

# Prevention, detection and combating of child trafficking at the EU borders

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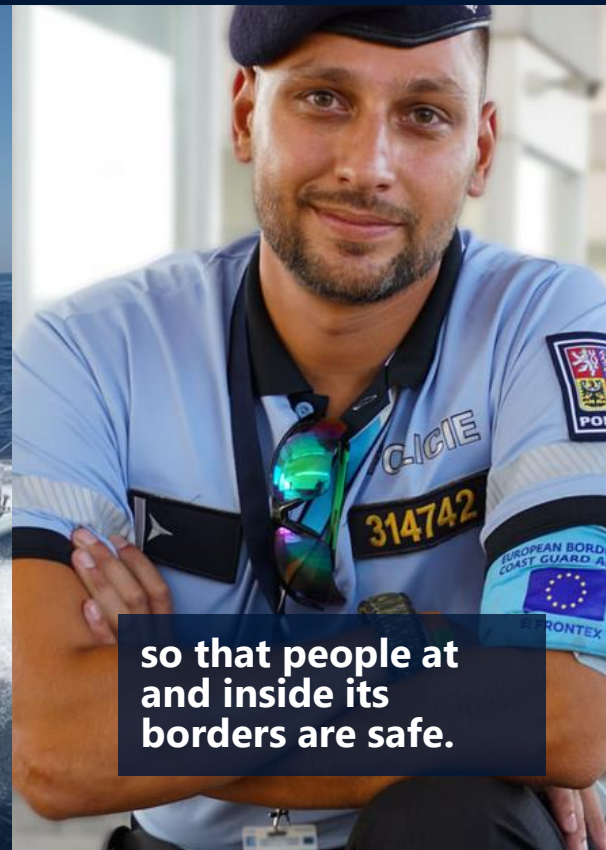
# WHO WE ARE



**We are the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.**



**We help to secure Europe's borders,**



**so that people at and inside its borders are safe.**

- **Biggest EU agency, +2 200 staff**
- **More than 2 500 officers at the borders every day**
- **23 operations yearly**
- **Liaison officers around the EU and beyond**



Protecting borders

Safer Schengen, smoother travels (ETIAS)

Fighting cross-border crime

Research and Innovation

Return and reintegration

Training

Monitoring the borders

International and EU cooperation

Risk analysis



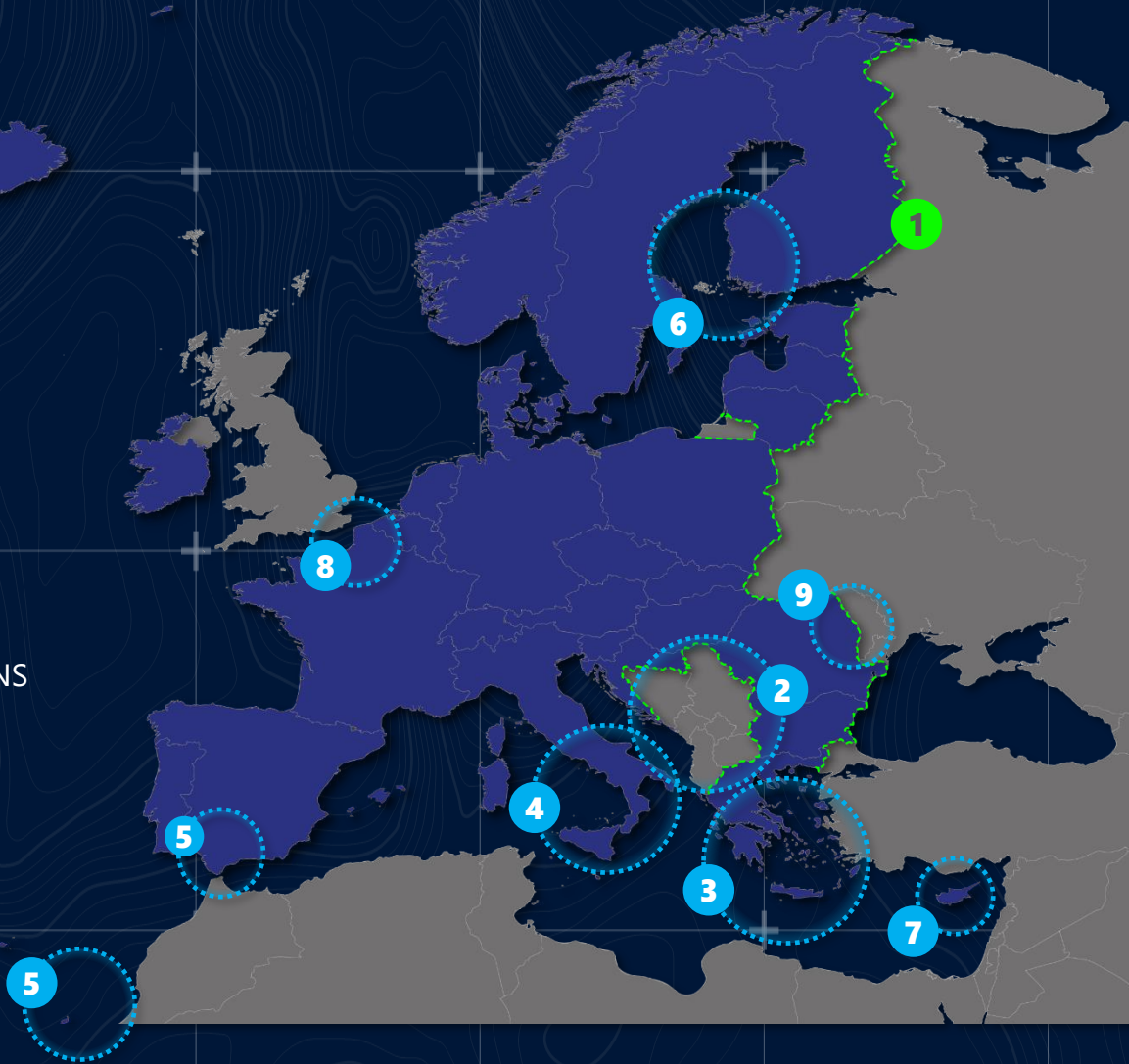
# OUR MAIN TASKS



# Where we are

Map showing main areas of deployment:

- 1 LAND OPERATION TERRA
- 2 WESTERN BALKANS
- 3 GREECE
- 4 ITALY
- 5 SPAIN
- 6 MULTIPURPOSE MARITIME OPERATIONS
- 7 CYPRUS
- 8 THE CHANNEL
- 9 MOLDOVA





## HOW WE WORK

- Frontex sends its standing corps officers, along with boats, planes and border surveillance equipment, to affected external border areas
- Our operations cover tasks related to security checks, search and rescue and detection of cross-border crime
- Operations are multipurpose and include search and rescue, fisheries control and detection of maritime pollution





## Frontex knows what is going on at the borders, where it is happening and how to react

We maintain a Europe-wide overview of border control thanks to our 24/7 monitoring of the situation at Europe's borders and beyond and risk analysis

We support national authorities and EU agencies in preventing and detecting all kind of illegal activities at the external border, from human smuggling to illegal fishing or drug trafficking

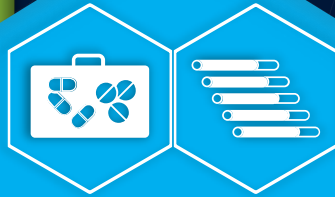




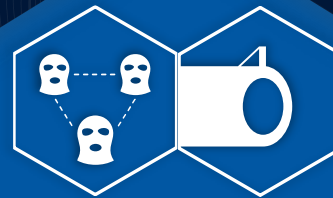
# FIGHTING CROSS-BORDER CRIME



Detecting stolen cars and fraudulent documents



Finding drugs and cigarettes smuggled into the European Union



Gathering intelligence on criminal networks



Detecting people smuggling and trafficking in human beings across the borders

**Eastern Land Borders/Eastern Mediterranean Route – Land**

- JO Terra 2024
- JO Bulgaria 2024
- JO Romania 2024
- JO Moldova 2024
- JO Georgia 2024

**Eastern Mediterranean Route – Sea**

- JO Poseidon 2024
- JO Ledra 2024

**Western Balkans**

- JO Albania 2024
- JO Montenegro 2024
- JO Serbia 2024
- JO North Macedonia 2024
- JO Coordination Points 2024
- JO Coordination Points Kosovo\* 2024

**Central Mediterranean Route**

- JO Themis 2024

**Western Mediterranean Route**

- JO Indalo 2024

**Atlantic Route**

- JO Canary Islands 2024

**North Sea**

- JO Opal Coast 2024

**Air borders (EU airports) & Sea**

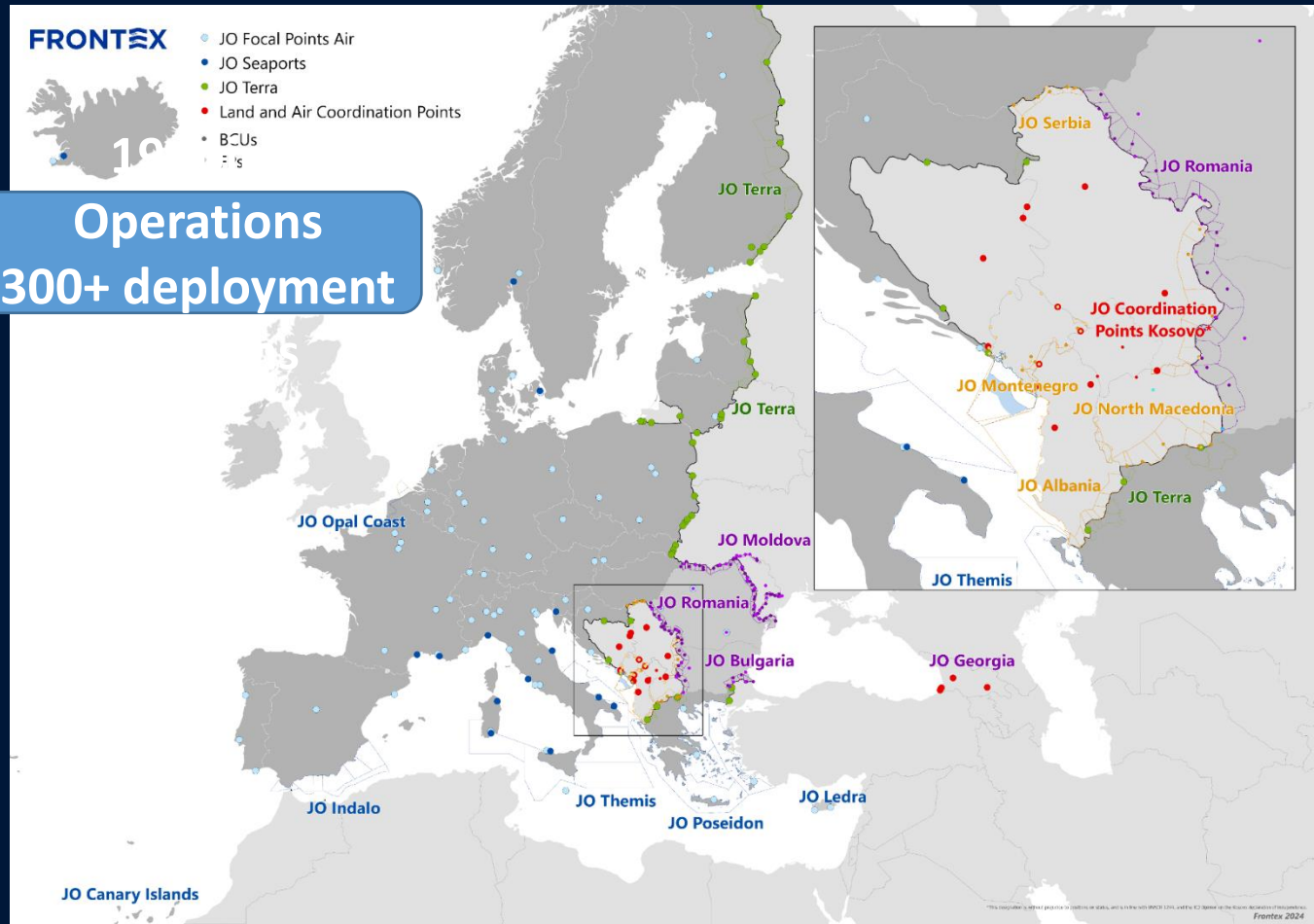
- JO Focal Points Air 2024
- JO Seaports 2024

**FRONTEx**



- JO Focal Points Air
- JO Seaports
- JO Terra
- Land and Air Coordination Points
- BCUs
- Ports

**Operations  
300+ deployment**



# The respect, protection and promotion of fundamental rights is our legal responsibility



Article 3 European integrated border management

1. European integrated border management shall consist of the following components:

(a) to the prevention and detection of cross-border crime at the external borders, in particular migrant smuggling, **trafficking in human beings**, and terrorism; and mechanisms and procedures for the **identification of vulnerable persons** and unaccompanied minors, and for the identification of persons who are in need of international protection or wish to apply for such protection, the **provision of information** to such persons, and the **referral** of such persons;

Certain categories of persons are better to identify as “vulnerable and with special needs” such as:



- Children
- Unaccompanied minors
- Single parents with minor children
- Pregnant women (or girls)
- Elderly people
- Persons with mental disorders
- Persons in need of medical assistance
- Persons with disabilities
- Persons in distress at sea



# EUROPE migration

- Over 100,000 refugee and migrant children in 2016
- 33,800 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) (34 %)
- Two main gateways to the continent: Italy and Greece

RESPONSE?

# Children at EU external borders: entry routes

Row Labels	2022	2023	2024
Detections of illegal border-crossings between BCPs	32,455	50,581	2,511
Central Mediterranean Route	20,276	28,173	419
Eastern Mediterranean Route	5,279	12,433	1,235
Western Balkan Route	3,122	3,215	152
Western Mediterranean Route	1,340	1,556	122
Western African Route	1,312	4,518	554
Not applicable	823	424	22
Eastern Borders Route	217	247	7
Black Sea Route	68	7	
Circular Route from Albania to Greece	18	8	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>32,455</b>	<b>50,581</b>	<b>2,511</b>

## Children nationalities

AFG	5,115	5,621
EGY	4,795	2,733
SYR	3,679	6,908
TUN	3,602	5,064
CIV	1,640	3,439
GIN	1,389	4,656
IRQ	1,328	1,469
SOM	1,262	1,468
MAR	1,207	1,561
AFG	5,115	5,621



Central Mediterranean Route	2022	2023	2024
Total	20,276	28,173	419
DZA	67	20	
LBN	675	61	
LBY	8,713	7,969	187
SYR	50		
TUN	6,331	18,548	232
TUR	4,440	1,575	

Eastern Mediterranean Route	2022	2023	2024
Total	5,279	12,433	1,235
IRN	3	-	-
LBN	-	411	64
SYR	109	760	72
TUR	5,167	11,262	1,099



## General Situation at the External Border

- ❑ Many vulnerable persons entering (mixed migration)
- ❑ Organized Crime Groups using migrant smuggling routes
- ❑ Smugglers using ‘leave-now-pay-later schemes’
- ❑ Diversity of nationalities of migrants
  -
- ❑ more diverse pool of persons in need
- ❑ Children in migration, and in particular **UAMs**, at higher risk
- ❑ Scale is unknown.

# Main issues related to children

- Border guards' awareness of children and situations of risk for children
- Standard Operational Procedures
- Identification of children
- Fingerprinting
- Parental authorisation
- Intelligence gathering
- National coordination mechanisms/unaccompanied minors' referral mechanism
- Reception and assistance, as well as interviewing
- Detention

# Problems faced by Border Guards with children at the borders

When it comes to children, Border Guards are facing major difficulties at different stages:

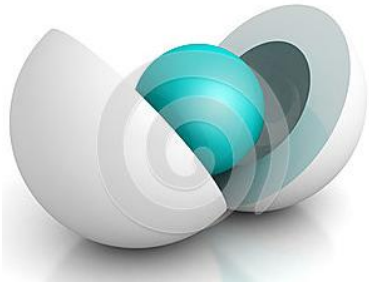
- To **identify** children in need (main challenge)
- To **deal with** children (first approach/contact)
- To **talk to** children (when possible)
- To **leave children in rightful care** (when there are no other alternatives)

# VEGA HANDBOOKS

Frontex  
for the Children  
on the Move



# VEGA Handbook: Children at the border



The **Core idea** was to establish a comprehensive approach on children at risk on the move at all types of borders by collecting best practice from MSs

## Aim

- To increase border guard officers' awareness of children crossing the external borders
- To help with the **identification** of children at risk, ensuring respect for **child rights** while enhancing activities against criminal activities



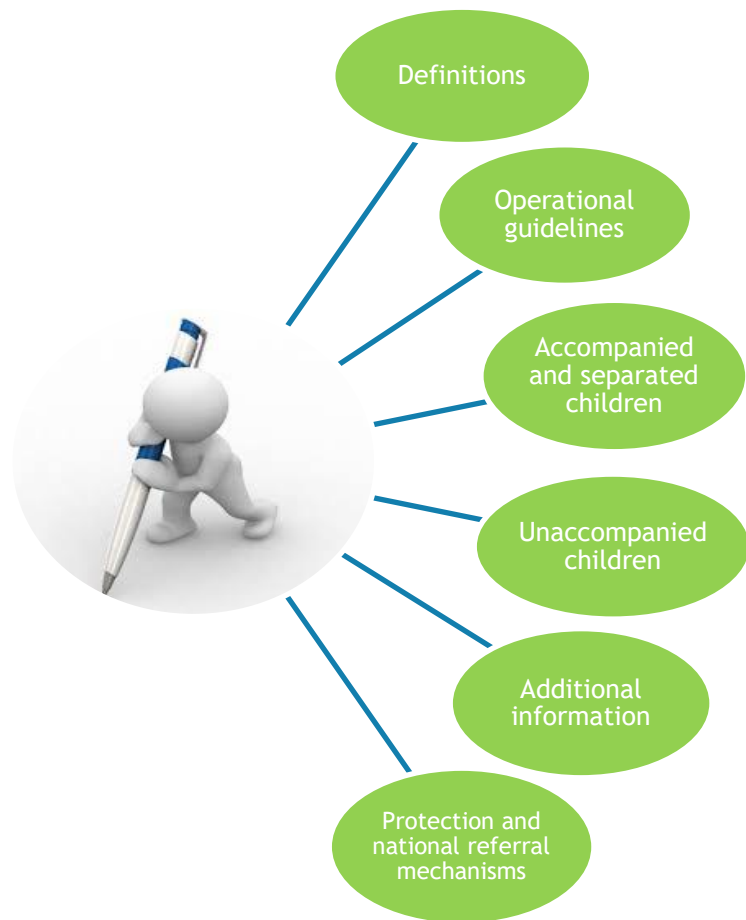
## Objectives

- Identifying gaps and challenges concerning children at risk
- To collect and create best practices on children
- To establish the ground for awareness raising
- Enhance multi-expertise and third country cooperation
- Keep the border guard language





# VEGA Handbook: Children at the borders



## CHILD TRAFFICKING

- Q: How many children are being trafficked?
- Q: How is Europe affected by child trafficking?
- Q: What are the most predominant form of exploitation? Is gender of any importance?
- Q: What are the Push and pull factors in child trafficking?
- Q: How the recruiting is done?

# TRAFFICKING INDICATORS

- Q: Is there something suspicious about this case?
  - What?
  - Who?
  - Where?

The presence of indicators should lead to a more in-depth information gathering on the situation

# Indicators used in first- and second-line control

- Travel documents
- Purpose of travel
- Physical appearance
- Behaviour
- Observations and conclusions from the interview
- Facilitation process
- Employment
- Contract
- Personal belongings

# Vega Children activities

## Children trafficked or smuggled through the external borders

On-the-spot visits of the experts from IO and NGO represented within the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights, upon MS agreement

### Vega Children Handbook

Best practices and recommendations for border guards





## Frontex involvement in EMPACT 2024



Frontex to be involved in 101 Operational Action: 9 as the action leader, 22 as the action coleader, 70 as a participants. Of these:

1.	22 in Migrant Smuggling (MIGR)	➔
2.	13 in Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)	➔
3.	11 in Cocaine, Cannabis and Heroin (CCH)	➔
4.	14 in Firearms (FIA)	➔
5.	10 in Organized Property Crime (OPC)	➔
6.	7 in High Risk Criminal Networks (HRCN)	➔
7.	3 in Environmental Crime (EnviCrime)	➔
8.	9 in Excise Fraud (EF)	➔
9.	4 in Synthetic Drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS/SYD)	➔
10.	8 in Intellectual Property Crime	➔

**EMPACT**  
**10** Priorities  
**101** Operational Action  
**9** led/**22** co-led

# JADs in 2024 (10 out of 12 led and co-led by Frontex)



Mobile 7	Stopover 4	Arktos 6	Child trafficking	Global Chain 2	Finestra 4	Danube 9	Pirates 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motor Vehicle Crime</li> <li>Stolen boats smuggling</li> <li>Migrant smuggling</li> <li>Document fraud</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migrant smuggling</li> <li>Document fraud</li> <li>Drugs trafficking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migrant smuggling</li> <li>Excise goods smuggling</li> </ul> <p>15-26.04</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child trafficking</li> <li>Migrant smuggling</li> <li>Document fraud</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All forms of THB</li> <li>migrant smuggling</li> <li>Document fraud</li> <li>03-10.06</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trafficking, illicit trade and illegal manufacturing of tobacco products</li> <li>Migrant smuggling</li> <li>Firearms trafficking</li> <li>Document fraud</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migrant smuggling</li> <li>THB</li> <li>Document fraud</li> </ul> <p>27.05-03.06</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migrant smuggling</li> <li>Document fraud</li> <li>Counterfeit product</li> <li>Cash and valuables smuggling</li> <li>13-24.05</li> </ul>
<p>+ JAD SEE 2024 (Co-led)</p> <p>Firearms trafficking, Migrant smuggling, Document Fraud, Drugs trafficking, THB, HRCN</p>							





212

suspects  
arrested



1426

victims  
identified



138

suspected  
traffickers  
identified



244

criminal  
cases  
opened

# LOOKING FORWARD

Frontex support in all hot spots  
at the EU external borders and  
beyond

Networking...  
Cooperation ...  
Increase efficiency and  
detection



**THANK YOU**