



A European Border and Coast Guard to protect Europe's External Borders

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The European Commission is today adopting an important set of measures to manage the EU's external borders and protect our Schengen area without internal borders. Today's proposals will help to manage migration more effectively, improve the internal security of the European Union, and safeguard the principle of free movement of persons. The Commission is proposing to establish a European Border and Coast Guard to ensure a strong and shared management of the external borders. To further increase security for Europe's citizens, the Commission is also proposing to introduce systematic checks against relevant databases for all people entering or exiting the Schengen area.

European Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"In an area of free movement without internal borders, managing Europe's external borders must be a shared responsibility. The crisis has exposed clear weaknesses and gaps in existing mechanisms aimed at making sure that EU standards are upheld. Therefore, it is now time to move to a truly integrated system of border management. The European Border and Coast Guard will bring together a reinforced Agency, with the ability to draw on a reserve pool of people and equipment, and the Member States' authorities, who will continue to exercise day-to-day border management. The system we propose will allow for an identification of any weaknesses in real time so that they can be remedied quickly, also improving our collective ability to deal effectively with crisis situations where a section of the external border is placed under strong pressure."*

European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris **Avramopoulos** added: *"The current migration and security challenges know no borders, and require a truly European approach. Where Frontex used to be limited to supporting Member States in managing their external borders, the new Border Agency will go beyond this. What we are creating today is more Europe: to manage our external borders, to step up returns of irregular migrants, to allow our asylum system to function properly for those in need and to strengthen checks at the external borders of the European Union. The Border Package we are presenting today will increase security for our citizens and ensure high standards of border management."*

A European Border and Coast Guard

The European Border and Coast Guard will bring together a European Border and Coast Guard Agency built from Frontex and the Member States' authorities responsible for border management, who will continue to exercise the day-to-day management of the external border.

The new European Border and Coast Guard will have:

- **A rapid reserve pool of border guards and technical equipment:** The Agency will be able to draw on at least **1,500 experts** that can be deployed in under 3 days. For the first time the Agency will be able to **acquire equipment itself** and to draw on a **pool of technical equipment** provided by the Member States. There will no longer be shortages of staff or equipment for European border operations. The new Agency's human resources will more than double that of Frontex, to **reach 1,000 permanent staff**, including field operatives, by 2020.
- **A monitoring and supervisory role:** A **monitoring and risk analysis centre** will be established to monitor migratory flows towards and within the European Union and to carry out **risk analysis** and **mandatory vulnerability assessments** to identify and address weak spots. **Liaison officers** will be seconded to Member States to ensure presence on the ground where the borders are at risk. The Agency will be able to **assess the operational capacity**, technical equipment and resources of Member States to face challenges at their external borders and **require Member States to take measures** to address the situation within a set time-limit in case of vulnerabilities.
- **The right to intervene:** Member States can request joint operations and rapid border interventions, and deployment of the European Border and Coast Guard Teams to support these. Where deficiencies persist or where a Member State is under significant migratory pressure

putting in peril the Schengen area and national action is not forthcoming or not enough, the Commission will be able to adopt an **implementing decision** determining that the situation at a particular section of the external borders requires urgent action at European level. This will allow the Agency to step in and **deploy European Border and Coast Guard Teams** to ensure that action is taken on the ground even when a Member State is unable or unwilling to take the necessary measures.

- **Coast Guard surveillance:** National coastguards will be part of the European Border and Coast Guard to the extent that they carry out border control tasks. The mandates of the European Fisheries Control Agency and the European Maritime Safety Agency will be aligned to the new European Border and Coast Guard. The three Agencies will be able to launch **joint surveillance operations**, for instance by jointly operating Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (drones) in the Mediterranean Sea.
- **A mandate to work in third countries:** The Agency will have a new mandate to send liaison officers to and launch **joint operations** with neighbouring third countries, including operating on their territory.
- **A stronger role in returns:** A European Return Office will be established within the Agency to allow for the deployment of **European Return Intervention Teams** composed of escorts, monitors and return specialists who will work to effectively return illegally staying third country nationals. A **standard European travel document for return** will ensure a wider acceptance of returnees by third countries.
- **Guaranteeing Internal Security:** The Agency will include cross-border crime and terrorism in its risk analysis and cooperate with other Union agencies and international organisations on the **prevention of terrorism**, in full respect of fundamental rights.

Systematic checks of EU citizens at external borders

To increase security within the Schengen area, the Commission is proposing a targeted modification of the Schengen Borders Code to introduce **mandatory systematic checks of EU citizens** at external land, sea, and air borders. Obligatory checks on EU citizens will be introduced against databases such as the Schengen Information System, the Interpol Stolen and Lost Travel Documents Database and relevant national systems, in order to verify that persons arriving do not represent a threat to public order and internal security. The proposal also reinforces the need to verify the **biometric identifiers** in the passports of EU citizens in case of doubts on the authenticity of the passport or on the legitimacy of the holder. Checks will now also be **mandatory when exiting the European Union**.

In principle, since controls on documents and persons can be carried out in parallel, authorities should be able to consult relevant databases without delaying border crossings. The rules provide for flexibility in cases where systematic checks could have a disproportionate impact on the flow of traffic at the border. In such cases Member States can, based on risk assessments, decide to carry out targeted checks at some land and sea borders crossings. The risk assessment shall be communicated to the Agency, which can assess the way the exception is applied in its vulnerability assessment.

The systematic checks in the databases are done on a 'hit/no hit' basis. This means that if the person does not present a risk then the check is not registered and no further processing of their data happens. Using the databases in this way means that personal data rights are only impacted to a very limited extent, and justified by the security objectives.

Background

The establishment of a European Border and Coast Guard, as announced by President Juncker in his [State of the Union Speech](#) on 9 September, is part of the measures under the European Agenda on Migration to reinforce the management and security of the EU's external borders. The European Agenda on Migration adopted by the Commission in May 2015 set out the need for a comprehensive approach to migration management. This objective has also been [signalled by the European Parliament](#) and endorsed in the clear orientations set out by the European Council on [23 September](#) and [15 October](#).

In response to the recent tragic attacks in Paris and the growing threat from foreign terrorist fighters, the Commission has swiftly taken action to accelerate work and implementation of measures under the European Security Agenda. Today's proposal responds to the need to reinforce security controls at the EU's external borders, as [called for by Interior Ministers](#) on 20 November.

For More Information

FACTSHEET: [A European Border and Coast Guard](#)

FACTSHEET: [Systematic Checks at External Borders](#)

[Detailed Q&A: The European Border and Coast Guard](#)

[Proposal for a regulation establishing a European Border and Coast Guard](#)

[Proposal for a regulation on a targeted modification of the Schengen Borders Code](#)

[Proposal for a regulation on a European travel document for the return of illegally staying third country nationals](#)

[Revised EUROSUR Handbook](#)

[8th bi-annual report on the functioning of the Schengen area](#)

[Legislative Documents](#)

Press release: [Implementing the European Agenda on Migration: Progress Reports on Greece, Italy and the Western Balkans](#)

[The European Agenda on Migration](#)

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