Greece
- 4 Italy
- 5 Spain
- 6 Multipurpose Maritime Operation Black Sea
- 7 Cyprus
- 8 Sea Operation Channel
- 9 Moldova



With more than 2000 standing corps officers and staff working at EU's external borders, patrol cars, planes and boats supporting national authorities with border control and fighting crime, Frontex has become a true operational body of the European Union.

Our operations span across the European Union, from EU's eastern borders, through the Western Balkans, down to Greece and Cyprus.

The agency is active outside the EU with operations in Moldova, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania.



Jun 24

Recently [@MargSchinas](#) met with our standing corps officers deployed in Cyprus. Our officers support the local authorities with the registration of migrants and other migration management related tasks.





Jun 15

Summer is here and so are we! Also this year, [#Frontex](#) launches operation [#Minerva](#) together with [@policia](#). The operation will last for the whole summer peak season, when the borders are crossed around 2 000 times per day 🇪🇺





Mar 15

Since March #Frontex deploys its own plane to support  and  in the Channel. The Dornier DO328-100 can fly in any weather and is equipped with high quality surveillance sensors. The plane streams live video and other data directly to the agency's HQ and relevant authorities.


## SUPPORTING NEIGHBOURS

Jul 9

EU's security starts in our neighbourhood: Yesterday, the President of the Republic of Moldova @sandumaiamd ratified the status agreement between the  and . Together, we will continue managing the EU's external border and help those who seek protection



Aug 12

Responding to the high migratory pressure, #Frontex has more than 2 000 standing corps officers and staff at various sections of the  external border, as well as in Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and Moldova.



## SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Nov 24

Document fraud enables various types of cross-border crime, from human trafficking to weapon smuggling.

This week, Frontex and [@NAUSS\\_SA\\_EN](#) gathered 11 Arab countries, with EU countries and int'l organisations for a workshop on the fight against this crime.

[#EU4BorderSecurity](#)



Jun 27

[#Frontex](#) opens its 6th Risk Analysis Cell! This time in Ivory Coast 🇮🇷 With financial support of [@EU\\_Commission](#) the cell will be run by Frontex-trained local analysts who will collect & analyse data on cross-border crime & support authorities involved in border management [#AFIC](#).





# Crisis response

# 3.

The standing corps brings an added value for EU and Schengen-area countries, as well as our neighbours, providing Frontex with the ability not only to support day-to-day border management activities, but also to immediately respond to emergencies at the borders.

This was best illustrated by Frontex just days after the invasion of Ukraine in February with the swift response to assist Member States such as Romania, as well the EU's neighbour Moldova, in helping millions of refugees seeking shelter from the war.

Russia's attack on Ukraine forced millions of Ukrainians, especially women and children, to flee their homeland. Coming with a helping hand to Member States affected the most by the record number of refugees at EU's doorsteps, Frontex provided hundreds of standing corps officers and equipment to support them at their borders with Ukraine. Even more Frontex officers arrived in Moldova as soon as the EU signed an agreement on border management cooperation to assist the neighbour who received the highest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita.



Feb 25

Happening now: #Frontex standing corps officers are helping their Romanian colleagues manage the flow of Ukrainian citizens at the border crossing point between 🇷🇴 and 🇲🇩

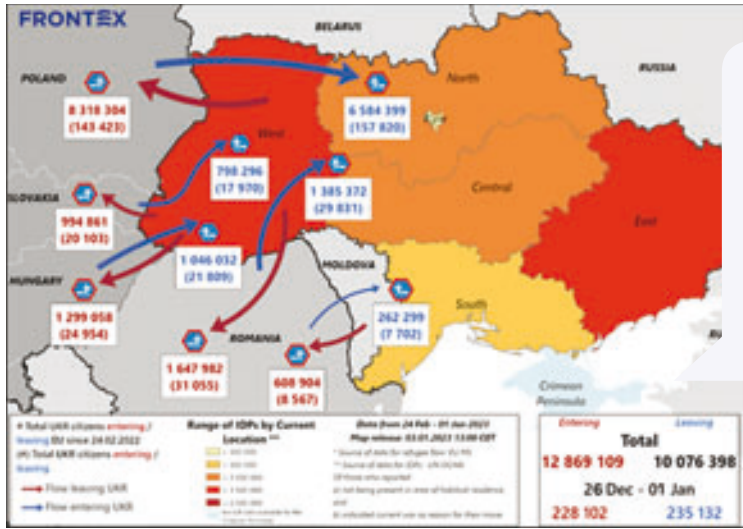
## OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

Frontex stepped up its operational support on the ground following the requests of the Member States and deployed additional officers to Romania, Moldova and Estonia. The agency had about 500 standing corps officers working along the eastern border from Finland to Romania, including more than 350 officers working at the EU-Ukraine borders.

**CRISIS MONITORING**

With the start of the war, Frontex activated a crisis response mechanism and established a dedicated crisis response team which operates 24/7. Through this mechanism, Frontex provides regular updates to the Member States

and the EU institutions on the situation at border crossing points and monitors refugee flows to support awareness, border control activities, including facilitation of border crossings, and evacuation corridors.



May 12



Almost 13 million Ukrainian refugees were counted on entry at the EU's external land borders between 24 February 2022 until the end of the year. In the same period, 10 million Ukrainian nationals were reported on exit at the same border sections.

**HUMANITARIAN RETURN FLIGHTS**

Frontex helped non-Ukrainian and non-EU citizens fleeing the war in Ukraine reach their home countries. Frontex can charter aircrafts or buy tickets for commercial flights to allow them to return home. In 2022, Frontex supported the organisation of humanitarian return flights

helping over a thousand non-EU citizens fleeing the war. Humanitarian voluntary return flights were carried out from Poland to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in cooperation with the relevant embassies.

Mar 27

The 4th humanitarian return flight from  co-organised by [#Frontex](#) & [@Straz\\_Graniczna](#) took off on Friday. 106 people from Tajikistan were able to return to their home country on a charter flight. This month, 697 people fleeing the war in  returned to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.




Jun 9

345 #Frontex standing corps officers and staff are deployed to countries bordering Ukraine. In total, we have 481 officers all along the EU's eastern land border.

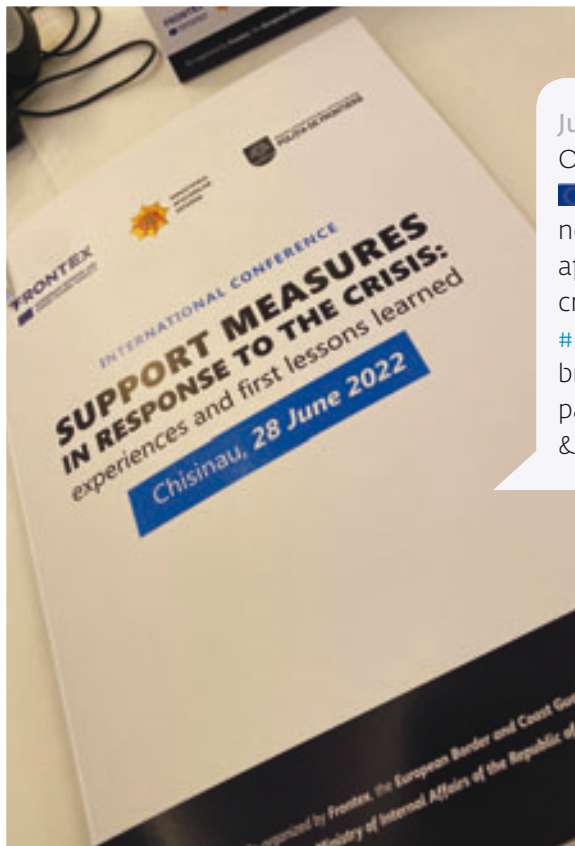


Mar 23

#Frontex and Member States work their hardest to ensure that no child is separated from their parents as they flee the war in 

Earlier this week, two children were reunited with their mother after successful cooperation between #StandingCorps officers,  &  authorities.





Jun 14

Over 6mil 🇺🇦 nationals have entered 🇪🇺 since February. Countries neighbouring 🇺🇦 are particularly affected by large number of people crossing the border.

#Frontex & Moldovan authorities brought together European and int. partners to discuss first experiences & lessons learned.

Jun 10

In March, following the signing of the EU-Moldova Status Agreement, #Frontex launched an operation in Moldova to assist 🇷🇺 authorities in processing the massive number of people fleeing the war in Ukraine.



# On the ground

# 4.

## FIGHTING CRIME ACROSS BORDERS

Frontex works closely with national authorities and EU agencies, including Europol, to stop cross-border crime, from drug and firearms smuggling to document fraud, stolen cars and the trafficking of human beings.

Frontex takes part in Joint Action Days - international operations that bring together national law enforcement authorities, international organisations and EU agencies to take on serious and organised crime. These operations are coordinated under the umbrella of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT).

**In 2022, Frontex coordinated five Joint Action Days.**



**448**  
PEOPLE SMUGGLERS IDENTIFIED



**570**  
STOLEN CARS SEIZED



**60 KG**  
DRUGS SEIZED



**17 MILLION**  
ILLEGAL CIGARETTES FOUND



**470**  
FRAUDULENT DOCUMENTS DETECTED



**1 500**  
LITRES OF ILLEGAL FUEL SEIZED



Nov 4

382 arrests in a #Frontex co-led action against traffickers! We teamed up with 28 countries, @Europol, @INTERPOL\_HQ, and @Eurojust, to combat migrant smuggling and trafficking of human beings, drugs & firearms.



**JAD MOBILE 5**

Nov 13

🇷🇺 Our experts have been noticing some new trends in motor vehicle crime:

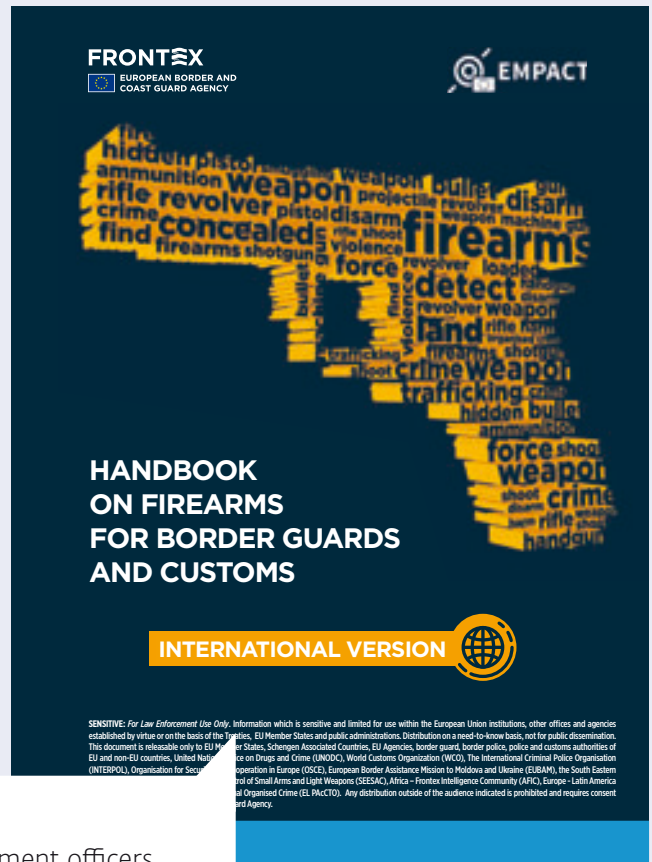
- 👉 stripping stolen cars into parts
- 👉 targeting campers
- 👉 increase in the number of stolen boat engines

#EMPACT #StrongerTogether

## AGAINST FIREARMS SMUGGLING

As the current conflict in Ukraine may have a long-term impact on weapons proliferation in Europe and beyond, it is important to treat the trafficking of illicit firearms as one of the key law enforcement priorities. The risk of smuggling of firearms and ammunition through the EU's external borders has recently increased as criminal networks try to exploit the situation.

Through regular trainings, we help authorities from EU and neighbouring countries detect firearms. Frontex developed a specialised handbook to support national border and customs authorities in both EU and non-EU countries to reinforce their operational response against arms-related crime. The handbook contains the latest information on firearms, their parts and ammunition, associated documentation, and the phenomenon of firearm trafficking itself. It also provides guidelines for border control and further handling of seized weapons.



Jul 1

Gun smuggling is a crime affecting law enforcement officers around the world. We have published a new international version of the #Frontex handbook on firearms to help authorities fight against this crime and protect citizens #EMPACT.



Nov 22

The risk of gun smuggling through the EU's external borders has recently increased as criminal networks try to exploit the ongoing war in Ukraine. We've just finished a training for Moldovan law enforcement officers to help them detect firearms 🇷🇺 🇲🇩

## MAKING THE SEAS SAFER



Fighting border crime, illegal activities and saving people in the Black Sea (europa.eu)

The agency supports the cooperation of law enforcement authorities, EU agencies (primarily the European Maritime Safety Agency and European Fisheries Control Agency) and customs at Europe's sea borders.

### FIGHTING ILLICIT WASTE TRAFFICKING

Illicit waste trafficking is a crime that brings enormous profits and comes at a relatively low risk. Frontex, 29 EU and non-EU countries, came together to target this crime. Labelled as "Operation TRASH", the action targeted the illicit trafficking of waste via the EU's external land and sea borders, both on entry and exit from EU.

### Results:



**2 500**  
CONTROLS



**100**  
CASES OF ILLICIT WASTE  
TRAFFICKING



**2 000**  
TONNES OF WASTE  
SEIZED



**43**  
ARRESTS



Nov 18

We've just wrapped up a search and rescue exercise in Constanta, Romania 🇷🇴 with over 80 experts from EU and non-EU countries and 🇪🇺 institutions participating. The goal: share the countries' experience within Frontex operations and practice rescue procedures 🇷🇪



## **FIGHTING BORDER CRIME, ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES AND SAVING PEOPLE IN THE BLACK SEA**

In December, we wrapped up the Multipurpose Maritime Operation in the Black Sea for 2022 together with EMSA and EFCA. Hosted by Bulgaria and Romania, the operation was aimed at border control including search and rescue, fisheries control and protection of environment in the Western Black Sea area.

This operation was multipurpose and focused on implementing several coast guard functions, including fighting cross-border crime, saving life at sea, detecting marine pollution and illegal fishing, and border surveillance.



Sep 7




Smugglers continue to put lives in danger by cramming people into overcrowded boats in the Central Mediterranean.

Just last weekend, our plane detected five boats carrying 480 people, most of them without life jackets. We alerted national authorities to support rescue operations.



May 19

#EUcoastguard cooperation is the joint work of  agencies & national authorities at 

Our tasks include ensuring safety and security at sea, search & rescue, border & fisheries control, customs, law enforcement and environmental protection   

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Oct 8

A bad week for people who tried to cross EU's borders with fraudulent documents... 🇪🇺

Our #StandingCorps officers managed to detect 83 such documents and 19 impostors within the past days.

We currently have 177 document experts deployed in all our operations.



Aug 26

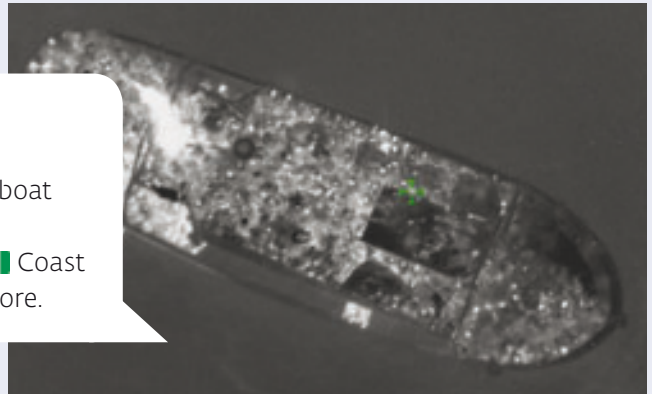
When a family with two small kids drove up for a check at the border between 🇷🇺 and 🇹🇷 to enter the EU, nothing seemed out of the ordinary. But #Frontex officers and their service dog were suspicious.

After a search, the 🚔🚔 found more than 100 kg of heroin hidden in the car.

Nov 25

Last weekend, #Frontex plane succeeded to locate an overcrowded fishing boat near the coast of Sicily. The boat carried nearly 600 people.

The passengers were rescued by vessels sent by the 🇮🇹 Coast Guard and Guardia di Finanza and made it safely to shore.



May 25

🇷🇺 authorities and #Frontex officers have been able to identify 65 people smugglers and 35 cases of drugs smuggling, detect 63 cases of document fraud and 23 stolen vehicles #StrongerTogether.



Nov 4

382 arrests in a Frontex co-led action against traffickers! At the end of October, Frontex teamed up with 28 European countries, Europol, [@INTERPOL HQ](#) and Eurojust to combat drug and firearms trafficking, migrant smuggling and trafficking of human beings. Almost 16 000 officers were involved in the operation, known as Joint Action Day (JAD) South-East Europe, that took place mainly in the Balkans and Southeast Europe.

In total, the activities led to:

- ☛ 382 arrests of suspects, the majority of which were involved in drug trafficking, facilitation of illegal immigration, document fraud and the trafficking of firearms
- ☛ 130 new investigations initiated
- ☛ 106 firearms seized
- ☛ 304 kg of heroin and 1.3 kg of cocaine seized

Frontex supported the action in the framework of some of its ongoing joint operations at land and sea borders, i.a. Joint Operation Terra, taking place along EU's eastern borders, Joint Operation in Moldova and various Joint Operations in the Western Balkans. A Frontex operational officer was also present in the coordination centre in Montenegro.



# Protecting victims

Criminals often try to take advantage of ongoing conflicts and abuse people in distress.

Frontex supports the Member States in prevention, detection and fight against a variety of cross-border crimes such as trafficking in human beings (THB), with specific focus on child trafficking, firearms smuggling, drugs, stolen vehicles, as well as excise goods trafficking and other illegal transborder activities.

In June, Frontex teamed up with 33 countries, Europol and Interpol to combat the crime of trafficking in human beings, especially children. More than 22 000 officers were involved in the week-long operation (Joint Action Days) and checked more than 970 000 people, hundreds of homes, commercial establishments, transportation hubs and border crossing points.

Frontex deployed standing corps officers specialised in combatting trafficking in human beings to Romania and Moldova. Together with Europol and Interpol, we supported local authorities in detecting potential victims of human trafficking.



## Results of the operation



134 arrests, including 29 for human trafficking for sexual exploitation and 4 for labour exploitation



134 potential victims, including 15 minors



64 suspected traffickers identified



104 new criminal cases opened

# Outside the EU

Cooperation with countries outside the EU and the Schengen area is an integral part of the Frontex mandate and one of the strategic priorities for the agency. To ensure implementation of European integrated border management (IBM), Frontex develops and maintains a network of partnerships with border authorities in countries outside the EU, particularly those neighbouring the EU and countries of origin and transit of migrants.

As an expression of solidarity with Ukraine and an example of the deepening cooperation between the EU and Moldova, in June, Frontex and Moldova held a conference “Support measures in response to the crisis: experiences and first lessons learnt” in Chisinau, Moldova.

Amid the growing migratory pressure in the Western Balkans, Frontex worked to enhance the agency’s operational capacities, particularly in Serbia, and to prepare for the implementation of the Status Agreement with North Macedonia once the agreement enters into force.

## Achievements in 2022

### **SUPPORTING MOLDOVA**

Contributing to the EU Support Hub for internal Security and Border Management in Moldova, Frontex actively engaged with Moldovan authorities in different technical assistance activities.

### **BUILDING TRUST AND DIALOGUE WITH PARTNERS IN AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST**

Throughout 2022, Frontex continued its efforts to build dialogue and cooperation in Africa and the Middle East. Within the framework of the EU4BorderSecurity project, which is funded by European Commission, Frontex continued its engagement with authorities in the Southern Neighbourhood.

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH MOROCCO**

In October, Frontex and Morocco’s Ministry of Interior held its bilateral Comité Mixte – a forum to agree on joint priorities and further areas of cooperation.

### **STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS WITH NON-EU COUNTRIES THROUGH WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Frontex started negotiations to pursue new working arrangements with Niger, Senegal, and Mauritania. It is also working on updating existing working arrangements with six Western Balkan partners and Moldova.



Oct 28

#Frontex Executive Director Aija Kalnaja met with Director General of the Ministry of Interior Khalid Zerouali: Glad to be able to count on Morocco as a reliable and credible partner in addressing common challenges 🇪🇺

🇲🇵 #IBPC2022

Oct 28

This year's International Border Police Conference brought together 260 border and coast guard experts from more than 70 countries, EU bodies and international organisations to discuss how to face common challenges across borders together.



Oct 26

I am glad to sign this status agreement today as it will strengthen our cooperation on migration + border management.  
@Frontex will be able to deploy standing corps to work hand in hand with border guards of North Macedonia.



# Modern border control

Millions of travellers cross the EU's external borders every year and their numbers will continue to rise. To accommodate this growth, border checks will need to undergo significant transformations in the coming years, both to effectively safeguard the EU's external borders and make border crossing more convenient to

travellers. Biometrics is one of the fields expected to significantly contribute to the achievement of these goals.

Considering this, in 2022 Frontex published the results of its Technology Foresight on Biometrics for the Future of Travel.



Oct 21

Millions of travellers cross the EU's external borders every year and their number continues to grow. How will border checks look in the future?

# Training

In 2022, Frontex trained hundreds of standing corps recruits to prepare them for their work at the external borders and beyond as fully fledged officers.

More than 350 officers completed the Frontex basic training programme, while well over 1 500 officers took part in specialised courses offered by the agency.

Basic and specialised trainings aim to ensure that members of the standing corps have the necessary theoretical and practical skills to operate at the EU external borders.

Frontex also trains experts from other authorities. In 2022, nearly 4 000 law enforcement officials from Europe and beyond took part in 54 trainings offered by the agency. The courses covered various topics, such as fundamental rights for trainers, countering trafficking in human beings, the Entry-Exit system, or detecting false documents.



Dec 16

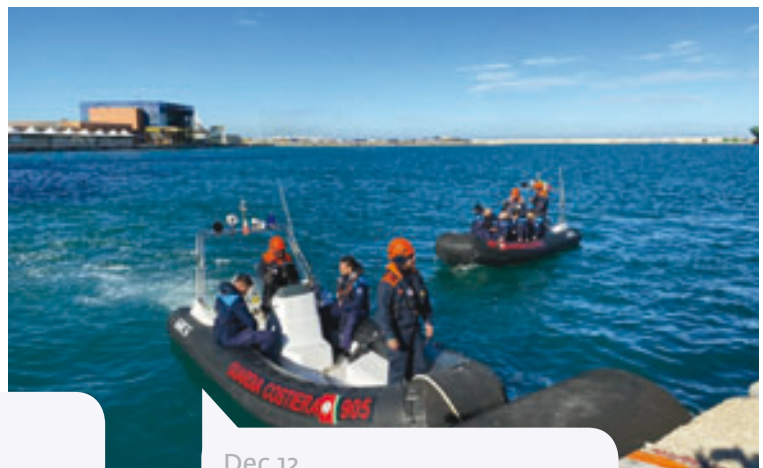
A moment to remember.

This week, 323 standing corps cadets graduated from their basic trainings in Spain and Portugal. The officers will wear blue uniforms that represent the entire European Union and protect the 🇪🇺 area of freedom, security and justice.



Dec 9

📷 172 future #StandingCorps officers are currently training real-life scenarios at the airport in Barcelona with @policia



Dec 12

Our new #StandingCorps officers are wrapping up their practical training in the port of Bari on board of two @guardiacostiera vessels 🇮🇹 ⚓



# Returns and Reintegration

# 5.

Returns are an essential part of border management and Frontex is playing an increasingly important role in this area. In 2022, the agency helped to return a record number of people who were staying illegally in the EU. Out of the 24 850 people Frontex helped to return last year, 40% returned voluntarily.

Frontex helps EU and Schengen-area countries with a whole range of activities, from pre-return, coordinating operations, providing fundamental rights monitors, to help upon arrival.

In 2022, Frontex sent 45 return specialists to Member States. The experts carried out counselling sessions, helped authorities identify returnees and obtain travel documents, and carry out operations. In addition, Frontex has eight return liaison officers in Member States.

## Sep 6

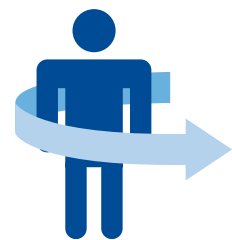
Forced-return monitors observe return operations coordinated or supported by #Frontex to make sure that all procedures are in line with fundamental rights.

Out of 136 forced return operations coordinated by #Frontex in the first half of this year, 104 had monitors on board.

## People returned with Frontex's support

**2022** 24 850

**2021** 18 300



## REINTEGRATION

The agency now also supports people to start anew after leaving the EU's Schengen area. Through reintegration assistance, Frontex provides support both during the first days following the arrival in the country of origin (post-arrival assistance), as well as longer-term assistance up to 12 months (post-return assistance) to help returnees reintegrate into their societies.

In 2022, Frontex helped 1000 people start a new life back home.

## VOLUNTARY RETURNS

The number of people who return to their countries voluntarily with Frontex's support keeps growing.

In 2022, out of the 24 850 people returned with Frontex's support, 40% returned voluntarily.

## First return operations fully organised by Frontex

2022 marked a milestone for Frontex in the area of returns. The agency carried out two operations entirely organised by Frontex, from pre-return procedures, chartering of the aircraft to contacts with authorities. Prior to the operation,

each of the returnees received an individual return decision from the authorities of the relevant EU countries.



May 25

Last week, #Frontex organised a flight to return 40 🇷🇺 citizens to Tirana. This was the 1st return operation fully initiated & organised by Frontex.

Excellent cooperation with 🇪🇸 and 🇮🇹 authorities ensured the success of the flight.



# Fundamental rights in focus

# 6.

In 2022, Frontex put fundamental rights at the centre of its activities. With the recruitment of a deputy Fundamental Rights Officer, more than 40 fundamental rights monitors on board and implementation of the fundamental rights strategy, the agency demonstrated that fundamental rights and border management go hand in hand.

**JONAS GRIMHEDEN**, Frontex  
Fundamental Rights Officer:

*“2022 was the first full year in office with the Fundamental Rights Monitors. With a total staff of 60, coming from close to 20 countries, the Fundamental Rights Office has reached cruising speed in terms of staffing, but is still developing working methods and approaches with a view to maximum impact to safeguard fundamental rights in all Frontex activities.*”

*In 2022, the Fundamental Rights Office (FRO) completed some 1 000 mission-days in the field in some 20 countries. The monitors covered 40 return flights, as well as 20 pre-departures. FRO staff provided around 140 training days over the year, in particular to the standing corps, and have undergone extensive training themselves: in tactical first aid, rescue swimming, self-defence, and much more.*



The number of complaints received by the agency's mechanism as well as the number of serious Incidents reports related to fundamental rights more than doubled from the previous year (handling 70 complaints and as many reports in 2022). And this is a good sign, as it shows increasing awareness of our officers and people at the borders. In 2022, the number of opinions and recommendations that we provide to various in-house processes also doubled.

While much remains to be done, 2022 was a year with much progress and with continued development along these lines in the coming year we should be able to embrace the future with confidence."



### **GRIGORIOS, TSIUKAS,**

Deputy Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer:

"What a year! I must say it was challenging - missions almost every other week, visiting dozens of different locations across the EU external borders, but also in non-EU countries where Frontex is operating, and forced-return operations to various destinations. Trying to understand how things work and convey the message why ensuring respect for fundamental rights is of critical importance for the agency and for the European Border and Coast Guard community."

## **FRONTEX FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS MONITORS**

In 2022, Frontex fundamental rights monitors checked the agency's operations from Finland to the Canary Islands. They closely monitored the situation at the external borders after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, observing activities in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Moldova.

The findings of the monitors contribute to the reports and opinions of the Fundamental Rights Officer who advises the Management Board on the

compliance of the agency's activities with fundamental rights.

Frontex is increasingly active outside the EU. Also here, fundamental rights play an important role – they assess the human rights situation in the selected countries. Another key task of the monitors is the monitoring of the Frontex return operations and the management of the agency's pool of forced return monitors.

**KATERINA**, Frontex Fundamental Rights Monitor:

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*Even though at the beginning some national organisations showed a bit of reluctance in sharing information, after getting to know us, the work we do and our mandate they appreciated our motivation and commitment. For instance, one day during a monitoring activity a coordinator of a child protection NGO told me that he is happy to see that Frontex monitors are so highly motivated to protect fundamental rights.*

**LUANA**, Frontex Fundamental Rights Monitor:

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*The work of monitors is challenging and rewarding at the same time. Challenging due to nature of our work and the responsibility to ensure that fundamental rights are always respected and protected in the execution of Frontex tasks and activities. Rewarding, because despite the numerous challenges, we see that our work makes a difference.*





May 30

20 Frontex fundamental rights monitors completed the last stage of their specialised training in Amsterdam. Over 5 days they learned about operational specifics, including search & rescue at sea, to be able to effectively monitor & assess Frontex operations at sea borders.



Sep 6

We're continuing to increase the number of forced-return monitors on return flights coordinated by [#Frontex](#).

Last week, fundamental rights monitors from the agency and monitors from EU countries took part in a special training in 🇷🇺 to prepare them for their important task.



Sep 8  
 We've wrapped up a workshop on human rights at the borders for representatives from all Member States of [@arableague\\_gs](#) in Cairo, 🇪🇬. It was opened by Assistant Minister Hossam El-Kholy and delivered by [#Frontex](#) Deputy Fundamental Right Officer [#eu4bordersecurity](#).

Nov 9  
 Another excellent week for us to learn, get updated and exchange on key issues for our work - monitoring and advising on EU's external borders. 🙌



# Faces of Frontex



Standing corps officers are the ambassadors of Frontex. Well-trained and specialised in various areas, they provide an added value wherever they are stationed.

Fingerprinting officers, experts in detecting various forms of crime, including stolen cars, drugs, weapons, but also trafficking in human beings – Frontex officers make a difference wherever they are sent to work.

**VANESSA**, trainer from Portugal working in Frontex training centre in Almada, Portugal.

A sea border expert and PhD holder, Vanessa trains standing corps candidates and coordinates our basic training programme:

*"I had the pleasure to train almost 1 000 standing corps officers who are now deployed all over Europe."*





**MARCOS**, a former Assistant Commander in the Cyprus Civil Defence, Marcos graduated from Frontex specialised training in 2021 and now works as a border guard officer at the Greek-Albanian border.

*"We have different areas of expertise. This gives us the advantage to assist our host country and protect the external borders of the European Union."*



**ATHANASIOS**, a stolen car expert who works at the Bulgarian-North Macedonian border.

*"My job is very important because stolen cars are used for financing organised crime. I'm also preventing human trafficking and any type of smuggling, including drugs, tobacco, alcohol and guns."*

**CHRISTINA**, return specialist, is coordinating a Frontex team in Vienna, Austria.

*"When a Member State decides that an individual no longer has the right to stay in a European country, it issues a return decision. We can provide assistance during return operations by land, air, or sea."*



# Highlights of the year

# 8.



First Frontex-led return operation



Commissioner Johansson meets Frontex staff



Frontex to send additional officers to Romania  
Frontex sending standing corps officers to Moldova

JAN

MAR

MAY

FEB

APR

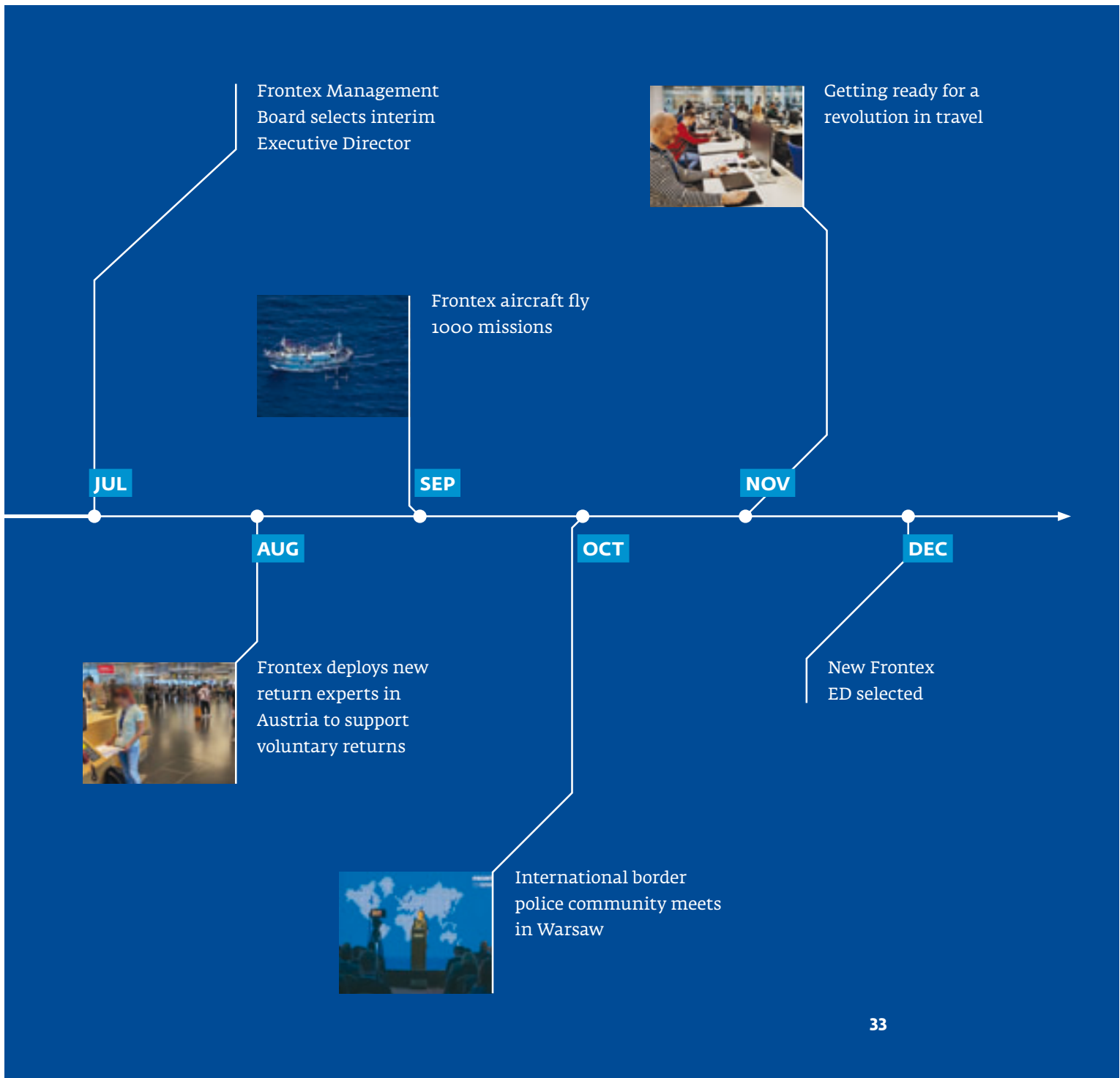
JUN



Frontex launches new land operation

Joint Action Day Arktos 4 deals a serious blow to cross-border crime

Frontex starts support for Member States with Joint Reintegration Services



# A year in numbers

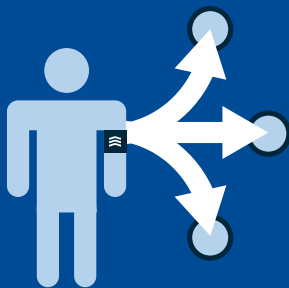
Preliminary statistics

# 9.



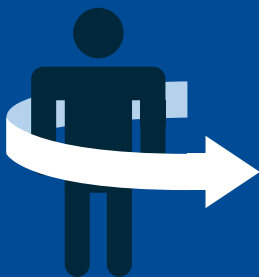
# 20

OPERATIONS



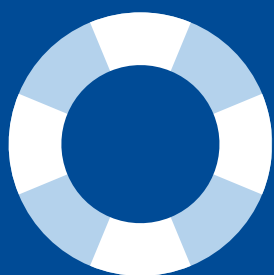
# 2 000+

OFFICERS DEPLOYED EACH MONTH



# 24 850

PEOPLE RETURNED WITH FRONTEX SUPPORT  
(INCREASE OF 36% COMPARED TO 2021)



# 53 000

PEOPLE RESCUED AT SEA WITH  
FRONTEX SUPPORT (2021 – 11 650)



# 1 888

PEOPLE SMUGGLERS ARRESTED (2021 – 1171)



# 408

STOLEN CARS DETECTED  
(2021 – 200)



# 2 174

WEAPONS SEIZED  
(2021 – 237)



# 96

TONNES OF DRUGS SEIZED  
(2021 - 16 TONNES)

# What's next?

# 10.

In December, the Frontex Management Board selected Hans Leijtens as the agency's new executive director. Previously, Lieutenant General Leijtens served as the Commander of the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, heading an organisation of more than 7 000 people.

One of the fundamental principles of the EU is the free movement of people within its borders. Yet, in order to be able to enjoy the benefits of the Schengen area, it is essential to safeguard its external borders. Internal free movement must be balanced with the need to protect our citizens and maintain the security of our countries. This is why it is essential that we cooperate closely and effectively at the European level to address these challenges.

Frontex continues to provide technical and operational assistance to affected Member States, especially as we face unprecedented challenges at our frontiers. At the same time, we will continue to help take care of those seeking protection in the EU.

In 2022, we took many steps to enhance Frontex as a workplace and as an organisation, and to meet stakeholders' expectations for the European Union's largest operational agency. We will continue on this path in 2023, prioritising transparency in all Frontex activities.

We are also getting ready for a revolution in travel with the introduction of the Entry-Exit System, to be followed by the launch of ETIAS, in which Frontex will play a central role. Both these changes will allow for safer and smoother travel across the EU's external borders.

By working together with EU Member States and our neighbours, sharing resources and expertise, we can ensure the security of our countries and protect our citizens, at the same time guaranteeing seamless border crossing for bona-fide travellers and fulfilling our moral and legal obligation to provide protection to those in need. All this while safeguarding our core values, especially fundamental rights of everyone we deal with.



*"The situation at Europe's external borders is challenging. It calls for Frontex that is fit for purpose. Migration is one of the key challenges of the EU and Frontex is one of its most important assets.*

*The trust of European bodies and citizens is crucial. I am motivated and committed to lead the organisation for the next five years."*

At the beginning of 2023, Frontex will have deployed nearly 1 000 Category 1 standing corps officers recruited and directly employed by Frontex, with another 4 000 officers contributed by Member States and 1 000 in reserve for any rapid reaction operations.

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