

**FRONTEX**

**2019**

**IN BRIEF**



**EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY**





**FABRICE LEGGERI**  
Executive Director

## **2019 WAS AN IMPORTANT YEAR FOR FRONTEX, THE EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY.**

In 2019, Frontex continued to work hard to deliver on the mandate it was given in 2016 when it was transformed into the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

It was also a transitional year. Together with the Member States and the European Commission we were preparing for the implementation of the upgraded mandate that entered into force in December 2019.

The growth of the agency continued at a fast pace and the total number of staff reached 750 at the end of the year.

As Frontex expanded its presence in the field, as well as its operational activities and services provided to national border and coast guard services, the agency used 100% of the EUR 333 million that were allocated by the EU budget authority and the Schengen Associated Countries.

Return of irregular migrants was a key area for the agency in 2019 and we will continue to support Member States in returning people who have received negative asylum decisions.

New technologies and new border surveillance services are other areas where the agency was leading innovation in 2019 and proving daily support to EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries.

In 2019, it became clear that the role of Frontex is not only to act as an emergency service—now, we are first and foremost the operational partner of national authorities, supporting and assisting in regular border management tasks.

The expanded international dimension of Frontex activities was highlighted by our first operation outside the European Union launched in Albania.

We were acting as the “eyes and ears” of the law enforcement at the external borders in an ever closer cooperation with our European and national partners.

Very soon Frontex will be playing a crucial role in verifying millions of legal border crossings by regular travellers. Last year, we were busy preparing to set up the central unit of the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS).

The adoption of the European technical operational strategy for Integrated Border Management (IBM) last year was a great step forward both for the Member States and the agency. It helped us shift to a new operational concept driven by the future deployment of the European Border and Coast Guard Standing Corps.

We structured *2019 in Brief* having in mind three strategic operational objectives: We have to KNOW in order to SUPPORT Member States at the borders, and, based on that knowledge, we BUILD capacities to tailor our operational response.

We also aim for Frontex to comply with the best EU standards for sound administrative and financial management and EU legal and ethical standards, which include fundamental rights.

In 2019, Frontex also laid the foundation for the future. We launched the first recruitment of Frontex border guards who will work shoulder-to-shoulder with national border and coast guard officers.

Frontex is committed to work for better-functioning and safer external borders, safeguarding our European Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and promoting smooth legal border crossings for bona fide travellers.

# Highlights of the year



Number of irregular crossings at Europe's borders at lowest level in 5 years



Frontex launches first operation outside of the EU in Albania



Smart borders conference at WCO: Bringing Frontex and customs closer together

JAN

MAR

MAY

FEB

APR

JUN

● Frontex supports significant seizure of cocaine by Portuguese authorities



Frontex opens Risk Analysis Cell in Senegal



Frontex, EMSA and EFCA host second annual European Coast Guard Event



26 people smugglers arrested in 10 days in a Frontex-led operation

JUL



Frontex welcomes new class of Joint Master's programme

SEP

The Council adopts new Frontex Regulation

NOV

AUG

Frontex begins testing use of aerostat for border surveillance in Greece



OCT

Frontex tests new biometric technologies at Lisbon airport



DEC

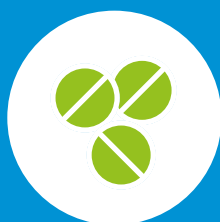
7 500 candidates apply to become first Frontex border guards

# Year in numbers\*



54 800

PEOPLE RESCUED\*\*



125.5

TONNES OF DRUGS SEIZED



669

DRUG SMUGGLERS DETECTED

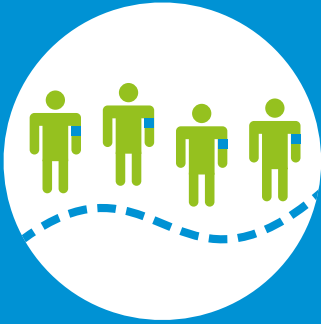


592

NUMBER OF MARITIME AERIAL SURVEILLANCE FLIGHTS

\* preliminary numbers

\*\* Number of people rescued in Frontex operational areas.



# 1 500

AVERAGE NUMBER OF FRONTEX OFFICERS AT EU'S BORDERS



# 15 850

NUMBER OF PEOPLE RETURNED BY FRONTEX



# 6 900

NUMBER OF FALSIFIED DOCUMENTS DETECTED



# 7 500

APPLICATIONS FOR FRONTEX BORDER GUARDS



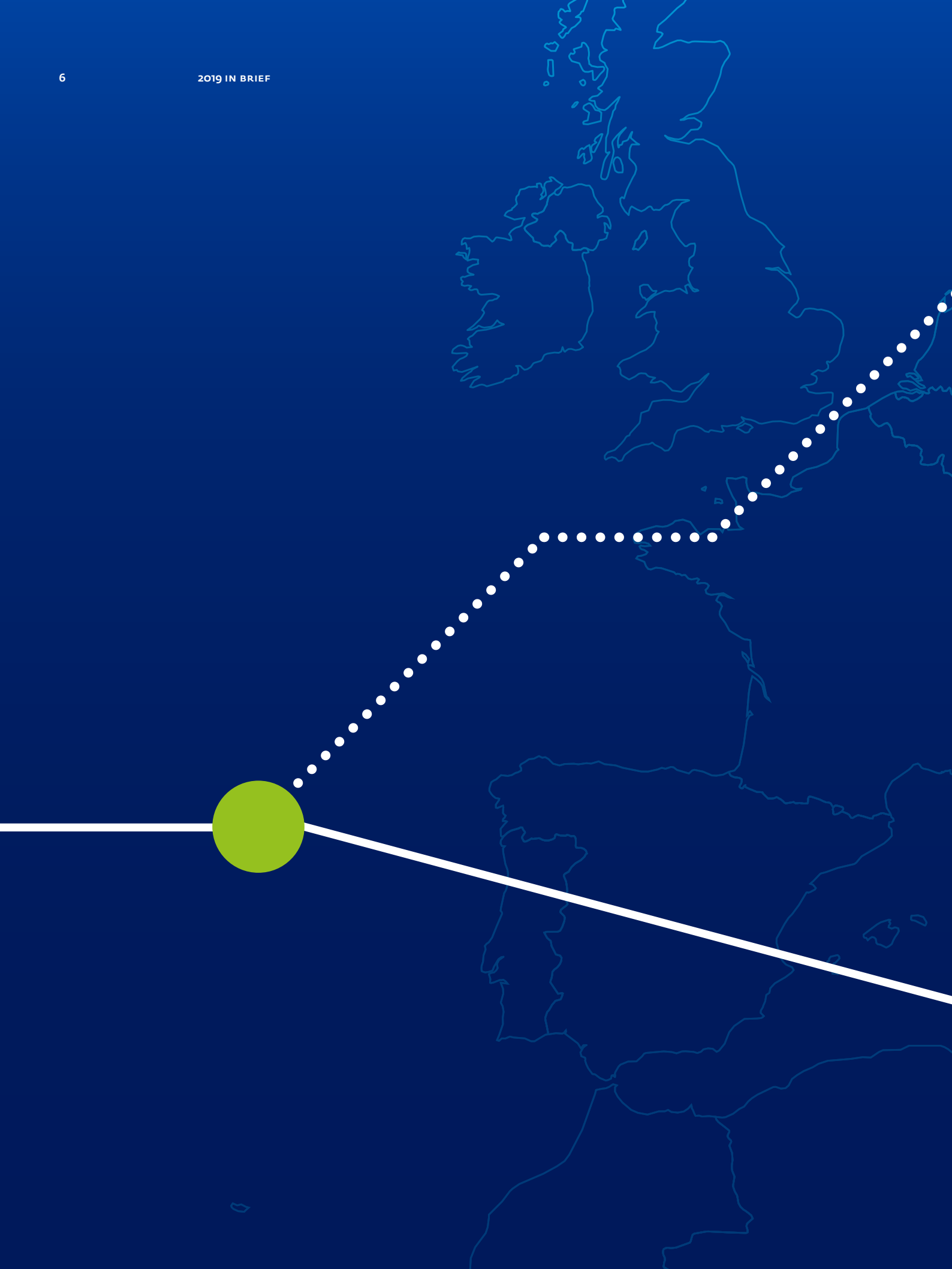
# 750

NUMBER OF STAFF IN HQ



# 3 675

BORDER AND COAST GUARD OFFICERS TRAINED



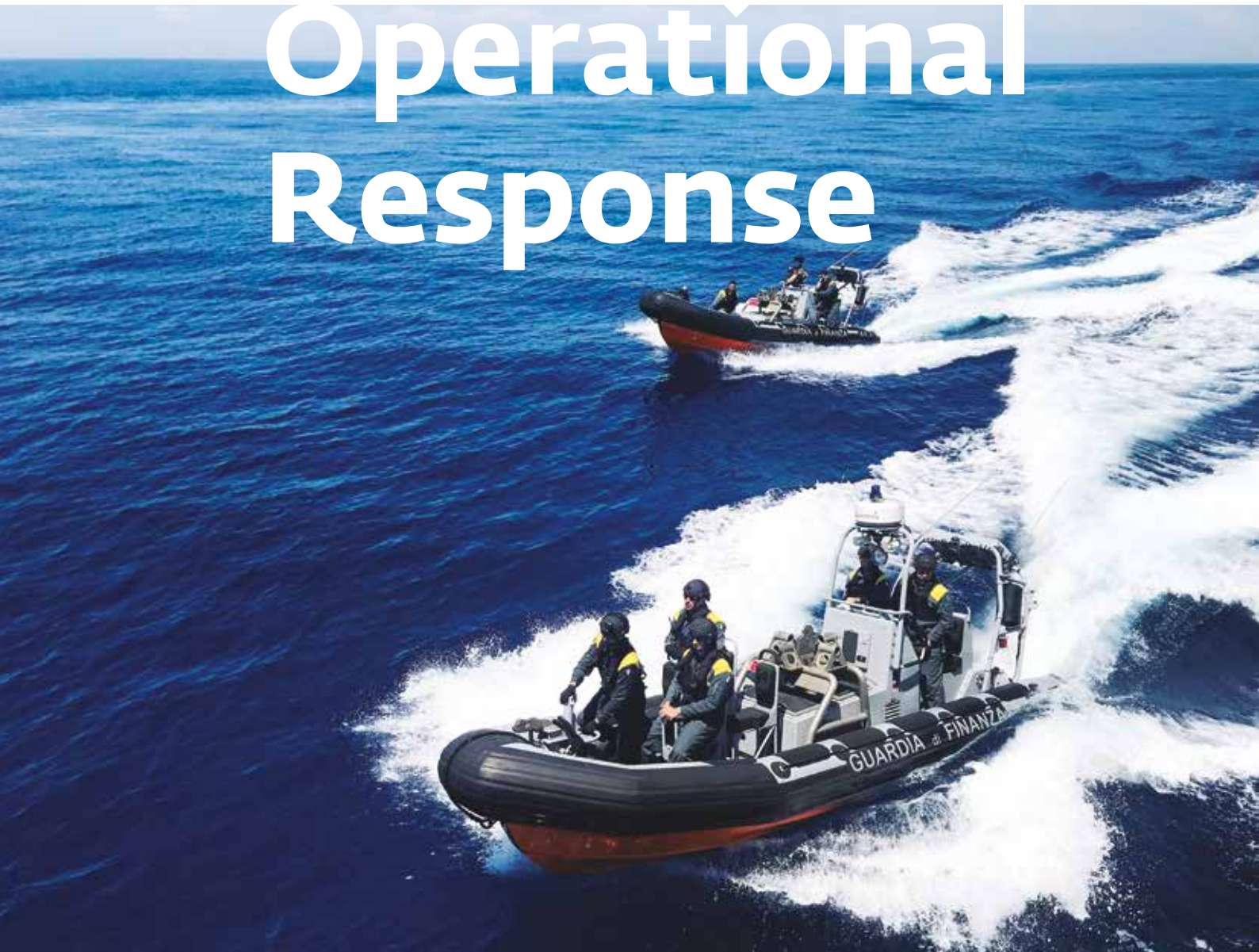




**We support**



# Operational Response



The agency offers EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries flexible operational response at their borders. We do this by deploying officers and equipment where the countries need us most.

In 2019, we continued to run our three permanent operations in Greece, Italy and Spain, as well as numerous other field deployments at EU's external borders and beyond.

Every month, around 1500 border and coast guard officers worked in various locations at EU's borders, assisting the national authorities with border control, surveillance, registration of migrants, collecting intelligence on criminal networks, fighting document fraud and other types of cross-border crime.

## SITUATION AT EU AND SCHENGEN EXTERNAL BORDERS IN 2019

# 139 000

TOTAL NUMBER OF DETECTIONS  
OF ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSINGS  
AT EU AND SCHENGEN EXTERNAL BORDERS\*

WESTERN  
MEDITERRANEAN

## 24 000

OPERATION  
INDALO

CENTRAL  
MEDITERRANEAN

## 14 000

OPERATION  
THEMIS

EASTERN  
MEDITERRANEAN

## 82 000

OPERATION  
POSEIDON

\* Map shows estimated number of detections of illegal border crossings at EU's sea borders in 2019 (data as of January 9, 2020).



One of the ways in which Frontex supports EU Member States is nationality screening. When needed, the agency sends in experts to help establish the nationality of migrants. They are also trained to identify persons in need of international protection as well as those in a vulnerable situation, including unaccompanied minors, and refer them to the competent national authorities.

# First operation outside the European Union

Frontex launched its first fully-fledged joint operation outside the European Union, supporting Albania in border control. We provide officers from countries around Europe along with patrol cars and other equipment to help the EU's Western Balkan neighbour deal with irregular migration, as well as cross-border crime and potential terrorist threats.

Officers deployed by Frontex also support the detection of stolen vehicles, drugs and weapons, document checks and the identification and establishing the nationality of migrants. They also share knowledge and experience with their Albanian partners.





Frontex Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri greets the agency's first officers in Albania.



## MEET OUR OFFICERS

### **ANTTI, FINNISH BORDER GUARD IN ALBANIA**

"I help my Albanian colleagues detect forged documents, as well as victims of human trafficking. While 99.9% of people crossing the borders are travellers with genuine travel documents, it is the job of border guards to identify and stop those who try to cross the border using fake passports.

To keep our borders safe, we always have to be one step ahead of the criminals who forge travel documents."

# Fighting crime at the borders

The security of Europe's external borders is our priority and combatting crime is at the core of all our activities. Border guards have a critical role to play when it comes to reinforcing the internal security and preventing or detecting organised crime.

All along EU's borders, our officers help national authorities fight crime. They detect hundreds of stolen cars and fraudulent documents at land borders every year. They help EU member states find drugs and cigarettes smuggled into the European Union via land and sea routes. The officers also help detect people smuggling and trafficking in human beings across the borders.

We collect and share information on crime at the borders with national authorities and Europol. The information we gather about people smuggling plays a key role in efforts to dismantle smuggling networks.

In 2019, Frontex coordinated five Joint Action Days—international operations aimed at fighting cross-border crime—and supported many others with experts and information. These operations were coordinated under the umbrella of the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) as part of the EU Policy Cycle. As a result, national authorities arrested 200 suspected people smugglers, detected nearly 500 stolen cars, 600 fraudulent documents and seized nine suspicious vessels.

Frontex also supports national authorities with information in drug smuggling investigations. In 2019, the agency supported member states in cases that led to the seizure of 4.7 tonnes of cocaine.

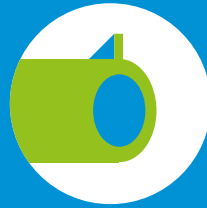
Border guards are trained to detect potential victims of trafficking in human beings (THB). Often a border guard is the only law enforcement officer victims may come in touch with before disappearing into a world of exploitation. Combatting THB is a key part of Frontex's work at EU's borders.

## OPERATIONAL RESULTS



**390**

NUMBER OF  
STOLEN CARS SEIZED



**69**

NUMBER OF  
WEAPONS SEIZED



**125.5**

TONNES OF  
DRUGS SEIZED



**669**

NUMBER OF  
DRUG SMUGGLERS  
DETECTED



**20 000 000**

NUMBER OF CIGARETTES SEIZED

# Return operations

Frontex continues to strengthen its role as a key player in returns of people who have been ruled to be staying in Europe illegally. These could be people who have exhausted all legal avenues to remain in the EU, who have committed offences in a member state, overstayed their visas and received a return decision from a court or competent authorities of member states.

Frontex remains a partner for EU countries in organising charter flights. In 2019, the agency also expanded its role in coordinating returns on commercial flights.

Frontex is building the European Union's capacity in returns by integrating various information systems that allow countries to coordinate and have an overview of return operations at the European level.

We now also support countries ahead of return operations with the preparation of documents for returnees and contacts with consular authorities in non-EU countries to make the return process faster and more efficient.

Frontex is helping EU member states meet the requirement for all return flights to be monitored to make sure that all returnees are treated with dignity and that their rights are respected. We provide monitors from our pool of experts and cover the cost of participation of national monitors. Thanks to our efforts, 272 flights had monitors on board in 2019, including 199 experts provided by Frontex.

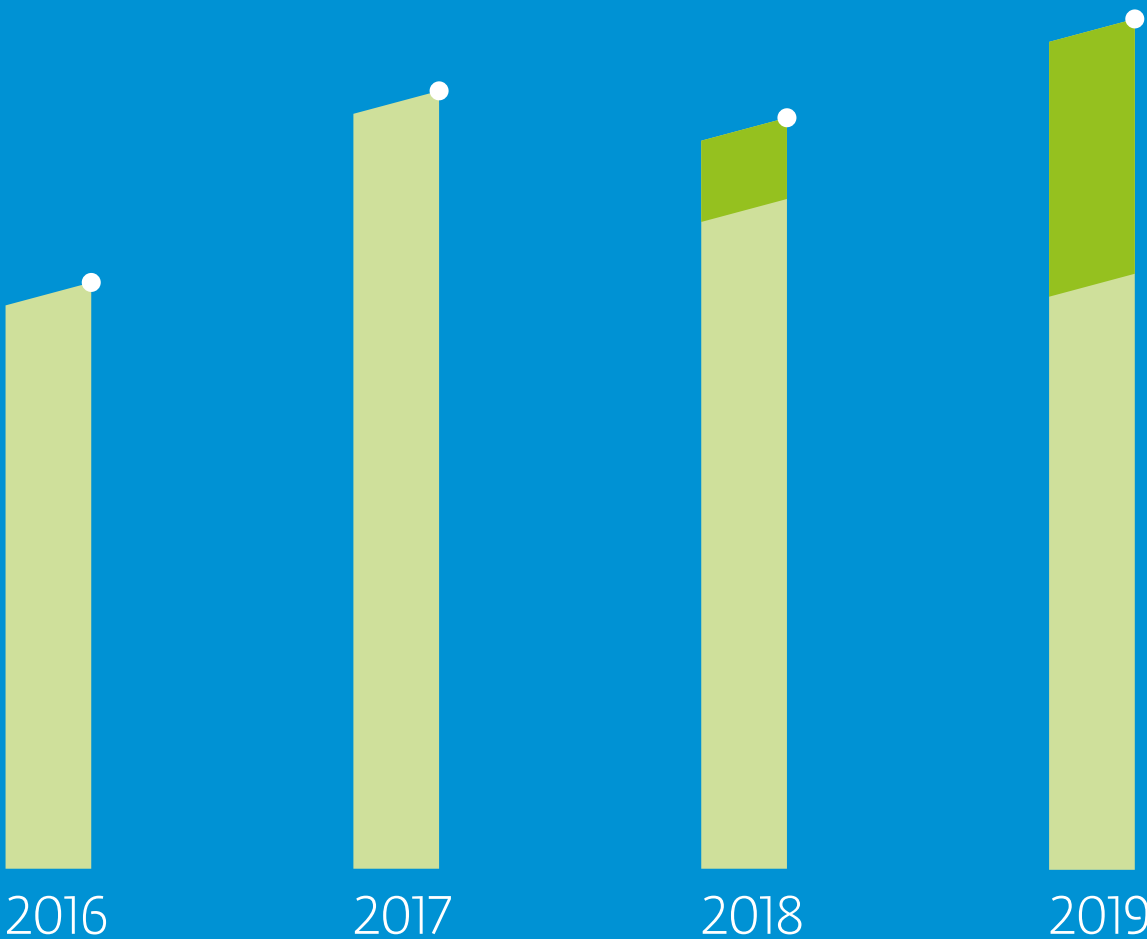


## RETURN OPERATIONS COORDINATED BY FRONTEX

More than 15 500\* non-EU nationals were returned in Frontex-supported return operations last year. The number of persons returned by commercial flights tripled, increasing efficiency and reducing costs.

\* Preliminary numbers

**10 700**    **14 190**    **13 730**    **15 850**



● CHARTER FLIGHTS

● COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS





# We know





# European overview

Frontex knows what is going on at the borders, where it is happening and how to react. The agency maintains a Europe-wide overview of border control and migration management thanks to its 24/7 monitoring of the situation at Europe's borders and beyond and comprehensive risk analysis. Frontex helps to spot potential weak points and strengthen Europe's resilience.

Reducing the vulnerability to challenges at the borders requires the understanding of short-term and long-term risks.

Our job is to predict challenges that EU countries might face and support national authorities in their response.



Risk analysis guides all Frontex activities, helping us decide where our officers should be deployed and where our planes should patrol.

Once we spot a ship with drugs or people smugglers, we quickly react. At the same time, related information travels back to our headquarters to be analysed for trends in irregular migration and cross-border crime.

We collect and analyse information coming from national authorities to build a common picture of the situation and potential vulnerabilities at EU and Schengen external borders.

# Support from above



Our Maritime Aerial Surveillance (MAS) became an integral part of the agency's activities and a permanent service offered to national authorities.

MAS uses surveillance airplanes and drones that stream video and other data from EU and Schengen external borders directly to the agency's headquarters in Warsaw and relevant national and European authorities. It allows for real-time monitoring of what is happening at the borders.

At the European Monitoring Room in Warsaw, experts from 12 countries worked together to monitor the incoming video and information.

The planes were used in Frontex activities to support national authorities and EU agencies in various tasks, including border surveillance, detecting drug smuggling and illegal fishing.

In 2019, Frontex performed nearly 600 flights. In many of the cases, Frontex planes detected boats in distress at sea and thanks to the quick reaction and coordination, national authorities were able to rescue more than 4500 people.

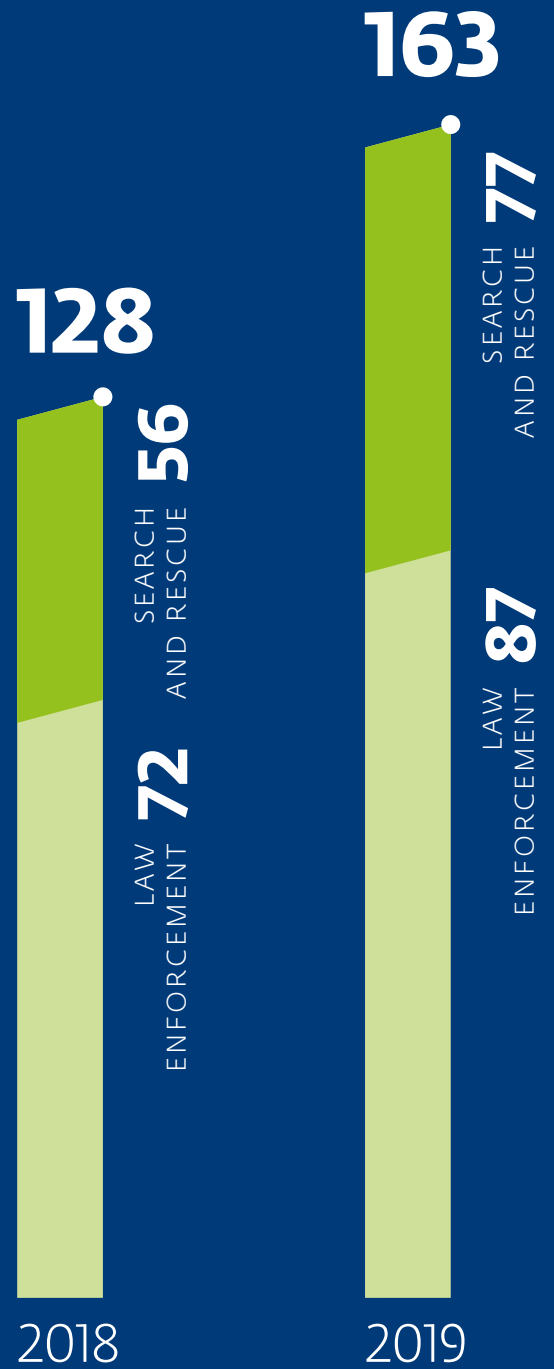
The MAS planes flew over the Central Mediterranean Sea, Aegean Sea, Black Sea, Adriatic Sea and Baltic Sea. It also monitored the land borders in Poland, Slovakia, Croatia and Hungary.



**NUMBER OF  
MAS FLIGHTS**



**NUMBER OF  
INCIDENTS  
DETECTED BY MAS**









# We build

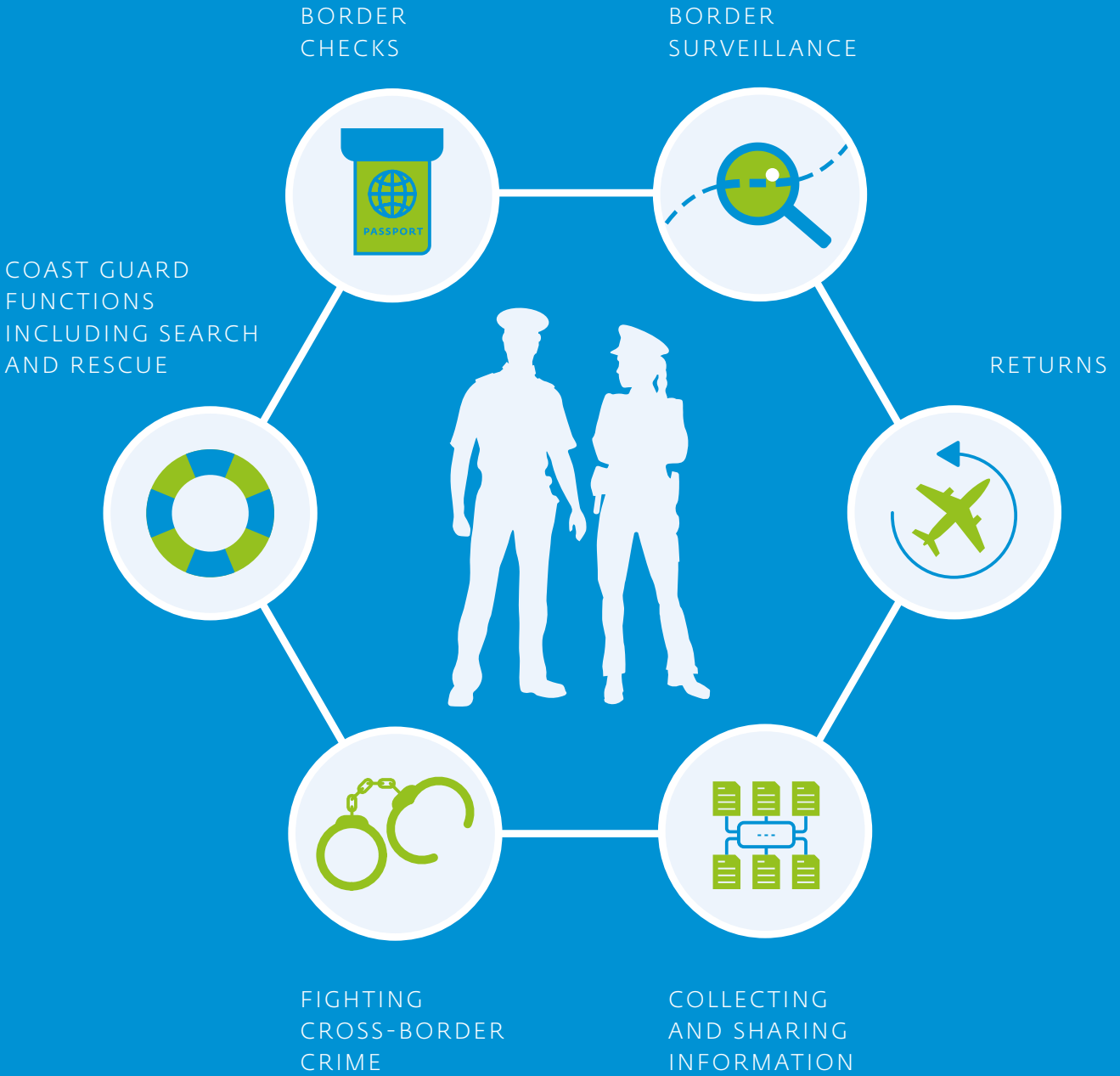
# Europe's first uniformed service



Frontex began to lay the foundation for the creation of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps. In October, we launched the first recruitment campaign for more than 700 Frontex border and coast guards. We received 7 500 applications from all around Europe from people who wanted to join Europe's first uniformed service.

Once selected, the first group of Frontex border and coast guard officers will spend most of 2020 training for deployment across Europe's borders. They will serve as the backbone of the new corps and a permanent support to national authorities facing challenges at their external borders. Some of them may even work outside the European Union in countries that have signed Status Agreements with the EU.

# MAIN TASKS OF FRONTEX BORDER AND COAST GUARD OFFICERS



# Our own equipment



Frontex will increasingly rely on its own equipment allowing it to be more flexible in its various field activities. In 2019, we began using our own patrol cars at Europe's borders. The new cars, carrying the agency's logo, took part in operations in places like Albania, Greece and Bulgaria. They mark a leap forward in the agency's efforts to develop a pool of its own equipment.

To support Frontex border and coast guard officers, we will gradually start deploying various other equipment owned or leased by our agency, including vessels, planes and remotely piloted aircraft. We will make sure that our equipment is always ready for action.



MEET OUR OFFICERS

**MILOSLAV, CZECH BORDER GUARD IN SPAIN**

“Together with my patrol dog Fanouš we help inspect the thousands of vehicles arriving in Spain from Morocco by ferries.”

# Future of border control



One of the core tasks of Frontex is to identify technologies that can be used for border control. In 2019, we tested a variety of technologies, including biometrics, artificial intelligence and Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems.

## **AEROSTAT FOR BORDER SURVEILLANCE**

In partnership with the Hellenic Coast Guard, we held a one-month trial of an aerostat and other equipment for border surveillance on the Greek island of Samos. It helped us assess how well an aerostat can perform sea surveillance in an operational environment.



### **FUTURE OF BORDER CHECKS**

Together with the Border Service of Portugal (SEF) and the Lisbon Airport Authority (ANA), we tested the “biometrics on the move” technology for border checks. In the years to come solutions such as touchless fingerprint and face scans will make border crossing easier and faster for regular travellers while increasing security. It will give border guards more time to spot potential threats and conduct systematic and efficient security checks. It will also benefit airports and airlines, with passengers spending less time in queues and having more time for a transfer or to go shopping.



### **MEET OUR OFFICERS**

#### **DIANA, ROMANIAN FINGERPRINTING EXPERT IN GREECE**

“I assist my Greek colleagues in fingerprinting all newly arrived migrants and registering them into a European database. The work with Frontex is a learning experience on different levels. It’s critical to our security that we know who is crossing the borders.”

# New Operational Concept

Setting the path for the growing agency, we created a new operational concept—a roadmap for how Frontex will operate in the coming years. At regional conferences with the commanders of national border and law enforcement services, Frontex developed services that the new European Border and Coast Guard standing corps will provide to EU member states.

Our agency's main strategic objectives are to reduce vulnerability at the external borders based on comprehensive situational awareness; guarantee safe, secure and well-functioning EU

borders and plan and maintain European Border and Coast Guard capabilities. We also aim to implement European integrated border management, which brings together the national authorities, EU institutions and other agencies and organisations.

Frontex and national border authorities together create the European Border and Coast Guard. Everything we do is a result of close cooperation and dialogue with our national partners.

## **European integrated border management— A shared responsibility of Frontex and Member States**

In 2019, Frontex met with authorities of all EU member states and Schengen-associated countries to discuss plans and challenges related to the implementation of the new European Border and Coast Guard regulation and the creation of the standing corps. The meetings were held in five regional clusters in Helsinki, Budapest, Rome, Amsterdam and Paris.





# Main events



Every year, Frontex hosts numerous conferences and events to bring together top officials and experts dealing with a variety of facets of border control.

## **IBPC**

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At the end of October, Frontex hosted the 24th International Border Police Conference (IBPC), a bi-annual event that brought together law enforcement executives from nearly 100 countries on five continents, as well as representatives of international organisations, EU institutions and agencies.

More than 300 participants took part in the conference, which focused on cross-border security through preparedness, prevention and response to global challenges such as terrorism, people smuggling, and document and identity fraud.



### SECOND ANNUAL EUROPEAN COAST GUARD EVENT

In April, Frontex, the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) together held an annual European Coast Guard Event in Świnoujście, Poland.

The Annual Coast Guard Event provides a platform for national authorities, the EU agencies involved in the cooperation on coast guard functions and the European Commission to exchange views on matters related to safety and security at sea. The discussions focused on information sharing and surveillance, analysing risks at sea and training of coast guard officers.



### BIOMETRICS CONFERENCE

In October, Frontex, held a conference on the use of biometrics at the borders. The conference focused on the growing challenge of the use of morphed images of faces in identification documents to fool officials and computer systems.

The International Conference of Biometrics for Borders brought together experts and practitioners from around the world to discuss the various challenges and opportunities related to identifying people by law enforcement authorities.

### EBCG DAY



Frontex hosted 600 European border and coast guard representatives from more than 30 countries at the annual European Border and Coast Guard Day. The Agency's flagship event took place in Arłamów, near Poland's border with Ukraine. It was focused on the challenges at land external borders and cooperation with the neighbouring countries.

# Looking forward

2020 brings massive changes to Frontex with the creation of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps. Throughout the year we will be training the first Frontex border guards. They will then undergo tests to ensure that they have the necessary skills to operate together at the external borders, complying with applicable EU law and ethical standards.

At the end of the year, the first Frontex border guards will be ready for deployment at the borders to help keep Europe more secure.

Frontex border guards will wear a unique European uniform and will be able to perform tasks such as verifying a person's identity and nationality, allowing or refusing entry into the EU and patrolling between border crossing points. They will also participate in return operations.

Our agency will also be working with our national partners to set up regional offices around Europe that will provide logistical support for the corps. We will continue to be a reliable

partner for national authorities around Europe. We will offer a wide range of services that will help the national authorities deal with a variety of challenges at their borders rather than simply responding to new emergencies.

Dozens of monitors will help make sure that the respect of fundamental rights is at the heart of all our activities and operations.

Finally, we will be building a team of experts for the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), a system for granting authorisation to travel into the EU from visa-free countries. When it comes into effect, Frontex will be responsible for the 24/7 Central Unit, where we will verify applications.

To make ETIAS a reality, we are closely cooperating with eu-LISA, Europol, the European Commission and EU member states.



## MEET OUR OFFICERS

### **LUCIE, FRENCH SCREENING EXPERT IN GREECE**

“While performing my duties, I am fully aware that special attention has to be given to vulnerable groups, especially women and children.”



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