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CENTRE DELÀS REPORT 40

GUARDING THE FORTRESS

The role of Frontex in the militarisation and securitisation of migration flows in the European Union

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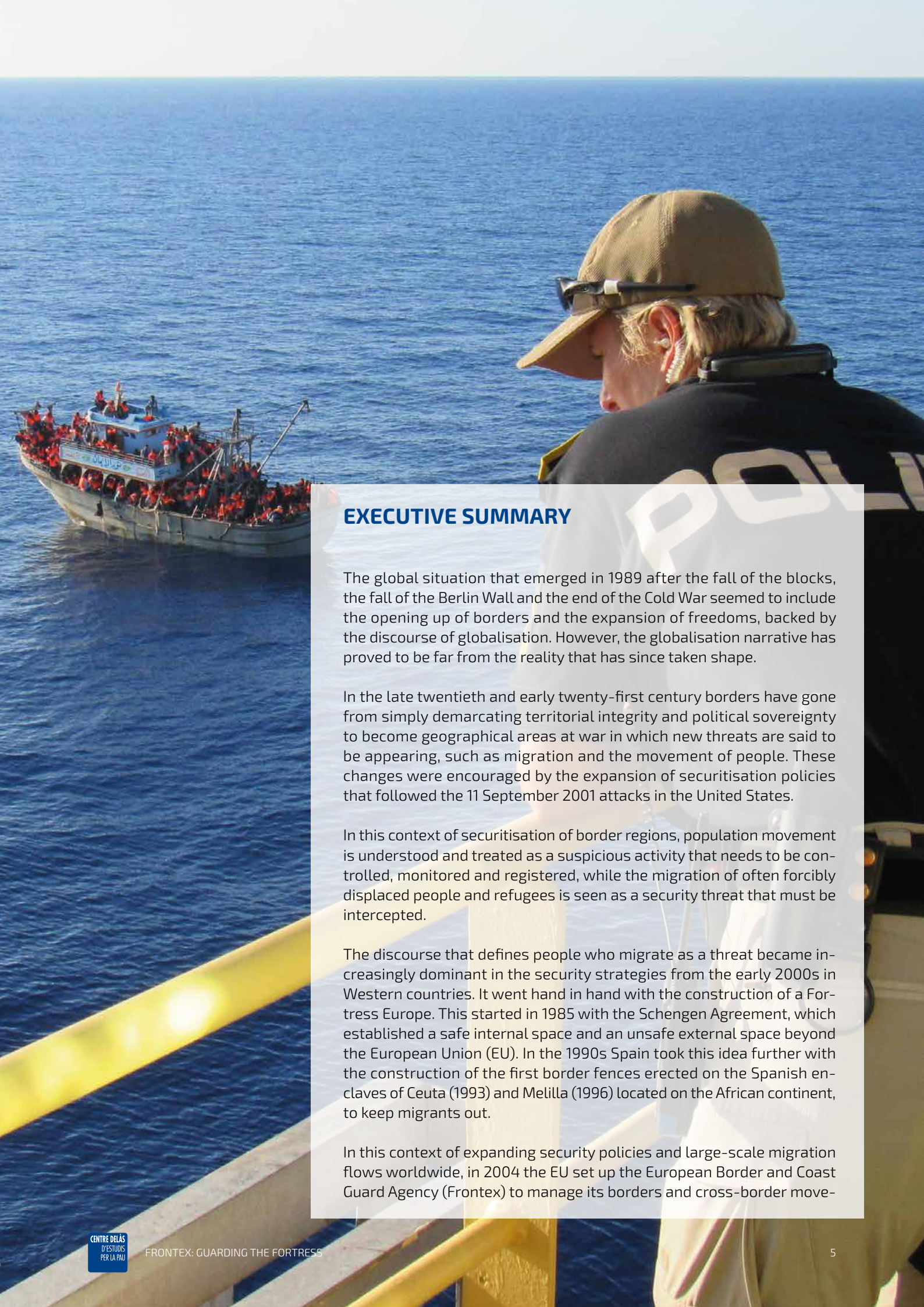


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The global situation that emerged in 1989 after the fall of the blocks, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War seemed to include the opening up of borders and the expansion of freedoms, backed by the discourse of globalisation. However, the globalisation narrative has proved to be far from the reality that has since taken shape.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century borders have gone from simply demarcating territorial integrity and political sovereignty to become geographical areas at war in which new threats are said to be appearing, such as migration and the movement of people. These changes were encouraged by the expansion of securitisation policies that followed the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States.

In this context of securitisation of border regions, population movement is understood and treated as a suspicious activity that needs to be controlled, monitored and registered, while the migration of often forcibly displaced people and refugees is seen as a security threat that must be intercepted.

The discourse that defines people who migrate as a threat became increasingly dominant in the security strategies from the early 2000s in Western countries. It went hand in hand with the construction of a Fortress Europe. This started in 1985 with the Schengen Agreement, which established a safe internal space and an unsafe external space beyond the European Union (EU). In the 1990s Spain took this idea further with the construction of the first border fences erected on the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta (1993) and Melilla (1996) located on the African continent, to keep migrants out.

In this context of expanding security policies and large-scale migration flows worldwide, in 2004 the EU set up the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) to manage its borders and cross-border move-

ments. Frontex was one of a range of security measures deployed to build what has become known as Fortress Europe.

This report analyses the theory and practice of Frontex, the agency set up to manage the EU's borders and migration flows, as well as its contribution to Europe's securitisation and its role in guarding Fortress Europe.

MOVEMENT AND MIGRATION AS A THREAT

Analysis of the founding regulations and mandate of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) shows that the EU considers migration a security risk on a par with crimes such as drug trafficking or smuggling, paving the way for the approval of exceptional measures to address it.

The 2016 Regulation on Frontex gave it more powers and approved the use of force in the course of undertaking its duties, making it an instrument of containment and coercion with regard to the treatment of migration flows. It also allowed it to act in the territory of Member States without their consent, thus infringing their sovereign right to use a different, non-securitised approach to dealing with migration.

Since 2016 the role of Frontex has shifted from facilitating to coordinating operations to return migrants to their country of origin, as is evident in the growing budget devoted to such operations.

THE PRACTICE OF SECURITISATION BY FRONTEX

The budget for Frontex increased from €6.2 million in 2005 to €288 million in 2018, making a total of €1.65 billions for the 2005–2018 period, and its approved budget for 2019 is €333 million. This reflects the political determination to reinforce Frontex as a border-control system. Most of the budget is allocated to its operational activities.

The budget shows the growing importance of migrant-return operations, from €80,000 in 2005 to €47.8 million in 2018, with an approved budget of €63 million for 2019.

None of the 19 main joint operations conducted by Frontex has a specific mandate to rescue people or to include civilian shipping fleets in its actions. They all concentrate more or less exclusively on combating and intercepting different cross-border crimes, most of which are related to flows of migrants.

Frontex collaborates with NATO on joint operations carried out in the Mediterranean by the UE (Operation *Sophia*), thus consolidating a securitised and militarised practice in the management of migration.

Frontex also plays a crucial role in expanding Fortress Europe by conducting and coordinating operations in third countries by various means. These include Coordination Points and Focal Points, which are aimed at forging links between security forces and training them to work together, as well as the rapid deployment of Frontex in third countries. In this way, the EU's migration policies are externalised, imposing its approach to managing migration flows on other countries.

Operations conducted in the Mediterranean such as *Poseidon* and *Triton* had budgets of €18 million and €19 million respectively for their six months of activity. The Italian government operation they replaced, *Mare Nostrum*, had a six-monthly budget of €54 million in October 2013 and 2014.

One of the main objectives of joint operations like *Hermes* and *Attica* is to identify 'illegal' migrants and help to organise operations to return them to their countries of origin.

Of the 19 operations analysed, only one, *Vega Children*, mentions working together with a humanitarian organisation, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to control cross-border movements of child migrants.

The analysis shows that Frontex engages in one practice typical of securitisation policies: the use of emergency measures such as the deployment of Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABITs) to intercept migrants. These emergency operations were carried out in 2010 and 2015, on the borders of Greece and in its territorial waters. In 2015 its core mandate was to identify and intercept migrants before they reached European soil.

The European Border Guard Teams (EBGTs), which replaced the RABITs in 2016, have a permanent corps of 1,500 guards ready to be deployed in the event of large-scale migration movements. Their duties are similar to those of Frontex, including migrant-return and rapid-return operations.

Joint operations such as EUROCUP, reinforced border control during the European Cup, which began to be conducted in 2008, and implied the expansion of control and surveillance policies on cross-border movement, including on the EU's internal borders.

Analysis of migrant-return operations shows that Member States have become increasingly interest-

ed in these operations. Their number rose by nearly 76% in 2018 compared to 2017, according to Frontex figures.

These securitisation practices implemented by an EU agency reinforce the widespread idea that people who migrate are criminals, coupled with the existence of a safe 'internal space' and an unsafe 'external space' from which the EU needs to insulate itself by strengthening its borders with security agents whose use of force is considered legitimate. They also reinforce the territorial power dynamics in which one's country of origin is one of the factors that determine a person's freedom of movement. This buttresses the differential treatment applied to people as they cross borders.

Thus, Frontex safeguards the EU's structures and discourses of violence, distancing it from policies that defend human rights, peaceful co-existence, equality, protection and more equal relations between territories.

INTRODUCTION

This report, *Guarding the Fortress: the role of Frontex in the securitisation of migration flows in the European Union*, is set in a wider context in which more than 70.8 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced, according to the 2018 figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (UNHCR, 2019). Some of these have reached the borders of the European Union (EU), seeking protection and asylum, but instead have encountered policy responses that mostly aim to halt and intercept migration flows, against the background of securitisation policies in which the governments of EU Member States see migration as a threat. One of the responses to address migration flows is the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (hereafter Frontex), established in 2004 as the EU body in charge of guarding what many have called 'Fortress Europe', and whose practices have helped to consolidate the criminalisation of migrants and the securitisation of their movements.

The report focuses on analysing the tools deployed by Fortress Europe, in this case through Frontex, to prevent the freedom of movement and the right to asylum, from its creation in 2004 to the present day.

The sources used to write this report were from the EU and Frontex, based on its budgets and annual reports. The analysis focused on the Frontex regulations, the language used and its meaning, as well as the budgetary trends, identifying the most significant items – namely, the joint operations and migrant-return operations.

A table was compiled of all the joint operations mentioned in the annual reports since the Agency was established in 2005 up to 2018 (see annexes). The joint operations were found on government websites but were not mentioned in the Frontex annual reports. Of these operations, we analysed those of the longest duration, or that have showed recent signs of becoming long-term operations. The joint operations are analysed in terms of their objectives, area of action, the mandates of the personnel deployed, and their most noteworthy characteristics.

Basically, the research sought to answer the following questions: What policies are being implemented in border areas and in what context? How does Frontex act in response to migration movements? A second objective was to analyse how Frontex securitises the movement of refugees and other migrants, with the aim of contributing to the analysis of the process of border militarisation and the security policies applied to non-EU migrants by the EU and its Member States.

1. FRONTEX IN CONTEXT: NEW SECURITY POLICIES IN THE BORDER REGIONS

Political borders are by definition a human and social creation rather than a natural phenomenon. For this very reason, borders have a range of meanings that go beyond political maps. The border is a multidimensional concept (Bauder, 2011: 1126) and an essential component of social and economic policies and the international system. Modern borders define the contemporary political system, demarcating territories, sovereignties, populations, identities and economic processes.

A border is essentially a line which states have drawn to demarcate their sovereign space, meaning the extent of the territory – including the people who live there – over which they can govern, apply their policies and exert influence. Borders are essential to nation-states because they mark out their area of action and where another sovereign state begins.

In the modern world, which is based on nation-states, the border is an element that goes practically unchallenged. It constitutes the basis of state sovereignty, as defined in the concepts of territoriality and authority (Barkin and Cronin, 1994: 107), and therefore determines national security, among other things. When it is crossed or challenged by another state it is going to be seen as an act of aggression, setting in motion mechanisms for the use of force by the state itself and by the international community, which may lead to serious tensions or conflicts and wars. Indeed, territorial disputes are the main cause of inter-state rivalry (Zacher, 2001: 215).

Borders therefore constitute an element of international rules based on the sovereignty of states, and so are directly related to matters of national and international security.

This relationship between borders and security influenced the creation of a global system in which the hegemonic security paradigms are state-centric and militaristic. This implies the use of force to maintain security, so that the state's territorial integrity is assured, and includes the border as a basic element in security and defence. There is therefore a close relationship between the border and any given model of security. The relationship between the two may change depending on the policies implemented in border regions, leading with growing frequency to the reinforcement of control measures (Vollmer, 2012: 131).

One historical moment when the changing role of borders seemed to be most relevant was the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the end of the Cold War and the growing process of globalisation, which led people to believe that walls and reinforced borders would come to an end, giving way to flexibility with regard to movements of people around the world.

However, globalisation has proved to be a long way from bringing equality and connection among territories or the full freedom of movement that its dis-

course promised (Johnson et al., 2011: 61; Jones and Johnson, 2016: 187); and, as pointed out by Shamir (2016: 157), it has not implied a full and equal opening of borders. Rather, it has increased inequality between territories: depending on their country of origin, people may be able to travel more freely or are subjected to greater control, security measures and expense.

The emergence of this globalised and transnational world has left borders not solely demarcating state sovereignty, ensuring the security of territorial integrity and internal cohesion but also a means to create and reinforce hierarchies in movement, social differences and exclusion (Shamir, 2016: 200; Walters, 2002: 571).

Against this background of globalisation, there is the contradiction between open and closed borders, where more open borders are perceived as a possible threat, or indeed create new threats. As a consequence of this contradictory situation, with the promise of more open borders while at the same time these are associated with new threats, some social and political sectors have moved towards the securitisation of borders, leading to their reinforcement as an instrument of control (Arieli, 2016: 493).

The complex and multidimensional nature of borders that emerges from these analyses, their relevance in the maintenance of the international system mainly structured after World War II, their role in controlling people and movement – as well as the new globalisation-related perceptions that have an influence on borders – mean the creation of new scenarios for the way in which borders are interpreted and addressed, as policies move in parallel with the tendency to implement securitisation measures.

The term securitisation comes from economics and refers to the degree of certainty involved in investments. The Copenhagen School introduced and analysed a new framework in security studies in the 1990s, discussing the new concept of securitisation (Emmers, 2013: 131) which would prove to have a crucial effect on how borders are addressed and treated politically and socially.

For the Copenhagen School, a state of security is when the subject neither encounters nor perceives threats or aggressions. It also introduced a multidimensional approach to the concept of security, which is broader than military security alone. The areas of expansion beyond military security and the integrity of the state are the realms of the collective and society, and security is therefore related to the threats to which these subjects are exposed at the local and global level. In the late twentieth century, and especially at the start of the twenty-first, the border emerges as an element that establishes a strong relationship between the local and the global.

It is this multidimensional nature of security that generates the process called securitisation, which expands the vulnerability to threats. This means that elements belonging to the sphere of public policy come to be seen as matters of security (Salazar and Yenissey, 2011: 33), which in turn diversifies and generates new threats. Among these new threats is that posed by open borders in a context of globalisation and further threats that more porous borders may generate. In other words, the border itself implies a threat, together with those elements associated with it, such as the movement of people.

Securitisation also has another set of characteristics based on the concepts and strategies of risk assessment and prevention. This has led to the tendency of 'governing through risk' (Muller, 2009: 68), whereby governments adopt various measures to implement the doctrine of 'zero risk'. This means that measures are deployed on the borders with the aim of being able to filter out those elements that may pose a threat, thus strengthening the control and surveillance society.

Data-gathering and analysis systems are increasingly consolidated, together with an expansion of the collection of biometric data and its analysis, using algorithms to detect elements of risk (Amoore, 2009: 50). This expansion of control systems introduces what Muller (2009) calls the *technologisation* of security, whereby security is subordinated to technology.

The multitude of threats and the implementation of 'zero risk' policies also imply a constant state of alert and emergency. This makes it easier to justify the approval of policies seen as exceptional from a political perspective.

It is important to mention that the securitisation process also includes militarisation, because it conflates the spheres of public safety and war (Salazar and Yenissey, 2011: 34). Furthermore, the prevailing paradigm for providing security is based on military principles: the use of force and coercion, more weapons equating to more security, and the achievement of security by eliminating threats.

The realm of security is thus expanded, leading to a change in the sense that the state is no longer solely responsible for security. However, the same tools of coercion are maintained, and for the same reasons, namely to protect the cohesion of the nation-state and the key elements that comprise it. Also main-

tained is the hegemonic paradigm for providing security: militarism.

The border securitisation process that began in the 1990s was reinforced at the start of the twenty-first century, mainly due to the 11 September 2001 attacks (9/11) in the United States. Those attacks led to a paradigm shift in Western countries' approach to security, which was already being reviewed and debated after the end of the Cold War (Nuruzzaman, 2006: 228). The attacks triggered national and global alarm and activated exceptional measures through policies such as the Patriot Act, which approved the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in the United States. Globalised and transnational terrorism, at a level hitherto unknown in the West, was accompanied by a political rhetoric of fear and insecurity that unleashed a permanent state of alert: any kind of attack was possible, anywhere and at any time, against any of the nation's subjects.

As described by authors such as Messina (2016: 530), Emmers (2013: 132) and Vollmer (2012: 131), the securitisation process began with the political discourse about new threats that was repeated in various different spaces of power, and consequently social acceptance of the extraordinary measures that were approved.

In this way, the process of developing a type of security more closely related to the concept of National Security or Homeland Security than to National Defence began to be consolidated, and would come to have global influence. With the creation of the DHS the securitisation process became consolidated in the United States (Mutimer, 2013), and would influence the rest of the world.

Securitisation has also had a global impact on the management of different policy spheres, as substantial changes have taken place in the way public policies are addressed by associating them with security. Social and economic policies that have been securitised include those concerning infrastructure, epidemics, and borders and immigration.

Thus, borders have come to be seen as exceptional spaces where emergency measures are deployed and where the movement of people and migration flows have become a threat.

In conclusion, there is a strong relationship between borders and security. This relationship has evolved, coming to define the current international system of nation-states. In the late twentieth century, and especially at the start of the twenty-first, a special relationship was established between the securitisation process and borders, with some sectors analysing the appearance of new threats associated with borders and the launch, reinforcement and consolidation of the process of border securitisation.

2. FRONTEX: GUARDING THE FORTRESS

2.1 MANDATE: SECURITISATION AND CRIMINALISATION OF MOVEMENT

The European agency for border control (Frontex) was created in 2004 in Warsaw under European Council Regulation (EC) Nº 2007/2004 (European Council, 2004), although the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders would not start work until 2005. Its mandate is to oversee the effectiveness and coordinate the authorities charged with controlling the external borders of EU Member States and the Schengen area, and provide operational and technical support to the countries that require it. It also has to develop a strategy for border control and assess its effectiveness and the threats that may need to be addressed.

Its main role is to control crimes associated with border areas, such as smuggling and drug trafficking, but this also includes intercepting refugees and migrants to prevent them reaching European territory, so that no Member State will have to manage the registration, possible request for asylum, or return (*refoulement*) of a migrant. Such actions are carried out under the name of 'operations against people trafficking' or combating 'irregular migration'.

Frontex is also responsible for the surveillance and control of the movement of people across the EU's internal and external borders and the Schengen area, because such movement itself has become securitised and therefore seen as a threat to national security. Thus, Frontex's mandate is not to rescue people in distress, but to focus on border surveillance and detecting cross-border crime.

Frontex was not allocated its own resources until 2016, when its mandate was expanded and it received its own equipment and agents, although Member States must still provide materials, equipment and personnel for its operations. In 2019 the European Council agreed to strengthen Frontex until 2027, providing it with increased operational capacity, allowing it to act in third countries and giving it a greater role in migrant-return operations. It also decided to increase its staff by 10,000 and allocate a budget to buy equipment.

Its areas of responsibility include (European Union, 2017):

- Risk analysis: Frontex assesses the risks to border security in an annual report. These security threats or risks include immigration. Risk analysis is based on the premise of 'zero risk' (Muller, 2009) characteristic of securitisation policies, which implies a

permanent state of alert and justifies the use of extraordinary measures.

- Joint operations: Frontex is in charge of coordinating the staff deployed in border areas when requested or recommended by a Member State. These operations are conducted jointly with the country's own security or paramilitary forces, such as the Civil Guard in Spain or the *Guardia di Finanza* in Italy. It also coordinates with military forces, as in Operation *Sophia*, which is carried out with the support of NATO warships.

- Rapid response: Frontex coordinates the Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABITs) to control borders when large numbers of people arrive at an external frontier. This implies preventing people from entering the territory of the EU or the Schengen area. Forced expulsion, rejection at the border, or transfer to a detention centre for non-EU nationals are the usual options facing such migrants and refugees.

- Research: Frontex coordinates the different sectors involved in the research and development of border-control technologies. The military and security industry is involved in research on border control, developing surveillance and control technologies and equipment.

- Training: Frontex develops common training standards for the border authorities in different countries. The type of training it develops contributes to border securitisation because immigration is now treated in the same way as other conventional threats (smuggling, piracy or drug trafficking) and the same means are used. Frontex has had to outsource much of its training due to the amount of work required to standardise training in different states and the size of its training unit (Léonard, 2010: 241).

- Joint returns: Frontex develops best practices for returning migrants to their country of origin. This is one of the most controversial aspects of its work due to the rejections at the border often practised by Member States and Frontex in their joint operations (Léonard, 2010: 240), violating the principle of *non-refoulement* enshrined in article 33 of the 1951 Geneva Convention and various international treaties, as it involves rejecting people at the border without having studied the possible risk that return will pose for each person's life (Marengoni, 2016: 6). Countries such as Greece, Italy and Spain have been criticised for rejecting migrants at the border (2016: 4).

  Frontex facilitated deportation flights until 2016, when it became the coordination agency and, as we will see, its budget for return operations began to increase steadily. Furthermore, some return operations are conducted with the collaboration of third countries or on their territory, complicating transparency, as a significant part of such operations depends on that third country and is not subject to the same laws that apply to EU Member States.

- Information sharing: Frontex helps to develop and operate information systems to manage and store vast quantities of border-control data and facilitate information-sharing among agencies. The accumulation of data and the recording of cross-border movements forms part of the system of reinforcement, control and surveillance of the securitised border.

After its first decade of work, some Member States felt that Frontex had not been given a sufficiently strong mandate and powers to be an effective means of border control (European Commission, 2015), and that its operational shortcomings were due in part to its dependence on equipment and staff provided voluntarily by Member States. For this reason, in 2016 it became the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (still called Frontex) with the new Regulation 2016/1624 (Official Journal of the European Union, 2016). This provided Frontex with increase increase in its staff, a reserve pool of 1,500 guards that it can mobilise if it considers there is a migration emergency (2016: 4), and equipment.

The new regulation also expanded Frontex's powers and competences. Some of these have proved controversial, including the following:

- Ability to operate in the territory of a Member State without its consent: the regulation (2016: 4) allows Frontex to take action in the territory of a Member State when ordered to do so by the European Commission,[1] if it believes that the State in question is incapable or unable to deal with an emergency, such as the arrival of refugees and other migrants. This implies that a government is unable to deal with migration flows or other matters related to its borders in the manner it deems most appropriate, because the other EU countries have the power to decide to intervene in its territory.

- Use of force: the regulation specifies that the Agency's teams may use force if necessary. This implies that they can use force and coercion against mi-

1. The decision is taken by a qualified majority of EU Member States.

grants and refugees, and thus a militarised treatment of the migration question:

> While performing their tasks and exercising their powers, members of the teams shall be authorised to use force, including service weapons, ammunition and equipment, with the consent of the home Member State and the host Member State, in the presence of border guards of the host Member State and in accordance with the national law of the host Member State. The host Member State may, with the consent of the home Member State, authorise members of the teams to use force in the absence of border guards of the host Member State (2016: 38).

- More active role in return operations: according to the new regulation (2016: 5), Frontex can organise and coordinate return operations on its own initiative, whereas before its role was mainly to act as facilitator. It is therefore able to provide deportation supervisors, escorts, specialists and intervention teams. The regulation also provides for the use of force in return operations (2016: 29).

- Increased cooperation with third countries: joint operations may include the territory of third countries. This forms part of the border externalisation policy, which delegates the management of migration flows to third countries. As stated in the Transnational Institute report, *Expanding the Fortress*, the majority of these are countries with serious shortcomings in their ability to safeguard returnees' human rights (Akkerman, 2018). This also implies an increased level of EU interference in third countries, which are obliged under various agreements to apply migration policies that comply with the EU agenda, and to mobilise resources to control borders and migration flows in keeping with the EU's needs.

- Analysis and assessment of external borders: Frontex will evaluate how Member States are managing the EU's external borders in order to impose measures to improve border control, which would expand the application of policies that seek to move closer to Fortress Europe.

- Establish controls on internal borders: in exceptional situations, Frontex may establish border controls inside the Schengen area.

In short, both the principles and the practices of Frontex are based on securitising the movement of people specifically and migration flows in general, treating them as a threat that must be addressed in a militarised security approach. Its main mandate is to combat and intercept cross-border crime, which means it cannot be seen to include rescue operations. Furthermore, the means used by both Frontex and EU Member States to deal with migration and the movement of people are the same as those used to combat crimes such as people trafficking, drug trafficking and smuggling, side-lining humanitarian practices and interventions.

2.2 BUDGET: PUBLIC FUNDS FOR INTERCEPTING AND CONTROLLING MOVEMENT

The budget for Frontex has increased significantly since it was set up, reaching a total of €1.65 billions for the 2005–2018 period, and an approved budget for 2019 €333 million. The budget fell slightly in 2012, but has grown markedly since then. The budget has increased notably since 2015, a year that also stood out for the major wall-building projects carried out by Member States to shut off one of the main migration routes through the Balkans (Ruiz Benedicto and Pere Brunet, 2018: 23).

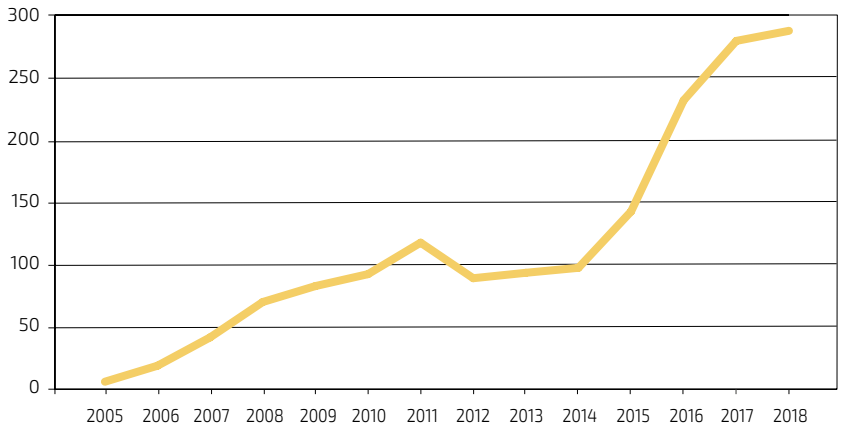
Most of Frontex's budget and resources are allocated to its operational activities, which include its joint operations with third countries based on its risk analysis. These focus on the detection and interception of cross-border crime and the surveillance and control of movement on the borders between EU Member States and third countries. Operational activities also include coordinating and supporting operations to return people to their country of origin, staff training, cooperation with other countries and other types of activities.

Table 1 shows the total budget for operational activities and some of the most significant items included for the 2005–2018 period.

The operational activities include the joint operations to return migrants. Before the expansion of its roles in 2016, Frontex used to facilitate these return operations, and provided funds from its budget for them. In 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015 these operations ceased to appear as such in the Frontex budget reports, but this does not mean that they were not conducted, as they may be included in other items. From 2016 onwards, Frontex's role shifted from facilitator to coordinator, so the budget item appears as 'Return Support', reflecting a trend in the form of this type of operations and the budget allocated for them.

In short, Frontex is the main EU policy instrument for managing borders and migration flows, as demonstrated by its growing budget, particularly since 2015. Its involvement in return operations has also been increasing, reflecting the decision by Member States to boost Frontex's role in them.

Figure 1. Frontex budget 2005–2018



Source: Prepared by the author based on Frontex annual budgets (Frontex, 2005-2018)

Millions of current euros

Table 1. Budget for Frontex operational activities (2005–2018)

Current euros

	Total operational activities	Joint operations (land, sea and air)	Cooperation with migrant return operations	Support for migrant return operations	Training
2005	4,024,300	3,400,000	80,000,00		250,000
2006	19,166,300	10,764,300	325,000,00		1,060,000
2007	27,326,000	19,865,000	600,000,00		3,505,000
2008	70,432,000	38,450,000	560,000,00		6,410,000
2009	83,250,000	42,900,000	2,250,000,00		6,500,000
2010	61,611,843	34,770,843	9,341,000,00		7,200,000
2011	86,730,500	73,223,500			5,600,000
2012	58,951,000	46,993,000			4,000,000
2013	62,550,900	39,531,900	8,850,000,00		4,760,000
2014	60,348,700	46,330,700			4,050,000
2015	111,228,000	92,009,000			4,320,000
2016	188,897,000	121,977,000		39,585,000	5,000,000
2017	225,652,794	129,365,000		53,060,000	8,978,285
2018	218,324,187	128,100,000		47,853,080	9,801,239

Source: Prepared by the author based on Frontex annual budgets (Frontex, 2005-2018)

2.3 JOINT OPERATIONS: SECURITISATION IN PRACTICE

Frontex usually acts alongside the security forces of Member States in joint operations, which take place on three types of borders: land, sea and air. Operations are based on the risk analysis conducted by Frontex itself or at the request of a Member State. The analysis involves assessing the situation on the ground in the requesting country and the type of operation required. A risk analysis will also be conducted on the operation itself, and an operational plan will be drawn up specifying the equipment and personnel needed to carry it out. Following its approval, Frontex will request Member States to assist by providing resources, and once these are obtained the deployment can be authorised.

Frontex's risk analyses look at the situation on the EU's external borders, migration trends, the situation in the main countries of origin and transit countries, methods used by people-trafficking networks and strengths and vulnerabilities in border controls.

A table was compiled of all the joint operations mentioned in the annual reports since the Agency was established in 2004 up to 2018 (with the budget for joint operations from 2005 onwards). The operations

were selected from a more comprehensive table included in the annexes,[2] based on the following criteria: the duration of the operation (more than three years); deployment of the RABITs, as an emergency force for rapid deployment; and the potential for some operations to continue in subsequent years (recent operations). It should be noted that joint operations were found on government websites but were not mentioned in the Frontex annual reports, indicating some irregularity in the transparency of these reports.

The operations that have lasted the longest are those designed to control sea borders, such as *Poseidon, Hera, Indalo, Minerva, Attica* and *Hermes*. Most of these operate in the Mediterranean, with some, such as *Minerva* and *Hera*, extending to controls in North Africa.

It is also important to highlight the *Coordination Points* operation due to its significance for the Agency at the operational level. It involves implementing coordination points, both in Member States and in countries outside the EU, due to their usefulness for the deployment of RABITs or European Border Guard Teams (EBGTs), and as a consequence of the border externalisation policies. As Akkerman (2018) states, border externalisation means that, under agreements with the EU, third countries have the obligation or responsibility to control migration flows and introduce measures to do so, as part of their policy agenda and practice.

The two operations involving the RABITs should be noted, as these teams have only been deployed twice since Frontex was set up (excluding training manoeuvres), both times at the request of Greece, and justified by the arrival of large numbers of migrants.

One operation worth mentioning that does not appear in the table because it is conducted in coordination with NATO is Operation *Sophia*. It is not strictly a Frontex operation and is not mentioned in its activity reports, although it is named in the section on Operation *Triton*. This operation sets a precedent for joint actions with NATO patrols to control migration flows, and clearly implies the militarisation of migration.

When the Agency was first set up the reports were not very specific about the operations, since when the information provided varies greatly. Hence, some operations may have lasted longer than the time stated in the table.

Furthermore, some operations do not appear in the reports published by Frontex but were found in the other sources consulted, while some do not appear in the report on a given year but are confirmed by other sources to have been conducted that year. For example, Operation *Mos Maiorum* is not mentioned in the Frontex reports, but does appear in a European Council document accessible on the Statewatch website (Statewatch, 2015b). Similarly, Operation *Atlas* does not appear in the Frontex reports but is mentioned on a page on the European Commission website (European Commission, 2019). Operation *Triton* is mentioned in the 2014 report, but not in subsequent ones. It was found from other sources (Frontex, 2016b and European Council, 2018) that this operation lasted until 2017, and it was mentioned once again in the Frontex annual report for 2018. Some reports provide much more information than others.

Therefore, the figures on the operations are approximate, and it can be surmised that there were in fact more operations than those analysed and mentioned in the annexes.

In conclusion, the annual reports Frontex presents on its activities vary in terms of the information and figures they provide on each operation. Therefore, the information presented here on the number of operations carried out, their duration and the countries involved is indicative, but sufficiently representative to be able to analyse the type of activities in which Frontex is engaged.

2.3.1 MAIN JOINT OPERATIONS CONDUCTED BY FRONTEX (2005–2018)

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
FOCAL POINTS	2005-2018	Based on Frontex risk analysis	Airports

Frontex establishes Focal Points for long-term exchanges of specialised border guards at key points on the EU's external borders, the core idea and main purpose of which is to contribute to the implementation of the EU's Integrated Border Management concept (Frontex, 2016b). It also allows for cooperation with third countries by deploying Frontex personnel. Each Focal Point is activated to assist local authorities with border checks in order to better manage the arrival of large numbers of migrants and other cross-border activities such as smuggling or the use of forged documents (Frontex, 2014a). The operation may also be integrated into other joint operations in the same areas. In 2013, operations in third countries included Albania, Moldova, the Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine.

2. The table of all the Frontex operations can be found in Annex 2, 'Frontex joint operations, by year (2005–2018)'.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
POSEIDON	2006- 2018	Greece	Central Mediterranean sea borders (Aegean sea) and land borders: Greece and Bulgaria

The *Poseidon* joint operation was in response to the large numbers of migrants arriving at Europe's borders along the Balkan route and from North Africa. The operation began in 2006 as part of the European Patrols Network (EPN), together with other operations involving joint patrols, such as *Hera, Indalo, Minerva* and *Triton*.

In the first quarter of 2010, more than 5,000 people, mainly from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, attempted to cross Europe's borders (Frontex, 2011c). The operation was then reinforced and also replaced the 2010 RABIT operation in Greece (Frontex, 2011d), together with the establishment of a broader operational framework covering the borders between Greece and Albania, Bulgaria and Turkey. Twenty-six EU Member States became involved in the operation to control land, sea and air borders.

The main objective was to intercept migrants at the border, register and identify them, and assist the Greek authorities with returns and re-admissions from the so-called hotspots (places receiving large numbers of migrants), although the objectives were increasingly broadened to cover dealing with cross-border crimes such as smuggling, illegal fishing and other activities taking place on the border.

Both *Poseidon* and *Triton* were reinforced in 2015 when their budget was tripled (Frontex, 2015b), with €18 million allocated to Operation *Poseidon* for six months and €38 million to *Triton* for a year (Frontex, 2015c). Even so, they would never match the Italian operation *Mare Nostrum*, which had a monthly budget of €9 million (Taylor, 2015). The reinforcement included a deployment of rapid intervention forces, including experts in filtering out arrivals by questioning them and analysing their fingerprints. It should be borne in mind that the large geographical area covered by the operation considerably reduces the possibility of sea rescues.

In 2015, this operation was replaced by the *Poseidon Rapid Intervention* (PRI) (Frontex, 2015a). The PRI was initially designed to take place at the end of 2015 for a period of three months. Member States contributed various experts and technical equipment. The objective of the operation was to speed up the registration and identification of people on the Greek islands; and 2016 saw the start of collaboration with NATO patrols operating in the central Mediterranean (Operation *Sophia)*, thus completely militarising the issue of dealing with migration flows.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
HERA (9)	2006-2018 (August-October)	Frontex Joint Operation	Western Mediterranean: Canary Islands and coast of West Africa: Mauritania, Senegal, Cape Verde

(9) Guardia Civil (2016)

This operation is conducted on land in the Canary Islands and in the sea off Senegal, and is financed by Frontex with support from France. Like Operation *Indalo*, its main objective is to stop people reaching the EU, although it also engages in other secondary activities. Spain's Civil Guard contributed a ship and a patrol boat, as well as setting up the International Coordination Centre (ICC) in Madrid and the Regional Centre in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

Operation *Hera* was conducted for the first time in 2006 and is always deployed in the summer months when migration movements are more frequent. This operation forms part of the *European Patrols Network* (EPN).

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
ÍNDALO (10)	2006-2018 (July-October)	Frontex Joint Operation	Western Mediterranean: southern Spain

(10) Guardia Civil (2016)

This is the first operation to control migration flows to be led by Spain's Civil Guard and its main objective is to control the arrival of people at the air and sea borders in the south of the Iberian Peninsula. It also seeks to combat cross-border crimes. The operation would be financed by Frontex, which also deployed 69 officers in Spain, together with a boat and a plane to assist with surveillance and anti-smuggling tasks. The operation is conducted in the waters off Cádiz, Málaga, Granada, Almería and Murcia, and the other states participating are Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Sweden.

This operation as well has been carried out since 2006 in the same months of the year, and it also forms part of the EPN.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
MINERVA (9)	2006-2016, 2018	Frontex Joint Operation	Western Mediterranean: southern Spain and North Africa

(11) Ministerio del Interior de España (2017)

This operation takes place in the Spanish ports of Algeciras, Ceuta and Tarifa and aims to secure the return of migrants once they are detected in inspections at border points, and to identify cross-border crimes. The operation is led by Spain's National Police and coordinated by Frontex.

Officers participating in the operation come from Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Switzerland, and from an invited third country, Moldova.

This operation has been conducted since 2006 in the same months of the year, and it also forms part of the EPN.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
COORDINATION PONTS (10)	2006-2018	Frontex analysis	Member States and third countries

This operation involved the setting up of what Frontex calls *Coordination Points*, the objective of which is to enable Member States to exchange experts in a range of professional fields for border surveillance. It also includes third countries in the sharing of information on border-related risks.

Since 2013 it has mainly been used to deploy *EU Border Guard Teams* to border crossing points between two non-EU countries (Frontex, 2013:10). Third countries also send observers to learn how to use these border guard teams when *Coordination Points* have been established on their territory. Five new *Focal Points* were established in 2013, mainly in the Western Balkans region, bringing the total number to 36.

This implies an externalisation of border-management policies, whereby EU policies to control migration are imposed on third countries.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
HERMES	2008-2016, 2018	Italy requested Frontex risk analysis	Mediterranean: coasts of Italy and Malta. Pelagian Islands, Sicily and Italy.

This is a maritime operation for border surveillance and control in support of Italy and Malta, led by Italy. One of its main objectives is to identify people.

According to Frontex, another important task will be to help organise operations to return migrants to their country of origin: 'Next important element of this operation will be to provide assistance at the following stage focusing on organising return operations to the countries of origin' (Frontex, 2011f).

At the start, as many as 14 Member States committed resources, although two months later only eight were still active. Some of the agents deployed as part of this operation were involved in interviewing people being held in migrant detention centres (Frontex, 2011g).

The experts participating are from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
ATTICA	2009-2016	Frontex risk analysis report	Central Mediterranean (eastern Greece), sea and land borders and airports

Attica began in 2009 as a pilot project aimed at supporting Bulgarian and Greek authorities to detect and return migrants, using filtering experts to identify where they were from. Training was also provided on how to filter migrants and detect forged documents, as well as cooperating with third-country embassies and participating in deportation operations. The project has been renewed every year since it was launched (Statewatch, 2009: 19).

The RABIT operation deployed in 2010 in Greece was integrated with the two joint operations *Attica* and *Poseidon*. Additional filtering experts and interpreters from 14 Member States were deployed in 2014.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
RABIT 2010	November 2010 - March 2011	Greece	Greece's land border with Turkey

In 2010 the Greek government asked Frontex for help due to the large number of people arriving at its land border with Turkey in the Evros region. This would be the first time that an EU Member State requested the intervention of a Frontex RABIT. The operation began in November, initially for two months, but it was decided to prolong it until March. The teams were integrated with the *Poseidon* and *Attica* operations already deployed in the region.

Frontex assessed this deployment as follows:

> The first ever RABIT deployment has achieved measurable results. Detections of illegal entry at the Greek land border with Turkey have fallen by 44% since October and we hope to see continued benefits from the ongoing efforts of the 26 Member States involved. However, irregular immigration cannot be effectively managed with short-term solutions (Frontex, 2010a).

Following the withdrawal of the RABIT, operations *Poseidon* and *Triton* were reinforced.

The first RABIT deployment took place in Portugal in 2007, but as part of training manoeuvres.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
EUROCUP 2008, 2012, 2016	2008, 2012, 2016	Poland, Ukraine, France	Various airports in Europe and third countries. Some land borders.

The *Eurocup* joint operation covered various airports due to the large numbers of people arriving in certain European cities for the football tournament. It was first conducted in 2008 and took place every four years to coincide with the European Cup. In 2012 the operation was deployed in Poland and Ukraine, with experts from 23 Member States reinforcing border control and surveillance. This also included controls on land borders in Poland and other Member States (Frontex, 2013: 10). In 2016 the operation was conducted at the request of France with the participation of 15 Member States and third countries such as Albania, Turkey and Ukraine in a total of seven airports. The deployment involved experts in filtering people and detecting forged documents as well as reinforcing security checks.

This deployment reflects the securitisation of the movement of people, which is understood as a threat that needs to be subjected to control and surveillance.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
NEPTUNE (18)	2009-2013	Not specified	EU external borders: Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece

(18) Statewatch (2009: 34, 41)

The purpose of Operation *Neptune* was to strengthen border controls in Croatia, Hungary and Serbia (the Balkan Route) and was later expanded to include Greece and other Member States, with the aim of intercepting migrants. It also developed an international agency to improve cooperation with third countries (Taylor, 2015).

In 2013 Frontex detected changes in migration patterns and concluded that it needed a more flexible operation to adapt to the new routes. Operations *Neptune* and *Jupiter* served as a testing ground for the *Joint Border Control Teams*, which became the basis for the design of operations in subsequent years, with more flexible deployment and withdrawal mechanisms (Taylor, 2015). In 2013 it also operated in third countries including Albania, Bosnia, the Republic of Macedonia and Serbia.

Both *Neptune* and *Jupiter* came to an end in 2013.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
PEGASUS	2014-2016, 2018	Not specified	Specific entry points on the EU's external borders

Pegasus is one of the joint operations implemented under the umbrella of *Pulsar Concept*. It involves interviewing people detained for crossing into the Schengen area or the EU, especially at airports, in order to gather information about mafias and to halt illegal immigration (Frontex, 2017b:3).

According to the Frontex annual reports, in 2016 major progress was made thanks to the *Joint Action Days* (JAD) project which was included in Operation *Pegasus* (Frontex, 2017b) and focused mainly on actions on the EU's external borders. Frontex coordinates the EBGT members at selected border crossing points on certain days to combat specific threats, so there is a heightened presence of guards at certain entry points.

Frontex collaborates with Interpol and Europol on this operation.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
JUPITER (21)	2013	Not specified	Not specified

(21) Frontex (2013: 10)

The main objective of Operation *Jupiter* was to reinforce the security capacities of Member States on the EU's eastern borders. Personnel and technical equipment from Member States were deployed, with the aim of improving border control and surveillance in the most vulnerable areas. The operation was also conducted in third countries such as Moldova and Ukraine, through cooperation with their border guards. *As in the case* of Operation *Neptune*, *Jupiter* was ended in 2013 due to the change in the routes that migrants were using.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
TRITON	November 2013-2015 (2016 Expanded Triton)-2017, 2018	Italy requested help from the EU to strengthen the *Mare Nostrum* operation, and Frontex launched Operation *Triton* instead	Territorial waters of Italy and Malta

In 2014, Operation *Triton* replaced *Mare Nostrum,* which had been run by the Italian government, and the two joint operations that were working in the same region, *Hermes* and *Aeneas. Triton* is coordinated by Frontex to reinforce the Italian Coast Guard, but is led by Italy's Ministry of Defence and covers the territorial waters of Italy and Malta (Frontex, 2016a). It is much more focused on putting an end to trafficking than on saving lives. It also has a much smaller budget than the Italian government's operation of €3 million per month (Adam, 2015).

At the request of the Italian Coast Guard, Frontex's boats may be redirected when large numbers of people are moving to areas outside the operation's area of action.

Together with Operation *Poseidon*, *Triton* was reinforced in 2015 (becoming known as *Expanded Triton)* with an increased budget and additional equipment, including ships, patrol boats, helicopters and teams of officers specialised in filtering people (Frontex, 2015e).

A total of 26 European countries participated in Operation *Triton* by deploying staff and equipment: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden and the UK.

In 2015 this operation began to be coordinated with Operation *EUNAVFOR Med* (renamed Operation *Sophia)* and the cooperation of NATO forces deployed in the Mediterranean was requested. This would complete the militarisation of the operations to control migration flows.

Operation *Triton* also forms part of the EPN.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
RABIT 2015	2015	Greece	Sea border between Greece and Turkey

In 2015 Greece again asked Frontex to deploy the RABITs and later the EBGT on the Greek islands and in the Aegean Sea to deal with the volume of people arriving on its coasts. This required Greece to provide a large number of officers to work together with those deployed by <rontex. The operation increased the number of staff, equipment, patrol boats and cars, and adopted a new approach to security controls, working with experts on data checks and the filtering and identification of people.

The executive director of Frontex, Fabrice Leggeri, defined the operation's objectives as follows:
The RABIT deployment will allow us to increase the number of both sea and land patrols, which means more migrants will be identified and properly registered soon after they arrive on the Greek islands. In other words, launching RABIT means upscaling Operation Poseidon Sea (Frontex, 2015d).

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
VEGA Children	2014-2016, 2018	Frontex analysis	Airports of EU and third countries

In Operation *Vega Children*, Frontex deploys agents to identify child migrants who might have paid mafias or be victims of people trafficking. The operation is conducted jointly with other organisations, including Europol, Interpol, UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Its principles and methodology are based on the *VEGA Children Handbook* produced by Frontex together with the other organisations involved in conducting the operation (Frontex, 2015f).

During the first phase of the operation, three people suspected of having facilitated the entry of children into the EU were arrested at airports in Amsterdam and Paris. Eighteen Member States participated in the 2015 project, which was carried out at airports in Amsterdam, Bucharest, Lisbon, Ljubljana, Madrid, Paris, Porto, Stockholm, Vienna and Warsaw. It also included attempts to identify forged documents.

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
ALEXIS	2014-2016, 2018	Not specified	Not specified

This operation is implemented in phases, covering 37 airports in 23 Member States, and is supported by Interpol. Its main purpose is to detect vulnerabilities in these airports, especially with regard to illegal immigration (Frontex, 2018: 112).

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
Joint Action Days: DANUBE 3	11-22 June 2018	Jointly led by Frontex with Bulgaria and Lithuania	Bulgaria and Lithuania

This operation took place from 11–22 June 2018 and focused on intercepting 'illegal' migrants, people trafficking, tax fraud and forged documents associated with immigration.

In this operation, and since 2018, Frontex's joint leadership role has been promoted alongside other agents from Member States, in this case customs authorities in Bulgaria and Lithuania. This operation formed part of the so-called *Joint Action Days*, which consist of coordinated actions on specific days at different border sites, in this instance on the EU's external borders (Frontex, 2018: 25).

Name of the operation	Date	Requested by	Geographical area of action
OPERACIONES DE RETORNO	2005-2018	Frontex and all Member States	Not specified

Frontex has facilitated migrant-return operations right from the start, as shown in its annual reports. However, since it formally became the Border and Coast Guard Agency, when much of its mandate was expanded, it has been conducting and coordinating return operations with EU Member States, countries in the Schengen area and third countries. Since 2013, it has been easier to find information about return operations by following this link: https://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/key-documents/?category=frontex-evaluation-reports

In 2018 some interesting data emerged about migrant-return operations (Frontex, 2018: 118):

- 345 such operations were organised or coordinated with the support of Frontex.
- 12,245 third-country nationals were sent back on charter flights in return operations organised or coordinated by Frontex. Nearly half (6,099) were sent back in joint return operations. Four new return destinations were approved: Burkina Faso, Belarus, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal, bringing the total to 38, compared with the 32 return destinations in 2017.
- Member States have become increasingly interested in return operations, which rose by nearly 76% in 2018 compared to 2017.

In short, none of the main operations carried out by Frontex has had the sole and specific mandate to rescue people, but rather to combat and intercept cross-border crimes. The operations analysed put into practice the security discourse of the EU and its Member States by addressing the subject of migration with the same resources and means used to deal with criminal activities that take place on the border: criminalisation, use of force and coercion.

It is especially remarkable that *Mare Nostrum,* the operation run by the Italian government, had three times the budget of the EU's Frontex operations that have replaced it.

The overall analysis of the Agency's operational activities shows that it completely rejects the notion that people at sea may be assisted and rescued by civilian ships with the capacities and means to address the problem of irregular migration in a humanitarian way, ensuring that the issue is not treated in the same way as criminal acts.

In sum, Frontex's practices apply the security doctrine whereby Europe's borders are seen as threatened by migration, treating the very act of migrating as a security threat.

* Information on operations was compiled by the author based on the following sources: European Parliament (2006), Statewatch (2005, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2017), Frontex (2011, 2013, 2014b, 2017b, 2017c, 2018), Frontex (2005-2017), Ministerio del Interior de España (2017), European Court of Auditors (2007).

Notes:

a) *European Patrols Network (EPN):* a concept of permanent regional border security that enables the synchronisation of Member States' national measures and their integration with joint European activities and with Frontex. It unites Member States' existing activities with EU reinforcement and coordination, and is the first time that a surveillance system has been deployed at the EU's maritime borders. The first phase was carried out in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean. In the second phase, an appropriate organisational structure was established in which National Coordination Centres in each Member State play a key role, sharing information and coordinating with Frontex.

b) National Coordination Centres (NCCs): the coordination hub for the European border-surveillance programme, Eurosur, is the network of National Coordination Centres (NCCs). Each Member State sets up an NCC, which brings together the authorities responsible for its border control. Its roles are to coordinate the country's border-surveillance activities and serve as a centre for the exchange of information, which it gathers at the national and local level. All this information is shared with the other EU Member States and with Frontex.

c) *European Border Guard Teams* (EBGT): these are Frontex's new rapid reaction teams, enabling it to provide rapid assistance to EU Member States that are experiencing great pressure from migration flows.
According to the Regulation, EU Member States are expected to contribute to this rapid-reaction capacity by setting up a 'permanent corps' of at least 1,500 experts, who must be available for deployment at short notice. This permanent staff forms part of the Agency's expanded roles since 2016. The teams can be deployed for a range of activities: Frontex joint operations, rapid interventions, migrant-return interventions and other operations (including rapid return interventions).

CONCLUSIONS

The EU, its Member States and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency – Frontex – have reinforced the security discourse, policies and practices that deal with migration as a threat, treating it as another type of cross-border crime. Accordingly, they refuse to employ humanitarian means or allow civilian organisations to rescue people in distress.

The analysis of 19 main operations carried out by Frontex found that it adopts security practices that criminalise people who are fleeing from poverty and violence. It also plays an active role in operations to return migrants to their country of origin, especially since 2016, and allocates an increasingly large slice of its budget to these operations.

Frontex was not set up to rescue people, which is not its main mandate, and it does not devote resources specifically to rescue operations. The rescues it does undertake are designed to assist its main role, by speeding up the return of migrants arriving or close to arriving on European soil.

The Agency's practices form part of the policies to expand and consolidate Fortress Europe by securitising its borders. The argument is that new threats are appearing and borders therefore need to be reinforced by deploying security agents, thus creating the discourse of a safe 'internal space' and an unsafe 'external space' that does not correspond to the reality that surrounds Europe and from which it seeks to insulate itself.

It is important to highlight Frontex's lack of transparency, despite the fact that the regulation that created it (European Council, 2004: 8, 21) was amended in 2014 to stipulate that its analyses of general and specific risks, its annual report and its budget must be presented to the European Council. As this research has found, the information on risk analysis and budgets and in annual reports varies greatly from year to year and some information is omitted. This makes it difficult to follow up on and monitor its activities.

In conclusion, the EU needs to make an effective commitment to rescue people whose lives are in danger, which entails abandoning border-security practic-

es that lead to stricter control of the movement of people and fail to safeguard the right to asylum, as well as to the progressive militarisation of the way in which migration is addressed. Furthermore, migration flows are addressed in terms of risk analysis, completely ignoring the fact that these are mainly people fleeing from physical and structural violence in their home countries. Rather, the EU and its Member States should identify and analyse the structural causes that lead to violence in migrants' and asylum-seekers' countries of origin, as well as the factors that encourage violence and economic inequality on a global scale. At the same time, there is a need to address the responsibilities of all the EU Member States whose policies help to create economic inequality and global violence.

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ANNEX 1

FRONTEX BUDGET 2005-2018

	BUDGET
2005	6,280,202
2006	19,166,300
2007	41,980,000
2008	70,432,000
2009	83,250,000
2010	92,846,928
2011	118,187,000
2012	89,578,000
2013	93,950,000
2014	97,945,077
2015	143,300,000
2016	232,757,000
2017	280,560,000
2018	288,663,520
TOTAL	**1,658,896,027**

Source: Compiled by the author based on Frontex annual budgets (Frontex, 2005-2018)

ANNEX 2

FRONTEX JOINT OPERATIONS, BY YEAR (2005-2018)

Operation	Geographical area	Years conducted	Regularity	Type
FOCAL POINTS	Western and Southern borders: Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. In 2008 it was expanded to include 11 airports. In 2009 it was expanded to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and sea and air borders were added. In 2011 it took place all year round instead of in certain months. In 2012 its coverage was increased to include third countries: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Republic of Macedonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Moldova, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland and Ukraine. An expanded version was included.	2005-2018	Annual	Land, sea, air
First joint operation	Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia	2005		Land
"Illegal Workers"	Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia	2006		Land
TORINO	Turin airport	2006		Land
POSEIDON	Ports and borders in Greece; expanded to Bulgaria in 2008. In 2009 the operation was expanded to include the sea. In 2011 it was expanded to a year round operation, rather than just a few months of the year. In 2015 it was replaced by Poseidon Rapid Intervention (PRI)	2006-2018	Annual	Land, sea
BORDER DELEGATES	External borders (both sides)	2006-2007		Land
COORDINATION POINTS	EU Member States and Schengen area, later expanded to third countries. In 2006 it was a pilot project. In 2011 it was carried out on the border between Ukraine and Moldova. In 2018 it was conducted in a third country, Serbia, and during the Championship finals held in another third country, Ukraine.	2006-2018		Land, air

Operation	Geographical area	Years conducted	Regularity	Type
AGIOS	Spain's ports on the Mediterranean	2006-2007		Land
HERA I	West Africa. From 2008 onwards it would be a joint operation with Hera II.	2006-2008		Land
HERA II	West Africa (Mauritania, Senegal, Cape Verde) with Canary Islands as destination. From 2008 onwards, a single Hera operation (together with Hera I). In 2011 it became a permanent operation rather than one that was only implemented during a few months of the year.	2006-2018	Annual	Sea
JASON I	Central Mediterranean	2006 (under preparation) -?		Sea
NIRIS	Baltic Sea and North Sea	2006 (under preparation) -?		Sea and land
ZEUS	Ports of Member States	2006 (under preparation), 2009		Sea, air
AGELAUS	EU airports	2006 (under preparation) -?		Land
HYDRA	Not specified	2006 (under preparation) -?		Not specified
AMAZON	Not specified	2006 (under preparation) -?		Not specified
ARGONAUTS (Pilot project)	EU Member States and Schengen area	2006 (under preparation), 2008, 2009		Air
J.O. IN MALTA	Malta	2006		Land and sea
MINERVA	Western Mediterranean: Spain	2006-2016, 2018	Annual	Sea
INDALO	Western Mediterranean: Spain	2006-2018	Annual	Sea
25 joint operations conducted/ initiated in 2007	Not specified	2007-?	Not specified	Not specified
HAMMER	115 airports. The operation has various phases and is implemented in different airports each year.	2008-2009		Air
EPN (EUROPEAN PATROLS NETWORK) Includes: Aeneas Hermes Indalo Hera Minerva	Mediterranean Sea	2008-2016, 2018	Annual	Sea
NAUTILUS	Central Mediterranean: Italy and Malta	2008-2009		Sea
ATLAS	Poland's border with Ukraine	2008-?		
HERMES	Central Mediterranean: Italy and Spain	2008-2016	Annual	Sea
EUXINE	Black Sea: Romania	2008		Sea
ARIADNE	Eastern borders: Poland	2008		Land
FIVE BORDERS: ATLAS I, ATLAS II, ATLAS III	Eastern borders: Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia	2008		Land
HERAKLES	South-Eastern borders: Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania	2008		Land
EUROCUP	Austria and Switzerland. In 2012 it was expanded to Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Ukraine.	2008,2012, 2016	Every four years	Air

Operation	Geographical area	Years conducted	Regularity	Type
DRIVE IN	Southern borders: Slovenia	2008		Land
GORDIUS	Eastern borders: Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia,	2008		Land
KRAS	Southern borders: Slovenia	2008		Land
LYNX	Eastern borders: Slovakia	2008		Land
LONGSTOP	22 airports	2008		Air
ZARATHUSTRA	38 airports	2008		Air
ZORBA	51 airports	2008		Air
SILENCE	13 airports	2008		Air
JUPITER	Eastern borders: Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, In 2012 it was conducted in Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.	2009-2013	Annual	Land
NEPTUNE	Eastern and Southern borders: Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia In 2011 - conducted in Greece and Slovenia. In 2012 - conducted in Slovenia.	2009-2013	Annual	Land
SATURN (Part of Poseidon programme)	Bulgaria, Greece	2009		Land
URANUS	Eastern and Southern borders: Estonia, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia,	2009		Land
MERCURY	Western and Southern borders: Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia	2009		Land
GOOD WILL	Eastern borders: Hungary, Poland, Slovakia	2009		Land
LONG OVERSTAYERS	Eastern and Southern borders: Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia,	2009		Land
ALPHA REINFORCEMENT	Atlantic Ocean, mainly South coast: Latvia, Portugal, Spain	2009		Sea
HUBBLE	10 airports	2009		Air
RABIT 2011	Greece's border with Turkey	2011		Land
AENEAS	Central Mediterranean	2011-2014	Annual	Sea
RABIT	Greece	2011		Land
FLEXI FORCE: -HUBBLE -EUROCUP -VISA INTEGRITY	Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain	2010-2013	Annual	Air
METEOR	Lisbon airport	2013		Air
TRITON	Central Mediterranean: Italy	2014-2018	Annual	Sea
ATTICA	Greece	2009-2016	Annual	Land, sea and air
MOS MAIORUM	EU Member States and Schengen area	2014, 2015, ?		
REX	Not specified	2014-2015		Land
RABIT 2015	Maritime border between Greece and Turkey	2015		Sea
PEGASUS	EU Member States and Schengen area	2014-2016, 2018	Annual	Air
ALEXIS	Not specified	2014-2016, 2018	Annual	Air
VEGA CHILDREN	EU Member States and Schengen area	2014-2016, 2018	Annual	Air
DRAGON	EU Member States and Schengen area	2017		
THEMIS	Europol, France, Italy	2018		
BALTIC TRACKING	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden	2018	Annual	Sea

Operation	Geographical area	Years conducted	Regularity	Type
Joint action days: DANUBE 3	Bulgaria and Lithuania. Jointly led by Frontex	2018		
Joint Action days: MOBILE	Germany, Greece and Poland. Europol and Interpol	2018		
OLYMPUS	Jointly led by Frontex and France	2018		Air
RETURN OPERATIONS	EU Member States and Schengen area, Frontex with third countries	2006-2018	Annual	Land, sea and air

*Compiled by the author based on the following sources: European Parliament (16-09-2016), Statewatch (2005, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2017), Frontex (2011, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018), Ministerio del Interior de España (27-7-17), European Court of Auditors (2007)
**The operations in blue were selected for subsequent analysis. The criteria are specified before each analysis.
***The table does not include conferences, trainings, working groups or projects to implement security-related technologíes or the deployment of staff to conduct specific analyses.

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