

Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/CSDP)

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Background Paper

Session 1: Security, Migration and External Border Management

Introduction

The impact of migratory movements in 2015 underlines the need for a European Union capable of action and a common approach to security, migration and external border management in accordance with fundamental and human rights. In a globalised world, it is important to promote the positive effects of legal migration, while effectively combating illegal migration. In this context, the European Commission launched, among other things, a reform of EU asylum legislation in 2015, aimed at both preventing secondary migration and ensuring solidarity vis-à-vis those Member States in which migrants enter Europe for the first time. These legislative proposals aim to ensure the humane treatment of asylum seekers, simplified and shortened asylum procedures and stricter anti-abuse rules.

FRONTEX as an instrument of EU external border management

Crisis-proof external border protection and effective checks on entry and exit are of particular importance for strengthening internal and external security and guaranteeing freedom of movement within the Schengen area. The focus is on the need for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency FRONTEX to support the Member States and to adapt its mandate to meet the new requirements; its mandate was already amended in 2016 to respond to the extremely high pressures caused by the migration crisis.

Although primary responsibility remains with the Member States, FRONTEX supports them with know-how, resources and analysis. It conducts joint return flights, cooperates with national authorities within the EU as well as with non-EU states and can conduct joint operations on the territory of and in cooperation with third states bordering at least one EU Member State. By setting up hotspots and sending teams to support migration management, FRONTEX, together with other EU agencies, has played an important role in responding to the challenges currently facing some Member States. Both the operations at sea and the direct support of Member States at the hotspots are tangible European responses to this humanitarian crisis, which at the same time presents challenges to

border management as well.

Internal and external dimension

At the external borders, the internal and external dimensions of the EU's border control activities have become increasingly intertwined. This trend is also reflected in the increasing participation of defence actors in developing integrated border management. This takes the form of both direct operations and providing border management assistance to third countries, e.g. through training, mentoring and monitoring. Operation SOPHIA, a key element of the Common Security and Defence Policy, is an example of the operational involvement of Member States' navies in achieving the integrated management of external borders. While the original mandate of this operation was to combat smugglers, activities such as surveillance, search and rescue operations at sea and the exchange of information with the law enforcement authorities of the Member States, as well as with FRONTEX and Europol, have been added. In so doing, it contributes to developing the capacities of the Libyan coastguard and navy and is aimed at enabling Libya to prevent the smuggling of human beings along the central Mediterranean route.

Enhanced cooperation with third countries

In addition, increased cooperation with third countries can prevent people not entitled to protection from crossing to Europe and ensure effective repatriation capabilities. Measures for the sustainable monitoring and closure of illegal migration routes, in particular the eastern and central Mediterranean routes, aimed at preventing smuggling and human trafficking and at breaking up criminal gangs of smugglers, need to be intensified. As the example of Operation Sophia shows, CSDP instruments can also be used effectively for this purpose. Moreover, a sustainable EU migration policy must be closely linked to foreign and security policy strategies. Causes of migration are manifold and complex, and are intertwined. If the EU aims to combat these causes and support the countries of origin in promoting political stability and economic prosperity, coherent policies in a number of areas, such as trade, finance, agriculture or climate protection, are necessary.

- Which CFSP/CSDP instruments can be increasingly used for external border management in the future and how?
- What avenue could the European Union pursue on the issue of migration in order to achieve the broadest possible consensus among all Member States and to facilitate long-term joint action?
- What steps should be taken to ensure that external border management and migration policies continue to be compatible with international human rights and European fundamental rights obligations?