

European Integrated Border Management: State of Play and Perspective

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Abstract

The 2019 Frontex Regulation mandates the European Commission to formulate a strategic or political policy on European Integrated Border Management. The paper aims to analyze the decision-making process in preparing and developing the strategy. In addition, it seeks to understand (a) the influence of European institutions on EIBM communication and (b) the potential of supranational authority. We are building on an analytical framework encompassing executive agency theory, multi-level policy-making, and leadership theory. The methods employed are process tracing and a case study based on content analysis of public documents and internet sources. The research contributes to the literature on Frontex in three manners. First, we apply an analytical framework to analyze the decision-making process of EIBM communication. Secondly, the study explores theory generation, promotes ideas, and is experimental by being augmented by AI Bing and Grammarly. Third, the study pursues the way forward on EIBM with energy and vigor by providing food for thought to be consolidated into an action plan, dovetailing with the multi-annual strategic policy. The overall conclusion is that politically desirable outcomes, such as the restoration of the entire Schengen free zone of travel, entry of Romania and Bulgaria into Schengen, and the creation of an integrated and uniform EIBM system, are unlikely without the consideration of a multi-layered strategy encompassing an efficient supranational administrative system, a properly working multi-level policy system, and political leadership. The EIBM strategy is geared towards the assumption of bureaucratic control through an interwoven approach based on isomorphic BM organizations and risk assessments, agreed to within a pluralistic polity, DG Home barely wants to be given publicity. It will remain as ineffective as the desire to lead the pack through the EU Border Guard is illusory. Common ground is the need for an evolution in the EU's external border regime, a legal requirement, and a political must now that the EU's borders have been defined. The overall conclusion is that an action plan à la Suisse is needed to move forward.

Keywords: Leadership, Public Policy, European Integrated Border Management, AI

Introduction

The Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ) , grown out of Franco-German legislative packages in the 1990'ies, is a key objective of the European Union, aiming to ensure that citizens can enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms without internal borders, while also maintaining high levels of security. The AFSJ covers policies on border checks, asylum and immigration, judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, and police cooperation²

The AFSJ is founded on several core values, as outlined in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

. These values include:

- **Human Dignity:** The inviolable right to respect and protection, forming the basis of fundamental rights
- **Freedom:** Including freedom of movement, thought, religion, assembly, expression, and information
- **Democracy:** Ensuring that the EU functions on the principles of representative democracy
- **Equality:** Equal rights for all citizens before the law, including gender equality
- **Rule of Law:** The EU is based on treaties and laws that are democratically agreed upon and upheld by an independent judiciary
- **Human Rights:** Protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, covering non-discrimination, personal data protection, and access to justice

These values are essential for creating a safe, just, and free environment for EU citizens³.

In academic discourse, a border is often understood as a socially constructed, multifaceted, and fluid concept rather than just a physical or geographic division. It encompasses the processes and practices that regulate the movement of people, goods, and ideas across different territories. Borders can be seen as institutions that shape social, economic, and political interactions⁴.

Borders play a crucial role in:

- **Maintaining Sovereignty:** Defining the territorial limits of a state and its authority.
- **Regulating Movement:** Controlling the flow of people, goods, and capital.
- **Security:** Protecting against threats such as smuggling, illegal immigration, and terrorism.
- **Economic Management:** Facilitating trade and economic policies.

The EU's approach to frontier security involves coordinating actions to manage and secure its external borders. This includes joint operations at sea and land borders, deploying Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABITs), and ensuring compliance with EU regulations and standards.

Frontier security is an extension of border management that focuses on protecting and controlling the EU's external boundaries. It aims to prevent illegal activities and ensure the safety and security of EU citizens.

Since the end of the Cold War, the concept of security has gradually replaced the concept of defence in shaping European policies *foro interno, foro externo* something I take issue with in this piece. The main objectives of the EU's policy on internal security are to ensure a safe and secure environment for its citizens by addressing various threats and challenges. The objectives include Fighting Organized Crime and Human Trafficking, Countering Terrorism and Radicalization, Combating Cybercrime, protecting critical infrastructures, enhancing law enforcement cooperation, and promoting research and innovation⁵. The sheer numbers of EU non-nationals crossing EU borders are expected to increase exponentially. Europe is an open continent, and the EU should remain so.

There is a close connection between cooperation between the police internally in the EU, parliamentary accountability, and the stabilization and definition of the EU's external borders. EU's border regime is still in the making, and the system's policy capacity is not fully developed. Still, it has already led to a more nuanced understanding of what confers security upon Union citizens in the European Union's border regions. Furthermore, the evolving nature of migration and the migrant's status throughout Europe and their participation in the daily life of the member states provide an example to the union citizens about their own identity in the borderless European Union.⁶

The demand for regional cooperation and externalization of border security to neighboring countries is a universal phenomenon⁷. In West Balkan, borders play an essential role in the security agenda.

Political and ethnic dissatisfaction focuses on disputed borders, while trafficking in migrants and drugs ignores boundaries. EU wants Balkan to develop European standards in managing border security, while West Balkan is characterized by corruption, and the border guards are underfinanced and ineffective⁸. There have been 25,000 deaths in the Mediterranean since 2004. This number needs to come down substantially.

The fight against terror, hybrid war, repeated refugee crisis, and the resultant growth in populism in the member states have increased the demands on national control of the internal borders in the Schengen area. This led to the Frontex Border and Coast Guard formation in 2019.⁹ Covid-19 then closed the borders.

Linkages are made between asylum, irregular migration, and terrorism in the wake of the various terrorist attacks that have significantly impacted asylum-seekers ability to access asylum systems in the EU¹⁰. However, not all of these political linkages are objective and relevant.

Between 2013 and 2023, millions of legal migrants entered the EU. For instance, in 2022 alone, around 5.1 million immigrants came to the EU from non-EU countries. As of 2020, Europe hosted approximately 86.7 million international migrants, making it one of the regions with the highest number of migrants globally¹¹. Migrants fill important labor market shortages in sectors like healthcare, construction, and agriculture. With an ageing workforce, the EU needs migrants to sustain its workforce and support economic growth. Migrants contribute to economic growth and entrepreneurship, driving economic growth¹². While exact numbers can vary, estimates suggest that the EU needs a steady influx of migrants to maintain economic stability and growth. For example, in 2022, nearly 10 million non-EU citizens were employed in the EU labor market, highlighting their importance.¹³.

Muslim migrants tends to be overrepresented in the crime statistics in the member states compared to the European compatriots. Their level of integration varies across ethnic groups and they more often than not tend to become radicalized. All three aspects point to the need for more Europe in the member states and that there is scope for strengthening of governance and policies at the EU and MS-levels.

Open borders and the debate of legitimate security governance raise the question of what role technology should have in the maintenance of the EU's inner security¹⁴, about the form and content of the cooperation between the customs authorities, Frontex, and the member states as well as the relationship between border security and military mobility of European soldiers. Furthermore, this raises the question of the international standards for monitoring violence at the border and the definition of those standards¹⁵.

It is essential to be proportional. 500 million people cross the EU's borders every year, of which 330,000 in 2022 were illegal transgressions, an increasing trend in which 45% used the Balkan route, primarily Syrians, Afghans, and Tunisians. This puts the asylum agencies of the member states under pressure. The migration routes: Western Africa, Western Mediterranean, Eastern Mediterranean, Western Balkans and the Eastern land borders¹⁶

At the same time, Frontex functions like a prolonged arm of the Member States and an agent of Europeanisation of the Border Police Organizations of the Schengen-members – for which a salary package is available at a basic, intermediate, and advanced level¹⁷. The Frontex officers must respect human rights, act as a shield for the European Union and manage stakeholders. This is not always an easy task.

The EU allocated €30bn Euro from 2021 to 2027 for the integration of the EIBM system and strengthening of Frontex, but the EU Commission only adopted the Asylum and Migration Pact in 2023 after ten years of negotiations. Citizens are perfectly entitled to ask what is going on and what they have received in return for their per spent Euro and which meaningful progress has been made and what meaningful achievements can be expected in the future.

Currently, the EU has a weak center, while the member states need to follow the law regarding their obligations under the Schengen Convention¹⁸. Since 2015, they have imposed temporary border controls on a quasi-permanent basis, and some in the EU Commission are close to throwing the towel in the ring altogether, as though they were the agents of the member states instead of the executive of the EU and the servant of the citizens and economic rational (Zainotti, 2005).

Europe's geography, with its vast coastlines, rugged mountain ranges, and numerous land borders, presents unique challenges for frontier security. The diverse terrain requires specialized approaches to border management, from maritime surveillance in the Mediterranean to controlling mountain passes and extensive land borders in Eastern Europe. As the EU evolves, its frontier security must adapt to these geographical exigencies, employing advanced technologies, enhancing cross-border cooperation, and ensuring rapid response capabilities. The dynamic nature of Europe's borders necessitates a flexible and integrated security strategy to effectively address the multifaceted challenges of maintaining safety and stability within the region.

The European Union (EU) has approximately 66,000 km (41,000 miles) of sea borders and 14,111 km (8,750 miles) of land borders. These extensive borders reflect the EU's significant geopolitical presence and its commitment to maintaining security, facilitating trade, and promoting cooperation among member states and neighboring countries.

Politically, the EU's border commitments involve:

- **Security and Control:** Ensuring the security of its external borders through measures like the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)
- **Trade and Economic Cooperation:** Facilitating smooth trade and economic cooperation with neighboring countries and regions
- **Migration Management:** Addressing migration challenges and promoting safe, orderly, and regular migration
- **Environmental Protection:** Protecting marine and coastal environments through various environmental policies and initiatives.

These commitments highlight the EU's role in fostering stability, security, and prosperity within and beyond its borders.

People may cross the EU's borders at land, sea and air borders.

- **Air Borders:** The EU has around **500 international airports** with border control points.
- **Sea Borders:** There are approximately **200 major seaports** equipped with border control facilities.
- **Land Borders:** The EU has around **1,000 border crossing points** on land, including major roads and rail lines.

These control points are strategically located to manage the flow of people and goods across the EU's extensive external borders. Currently, external border security involves crossing the border and various tools and techniques to ensure arrivals fulfil the legal requirements for crossing the border. To enhance the travel experience of citizens and citizens is an enduring challenge¹⁹.

There were 330,000 illegal border crossings in 2022 notably from Ukraine and Western Balkans, Eastern and western Mediterranean²⁰. In 2024, the illegal migrants in the EU were down to 140,000, with hotspots at Gran Canaria, Sicily, the Aegean, the English Channel and the Belarus²¹.

Integrated Border Management must conform with ECJ's case law and the Schengen convention, i.e., border controls must not exceed six months²². This is not the case for the moment, and the weakness of Frontex combined with the member state's security authorities' sense of security is at fault. In addition, there are the Schengen-convention provisions for vulnerability assessment and the evaluation mechanism. The Frontex Liaison Officers in the Member States may even address operational concerns of both imagined and real nature among the Member States.

Thus, we are dealing with inter-institutional interaction between and amongst European and national levels and a partnership in power. The exercise of Border Management in conformity with constitutional percepts displaces the point from where power is exercised without rendering it impossible. Coercion must not evolve into a dominant relationship. Border management is limited to six months due to interests linked to public security. More Kant, less Kumm/Ripstein, please. The Member States are entitled to expect assistance from Frontex if trouble erupts.

Scientific Argument: The Impact of Nationalism and Borders on Cross-Border Cooperation

We argue that nationalistic tendencies and the complex significance of borders present substantial obstacles to cross-border cooperation, but these challenges can be addressed through sustained collaboration and mutual understanding.

First, nationalistic tendencies often act as barriers to cooperation. When national identity becomes the dominant framework through which people and governments view their neighbors, it can lead to resistance against regional integration. Nationalism tends to emphasize sovereignty, distinctiveness, and self-reliance, which may breed suspicion toward external influence and reduce willingness to engage in joint decision-making. Historical grievances and territorial disputes are often inflamed by nationalist rhetoric, further complicating efforts at regional dialogue.

Second, borders are not merely physical lines dividing states; they carry deep cultural, social, and political meanings. They can represent collective memory, identity, and even trauma. As such, borders shape how communities understand themselves and their neighbors. This symbolic dimension can reinforce separation, even in cases where economic or geographic logic would suggest cooperation. Efforts at integration must therefore consider not only the logistical but also the emotional and ideological significance of borders.

Finally, despite these challenges, effective cross-border cooperation has the potential to overcome historical divisions and generate shared benefits. Initiatives in infrastructure development, environmental management, and cultural exchange have shown that cooperation can foster mutual understanding and reduce mistrust. In practice, collaboration across borders can transform sites of past conflict into zones of shared opportunity and innovation.

In summary, while nationalism and the symbolic weight of borders can obstruct cross-border initiatives, scientific research and practical examples demonstrate that these obstacles are not insurmountable. By addressing both the structural and cultural dimensions of division, policymakers and stakeholders can build a foundation for lasting regional integration and collective progress.

Objective

The objective of the research is to enhance the effectiveness and coherence of the European Integrated Border Management (EIBM) system by leveraging insights from renowned organizational theorists and cultural experts. This involves analyzing organizational structures, strategies, and cultural dimensions to identify the most effective configurations for EIBM, understand the balance between centralization and decentralization, and optimize the roles of

different actors within the system.

The research scope encompasses various aspects of the EIBM system, including organizational structures, strategies, and the policy-making process. It also extends to strengthening asylum laws and practices, rules of engagement at the EU border, a strategy for the EU's borderlands, a Frontex app, a strategic framework for inter-agency coordination, and capabilities and operational impact related to trafficking in humans and drugs. Additionally, the analysis of the policy-making process should be included to provide a comprehensive understanding of the EIBM system.

Research Questions:

- Is EIBM meant to underpin Commission control ? Or Does EIBM serve the territorial security of the European Union, the economic actors, and the union citizens?
- What are the most effective organizational structures and strategies for EIBM, and how do they impact the roles of different actors within the system?
- How can the policy-making process be analyzed to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of the EIBM system?
- In what ways can cultural dimensions and leadership practices be leveraged to foster effective leadership within EIBM, ensuring that leaders can manage cultural diversity and complexity?

I will develop a concept combining theories on the relationship between executives and agencies with approaches to policy-making in multi-level political systems connected with leadership theory. I will also address the need for leadership instead of passing the buck to maximize the achievement of public policy objectives under the existing Treaty mandate. Utilizing the executive-agency theory, multi-level theory, and leadership theory, I analyzed the policymaking process within the EIBM system to optimize its effectiveness. This analytical framework allowed for a comprehensive assessment of organizational and cultural insights, providing actionable strategies for enhancing the system's effectiveness. This approach provided valuable insights into the impact of these structures on the roles of various actors, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the system's dynamics., I critically examined the policy-making process in the EIBM system. This analytical approach facilitated the identification of opportunities to enhance coherence and effectiveness, shedding light on the complexities of policy formulation and implementation. This analytical approach facilitated the identification of opportunities to enhance coherence and effectiveness, shedding light on the complexities of policy formulation and implementation, and offered insights into the management of cultural diversity and complexity, offering actionable recommendations for effective leadership practices.

Despite the encountered challenges throughout the research process, the findings hold significant value in shedding light on the complexities of the policymaking process within the EIBM system. The research offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of organizational structures and strategies within the EIBM system, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the roles of different actors amidst the encountered challenges. These obstacles, while present, do not diminish the critical perspectives provided by the analysis of the policy-making process, which offers actionable recommendations for improvement. The research underscores the importance of leveraging cultural dimensions and leadership practices to foster effective leadership within the EIBM system, aligning with the overarching goals of the organization despite the encountered challenges.

Situating the study in the literature

The academic community is watchful regarding Frontex. Many aspects of Frontex's functioning are covered in the literature, such as human rights in multi-actor situations²⁷, nonrefoulement²⁸, OLAF's probe into the Greek Coast Guard's concealment, and Frontex's management's complicity in the cover-up²⁹, the rules concerning the use of force³⁰, the operational practices of Frontex³¹.

Three authors find that EU Border management has been strengthened by the revival of long-forgotten memories of Europe's migration but that narratives on border management are framed as a permanent crisis at Europe's borders, justifying the reassertion of national control of borders.³²

In an exemplary piece, Ameyahid & Alegeria examines the origin of the concept of European Integrated Border Management in 2002 when the EU Commission suggested "the need to bring together different authorities around the same table to coordinate their operational actions in the framework of an integrated strategy that progressively takes into account the plurality of the dimensions of external border management." They recall the "definition of EIBM is based on three essential dimensions related to what should be done (border control, risk analysis and investigation of cross-border crime), how it should be done (through coordination, coherence, inter-agency cooperation, and international cooperation) and, above all, where it should be done. The access control model, later developed by the EU, is critical to establishing the EIBM concept. This model redefines the political geography of border control along different levels of action, involving both national and supranational agencies and institutions.... It can, therefore, be seen that, in practice, the EIBM has reaffirmed the need for a European way of managing borders. The concept seeks to avoid duplication of tasks within European border management, to address the coordination problem between agencies, and to address the ambiguity of responsibilities at the national and European levels³³. The authors conclude that further progress is needed towards a consistent supranational IBM model, which requires clarification of the competencies between the EU institutions and the member states and perhaps even treaty revision.

Only some studies have sought to couple theory with practice. One study uses an ethnographical lens, revealing how the agency's work lacks constitutive elements regarding Frontex's actual functioning and culture. Another scholar cites the failure of institutions, not the securitization of migration, but in assessing risk as the root cause of Frontex's creation³⁴. A Swedish scholar provides a neo-institutionalist approach to understanding Frontex's origin, emphasizing social processes and the historical context³⁵. Another quantitative study into the burden-sharing at the EU border proved that the Southeastern countries contributed relatively more to the defense of EU borders, that the member states' contributions vary, and that the acquired benefits from Frontex are distributed unequally between the member states.³⁶

Juri Kalkman, a researcher at the Netherlands's Defence Academy, has analyzed 72 articles on Frontex and identified five dominating themes in the research: (1) Frontex's activities, (2) the characteristics of the agency, (3) the operational effects (4) the question about human rights and (5) Frontex' position in the EU bureaucracy. He reports on recurrent debates and relevant results in these research streams. He recommends a future research agenda on Frontex along the following lines: Examining how Frontex's activities affect asylum and migration in the EU and third countries. To analyze how Frontex's characteristics as a hybrid agency with different types of personnel and partners influence the function and legitimacy of Frontex. To evaluate how Frontex's operational effects on frontier security and security can be measured and compared with other actors and methods. To research how Frontex's compliance with human rights can be secured through internal and external control and accountability. Finally, he recommends studies to understand how Frontex's position in the EU bureaucracy influences its relations with other EU institutions and the member states³⁷.

In a seminal contribution, Leuprecht, Hataley & Jailly (2022) asks : How does security communities evolve into security regimes ? It compares security regimes across five regions how security communities develop, implement and align frontier security regimes to enhance their sense of security. They posit globalisation has had a nuanced way borders are governed and border security managed.

They posit pluralistic forms of communication and interaction is key to enhancing frontier regimes. Despite neither US-led businesses having an impact on border management in Europe nor the EU multi-nationals are main drivers of border flows in the EU, it is true that the Schengen Agreements were conceived as a flanking measure to the internal market and that the wealth generation and rights free movement of people is a foundational pillar of the EU integration project. Dg Home is also responsible for the formulation of EU policies on the internal policies of the European Union. Johan Wagner examines the challenges to the efficiency, effectiveness and coordination of the external borders of the EU:

The European IBM model aims at managing the crossing of the external borders efficiently. Therefore, it addresses challenges identified in the area of irregular migration and other potential threats such as terrorism and cross-border organised crime at those borders. It helps to ensure a high level of internal security within the EU, while at the same time ensuring full respect for fundamental rights and governing in a manner that safeguards the free movement of persons within the EU.

The EU's policy is and will continue to be developed on the basis of the three main goals in place: common legislation, close operational and tactical cooperation, and financial solidarity (Council of the EU – European Security Strategy). In addition, IBM has been confirmed as a priority area for strengthening the cooperation with third countries in the European Commission's strategic security management approach, where non-EU countries are encouraged as partners to upgrade their border security, border surveillance, and border management systems.

Most of the countries in Western Europe reaffirm their commitment to promote open but at the same time secure borders in a free, democratic, and more integrated area without dividing lines. In doing so, they officially commit themselves to cooperate by following the principles of international law, mutual confidence, equal partnership, transparency and predictability, and pursuing a comprehensive approach in a spirit that would facilitate friendly relations between states. Hence, border management is an extraordinary responsibility of each European state to choose best functioning practices and the most modern standards to control, survey, and secure their borders regarding political, security, socio-economic, environmental, and cultural considerations. In general, European states are committed to act responsibly in accordance with international law and conventions and in particular international human rights, refugee, and humanitarian law. Border law enforcement agencies, both from EU member states and non-EU countries, find themselves exposed to increasing challenges for safe-guarding and monitoring their borders. Transnational threats are complex and range, inter alia, from the maximum credible accidents, natural disasters, impact of political upheavals, all kind of serious cross-border criminal activities, displacement effects due to invasions, terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), violent extremism and radicalisation, towards diseases of humans and animals, as well as the lack of food inspection, pandemics and panzootic outbreaks.

Regime theory, while influential in international relations, however, also has several limitations:

- **Overemphasis on Cooperation:** Regime theory often focuses on instances of international cooperation, potentially overlooking conflicts and power struggles that also shape global politics
- **Assumption of Rational Actors:** The theory assumes that states and other actors are rational and will cooperate when it is in their best interest, which may not always be the case
- **Lack of Enforcement Mechanisms:** Regimes often lack strong enforcement mechanisms, relying on voluntary compliance, which can be inconsistent
- **Static Nature:** Regime theory can be static, failing to account for the dynamic and evolving nature of international relations

- **Neglect of Domestic Factors:** The theory may neglect domestic political and social factors that influence state behavior and international cooperation

These limitations highlight the need for a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to understanding the evolution of border security in comparative perspective, and how German academics are instrumentalized as soft power instruments.

Katarzyna Stoklosa and Gerhard Besier outline how cross-border regions of the European Union are in fact the building blocks of internal security, the human communities life is made up of, and how they can be said to contains important lessons for the development of policies in the EU's border regions. Without Peace-building within, no stability outside. The book explores several key concepts related to border regions:

- **Territorial Disputes and Identity:** It examines how borders have historically been established and their impact on national identity and narratives. The book analyzes territorial disputes and how they shape regional identities.
- **Cross-Border Cooperation:** The book highlights the importance of cross-border cooperation in overcoming nationalistic tendencies and fostering regional integration.
- **Historical and Contemporary Perspectives:** It provides both historical and contemporary analyses of border regions, offering insights into how perceptions and policies have evolved over time.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** The book incorporates perspectives from historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists, providing a comprehensive view of border regions.
- **Policy Implications:** The findings suggest that policies promoting cross-border cooperation and regional integration are crucial for addressing the challenges posed by nationalistic tendencies.

A report by the World Customs Organization (WCO) Coordinated Border Management, in turn, provides, a comprehensive guide to coordinated border management (CBM), which involves a coordinated approach by border control agencies to manage trade and travel flows efficiently while maintaining compliance requirements. The report includes various WCO instruments and tools, such as the Revised Kyoto Convention, Risk Management, Single Window, and the SAFE Framework of Standards. It also highlights the importance of cooperation between customs and other cross-border regulatory agencies. Communication, Cooperation and Coordination.

The study is situated in the literature on Frontex by examining the most recent development in the JHA policy issue area within an analytical framework combining different theoretical strands

into a coherent whole to analyze the outcome of the policy-making process on the making of the EIBM communication. I draw the consequences of my findings when taking a perspective on matters to confer leadership on the EIBM towards fulfilling the EU Commission's stated objectives and the gradual evolution of Europe's external frontier regime.

This study is empirically focused but involves an analytical concept that allows for a short presentation of the actors involved in EIBM and a brief analysis of the evolution of the regulation of Frontex. This gives a filament throughout the paper and precedes an analysis of the decision-making process on the EIBM communication in its institutional context. In addition, the study is limited in temporal scope to the EIBM communication from design to implementation at the conceptual level. Finally, I summarize my findings on several dimensions reflecting broader concerns in the literature. I also consider how policy might evolve in the short to middle term.

In this exploratory study, I will trace the preparation and decision-making on the EIBM communication. The EIBM-communication is not an EU program, and I am not into "impact assessments, interim evaluations, ex-post evaluation, and regular program Monitoring." Nor is the EIBM communication a legal act but a policy document. This frames the following analysis.

Scholarly contribution

There has yet to be a scholarly examination of the policy-making process on the European Integrated Border Management communication. I advance the academic community's theoretical and empirical knowledge of the conditions of EU policy-making processes within an integral analytical concept of the External Frontier regime. Three goals motivate this explorative study of the making of EIBM communication. First, we seek a better understanding of the decision-making process in a critical JHA issue area – border management- especially to the extent that the institutional actors play a role in or represent the integration process. Second, we seek a better integration along the dimensions that AI Bing indicates reflect the state of scholarship on Frontex. Not all actors involved in Frontex's decision-making have equal weight within different IBM issue areas. There is a data problem. Third, we seek to integrate decision-making studies on EIBM communication. My argument is that the time is right for theory-generating, methodologically- based, and carefully structured empirical studies to understand better how policy on Border Management is made and the potential of its possibilities as an integral part of the eu state-building project.

My scholarly contribution is to attempt to analyze the policy-making process about a critical JHA issue – the formation of the EIBM policy strategy - within an analytical framework allowing for a multilayered interpretive plan for the ideas of the decision-making process on the EIBM and to propose policy-relevant ideas for how the European Integrated Border Management might evolve combined with a Danish temperament of sobriety, integrity, and resoluteness infused

with a sense of historical purpose dating back to the Romans. Balance, harmony, and conviction thus shall prevail throughout the EIBM system. I call myself a European.

My scholarly contributions encompass a comprehensive analysis of migration policies, emphasizing the integration of leadership theories and multi-level policy-making frameworks to address the complexities of migration management. Through my scholarly endeavours, I have delved into the strategic application of executive-agency theory, multi-level theory, and organizational leadership insights to develop dynamic frameworks for effective migration policy formulation and implementation. My contributions to the scholarly discourse center on synthesising role theory, organisational culture models, and social control theories, offering a nuanced perspective on the interplay between state security, human rights, and migration governance. Additionally, my contributions highlight the dynamic and adaptive nature of the framework, allowing it to respond effectively to changing circumstances and challenges in the field of policy-making and institutional governance.

Methodology

The paper uses process tracing, a qualitative research methodology used initially to develop and test theories. It is generally understood as a “within-case” method to draw inferences based on causal mechanisms. The primary purpose of process tracing is to establish whether and how a potential cause or causes influenced a specific change. Scholars that use process tracing evaluate the weight of evidence. It was originally used as a research methodology that attempted to provide theoretical explanations of historical events. Increasingly, process tracing is used for monitoring and evaluation.²³

I have selected the making of the EIBM communication as a case study. Case studies are a research method that involves an in-depth examination of a single instance or phenomenon. Case studies are often used to investigate complex phenomena that are difficult to study using other research methods. Case studies are often used combined with process tracing.

The research is mainly descriptive in providing a detailed and accurate observation of the policy-making process on EIBM communication. This research method is applicable in exploring new topics or problems, raising questions for further research, and forming policy or practice decisions. Descriptive research can use a wide variety of techniques to collect and analyze data, increasing the validity and reliability of the findings. The weakness is that descriptive research cannot explain the causes or effects of the subject under investigation, as it does not manipulate or control any variables but only observes and measures them²⁴

The study is explorative and aims to gain an initial understanding of a phenomenon – the EIBM communication-making – or to generate new ideas. Exploratory research is often qualitative and

primary. It is often called interpretive research or a grounded theory approach due to its flexible and open-ended nature. In terms of theory, exploratory studies are used when there is little or no existing theory on a topic. They can also be used to generate new theories and hypotheses.

Explorative studies can also be used to refine existing ideas.²⁵

At the same time, the study is experimental. Experimental studies aim to test the effect of an intervention or treatment on an outcome. For example, in the context of AI chatbots, empirical research could test the impacts or features of different chatbots on user satisfaction and engagement.

I have used AI Bing to generate an analytical framework drawn from the burgeoning online literature on Frontex. This may qualify as online recycling but yield valuable insights if used creatively.

For this study, I asked Bing three questions: 1. Provide an analytical framework for studying the evolution of the regulation of Frontex 2. Provide an analytical framework for the decision-making process on Frontex. 3. Provide an analytical framework for the policy-making process on the EIBM communication. In the two former cases, answers were generated. In the latter case, BING returned with the reply: "I am sorry, but I couldn't find an analytical framework for the policy-making process on the EIBM communication." This procedure provided cues I unconsciously took heed of since the prompts appeared to facilitate my work. Human freedom in a numeric age challenges citizens and raises the question of the relationship between man and machine. AI may game or hack users and raise questions concerning bias and fairness. AI is a fickle power that can lead to a happy alchemy or lack of robustness and the possibility of surprises and cause a certain brittleness. These limitations must be taken into account²⁶. AI is more than just an assistant in collecting, recycling and harvesting data online. You can ask AI BING about anything. In practice, I have used the answers returned to frame the analytical framework to help develop the concept and define the dimensions along which I summarize my findings on the decision-making process on the EIBM in conclusion. I have also asked AI BING to recap the 2021 Court of Auditor's report on how the various IBM funds are administered for reference at the Schengen Forum meeting. For scientific reliability, most of the prompts are listed under point 8.

I have also addressed various issues running in the several hundred words in the text using Grammarly, powered by an advanced system that combines rules, patterns, and artificial intelligence techniques like machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing to improve authors' writing. This sometimes yields surprising changes to the text. Still, embedding Grammarly Premium into my Word program underpins the researcher's constancy of language, adding clarity, delivery, engagement, and correctness. As a result, its use is widely recommended and considered a standard operating procedure in academic studies by

professors, editors, and reviewers alike.

AI analysis facilitates cooperation and communication to solve problems, but it does not imply that the researcher is a monad without rights and entitlement. In the first section, I lay out the analytical framework, before I describe the policy-making system. I then analyse the policy-making process on the EIBM. In the conclusion, I summarise my findings around several axes: institutional context, the policy context and priorities, the role of NGO and Business interests, The role of national governments and other stakeholders in Shaping EU policy outcomes and the impact of member state policies and practices. I proceed to elaborate on the elements of a 25-action plan. In the appendices, I make a bad rap on several pertinent issues to the evolution of the EU's frontier security governance framework ranging from an action plan on Frontex-MS camps along the border, on the rules of engagement on the use of (lethal) force at the EU's border, a strategy for managing the EU's border areas in the context of the evolving EU frontier security framework, the need for a strategy proper to transnational crime and the relationship between the developing EU customs authority and the evolving Frontex.

Conceptual Framework

The study of the outcome of EU policy-making processes depends on the theoretical lens adopted to study them. Different theories may have different strengths and limitations. The theoretical concept depends on my research question, the empirical context, and the analytical perspective. My analytical concept builds on the recognition that several factors are involved in determining the outcomes of the decision-making process in the EU, requiring a multilayered interpretive approach considering organisational factors, multiple-policy-making theory, and leadership theory. Concepts are devices invented for an imperfect world to understand the empirical world and delineate their explanatory power and the slew of other purposes ranging from recognising life as a process through which we constantly form and create ourselves. We are being touched and transformed through our experiences, and if we are prepared to face what we have lived through our emotional stories, we can also deepen our relationship with ourselves, allowing dialogue at different levels.

Executive-Agency theory

Jan Egeberg is a professor of political science and public administration who has published several articles and book chapters on the relationship between the EU Commission and EU agencies. He argues that EU agencies have become an integral part of the EU executive system and are closely linked to the Commission through various forms of coordination and control. Increasingly, the EU Commission is acting like a government rather than a secretariat of an international organization. He has also explored how EU agencies affect the organizational identity and role perceptions of Commission officials and how they contribute to the emergence of a European administrative space.

Some of the main points that Egeberg has made about the relationship between the EU Commission and EU agencies are:

The Commission is crucial in establishing, funding, supervising EU agencies, and appointing directors and board members.

The Commission also regularly interacts with EU agencies through various channels, such as parent DG (DG HOME), partner DGs (the Commission departments collaborating with specific agencies on policy issues), inter-service consultations, and joint committees.

The Commission exercises formal and informal control over EU agencies through legal instruments, budgetary oversight, performance evaluation, reporting requirements, guidance documents, and feedback mechanisms.³⁸

The Commission benefits from agencies in terms of expertise, information, legitimacy, and implementation capacity, but it also faces challenges regarding accountability, autonomy, and coherence.³⁹

The Commission officials who work with EU agencies tend to develop a dual organizational identity, combining loyalty to their own DG and to the Agency they are associated with.

The Commission officials who work with EU agencies also tend to adopt a supranational role perception, seeing themselves as representing the general interest of the EU rather than the interests of specific member states or stakeholders.

The Commission and EU agencies share a common administrative culture and values, such as professionalism, impartiality, transparency, and efficiency, which contribute to forming a European administrative space.

Thus, the role of the EU Commission in the policy process is determined by the administrative space carved out by itself.

EU agencies are specialized bodies that the EU sets up to advise the institutions and member states on various policy areas that affect everyone in the European Union. They are distinct from the EU institutions but work closely with them and with national institutions and entities, services, information, and expertise. They are in different member states across the EU and have their legal personality, budget, and staff. There are 30 EU agencies, and Frontex is one of them.

All EU agencies have one or more of the following functions.⁴⁰

- shaping EU policies either directly or through advice to EU institutions
- Implementing EU policies
- Monitoring compliance
- Administering EU cooperation programs

In addition, the EU Commission has published a multiannual strategy for the EU Agencies Network.⁴¹

Frontex is an EU agency established in 2004. It was renamed and reformed in 2016 to strengthen its mandate and capabilities. Frontex's primary functions are:

- To coordinate operational cooperation between member states in the field of border management
- To carry out risk analysis and vulnerability assessments on the EU's external borders
- To provide technical and operational assistance to member states facing increased migratory pressures or security threats.
- To support member states in the return of irregular threats.
- To support member states in the return of irregular migrants.
- To cooperate with third countries and international organizations on border management issues.
- To establish and deploy a standing corps of border guards and a reserve equipment pool.
- To monitor and ensure respect for fundamental rights in all its activities.

Jan Egeberg and Jarle Trondal's approach to the relationship between the EU Commission and EU agencies is based on an organizational perspective emphasizing the role of organizational structure, demography, and decision behavior in shaping actors' interests and identities. He has compared his approach to other approaches focusing on different aspects of EU policy-making, such as inter- governmental, supranationalism, multi-level governance, and new institutionalism.

Regarding decision-making theory, Egeberg & Trondal's approach is anchored in Bounded rationality theory: This theory, pioneered by Herbert Simon, recognizes that cognitive and informational constraints limit actors and that they use heuristics or rules of thumb to simplify their decisions. As a result, one cannot account for the uncertainty and complexity of EU policy-making, while actors cope with them by relying on routines, norms, or experts⁴².

A strength of his approach is that it provides a detailed and nuanced analysis of internal

dynamics and interactions within the Commission and EU agencies and between them, which often goes under the radar by analysts. He shows how organizational factors such as hierarchy and specialization affect actors' role perceptions and preferences. A weakness of his approach is that it tends to neglect or downplay the role of external factors and influences on the EU Commission and EU agencies, such as member states, interest groups, public opinion, and international developments. He assumes that actors are mainly driven by their organizational affiliation and loyalty rather than other motivations or pressures. Supranational actors and decision-makers in the EU are essential to the policy-making process and have significant influence and autonomy.

Egeberg has acknowledged that his approach is not meant to provide a comprehensive or definitive explanation of EU policy-making but rather a complementary and alternative perspective that focuses on organizational factors. He has also suggested that his approach can be combined or integrated with other methods focusing on different aspects of EU policy-making. This is also important regarding research design to arrive at valid and unbiased conclusions. The point is to capture the role of the political system with actors representing the Member States and the peoples of Europe, the European Parliament, and The European Council, an actor in JHA matters.

The study of the relationship between the EU executive and agency assumes that EU-level agencies are part of a multi-level Union administration composed of supranational and intergovernmental elements. Egeberg proposes to operationalize this framework by using the dimensions: (1) the degree of autonomy of EU-level agencies from national governments and the Council, (2) the degree of integration with the Commission and other EU institutions, (3) the degree of politicization, and regulation of EU-level agencies' activities and outputs (4) the degree of interaction of EU-level agencies with national agencies and other actors.

He suggests measuring these dimensions using indicators such as legal status, budgetary resources, staff composition, decision-making procedures, policy area tasks, functions, and network relations. He also recommends using different methods, such as document analysis, interviews, surveys, and case studies, to collect and analyze the data on these indicators.⁴³ This is an excellent research agenda, but I must implement something else.

Multi-level governance policy-making theory

Lisbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks have proposed the concept of multi-level governance to understand the Eu as a system of overlapping and interlocking authorities at different levels of government, not from local to supranational. Multi-level governance emphasizes the role of subnational actors, such as regions and cities, in shaping and implementing EU policies and supranational actors, such as the European Commission and the European Court of Justice, in

influencing national policies. Multi-level approaches also distinguish multi-level governances: type 1 refers to the stable and hierarchical allocation of competencies across levels of government. And type MLG refers to the flexible and fluid network of actors across levels of government and policy sectors⁴⁴.

Helen Wallace, William Wallace, and Mark Pollack have proposed the concept of multi-level policy-making (MLPM) to analyze the EU as a system of complex and variable interactions among actors' different levels of government, from national to supranational. MLPM emphasizes the role of national actors, such as governments and parliaments, in mediating and adapting EU policies and transnational actors, such as interest groups and social movements, in influencing EU policies.

MLPM also distinguishes between three modes of policy-making: delegating authority to supranational institutions; intergovernmental policy-making, which involves negotiation and cooperation among national governments; and joint policy decision-making, meaning the joint participation of national and supranational actors in decision-making.

(MLG) has the strength of capturing the diversity and dynamism of EU policy-making and the empowerment and mobilization of subnational and supranational actors. MLG also has the power to provide a normative framework for assessing the democratic legitimacy and accountability of EU policymaking. However, it needs to be more accurate about the role and resilience of national actors and the constraints and conflicts that arise from the overlapping and interlocking authorities. MLG could be more specific concerning the generating of hypotheses and empirical evidence.

Multi-level policy-making (MLPM) has the strength of recognizing the complexity and variability of EU policy-making and the mediation and adaptation of national actors. MLPM also has the power to provide a descriptive and explanatory framework for understanding the processes and outcomes of EU policy-making. This is important if we want to understand the challenges and opportunities of EU integration studies at a theoretical and practical level. However, MLPM needs to pay more attention to the role and influence of subnational and supranational actors and the opportunities and challenges that arise from the complex and variable interactions. Moreover, MLPM needs to adapt more to changes and innovations in EU policy-making.

Leadership theory

There are loads of leadership theories, but they are rarely integrated into EU integration studies. One approach concerns the individual perspective of leadership –performing leadership, which leads to investigating a leader's background, knowledge, and networks. The second approach

zooms in on the structural location of leadership in terms of the pressing tasks such as agenda-setting, meeting leadership, representation, and policy implementation. The emphasis is on how leadership is enacted in an organization open to its surroundings. Finally, the third approach concerns the leadership process– how leadership emerges as a relationship between leaders and followers. In that sense, leadership is understood as a social process and “how potential role conflicts can constrain successful leadership performance.”

I take a different route to leadership. I belong to the transformation school, a theory developed by Bernard Bass. Transformational leadership, a.k.a. the Four I's, involves the following items: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

Transformational leaders focus on people – they encourage, inspire, and motivate those around them to innovate and foster positive change. These leaders encourage autonomy and creativity. They are open and responsive to change⁴⁵.

To incarnate the imaginary animal called EU, these elements – executive-agency-theory, multi-level governance theory, and leadership theory - are stacked and integrated logically to achieve equilibrium and harmony: the component of the administrative system, a multi-level policy setting, and the aspect of leadership. Parts of this analytical concept I will then harmonize along the following dimensions:

- the institutional context of decision-making,
- The interest groups involved in decision-making, such as business associations, trade unions, and NGOs
- The policy context objectives, and priorities
- The Role of national governments and other stakeholders in Shaping EU policy outcomes
- The impact of EU policies on national policies and practices.
- The role of transformational leadership in the policy domain.

These six dimensions could then be assigned a numerical value in terms of their impact on the formation of the EIBM communication, the empirical case study of our analysis. This would ensure that the inner logic of the concept is reflected in the logical structure of the paper. In practice, and for reasons of space and research economy, my emphasis is on dimension 1 – the institutional context - and dimension 6 – the role of leadership. Dimensions 2-4 are merely illustrated in the conclusions. However, this shall not prevent us from assessing and weighing each dimension's impact on the policy-making outcome of the 2023 EIBM communication.

Thus, I want to convey a better understanding of the conditions under which supranational supervision in Europe is possible. The point is to take the supranational role perception of the European Commission and Frontex officials seriously and to offer avenues for strengthening supranational leadership within the EIBM system, which is overmanaged and underled. In Europe, we are also democrats, unlike elsewhere. This inspires my take on how to move EIBM forward. Finally, I hope someone will cite my ideas' validity as evidence of the European

institution's accountability, openness, and responsiveness. And that is all I have to say about man's capacity to stay true to his story and the citizenry's capacity for agency. There is no such thing as unchanging perfection, and the evolution of the external frontier security of the EU is an ongoing process of creative and effective leadership and problem-solving, a process of birth and people and constantly learning how to give birth to different aspects of ourselves as European: Roman-Greek & Jewish- Christian.

If you wish to express yourself about a certain idea about man, and what makes Europe great, please wait until you have ended reading this piece.

The EIBM Policy-Making System: Actors and Roles

Where does the notion of Integrated Border Management come from?

The concept of integrated border management was likely developed by the European Commission in 2002 to address threats to external border management in terms of a comprehensive, multi- dimensional, collective, and well-coordinated approach in an integral manner among the member states with differing norms, interests, and priorities. It aims to develop regionally and globally recognized standards in ensuring coordination and cooperation among all relevant authorities involved in border security and trade facilitation.⁴⁶ The concept encompasses national and international coordination and cooperation among all relevant authorities and agencies involved in border management and trade facilitation to establish effective, efficient, and coordinated border management. According to the International Organisation of Migration, which has taken its cue in its programming from the European Commission, it seeks to enhance three levels of coordination: intra-service, inter-agency, and international cooperation.⁴⁷ The World Customs Organisation aims to develop and implement an integrated set of policies and procedures that ensure increased safety and security in the interest of global trade and has similarly developed a concept of collaborative border management, reorienting IBM from outcome to output.

Legal framework

The internal market needs flanking measures regarding external border security; the Member States resolved as they agreed in 1985 to the Schengen-convention, an intergovernmental treaty acceded to by all EU member states in the Amsterdam-treaty. In TEU article 3(2), the treaty-makers "call for appropriate measures concerning external border controls." Therefore, the EU aims to establish common standards for controls at its external borders and gradually implement an integrated system for managing them.

According to TFEU article 67(2), the Union “shall ensure the absence of internal border controls for persons and shall frame a common policy on asylum, immigration, and external border control, based on solidarity between Member States, which is fair towards third-country nationals.”

According to TFEU article 77, the treaty-makers stipulate “The Union shall develop a policy with a view:

- a. ensuring the absence of any controls on persons, whatever their nationality, when crossing internal borders
- b. carrying out checks on persons and efficient monitoring of external borders
- c. the gradual development of an integrated management system for external borders.

The Council and the Parliament shall adopt measures concerning any measure necessary for the gradual establishment of an integrated system for external borders, the checks to which persons crossing external borders are subject., and the standard policy on visas and another short-stay residence permit”.⁴⁸

Frontex was established under TFEU article 77. EU agencies are bodies founded by the EU to carry out specific technical, scientific, and managerial tasks that help EU institutions implement policies and programs. In addition, there are independent legal entities with their legal personality and are governed by their boards of directors. The rules governing the functioning of Frontex are set out in regulation 2007/2004⁴⁹, which was subsequently amended in 2016⁵⁰ and repealed in 2019 by a new Regulation.⁵¹ Frontex was established in 2004 to help EU member states manage their external borders. The agency has undergone several reforms since its establishment. The first reform of Frontex was enacted in 2007, just two years after The Agency’s launch. With the approval of regulation 863/2007, two significant changes were made to Frontex’s legal framework. Firstly, the new regulation clarified the type of powers the staff involved in Frontex’s operational activities were authorized to exercise. Secondly, the new rule set up so-called Rapid Regulation Border Intervention Teams (RABOT), which Frontex was allowed to deploy at the request of a member state “faced with a situation of urgent and exceptional pressures, especially the arrival at points of the external borders of large numbers of third-country nationals trying to enter the territory of that Member State illegally.”

Regulation no.1168/2011 gives Frontex the power to “initiate and carry out joint operations and pilot projects in cooperation with the Member States concerned and agreement with the host Member States.” In 2011, Frontex acquired a technical equipment pool and was authorized to purchase its equipment. In addition, the 2011 Regulation envisaged Frontex to develop a fundamental rights strategy.”⁵²

The 2019 Frontex regulation established the European Border Coast and Border Guards, a standing corps consisting of Frontex statutory staff and Member State seconded police officers, which will have a total capacity of 10,000 men in 2027. According to the regulation (23), "The Agency should carry out its tasks by the principle of subsidiarity and without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Member States about maintaining law and order and safeguarding internal security" (24). It also says, "The agency should carry out its tasks without prejudice to the competence of the Member States about maintaining law and order and safeguarding internal security"(25). The ECBG is mandated to guard the external frontier of a Member State if it fails to protect the EU's border effectively. It may dispatch Frontex officers to border points of the Member States. In addition, the ECBG may undertake operations outside the EU territory where the EU's frontier security is concerned. The Regulation also regulates information-sharing: "The Agency relies on the cooperation of Member States to be able to perform its tasks effectively; in that respect, it is important for the Agency and the Member States to act in good faith and to exchange accurate information promptly." Furthermore, it specifies: "Member States should also, in the interest of the other Member States, contribute to relevant data necessary for situational awareness, risk analysis, vulnerability assessments, and assessment and planning. Equally, they should ensure that the data are accurate, up-to-date, obtained, and entered lawfully." A new communication network is to replace Eurosur to ensure that. This is a work in progress. As of today, the EIBM system functions on Eurosur. The Member States have established national coordination centers to ensure the dissemination of information. The 2019 regulation also allowed Frontex to take charge of the external border security of The European Union in case a member state proved incapable or unwilling to do so. The legal basis for issuing the EIBM communication is the 2019 Frontex Communication article 8 (1), which states, "The European Commission and the European Border and Coast Guard shall ensure the effectiveness of European integrated border management using a multi-annual strategic policy cycle that is adopted in a procedure laid down in paragraph 4.

Furthermore, Article 8(4) says: "Based on risk analysis for European Integrated Border Management referred to in Article 29(2), the Commission shall prepare a policy document developing a multiannual strategic policy for European Integrated border management. The Commission shall submit that policy document to the European Parliament and the Council for discussion. Following that discussion, the Commission shall adopt a communication establishing the multiannual strategic policy for European integrated border management". According to Article 121 of the regulation, the Commission has to evaluate the 2019 Regulation by 5 December 2023 regarding, among other things, the results achieved by the agency regarding its objectives, mandate, resources and tasks, performance, and working practices, on the possible need to order and the functioning of the standing corps⁵³. This provides the legal rationale for the present study of the decision-making process on EIBM communication.

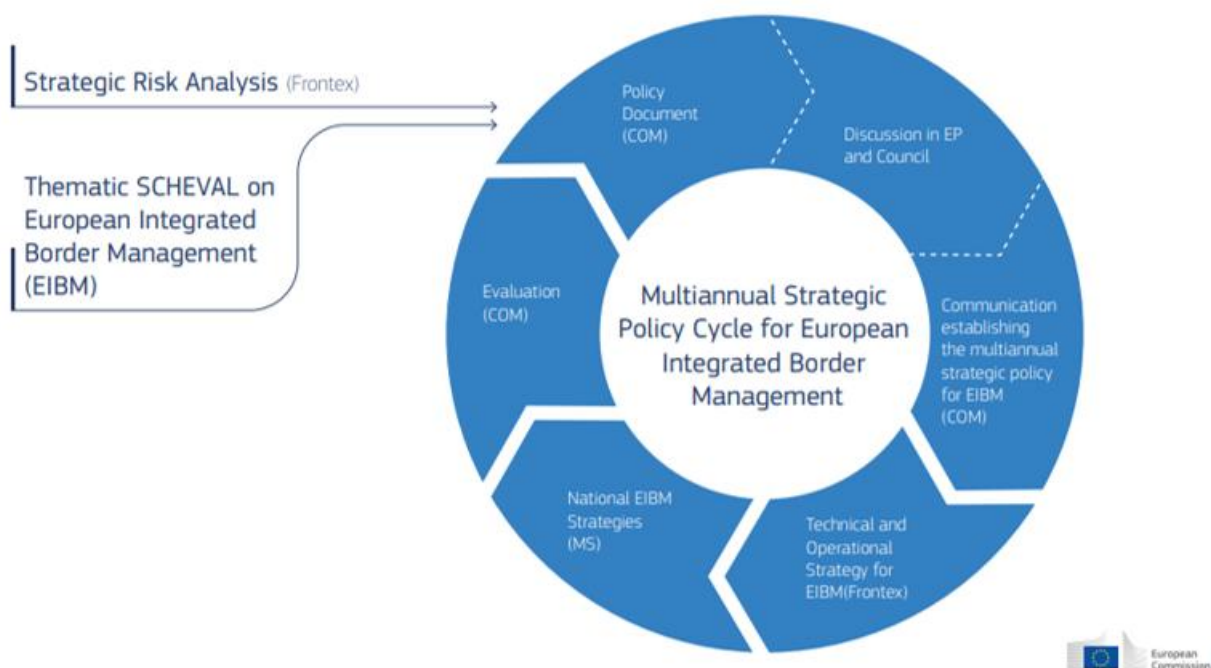
There are other legal instruments, such as the one governing the establishment of Eurosur in

terms of exchanging information for the cooperation between Member States and Frontex situational awareness—regulations for the surveillance of the external sea border. In addition, there is a Union code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders and a directive on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals.⁵⁴

Policy Cycle

The policy cycle of European border management is characterized by a structured, multi-phase approach that integrates strategic planning, implementation, and continuous evaluation. It begins with agenda-setting, where emerging risks such as irregular migration, cross-border crime, and hybrid threats are identified through strategic risk analyses, notably by Frontex. This is followed by policy formulation, during which the European Commission, Member States, and agencies like Frontex develop coordinated strategies, including the Multiannual Strategic Policy Cycle for European Integrated Border Management (EIBM). The adoption phase involves formal decision-making by EU institutions, such as the approval of the Technical and Operational Strategy for EIBM by the Frontex Management Board. Once adopted, the policy moves into implementation, where Frontex coordinates joint operations, surveillance, and returns, while Member States align their national strategies with EU objectives.

Implementation is supported by EU funding instruments (e.g., the Internal Security Fund) and enhanced by technological systems like Eurosur and biometric databases. A key feature of the cycle is the interoperability between agencies and systems, ensuring a seamless operational environment. Evaluation is embedded throughout the cycle, with regular reporting, audits, and reviews to assess effectiveness, legality, and proportionality of actions. Frontex's annual risk reports and mid-term reviews inform necessary adjustments. This cycle is underpinned by the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility among Member States, as well as respect for fundamental rights. Flexibility is another characteristic, allowing responses to rapidly evolving challenges like pandemics or geopolitical crises. The cycle also emphasizes external cooperation, particularly with third countries, to manage migration and security risks beyond EU borders. Importantly, the policy cycle is aligned with broader EU security, migration, and fundamental rights frameworks. Governance is multi-level, involving local, national, EU, and international actors. Finally, the EIBM cycle reflects the EU's commitment to evidence-based policymaking, grounded in data, threat intelligence, and legal norms.



Source: Effective management of external borders - European Commission

Key actors involved in EU Border Management

The European integrated border management (EIBM) aims to efficiently manage the crossing of external borders and address migratory challenges and potential future threats at those borders, thereby contributing to addressing serious crime with cross-border dimensions such as migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, and terrorism.

DG Home

The Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs – DG HOME – is responsible for the EU's internal security policy. According to the European Commission, effectively managing EU external borders is critical for a Schengen area without internal border checks. It is needed to facilitate legitimate border crossings, manage migration effectively, and improve internal security in the EU by detecting and preventing threats at the external border.⁵⁵ DG Home has two representatives on the Frontex Board of Directors. The Frontex regulation requires the European Commission to be informed of agency activities. Furthermore, according to Article 19 in the Frontex regulation, the European Commission may propose decisions by the Council requiring a Member State to cooperate with the agency to implement measures to mitigate risks at the external border.⁵⁶

Frontex

Frontex's origin lies in the EU's accession to the Schengen-convention and the provisions on Justice and Home Affairs in the Amsterdam-treaty, a European transposition of French and German legislative programs on home affairs. To assist the JHA Council's work on migration, asylum, and asylums, provisions on which were interested in the Amsterdam-treaty ratified in 1997, an External Border Practitioner Common unit was created consisting of members of the powerful Strategic Committee on immigration, frontiers, and Asylum (SCIFA) and heads of national border control services. The Common Unit coordinated national projects on an ad hoc basis involving pilot projects to test feedback from the member state's border control police organizations within budget and time. In 2004, Frontex was created under regulation 2007/2004.

The Frontex agency is led by an Executive Director, Hans Leijten, whose functions and powers are defined in Article 68 of the 2016 regulation. He is assisted by three Executive Directors: Aija Kalnaja, deputy for Standing Corps Management; Lars Gerdes, deputy for returns and operations; and Uku Särekanno, deputy information management and Processes⁵⁷. Frontex's mission statement is organized around the following: "We are professional and respectful; we seek cooperation; we are accountable; we care."⁵⁸ Mission-driven organizations drive loyalty across generations, foster citizen engagement, improve strategic alignment, bring clarity, and may even be measured. This ensures staff retention and underpins operations -particularly if you don't mistake them for values.

Nine divisions perform various tasks: Situational Awareness and Monitoring, International and Cooperation Division, Operational Response, European Returns, Capacity Building Division, Deployment Management, ETIAS Central Unit, Financial, Digital & Security & Governance Support Centre.⁵⁹ Frontex has a Fundamental Rights Strategy administered by a Fundamental Rights Officer, whose remit is to publish annual reports of Frontex's activities.⁶⁰ In addition, Frontex chairs the JHA Agencies Network, which includes nine EU agencies⁶¹. The JHA Network conducts seminars and commission reports, such as by RAND Europe, on AI-related aspects of Frontex's operations.⁶² It is unclear how the JHA Networks' work and activities feed into the overall edifice of Frontex and translate into organizational adaptation at the EU and MS levels. However, the JHA Network does enable Frontex to coordinate better among peers.

Figure 1 – Frontex Mission Tasks



Source: Frontex

Frontex is managed by issuing a single programming document, an annual work program, and a yearly activity report. The Single Programming Document lists three strategic Objectives for the period 2020-2023: (1) Reduced vulnerability of the External Borders based on Comprehensive Situational Awareness, (2) Safe, Secure, and Well-functioning EU External Borders, (3) Sustained European Border and Coast Guard capabilities⁶³

These strategic objectives are maintained in the 2023-25 programming document adopted by the Frontex Management Board 3 May 2023. The document also contains a work program with prioritized actions and focus areas and the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) endogenous to programming mind and planning needs. The annual Activity Report 2020 contains a reference to various priorities.⁶⁴

Frontex has a risk-analysis unit responsible for producing the annual risk-analysis reports. Risk-risk analysis integrated border management in Europe identifies and assesses the various threats and challenges that affect the security and functioning of the EU's external borders and the Schengen area. Frontex, the European Coast, and Border Guard Corpse carry it out in cooperation with national authorities. Other EU agency's analysis covers all aspects relevant to European integrated border management, such as border control, return, unauthorized secondary movements of third- country nationals within the EU, prevention of cross-border crime, including facilitation of unauthorized border-crossings, trafficking in human beings, terrorism and threats of a hybrid nature, as well as the situation in relevant third countries⁶⁵ Risk-analysis provides actionable information and recommendations to support decision-making and operational planning at the EU and national levels. It also contributes to developing common

standards, best practices, and training for border management authorities⁶⁶. In addition, Frontex publishes an annual risk analysis report that presents the situation at the EU's external borders and the future challenges for the European border management community. The latest news was released on 7 October 2022 and identified the impact of the war in Ukraine as one of the key risks affecting European integrated border management⁶⁷.

Frontex Liaison Officers Network

The Frontex Liaison Officers are responsible for acting as an interface and facilitating the cooperation between Frontex and all Member States, which have competencies about integrated border management and return, including Coast Guard authorities. In addition, the Frontex Liaison Officers Network monitors the Member State's management control of external borders. According to Frontex Management Board Decision 14/2017, the liaison officers "shall facilitate the exchange of information and perform tasks that will contribute to the vulnerability assessment referred to in Article 13 of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation." ⁶⁸

Europol

Europol and Frontex have established cooperation agreements to enhance their collaboration. These agreements focus on sharing intelligence and operational information, particularly in areas like migrant smuggling and human trafficking. The agencies work together on joint operations and risk analysis, leveraging their respective strengths to address cross-border crime more effectively.

Recent agreements have emphasized the importance of aligning their activities to avoid duplication of efforts and to maximize their impact on EU security. This partnership aims to create a more secure and coordinated approach to tackling the complex challenges of cross-border crime and border management in the EU⁶⁹. Given the intelligence and capabilities available to Europol and the role of Frontex, I expect a more strategic approach to the whole suite of trafficking : humans, drugs and arms with operational impact across sectors and types of border: Air, Sea, Land.

European Fisheries Agency (EFCA) & European Maritime Security Agency

The EFCA, EMSA and Frontex forms part of a three-pronged inter-agency collaboration in support of the Coast Guards of the member states on a chartered bases, in terms of functional cooperation about taskings defined in the handbook on European cooperation of Coast Guard Cooperation⁷⁰. The inter-agency areas of cooperation concerns (1) Information sharing (2) Surveillance and Communication services (3) Capacity building (4) Risk Analysis (5) Capacity Sharing.⁷¹

European Union Agency for Asylum

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) supports EU Member States in implementing asylum and international protection laws more harmoniously. It provides practical tools, guidance, and recommendations to ensure fair and effective asylum procedures⁷². The EUAA's remit includes facilitating cooperation and information exchange among Member States, particularly through networks like the Network of Dublin Units.

Germany tops the country with most applications, steady at 22% amounting to approximately 1 million, whilst Spain, France and Italy, Greece, Austria and Sweden also receives a good many migrants. Ireland takes-up the most per capita. In Italy in 2023 923,000 persons were in first instance awaiting trial, while 4,4 million applications in total were lodged to EU countries⁷³

However, the EUAA's role is supportive and advisory, not authoritative; it cannot make binding decisions on individual asylum applications. It collaborates closely with other EU bodies, such as DG HOME and Frontex, to enhance the efficiency and security of asylum processes. Despite its extensive support capabilities, the ultimate responsibility for asylum decisions remains with the individual Member States.⁷⁴

During May 2024 alone 84,000 asylum applications were lodged. Hotspots are regularly set-up to deal with the processing of asylum applications⁷⁵. This situation is becoming untenable.

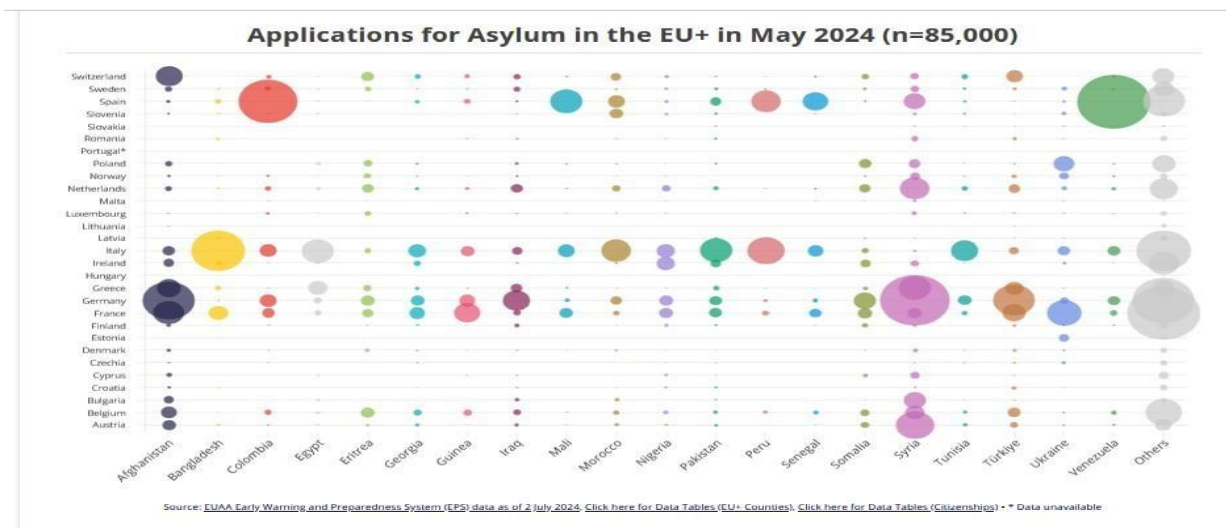


Figure 3 – Asylum stats

European Border and Coast Guard

Frontex is the European Border and Coast Guard that was established to help EU Member States manage their external borders, helping to ensure the proper functioning of Europe's Schengen area. This includes "support in migration management, fighting cross-border crime and return

activities, and supporting national authorities in making the crossing of the border safe and smooth for all travelers. Frontex border guards work under the command of the national authorities of the country they are deployed in.”⁷⁶ They perform various tasks such as border surveillance, fighting cross- border crime, and assisting in return operations. In addition, the Corpse helps candidate countries who have entered into a status agreement with Frontex.

The JHA Council

The JHA Council plays a crucial role in EU border management by adopting legislation and policy decisions that shape the EU’s approach to managing its external borders. In addition, the Council works closely with other EU institutions, such as the European Commission and the European Parliament, to develop and implement policies that promote effective border control and security while respecting fundamental rights and freedoms. The adoption of the Amsterdam Council created the JHA Council as an organ of the interior and justice ministers representing the Member States.

According to the 2019-Frontex regulation on Accountability, “ the Agency shall be accountable to the European Parliament and the Council by this Regulation.”⁷⁷ The JHA Counselors consist of the representative of the JHA attachés of the Member States’ permanent representatives. In addition, the Council has a working group on Frontiers (Fron) that deals with issues related to EIBM, Schengen, borders and visas, and the coordination of Frontex’s activities.

The European Parliament

The role of the European Parliament is co-legislator of the EU along with the Council of the European Union. The Parliament has a say in shaping EU border management and migration policies, including the Schengen area and Frontex. The parliament also monitors Frontex’s activities and ensures it complies with EU Law. In addition, the Parliament has approved funding for border management through the EU’s Integrated Border Management Fund (IBMF). The Civil Liberties Committee (LIBE) is holding Frontex accountable. In 2021, a Frontex Scrutiny Working Group (FSWG) was established to follow DG Home and Frontex more closely about all aspects of the functioning of Frontex, including its reinforced role and resources for IBM, the correct application of the EU acquis and its execution of the 2019 regulation: “ The FSWG may gather information, including by making requests to Frontex, and by inviting and requesting stakeholders. Meetings may be held to this effect. A dedicated LIBE Secretariat staff person should be allocated solely to support the work”.⁷⁸

Budgetary aspects

The European Parliament discharges the EU budget, the Council, and the EU Commission. The EU Commission manages the budget subject to the European Parliament's annual review and under the accountability of the Court of Auditors. 2/3 of the EU budget is managed jointly between the European Commission and the national authorities, while the EU Commission and its agencies directly work a meager 18% of the EU Budget. Under the multi-financial framework, 22,7 billion was allocated to migration and border management between 2021 and 2027⁷⁹.

DG Home has allocated €10,7 billion to Member States to address migration, border management, and internal security challenges in 2021-2027, administered by three funds. The Asylum and Migration Fund (AMIF) has four objectives related to managing the standard European asylum system: support for legal migration, contribution to countering irregular migration, and enhancing solidarity and responsibility sharing between the member states. AMIF had a budget allocation of 9,9 billion in the 2021-2027. The Internal Security Fund (ISF) will contribute to reaching a high level of security in the EU, in particular by preventing and combating terrorism, radicalization, severe and organized crime, and cybercrime, by assisting and protecting victims of crime, and by preparing for, and protecting against and effectively managing security-related incidents, risk and crises. It has a budget allocation of €1,9 billion during the period 2021-2027⁸⁰

The Integrated Border Management Fund (BMVI) comprises two financial instruments. The Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI) and the Customs Control Equipment Instrument (CCEI). The BMVI aims to ensure robust and effective EIBM and support the standard visa policy and is geared towards contributing to a high level of internal security of the Union, safeguarding the free movement of people, underpinning the respect for the relevant EU acquis ensuring particular fondness for the international obligations of the EU and the Member States. The CCEI helps member states with state-of-the-art customs control equipment in terms of financial support for customs authorities.⁸¹ The relevant IBM Funds are governed by Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), which lays standards for eight EU Funds implemented in shared management with the Member States. 6,902,2m6,902,2 million allocated in 2021-2027.⁸² Frontex's budget for 2021 was €541 million. The agency is funded by the EU budget and its resources, such as fees charged to External partners. It has access to BMVI.

Migration policy objectives are pursued under the European Development Fund. At the same time, €8 billion Euro under the new Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDCI) is allocated to "actions supporting management and governance of migration and forced displacement."⁸³

The European Parliament has exercised influence over the CPR, which the European Parliament adopted on 24 June 2021. Its power focuses on voice over the budget allocation for the various

funds and their respective objectives and priorities, the simplification of the rules and procedures for accessing and managing the funds, the introduction of a new delivery mode based on policy goals and enabling conditions, the enhancement of synergies and complementarities between the funds and other EU instruments, the promotion of cross-border, transnational and international projects⁸⁴. The European Parliament also exercises democratic oversight over implementing and enforcing the uses of the funds administered by the European Commission and other EU agencies.

The allocation of the funds is managed according to criteria pertinent to each funding instrument. The AMIF allocates 88% to national programs based on the number of third-country nationals residing in each Member State; the BMVI allocates 75% to federal agenda based on the length of external land and sea borders, the volume of passenger flows at border crossing points, and the number of consular offices. The ISF allocates 60% of its budget to national programs according to population size and specific indicators related to internal security challenges such as crime, terrorism, and radicalization. The CCEI allocates 50% based on the volume and value of goods cleared by Customs in each Member State. The remaining part of each fund's budget is administered under a Thematic Facility, which allows for more flexibility and responsiveness to emerging or unforeseen needs and priorities. The latter is undertaken in consultation with the Member States⁸⁵.

The budgetary revenue of Frontex has steadily increased from €693,122 million to € 922million in 2024⁸⁶. The EU citizens' representatives allocated to Frontex €247million on staff and €64 million on other administrative expenditures, and €609million on operational activities, of which €174 million went to the standing corps, €93million on return activities. Digitalization took up €41 million and the agency's horizontal operational support took up €24million, 9 million on information and data analytics, €8,7 million on strengthening capacities and 1,5 million on fundamental rights activities.

Schengen

The Schengen Area (German: Schengen-Raum) stands as one of the European Union's most prominent achievements in regional integration. Established by the Schengen Agreement of 1985 and its subsequent implementation, the area facilitates the abolition of internal border controls among participating countries, thereby enabling the free movement of persons. Comprising most EU Member States alongside several associated non-EU countries, the Schengen Area is founded on a collective responsibility for external border management, police cooperation, and harmonized visa and asylum policies. To ensure the effective and consistent operation of this borderless space, the Schengen Governance Framework was developed, with the Schengen Cycle serving as its cornerstone.

The Schengen Cycle represents a systematic and continuous process designed to monitor, guide,

and strengthen the implementation of Schengen rules. It enables a rigorous, evidence-based approach to governance and operational management within the Schengen Area.

The cycle begins with the situational picture, where operational data concerning external border management, migration flows, security threats, and compliance with Schengen regulations are collected and analyzed. This comprehensive real-time assessment forms the foundation for informed decision-making.

Following this, the process moves into the monitoring and implementation phase. Here, rigorous evaluations of member states' adherence to their obligations take place, identifying gaps and areas requiring improvement. This systematic oversight ensures consistent application of Schengen rules.

Insights derived from monitoring inform the strategic steering phase, which establishes high-level policy priorities and guidance. This strategic orientation aligns national and EU-wide efforts, adapting governance frameworks to emerging challenges such as irregular migration or evolving security threats.

The next stage, political coordination, involves dialogue and cooperation among political actors at both national and EU levels. This ensures unified, coordinated responses to challenges, reinforcing solidarity and shared responsibility within the Schengen community.

An annual health check is then conducted, serving as a comprehensive review of the Schengen Area's overall functioning. This diagnostic exercise identifies trends, evaluates systemic performance, and highlights best practices and persistent issues.

Finally, when shortcomings or breaches are detected, remedial measures are proposed and implemented. These corrective actions can range from targeted assistance to enforcement mechanisms, aiming to restore compliance and safeguard the integrity of the Schengen Area.

Through its cyclical and multifaceted structure, the Schengen Cycle provides a robust mechanism to ensure the credibility, resilience, and effectiveness of the Schengen Area. By fostering a proactive, coordinated, and evidence-driven approach to governance, it upholds the principles of free movement, security, and solidarity that underpin the Schengen project.



Implications of Different Conceptions of Schengen and EIBM

Different conceptions of the Schengen Area significantly influence the policies and practices within the European Integrated Border Management (EIBM) framework. These conceptual variations shape how member states perceive the balance between free movement and security, affecting cooperation, sovereignty, and operational coordination.

One conception emphasizes Schengen primarily as a space of free movement, focusing on minimizing border controls to facilitate economic integration and personal mobility. Under this view, the EIBM prioritizes seamless internal borders and streamlined processes, aiming to reduce friction for travelers and trade while maintaining external border security.

In contrast, another conception frames Schengen chiefly as a security regime, where the preservation of internal security and the control of irregular migration take precedence. Here, the EIBM focuses heavily on surveillance, intelligence-sharing, and strict border controls, which may entail temporary reinstatement of internal borders or increased checks to address security threats.

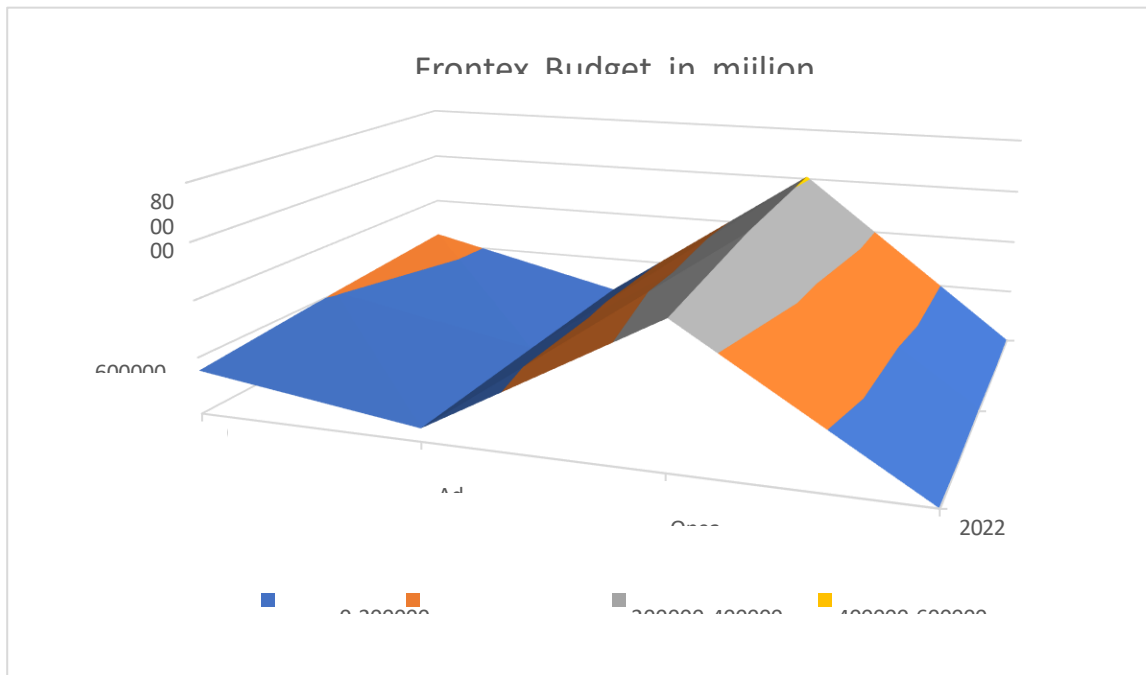
These divergent understandings lead to tensions between national sovereignty and collective governance. States prioritizing sovereignty may resist centralized control, seeking to maintain unilateral border policies. Conversely, proponents of deep integration advocate for stronger EU-level coordination and harmonization within EIBM mechanisms.

The implications also extend to the political and operational dimensions of border management. A Schengen vision centered on free movement encourages trust and mutual reliance among member states, fostering cooperation and data-sharing. A security-focused approach may generate fragmentation, with increased bilateralism or ad hoc measures undermining collective solidarity.

Ultimately, the interplay of these conceptions affects the effectiveness, legitimacy, and resilience of both the Schengen Area and EIBM. Balancing the competing demands of openness and

security remains a core challenge, shaping future policy development and the evolution of European border governance.

Figure 5 – Frontex ` Budget



Administrative costs covers the agency's internal administrative expenses, including staff salaries, office maintenance, and other operational costs. There are training programs for border guards and other personnel essential for maintaining high standards of operation and compliance with EU regulations. Funds are also allocated for RDI to enhance border management technologies and methodologies. Under operational costs, representing the biggest chunk comes costs for missions, joint operations and rapid border interventions. A significant portion of the budget is dedicated to these activities to ensure effective border management and security. The standing corpse is an expenditure under operational activities. This covers salaries, training and deployment costs.

Investments in equipment such as surveillance technology, vehicles, and other operational tools are crucial. This also includes the maintenance and development of infrastructure.

When Frontex moves into its permanent premises, rental cost at €17 million annually will drastically be reduced. The large share of the budget on staffing and other administrative expenditure -

+ 30% of the total budget - is way over what other EU agencies spends and is entirely unacceptable. It smacks of employment therapy. In addition, horizontal smacks of status-enhancing activities for idle hasbeens & wannabees. Analytics could largely be automated using AI or

reprioritised. We are not informed about what digitalization goes into. 4 million is allocated to the European School, but we are not told whether this covers training for the rank and-file, which in any event will have to be strengthened following induction⁸⁷

In the future, I recommend that pruning be undertaken along the following lines.

Implement remote work policies:

Strategy: Encourage remote work to reduce the need for physical office space and associated costs. **Implications:** This can lead to lower utility and maintenance costs.

Streamline administrative Processes:

Strategy: Automate routine administrative tasks using software solutions.

Implications: Automation can reduce the need for administrative staff, leading to cost savings. It also improves efficiency and reduces human error, but may require initial investment in technology and training.

Outsource non-core functions:

Strategy: Outsource functions such as payroll, IT support, and facility management to specialised service providers.

Implications: Outsourcing can reduce staffing levels and administrative costs. It allows the organization to focus on core activities but may involve managing third-party contracts and ensuring service quality.

Optimize Organizational Structure:

Strategy: Conduct a thorough review of the organizational structure to eliminate redundant roles and consolidate functions.

Implications: this could lead to a leaner and more efficient organization with reduced staffing costs. However, it may impact employee morale and require careful change management.

Information about how the standing corps and Frontex-MS officers distribute their time

Strategy: Publish detailed statistics and breakdowns of time spent on various activities by the standing corps and Frontex-MS field officers in Frontex's annual report. Hold public webinars and Q& A, use social media platforms to share regular updates and infographics and develop an online dashboard to display real time data and visualizations of time allocation across different activities.

Implications: It enhances Transparency and allows the public to understand the agency's operational focus.

Implementing these strategies can significantly improve public awareness and understanding of How Frontex spends its money and can saves money and how it allocates its resources and time.

Court of Auditors

Frontex is under the purview of the Court of Auditors. EU's contribution to Frontex amounted to € 11 billion in 2021-2027. The audit concentrates on whether (1) Frontex's situation monitoring of EU's external borders enables swift and well-targeted border interventions, (2) Frontex's risk analysis and vulnerability assessments are valuable tools for protecting the EU's external borders,

(3) Frontex's operational response is contributing to the development of EU integrated border management⁸⁸

In its 2021 audit, the Court of Auditors concluded that Frontex's support for Member State/Schen- gen-associated countries in fighting against illegal immigration and cross-border crime is ineffective. In addition, the CoA found that Frontex has not fully implemented its 2016 mandate and highlighted several risks related to Frontex's 2019 mandate⁸⁹. Some of the main findings of the report were:

- Frontex's situation monitoring is not comprehensive enough and reliable enough to provide a clear picture of the situation at the EU's external borders
- Frontex's risk analysis is not timely, complete, or sufficiently forward-looking to support decision-making and planning at the EU and national level
- Frontex's vulnerability assessment is not practical in identifying and addressing the weaknesses and gaps in Member State's border management capacities
- Frontex's operational response is not always well-targeted, rapid, or flexible enough to address the changing needs and challenges at the external borders.

And so, the Court of Auditors made several recommendations to Frontex and the European Commission:

- Improving the quality, timeliness, and coverage of the situation by monitoring data and information
- Enhancing the methodology, scope, and use of risk analysis products
- Developing a more robust and transparent framework for vulnerability assessment
- Strengthening the planning, coordination, and evaluation of operational response activities
- Clarifying the legal basis, roles, and responsibilities for Frontex's new tasks and powers
- Ensuring adequate human, financial, and technical resources for Frontex's new mandate⁹⁰

That is to say, Frontex needs to do its job better, and the European Commission needs to be a

better leader and a law-abiding manager.

Analysis of the decision-making process on EIBM

According to DG, Home EU's external border management serves four purposes:.'

- Facilitate legitimate border crossings
- Manage migration effectively
- Improve internal security in the EU by detecting and preventing threats at the external border
- Safeguard the principle of free movement of persons⁹¹

DG Home launched the policy debate in 2021 on developing a multi-annual strategic policy by publishing a policy document on EIBM.⁹² The policy document anchors its approach in the 2021 Schengen Strategy of June 2021⁹³ and the 2019 Frontex/ECBG Regulation⁹⁴. The Schengen Strategy is a long-term vision and roadmap for strengthening the Schengen area in all its aspects regarding a more robust, resilient, and secure Schengen area. The Schengen strategy identifies two requirements for a fully functioning and resilient Schengen area: An integrated approach to external border management and successfully implementing the European Border and Coast Guard Agency mandate. In particular, the Schengen strategy stressed the need "to provide both the strategic framework and the operational components coded to connect our policies better and eliminate loopholes between border protection, security, return, migration, while always ensuring the protection of fundamental rights."⁹⁵

The legal basis for both moves is the 2019 Frontex regulation regarding establishing the ECBG and European integrated border management. The management principles announced in the 2022 Policy Document: (1) Shared responsibility, the duty to cooperate in good faith, and obligation to exchange information (2) Constant readiness to respond to emerging threats (3) Greater coordination and integrated planning (4) Comprehensive situational awareness (5) EIBM technical standards (6) Common border guards' culture and high level of professionalism (7) Functional integrity⁹⁶. From these principles flows 12 vertical components and three horizontal components. The 12 components are each assigned with priorities and strategic guidelines: (1) Border control, (2) Search and Rescue, (3) Analysis of the risks, (4) Information exchange and cooperation between the Member States, (5) Inter-agency cooperation (6) Cooperation among the relevant Union institutions (7) Cooperation with third countries (8) Technical and operational measures within the Schengen area (9) Return of third-country nationals (10) Use of state-of-the-art technology (11) A Quality control mechanism (12) solidarity mechanism—the horizontal components: Fundamental Rights, Education and Training, Research and Innovation. The European Commission states: "The main goal of the EIBM policy cycle is to ensure in the next five years, EU political priorities are properly translated into operational objectives and activities

for the European Border and Coast Guard.”.

On the same day, 24 May 2022, DG Home published a State of the Schengen Report. This is a novelty and an annual exercise. The State of the Schengen Report 2022 provides a comprehensive state-of-play of the Schengen acquis, based on the results of the regular evaluations in the policy domain, the identification of challenges and opportunities for the Schengen area and the establishment of a new governance model for the Schengen area based on a regular health-check on the Schengen-area, allowing to identify problems early on and to ensure shared responsibility and solidarity among the member states. In addition, the State of Schengen report identifies priorities for the year ahead and monitors progress at the year's end⁹⁷. It was discussed in the Schengen Forum on 2 June 2022 and in the Schengen Council on 10 June 2022.

The EU Commission introduced the Schengen Forum in 2020 in the context of the COVID crisis, conceived as an inclusive, informal forum to explore ways of moving forward.⁹⁸ DG Home convened the third meeting of the Schengen Forum. The main discussion topics were the management of the EU's external borders, internal border controls, internal security, completion of the Schengen area, and priorities set by the Schengen area. The participants exchanged views on how to strengthen EIBM, ensure that the protection of the external borders and the rights of people seeking asylum are guaranteed, implement the large-scale information systems by 2023, and formally allow Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria to become part of the Schengen area. The participants also discussed how to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, migration pressures, cross-border crime, and terrorism and ensure respect for fundamental rights and the rule of law in all Schengen-related areas. The views expressed by different participants varied according to their interests and perspectives. The Commission stressed the importance of restoring a fully functioning Schengen area without internal border controls and ensuring effective and harmonized management of EU external borders through EIBM. The Commission also called for political support from Member States and The European Parliament to adopt the new multiannual strategic policy for EIBM. The European Parliament highlighted the need to safeguard the principle of free movement of persons and to protect fundamental rights in all Schengen-related activities. The European Parliament also urged the Member States to lift any unjustified internal border controls and to agree on admitting Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania to the Schengen area. The Home Affairs Ministers expressed their views on various aspects of EIBM, such as border control, return policy, cooperation with third countries, inter-agency cooperation, use of technology, respect for fundamental rights, and quality control. They also shared their experiences and best practices for dealing with migration pressure, the COVID-19 pandemic, cross-border crime, and terrorism at their external border. The EU agencies, such as Frontex, Europol, Eurojust, and EASO, provided their expertise and perspectives on EIBM issues, such as border surveillance, intelligence analysis, and judicial cooperation and asylum support. They also reported on their operational activities and achievements supporting Member

States and the EU institutions on EIBM matters.

The interests that prevailed in the Schengen Forum aimed to balance security and facilitate mobility at EU external borders. Accordingly, the participants agreed on needing a Schengen area without internal border controls. They also involved all relevant stakeholders in developing and implementing the Schengen acquis⁹⁹.

During the 9 June 2022 meeting of the JHA Council, JHA Ministers discussed over lunch the activity of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, encompassing the deployment of the standing corps, the governance of the agency, their expectations regarding the implementation of its mandate, and the prospects for developing Frontex's cooperation with third countries. They also endorsed the Schengen Council's conclusions¹⁰⁰. On the 29 August 2022 meeting, the JHA Council issued draft conclusions on the EIBM for the use and consideration of the JHA councilors. JHA Ministers noted that the combined effect of the COVID-19 crisis, terrorism, and migration had the functioning of the Schengen area, as ministers underlined the "key role of an "effective EIBM." Ministers emphasized that the EIBM policing would be complemented by the technical and operational strategy of Frontex and the national IBM strategies of the Member States, to effectively addressing the current and future challenges in the area of border management while reflecting the specific situation of each Member State." The JHA ministers proceeded on principles to propose "to add the four-tier access control model as one of the key principles and invited the EU Commission to elaborate further the concepts of integrated planning and EIBM technical standards". JHA Ministers then invited the Commission to "carefully delineate the scope of EIBM, especially with regard to measures within the Schengen area" and proceeded to invite "The Commission to devote particular attention to recent phenomenon such as the instrumentalization of migration and other hybrid threats". On policy priorities and strategic guidelines for the components of EIBM, JHA Ministers "stressed the need for prioritization through the national strategies, among other things based on risk analyses by Frontex and the results of the Schengen evaluation and vulnerability assessments." JHA ministers proceeded to "stress the prevention of irregular migration and cross- border crime and calls for a more proactive approach respective strategic guidelines" while underlining "that border surveillance may also be carried out by technical electronic means, equipment, surveillance systems and where appropriate, all types of stationary and mobile infrastructure, in full compliance with fundamental rights." Ministers also stressed "the need to take due account of international maritime law, in particular about search and rescue operations". On Governance, JHA ministers expressed their desire for "the governance of the multi-annual strategic policy cycle to be integrated into the Schengen cycle and regularly reviewed within the Schengen Council."¹⁰¹

Following deliberations by the JHA Counsellors, the JHA Council of Ministers adopted a slightly revised version of the conclusions. ¹⁰²

The European Commission's consultation script on the 2022 policy document involved stakeholders. A synopsis report. German Sg Beate was removed from office by the Swedish Commissioner, as she denied document access against her better knowledge.

The European Commission asked the European Parliament to provide input on the policy priorities and strategic guidelines for the 15 EIBM components in Annex I of Policy Document 2 on 2 May 2022. The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) of the European Parliament discussed the communication several times and adopted a letter on 19 January 2023 with its opinion and recommendations. The note welcomed the communication as a timely and comprehensive document that provides a clear vision and guidance for European integrated border management. However, it highlighted some areas that require further attention or improvement, such as:

- the need to ensure full respect for fundamental rights and international obligations, especially for asylum seekers, vulnerable persons, unaccompanied minors, and victims of trafficking in human beings.
- The need to strengthen parliamentary oversight and democratic accountability of Frontex and its activities, as well as its cooperation with third countries and other EU agencies
- There is a need to strengthen parliamentary oversight and democratic accountability of Frontex and its activities, as well as its cooperation with third countries and other EU agencies.
- There is a need to enhance solidarity and responsibility-sharing among Member States, especially regarding the relocation, return, and resettlement of migrants.
- There is a need to foster interoperability and information exchange among all relevant actors while ensuring data protection and privacy safeguards.
- The need to promote research and innovation in border management while ensuring ethical standards and human-centric approaches.

The 17 January 2023 letter by LIBE's chairman, Fernando Lopez Aguilar, also suggested specific amendments or additions to the policy priorities and strategic guidelines for each European integrated border management component.

DG Home responded to LIBE's letter by considering the suggestions and recommendations made by the LIBE Committee in preparing the IBM communication.

EUCO intervened in the policy process, stating their desiderata on the EU Commission's 2022 policy document during the 9 February 2023 EuCO meeting summing up the requirements of Heads of State and Prime Ministers of the European Union:

"The European Union remains determined to ensure effective control of its external land and sea borders. The European Council welcomes the efforts of Member States in this. Respect and:

- a) affirms its full support for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) in delivering on its core task, which is to support Member States in protecting the external borders,

fighting cross-border crime, and stepping up returns;

- b) reiterates the importance of the Entry/Exit System and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System becoming operational as soon as possible;
- c) calls for the rapid conclusion of negotiations on new and revised Status Agreements between the European Union and third countries on the deployment of Frontex as part of the efforts to strengthen cooperation on border management and migration¹⁰³;
- d) calls on the Commission to fund measures by Member States that directly contribute to the control of the EU's external borders, such as the border management pilot projects, as well as the enhancement of border control in key countries on transit routes to the European Union;
- e) calls on the Commission to immediately mobilize substantial EU funds and means to support Member States in reinforcing border protection capabilities and infrastructure, means of surveillance, including aerial surveillance, and

Equipment. In this context, the European Council invites the Commission to quickly finalize the European Integrated Border Management Strategy;

- f) recognizes the specificities of maritime borders, including as regards safeguarding human lives, and underlines the need for reinforced cooperation regarding the Search And Rescue activities and, in that context, take note of the relaunch of the European Contact Group on Search and Rescue.¹⁰⁴

March 16, 2023, DG Home published the long-awaited EIBM communication with Annexes¹⁰⁵. In it, DG Home states its objectives succinctly and clearly:

- "to facilitate legitimate border crossings and increase the efficiency of the Union's return policy;
- to ensure the effective prevention of unauthorized crossings of the external borders;
- to prevent and detect serious crimes with a cross-border dimension, such as migrant smuggling, terrorism, trafficking in human beings, arms trafficking, and drugs trafficking;
- to achieve practical cooperation with third countries;
- and to ensure the quick registration and provision of care to persons needing or applying for international protection.

In sum, European integrated border management must contribute to a high level of internal security within the Union in a manner that fully respects fundamental rights and safeguards the free movement of persons within the Union".

From the objectives flows the principles guiding DG Home's approach to strategic European Integrated Border Management:

"Firstly, implementing EIBM is a shared responsibility of Member State authorities responsible for border management and return, and of Frontex, together forming the European Board and Coast Guard. While national border management authorities retain primary responsibility for

managing their sections of the external borders, European Border and Coast Guard members must cooperate in good faith and exchange information within the EBCG community.

Secondly, EIBM is based on the four-tier access control model [8](#), which comprises measures in third countries, with neighboring third countries, border control measures at the external borders, and standards within the Schengen area and return. Therefore, Frontex and the Member States should take and adjust actions in all tiers based on risk analysis.

Thirdly, comprehensive and near-to-real-time situational awareness is indispensable for the correct and timely response of the European Border and Coast Guard to emerging threats. This requires a complete European situational picture developed and constantly updated by Frontex at the EU level and by the Member States at the national level. As the main base for illustrating the situation at the EU's external borders, EUROSUR should be effectively implemented.

Furthermore, new business applications should be developed with common standards for information management set jointly by Frontex, Member States, and the Commission.

Fourthly, the implementation of EIBM is based on constant readiness to respond to emerging threats and provide the necessary tools to respond to and manage such threats at external borders. Ensuring the successful functioning of the European Border and Coast Guard requires a well-established coordination, communication, and integrated planning system between Frontex and the national authorities responsible for integrated border management. Therefore, the inter-agency approach in this Communication includes strategic guidelines to ensure efficient national coordination between border management authorities and other competent authorities at the external borders, among which customs authorities manage the flow of persons and goods at the exterior walls.

Finally, European integrated border management requires high specialization and professionalism. The European Border and Coast Guard should develop a common border guard culture and a high level of professionalism with high ethical values and integrity. Training courses should also be designed to ensure the full respect for fundamental rights in all border management activities via all basic training programs and targeted techniques. "

From principles to practice: the components of EIBM are then outlined: (a) border control, (b) a standard EU system of returns, (c) cooperation with third countries, (d)use of state-of-the-art technology, (e) respect, protection, and promotion of fundamental rights (f) coherent and comprehensive quality control mechanism and (g) EU funding instruments.

Other components and activities related to the prevention and detection of cross-border crime involve measures for enhancing situational awareness, intelligence gathering and analysis, risk profiling and targeting, and cooperation with law enforcement authorities. Referral of persons who need or wish to apply for international protection. Search and Rescue operations for persons

in distress at sea, which involves measures for ensuring the coordination and cooperation among Member States and with third countries and international organizations, the provision of adequate resources and equipment, the application of common operational standards and procedures, and the respect for fundamental rights and international law. Risk analysis for internal security and security of the external borders. Use of state-of-the-art technology, which involves measures for developing, deploying, and using innovative technologies and solutions to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of border management operations, such as biometrics, AI, drones, or bright borders.

Respect, protection, and promotion of fundamental rights. A coherent and comprehensive quality control mechanism involves measures for monitoring, evaluating, auditing, and reporting on the implementation and impact of EIBM activities at the EU and national levels and ensuring accountability and transparency.

The annexes to EIBM-communication provide strategic guidelines for the EIBM components and information on implementing the multiannual policy cycle on EIBM. DG Home informs that Frontex will adopt a new technical and operational strategy for EIBM under the remit of the Frontex Executive Director, followed up by Member States updating their national plan on EIBM, essentially Europeanized clones regarding integrated border management. Mentioned is also the European Pact on Migration and Asylum and a Strategy on the future of Schengen, both linked to the overall objectives of EIBM outlined above. Finally, the EIBM communication lists an implementation plan annexed to the Communication. Implementing the European integrated border management strategy is based on 15 components covering all aspects of border management, such as risk analysis, situational awareness, operational cooperation, interoperability, training, quality control, fundamental rights, international cooperation, and return under the EIBM strategy.

Implementation is to be monitored and evaluated by indicators and benchmarks that measure the performance and impact of the actions taken at the EU and national levels. The monitoring and evaluation results are reported annually by Frontex to the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council under the 2019 Regulation.

On the same day as the publication of the final version of the EIBM communication, DG Home published a series of recommendations on mutual recognition of returns.¹⁰⁶

This displaces the point from a prioritized set of actions and strategic guidelines under DG Home's overall steering to implementation within the EIBM sector, expressed as a relationship between DG HOME and Frontex in a multi-level setting. The EU policy-making machinery in the industry appears quite a meat grinder regarding internalizing the EIBM standard. Thus, DG Home

identifies itself with a different approach without surrendering its core objectives within its administrative space, even as DG Home is tempted to isolate itself from the external world. There are microcosmoses and microcosmoses.

Analysis of the Stakeholder-Based Consultation Process on the EIBM

We now turn to an analysis of the stakeholder-based consultation process on the EIBM. Due to limited availability of comprehensive data, the information has been compiled in a non-systematic manner. While this approach has inherent limitations, it provides a pragmatic means of examining the consultation process and capturing insights from diverse stakeholder perspectives.

The non-systematic compilation is primarily driven by constraints such as restricted access to up-to-date information, the complexity and diversity of stakeholders involved, and limited resources for exhaustive data collection. Despite these challenges, this approach allows for flexibility in incorporating inputs as they become available, ensures efficient use of available resources, and enables the consultation process to continue without significant delays.

Adopting this method aligns with the principles of stakeholder engagement outlined in the European Investment Bank's Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework, which emphasizes the importance of including stakeholder perspectives even when comprehensive data may not be readily accessible¹. This section will explore the different dimensions of the consultation process, highlighting both the practical rationale for the approach taken and the key insights that emerge from the available information.

Concerning the Institutional context

The main evolution between the 2022 Policy Document and the 2023 Communication on EIBM was the refinement, development, and elaboration of the EIBM components and their interlinkages, as well as the identification of specific actions and measures of specific actions and steps to be taken at EU and national level to achieve the EIBM objectives and priorities. Some examples of the evolution between the two documents are:

- The component of border control was further developed to include measures for the detection and prevention of cross-border crime and terrorism, as well as actions related to a referral mechanism for vulnerable persons or persons in need of international protection.
- The component of a standard EU system for returns was further developed to include measures for voluntary return and reintegration, cooperation with third countries on readmission and

¹ https://www.eib.org/en/publications/guidance-note-for-eib-standard-on-stakeholder-engagement-in-the-eib-operations?utm_source=chatgpt.com

identification, return operations coordinated by Frontex, and monitoring of fundamental rights compliance.

- The component for cooperation with third countries was further developed to include measures for enhancing collaboration among Member States' authorities responsible for border management and among EU agencies involved in EIBM.

The JHA Council endorsed the main principles underpinning the EIBM policy document. It proposed to stress the importance of the four-tier access control model as one of the critical principles of EIBM communication. The JHA Council also commended the Commission for the comprehensive list of policy priorities and strategy guidelines for the components of EIBM. It stressed the need to prioritize them at central and national levels, among other things, based on Frontex's risk analyses and the results of the Schengen evaluations and vulnerability assessments. Furthermore, the JHA Council welcomed the Commission's intentions to establish a standard EU System for returns and called for further measures to enhance cooperation with third countries on readmission and identification, to ensure adequate return operations coordinated by Frontex, and to monitor fundamental rights compliance. Furthermore, the JHA Council supported enhanced cooperation with third countries on border management and migration issues and invited DG HOME to develop tailor-made approaches based on mutual interests and benefits and strengthen regional cooperation platforms. The JHA Council also proposed to avoid duplication and to merge the efforts under EIBM with that of the Schengen Forum, as though the JHA Council, as though the JHA Counsellors operate according to a principle-agent-logic.

The European Parliament's influence over the 2023 communication was significant, as it contributed to shaping the shared European vision for EIBM over the coming years by prodding its views and perspectives on the strategic challenges and policy goals for EIBM, as well on the policy priorities and strategic guidelines for its implementation. On this basis, DH Home applies itself to reduce the European Parliament's role to inter-parliamentary deliberations and consultation on implementation issues, i.e., subsumed under the executive's whims. The European Parliament has also informed itself on the Eu Commission's report on the strategy for a resilient Schengen area, which hasn't worked and is without practical effect on the ground¹¹³. Or, to coin Horatius: "Once I was a fig-wood stem, a worthless log, when the carpenter, doubtful whether to make a stool or a Priapus, chose that I was a god."

The European Council's seven-point desiderata seem ignored mainly by DG Home, an executive rival. The status agreement with Macedonia was completed by April 1, 2023. In addition, DG Home appears to have accommodated the European Council's desire for EU funding for IBM equipment for search and rescue only.

DG Home then coopt Frontex and the member states into a detailed implementation plan. The point is to merge the member states into the Asylum and Migration Pact¹¹⁴. This is pretty much vintage and practiced in all regions of the world. This would strengthen Frontex's role on returns and support partnership-building in different settings. This is pretty much in conformity with the expectations of theories on the relationship between the EU Commission and Agencies. This has to be compared to Parliament's views¹¹⁵, the widespread concerns amongst the European people for migration, and a lack of understanding in the MS administrations of what a rational and strategic migration policy is made of.

The EU Commission's considerations concerning the findings of the 2021 special report by the Court of Auditors: Booooooooo. The **Special Report 08/2021** evaluates Frontex's support to external border management¹¹⁶. The report concluded that Frontex's efforts were "not sufficiently effective" in helping Member States manage the EU's external borders.

Key findings include:

- **Gaps in Information Exchange:** Inconsistencies in the information exchange framework hindered Frontex's and Member States' ability to monitor and respond to border situations effectively.
- **Data Quality Issues:** Risk analysis and vulnerability assessments were often not supported by complete and high-quality data.
- **Operational Challenges:** Joint operations to combat cross-border crime were not sufficiently developed in Frontex's day-to-day activities.
- **Lack of Performance Analysis:** Frontex rarely analyzed its performance or the impact of its activities, and there needed to be more reporting on the efficiency and costs of its operations.

These findings highlight areas where Frontex needs to improve to fulfill its mandate¹¹⁷

In other words, DG Home goes in spades by allying with the Schengen Forum and relying on her former colleagues to finish the job. This has to be compared to the fact that the European Commission is the guardian of the treaties and the objectives laid down in the EIBM communication.

Given that the lead author of the EIBM communication, Corinna Ullrich, is also a former member of the Frontex Executive Board, we anticipate a psychological impact at the interpersonal level to move the process forward. This is likely intended by her superiors who hired her. The UVL-administration and its leadership team's autonomy, coherence, and accountability are at stake.

By the standards of merger architects – Bain consultants - DG Home is right about limiting the strategic rationale to the restoration of the Schengen-acquis and providing for integration planning at the agency and member state level; however limited and seeking the merger of

member states into the overall administrative space linked to a variety of greasing methods. However, there is a void in executive leadership and communication and minimal effort to eradicate cultural mismatch at several levels¹¹⁸. This questions the ability for organic growth and the preparedness of the EU for enlargement in the EIBM system. In addition, DG Home signals willingness to compromise on the Schengen playbook, suggesting the limitations to what DG Home can do about the situation. This conveys a negative message.

I recommend a more systematic approach to ensure the integration of the EIBM. According to Bill George, the integration of a company evolves around four key issues: leadership of the business, financial administration, business integration, and cultural integration¹¹⁹. The EIBM system might emulate this in terms of an integration team in a format to be determined.

Regarding the policy context and priorities

The legal mandate under the 2019 Regulation refers to the need for multi-annual political guidelines for the EIBM system. Still, the policy context is the dysfunction of the Schengen space, the acceleration of the EU's enlargement to the West Balkan, and the management of the COVID crisis. At the same time, the Ukraine crisis has led to an examination of the polity in many places in Europe. As a result, the EU Commission took the initiative to convene the Schengen Forum to discuss the annualized State of Schengen report. This informal setting informed the Schengen Council's deliberations and influenced the JHA Council's conclusions on the 2022 policy document. The priorities of the European Commission were formulated ahead of the 2022 Schengen Forum and are readily discernable from statements from policy-makers: Restoring the Schengen free zone of travel.

The EIBM communication objectives are linked to the facilitation of legitimate border-crossings and increasing the efficiency of the Union's return policy, ensuring the effective prevention of unauthorized crossings of the external borders, preventing and detecting severe crimes with a cross-border dimension, such as migrant smuggling, terrorism, trafficking in human beings, arms, and drugs, to achieve practical cooperation with third countries, and to ensure the quick registration and provision of care to persons needing or applying for international protection. In the implementation plan annexed to the IBM communication, 15 institutional components are listed, each assigned with a prioritized list of actions. This maximizes sectoral discretion. Whereas the 2022 policy document is clear and written by a leader, the approach in the 2023 EIBM communication is detailed and feels like an exercise in spiritual self-development. But it may merely reflect a compromise between the EU Commission's aspirations and dependency on the Member States, without neglecting the reputational costs of a habit among supranational actors of changing objectives and not carrying through, even as it seeks to disguise what is going on in a self-serving manner. The concern for a credible implementation plan is the

rationale for the delay in the planned publication of the EIBM and was a political decision combined with the need for inter-service consultation in the EU Commission, not an administrative one, DG Home claims¹²⁰

It was now time to weave things together. DG Home makes no secret that it is narrowing the scope to a reduction of migration and increase in returns by focusing on specific components and leveraging the Frontex operational and technical strategy and the Europeanisation of the Member States' IBM organizations¹²¹. In addition, implementation of the inter-operability of the EIBM data security architecture under regulation 2019/817 is being raised.¹²² This may facilitate cooperation and the production of technical material but may not reflect an objective experience of the environment. The EIBM system interacts with and conveys the necessary firmness, subtlety, flexibility, and potency to address common sense challenges. Before the publication of the EIBM communication, DG Home presented an Action Plan on the Central Mediterranean, followed by adopting an action plan on the Western Balkans.¹²³ Additional greasing to the three IBM Funds was announced regarding funds for the member states' customs organization. Integrating the member state's IBM organizations, strategies, and practices into the Migration and Asylum Pact and the State of Schengen 2023 strategy is a significant goal for the EU Commission. However, integrating the EIBM system is the most considerable difficulty faced by DG Home.

The Frontex Risk Analysis is also mentioned as part of the 14 March 2023 "new initiative," alluding to the need to address the root causes of migration flows.

On IT, the functioning of the Eurosur needs to be addressed¹²⁴. It forms part of the inter-agency ecosystem together with EFCA, EMSA and Frontex on surveillance of ships. At the same time, it is clear that the new IT system needs to become fully operational and that other technology could be developed to knit together and strengthen border control. The failure to fulfill the legal mandate on the new IT system is not even mentioned in the EIBM communication as an obstacle to moving forward. The EU-Lisa project is being underfunded¹²⁵ – for a reason. In addition, one is not surprised that German companies offer technologies for maintaining entry-exit security. At the same time, we lament the need for more communication about the failure to implement the new IT system. As the various IT systems are implemented, advanced screening of visa applicants is now in place.

This confirms the implementing role of Frontex anticipated by executive-agency-theory but also allows the burial of the Court of Auditor's criticism of Frontex. In addition, this aims to cover up leadership failure, Frontex's lack of situational impact at the operational level, and systemic failure.

Regarding the interest groups involved in decision-making, including business associations, trade unions, and NGOs

According to web search results augmented by AI Bing, some active business groups lobbying DG Home and Frontex are Business Europe, which has met several times with DG Home officials to discuss migration and security digital services and artificial intelligence. In addition, corporate Europe Observatory is a research and campaign group working to expose and challenge the privileged access and influence enjoyed by corporations and their lobbying groups in EU policy policymaking. It has published articles criticizing Frontex's lack of transparency and accountability and its ties with the defense and security industry. Finally, BEPAct is an interest group representing Public Affairs professionals, public affairs, and government agencies in Belgium and has organized events and workshops in Europe. These involve speakers from DG Home, the European Parliament civil society organizations, and the defense and security industry that have met with Frontex officials such as Airbus, Leonardo, Thales, Indra, Rheinmetall, and Elbit Systems.

The Statewatch Observatory on Frontex and Borders is a project of Statewatch, a non-profit organization that monitors civil liberties, democracy, and the rule of law in the EU. The Observatory provides critical analysis and documentation on Frontex's activities, policies, and practices related to European integrated border management¹²⁶. Statewatch has been active in financing the EIBM and has criticized the EU funding and the small amounts allocated to defending and upholding human rights by the various IBM-funding funds¹²⁷.

The European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW) is a platform for migrant women NGOs across Europe to advocate for the rights and interests of migrant women in various policy areas, including migration and asylum, gender equality, anti-trafficking, and anti-racism¹²⁸.

Several NGOs are active on EIBM issues, such as the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), a pan-European alliance of 106NGOs that protect and advance the rights of refugees. ECRE advocates for fair and humane European migration and asylum policies and practices monitors the implementation of EU legislation and funds, and provides legal and policy analysis and recommendations¹²⁹.

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organization that accompanies, services, and advocates for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. JRS works in 50 countries and provides psychological support, legal assistance, and integration programs.

The Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) is a grassroots organisation that documents and reports illegal push-back and violence perpetrated by state authorities along the EU's

external borders. BVMN collects testimonies from people who have experienced human rights violations on borders, publishes reports and policy briefs, engages with media and civil society, and advocates for accountability and justice¹³⁰.

The European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) is an independent, non-profit legal and educational organization that uses strategic litigation to challenge human rights violations by state and non-state actors. ECCHR works on issues such as migration and asylum, counter- terrorism, corporate accountability, and international and transitional justice¹³¹.

The Role of national governments and other stakeholders in Shaping EU policy outcomes

EU policy outcome on EIBM results from a complex and dynamic process involving various actors and stakeholders at different levels and stages. National governments are the main actors responsible for implementing EIBM at the federal level, as they have the primary competence for managing their external borders and ensuring their governments also participate in the development of EU policy on European integrated border management through the Council of the EU, which is one of the co-legislators of the EU along with the European Parliament. In addition, nationalists cooperate with Frontex in joint operations, risk analysis, information exchange, and capacity building.

There is evidence that Germany was particularly active in the Schengen forum addressing the new annual report on the State of the Schengen area, as Ursula & Ylva went in spades in 2022. Or, the material basis can be derived from the economic interests of Germany, France, and Italy from the Schengen area free zone of travel. These financial interests are linked to reduced transaction costs, enhanced competitiveness, and increased market access for goods and services. They promote tourism and cultural exchange by allowing citizens and visitors to travel freely across borders without visas or passport controls, boosting the hospitality and transport sectors. To foster regional integration and cooperation by strengthening political and social ties among European countries, enhancing solidarity and mutual trust, and supporting standard policies on security, immigration, and justice¹³². It is generally assumed that Germany has the most intensive interests in linking the Schengen-free travel zone to its economic interests¹³³. French and German law programs in home affairs were at the origin of the EU JHA legislative program. This has to be compared to underlying tensions between Germany, France, and Italy in the Eurozone left unresolved by the strategic commitment to create the Euro to prevent war between France and Germany and to harvest the full advantages of the internal market¹³⁴. At the time the Covid-19 pandemic had led to the temporary reintroduction of internal border controls now lifted¹³⁵, highlighted the need for a common approach to travel measures in the EU, triggered a revision of the Schengen Borders code, such as a European mechanism for the suspension of visa-free travel, and affected the rights and obligations of tourists and transport

operators¹³⁶. Only 20% of the population in developed countries are vaccinated, a potential source of changing human mobility¹³⁷ in the context of evolving push-and-pull dynamics¹³⁸. Europe's migrant population comprises 23,7 million people or 5,3 % of the EU's population. It is estimated that around 250 million people globally live in a country where they were not born¹³⁹. This provides the economic rationale the EU Commission appealed to when it set its game-plan in motion with the parallel publication of the State of Schengen report¹⁴⁰ and the policy document on EIBM.

It is then no surprise that France and Germany have been coopted into the various Frontex organs through participation in the EBCG, which is to implement EIBM. They are both part of the Frontex Management Board, which is responsible for adopting an annual work program for Frontex based on the EIBM communication and for monitoring its implementation. Furthermore, France and Germany are part of the Frontex Standing Committee on Internal Security, which ensures coordination between Frontex and other relevant EU agencies in implementing EIBM. France and Germany also participate in the Frontex Consultation Forum Human Rights, the Frontex complaints mechanism, Frontex Advisory Groups on returns, cooperation with third countries, research and innovation, and the Frontex Liaison Office Network. Furthermore, France and Germany, which partake in joint operations, approved the introduction of AI for risk analysis and situational awareness based on EIBM Communication's guidelines concerning state-of-the-art technology.

The objectives adopted by DG HOME also reflect on member state politicians' conditions for abolishing internal controls by strengthening the EU's external border regime. This seems initially to have paid off. In Denmark, for instance, Rigspolitiet informed the public in late April 2023, one month after the publication of the EIBM communication, that the border controls vis-à-vis Sweden would be lifted. In contrast, Denmark's management of the border with Germany has been reorganized towards more analysis and intelligence-led inland patrol, and the use of drones combined with a reduction of the personnel at the border stations with Germany¹⁴¹. This reflects a small-state preference for Commission-led structures and inter-nordic solidarity. It is likely also a pitch for better involvement of chief of intelligence in policy-making towards a shared threat perception. Finally, it reflects the relative advancement of Denmark, a small wheel-administered country with both sea and land borders, in terms of integrated border management, the location of Frontex's national coordination center, the development of ECJ jurisprudence, and the lack of organizational capacity of the regionally-based police headquartered in Sønderborg. This is positive. OR: The function of shame is to prevent us from damaging our social relationships or to motivate us to repair them.

Europol, Eurojust, and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) each have various roles and functions in developing, implementing, and monitoring EU policy on EIBM. Europol addresses trends in illegal migration¹⁴², tracks and acts against cybercrime, and participates in developing

travel intelligence¹⁴³. Eurojust coordinates the persecution of cross-border crime, including cases related to illegal immigration, migrant smuggling, trafficking of human beings, and terrorism, which are given publicity through the annual report and specialized reports. EASO provides input into trends in the asylum field. Other stakeholders include third countries and international organizations such as IOM, IMO, and WCO. In addition, academia and research institutions provide input, expertise, cooperation, and feedback on EU policy on EIBM.

The impact of EU policies on national policies and practices.

The alignment of the national IBM strategies with Frontex's technical and operational strategy remains to be accomplished¹⁴⁴. The current Frontex functional and technical strategy consists of a listing of legal instruments and elements in EU Border Management, which has been absorbed into DG HOME's EIBM communication as a bridge between principles, components, and implementation. Each of the member states publishes a strategy for integrated border management. This is likely to produce clones and make them nationalistic in the most European manner¹⁴⁵. The EU Commission has systematically evaluated the Member States' national strategies for integrated border management¹⁴⁶. The result of this evaluation has not been given publicity. The point is to signal a commitment by establishing a well-functioning and permanent governance system and integrating national and European strategic, operational, and technical capabilities for efficient border management. EU funding is being leveraged towards alignment with this common standard¹⁴⁷. The political purpose is to align member states' IBM organizations, strategies, and practices with the Migration and Asylum Pact and the revised 2024 Schengen Strategy. The Member States have one year to align themselves with Frontex's operational and technical strategy. More research is needed on the functioning and differences between the member states' governance set-up and absorption of relevant indicators within IBM. The departure point for this could be a study into the sectoral implementation of multi-level structures within the EIBM system¹⁴⁸. This could be merged with multi-level implementation studies to systematically examine organizational and strategic adaptation from a bottom-up perspective in Europeanisation and domestication processes within the IBM policy area.¹⁴⁹ This is useful for deepening understanding of new modes of governance and their effectiveness while responding to the call, making them accountable to European citizens¹⁵⁰. At the same time, it protects the EIBM organisation, may contribute to developing laggards, and bends those not inclined to cooperate. The underlying assumption is that the EU, and by extension, the European Commission, should unify the political space of Europe and, by extension, DG Home within the EIBM sector. Not that the borders of the EU have been defined, the puts a premium not only on public leadership inside the EIBM-system but also on how to define what a stable and balanced external order on the Eastern borders of Europe implies, i.e. the EU's relationship with Iran and Russia. Second, what matters is that there should be agreement about what would have to be done if a resolution to the structured rivalry between France and Germany were achieved. Third, we need to agree on what should be done, and this requires DG Home to allow itself to play a broader and better role and enter into a deeper dialogue with all stakeholders in the policy domain.

Towards Comprehensiveness

The EU Commission was to admit to the relative failure of the EIBM strategy in Regulation 2024/1351 on asylum and migration management: “To reinforce mutual trust between Member States, it is necessary to have a comprehensive approach to asylum and migration management which brings together internal and external components. ..In order to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of the actions and measures taken by the Union and its Member States, acting within their respective competences, there is a need for integrated policymaking and a comprehensive approach in the field of asylum and migration management, including both its internal and external components. The Union and Member States should ensure, each within their respective competences, and in compliance with the applicable Union law and international obligations, the coherence and implementation of asylum and migration management policies. In order to ensure that their asylum, reception and migration systems are well prepared and that each part of those systems has sufficient capacity, Member States should have the necessary human, material and financial resources and infrastructure to effectively implement asylum and migration management policies, and allocate the necessary staff to their competent authorities for the implementation of this Regulation. The Member States should also ensure appropriate coordination between the relevant national authorities as well as with the national authorities of the other Member States” .

Implementing a comprehensive approach to asylum and migration management, as outlined in Regulation 2024/1351, comes with several challenges:

Challenges:

1. **Divergent National Interests:** Member States have different priorities and perspectives on migration, which can lead to disagreements and hinder collective action.
2. **Resource Allocation:** Ensuring adequate funding and resources for asylum and integration programs can be difficult, especially for countries facing economic constraints.
3. **Administrative Capacity:** Some Member States may lack the administrative capacity to efficiently process asylum applications and manage integration programs.
4. **Public Perception and Political Will:** Negative public attitudes towards migrants and political resistance can impede the implementation of inclusive policies.
5. **Coordination and Cooperation:** Effective coordination between various national and EU-level agencies is essential but can be challenging to achieve.
6. **Legal and Policy Harmonization:** Aligning national laws and policies with EU regulations while respecting national sovereignty can be complex.
7. **Security Concerns:** Balancing the need for security with the protection of migrants' rights

is a delicate task.

8. **Integration Barriers:** Migrants may face barriers such as language differences, discrimination, and lack of recognition of qualifications, which can hinder their integration.

Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from all Member States, along with strong leadership and a commitment to shared values and goals.

The success criteria for a comprehensive approach to asylum and migration management, as outlined in Regulation 2024/1351, should encompass several key aspects:

Success Criteria:

- **Mutual Trust and Solidarity:** Ensuring that Member States trust each other and share responsibilities fairly, particularly in managing asylum applications and integrating migrants.
- **Effective Integration:** Providing adequate support for the integration of migrants into host societies, including access to education, employment, and social services
- **Efficient Asylum Procedures:** Streamlining asylum processes to ensure timely and fair decisions, reducing backlogs and ensuring that those in need of protection receive it promptly.
- **Combating Irregular Migration:** Implementing measures to prevent unauthorized movements and combat human trafficking and smuggling.
- **Legal Pathways:** Promoting legal migration routes to reduce the incentives for irregular migration and ensure that migration is managed in an orderly manner.
- **Return and Readmission:** Ensuring effective return and reintegration of those who do not qualify for asylum, in cooperation with their countries of origin.

Dimensions of Integration:

- **Legal Integration:** Ensuring that migrants have access to legal rights and protections, including residency permits, work rights, and access to justice.
- **Political Integration:** Encouraging political participation of migrants, including the right to vote in local elections and involvement in community decision-making processes.
- **Economic Integration:** Facilitating access to the labor market, recognizing qualifications, and providing vocational training and employment support.
- **Cultural Integration:** Promoting cultural exchange and understanding, supporting language learning, and ensuring that migrants can maintain their cultural identity while integrating into the host society.

Identity-Making:

While identity-making is an important aspect, it is more of a process than a criterion. It involves creating a sense of belonging and shared identity among migrants and host communities, which can be fostered through inclusive policies and community-building initiatives.

By addressing these criteria and dimensions, the EU aims to create a balanced and effective asylum and migration management system that benefits both migrants and host societies.

Legal harmonization involves aligning laws and regulations across different jurisdictions to minimize discrepancies and facilitate smoother interactions. However, this process faces several challenges:

Challenges in Legal Harmonization:

- **Diverse Legal Traditions:** Different countries have unique legal systems rooted in their historical, cultural, and social contexts. Harmonizing these diverse traditions can be complex and contentious.
- **Sovereignty Concerns:** Member States may be reluctant to cede control over their legal systems, fearing a loss of sovereignty and the ability to tailor laws to their specific needs.
- **Varying Levels of Development:** Countries at different stages of economic and legal development may have different priorities and capacities for implementing harmonized laws.
- **Political and Public Resistance:** Legal changes can face opposition from political groups and the public, especially if they are perceived to undermine national identity or local customs.
- **Administrative and Implementation Issues:** Even when laws are harmonized, differences in administrative practices and enforcement mechanisms can lead to inconsistent application.
- **Balancing Uniformity and Flexibility:** Striking the right balance between creating uniform laws and allowing flexibility for local adaptations is a significant challenge.
- **Complexity of Legal Areas:** Some areas of law, such as contract and commercial law, may be easier to harmonize than others, like family law or property law, due to their deeply rooted cultural and social implications.

Addressing these challenges requires careful negotiation, respect for national differences, and a commitment to finding common ground while allowing for necessary flexibility.

Report

During my student years, my personal life intersected curiously with broader themes of surveillance and accountability. One particular phase involved a Spanish girlfriend, Ana M. Peinado, who frequently demanded that I “report” on my life with what felt like bureaucratic zeal. This request for constant updates was reinforced by her informal network of informants—friends and acquaintances who provided her with unsolicited intelligence about my actions. Eventually, Ana ended up with a Basque man—one who, unlike others who became casualties of political violence in Euskadi, remained physically unscathed.

This anecdote, while seemingly personal and remote, offers a symbolic point of departure for understanding the growing emphasis on structured reporting within contemporary migration governance in the European Union. Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 introduces a new framework that mandates the European Commission to publish an annual report assessing the EU’s capacity to adapt to the evolving realities of asylum and migration management. This mechanism of regularised assessment reflects the underlying political imperative to enhance the coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of the European Integrated Border Management (EIBM) system.

Conceptualising Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Coherence: Narrow and Wider Institutional Applications

The key performance dimensions of the EIBM system—efficiency, effectiveness, and coherence—can be examined in two interrelated contexts: the operational remit of Frontex and the broader institutional framework comprising the EU and its Member States.

In the narrower sense, efficiency within Frontex refers to the agency’s ability to deploy its human, technological, and financial resources in a manner that minimises waste and maximises operational output. This entails rapid response to incidents at the EU’s external borders, strategic deployment of personnel, and optimal use of surveillance and monitoring equipment. Effectiveness, on the other hand, denotes the agency’s success in achieving concrete outcomes, such as the reduction of irregular border crossings, improved control over migration flows, and enhanced overall border security. Coherence in this narrower institutional context involves the alignment of Frontex’s operational activities with the strategic objectives and legal frameworks of the EU’s broader migration and border management policy, particularly in its interactions with national border authorities.

In the broader sense, efficiency within the EIBM system relates to the collective capacity of the EU and its Member States to manage external borders through resource-sharing, coordinated joint operations, and the diffusion of best practices. Here, efficiency is not only a matter of cost-reduction but also of operational scalability and adaptability. Effectiveness at the systemic level refers to the capacity of the integrated strategy to maintain secure borders while simultaneously enabling legal migration and trade, and combating transnational threats such as human trafficking and illicit smuggling. Finally, coherence in the wider context signifies the harmonisation of national policies and EU legislation to ensure that border management is applied consistently across jurisdictions, thereby reinforcing the integrity of the Schengen Area.

Overview of Regulation (EU) 2024/1351: Strategic Shifts in Migration and Asylum Governance

Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 constitutes a major restructuring of asylum and migration governance in the European Union. It seeks to create a harmonised framework that promotes both solidarity and responsibility-sharing among Member States. This regulation replaces Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013, previously known as the Dublin III Regulation, which established the criteria for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application. The new regulation also amends Regulations (EU) 2021/1147 and 2021/1060 to ensure legal consistency with its reformed approach.

Central to the regulation is the establishment of a common policy framework intended to ensure consistent procedures and standards across Member States. It introduces mechanisms for equitable distribution of asylum seekers and financial assistance through an Annual Solidarity Pool. This solidarity mechanism operationalises the principle of burden-sharing by enabling Member States to contribute through relocations, financial contributions, or operational support.

Importantly, the regulation promotes an integrated approach to migration governance that bridges internal EU policy and external diplomatic engagement with third countries. It underscores the need for coordinated implementation among Member States, aiming to foster mutual trust and a shared commitment to managing migration in a humane and legally sound manner.

Strategic Priorities for Enhancing the European Integrated Border Management (EIBM) System

In an effort to enhance the EIBM system, the European Commission has proposed several strategic activities. A central priority is the improvement of coordination between Frontex and national border authorities. Such coordination enables a unified operational response and encourages resource pooling, thereby reinforcing collective border security.

Technological advancement is another pillar of the strategy. Investment in biometric identification systems, automated border control infrastructure, and AI-powered surveillance tools is envisioned to improve the speed and reliability of border monitoring. Infrastructure upgrades at key border-crossing points are also necessary to reduce processing times and ensure security.

Capacity-building remains essential to the success of EIBM. The Commission advocates for standardised training and the professionalisation of border guards, alongside increased funding to bolster the capabilities of Frontex. Policy harmonisation is also emphasised, ensuring that Member States' national laws align with overarching EU legal standards, which in turn promotes a more consistent and transparent system of border governance.

Finally, strengthening cooperation with third countries is regarded as essential to addressing the structural causes of irregular migration. Such cooperation includes return and readmission agreements and joint efforts to manage migratory flows before they reach EU territory.

Further Proposals for Strengthening the EIBM System

To complement the Commission's proposals, a series of additional measures have been identified to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and coherence of the EIBM system, which currently includes over 125,000 personnel.

The establishment of unified training programmes across Member States would standardise professional competencies, improving cross-border operability. A centralised, real-time data-sharing system would increase the accuracy and timeliness of intelligence used for decision-making. The deployment of AI-enabled surveillance systems and the establishment of mobile border units would enhance the system's responsiveness to emerging threats.

In addition, the formation of cross-border task forces would strengthen cooperation on specific challenges, such as trafficking and narcotics. Strategic partnerships with private-sector actors could also yield innovations in border technology and logistics. Meanwhile, community engagement in border areas could provide additional intelligence and foster local cooperation.

A performance-based incentive framework could further motivate personnel by linking remuneration and career progression to measurable performance indicators. Environmental sustainability should also be considered, with impact assessments ensuring that border infrastructure and operations do not adversely affect surrounding ecosystems.

To ensure legal consistency, Member States should further align their domestic laws with EU directives. Comprehensive crisis management protocols must also be developed to respond to large-scale migration surges or emergencies. Cultural competency training would prepare border staff to interact appropriately with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Finally, regular audits and evaluations would ensure continuous improvement and transparency across the system.

Performance Assessment: Metrics from the European Court of Auditors (COA)

The European Court of Auditors plays a critical oversight role in assessing the performance of the EIBM system. Several key metrics are routinely applied in its evaluations. These include cost-effectiveness, which measures the financial efficiency of operations; operational effectiveness, which assesses the system's ability to achieve border management objectives; and resource utilisation, which examines the allocation and deployment of assets. Other metrics include compliance rates with EU legal standards and incident response times, which gauge the system's readiness and adaptability to evolving challenges.

While these activities may be dismissed by some as procedural formalities or bureaucratic exercises, they serve a crucial function. Much like military drills or physical training—often underestimated as mere "push-ups"—regular evaluations and training initiatives underpin the system's resilience. They ensure that personnel maintain operational readiness, that procedures remain aligned with current threats, and that inefficiencies are systematically addressed.

Summary: Integration, Adaptation, and Reporting as Principles of Governance

The EIBM system is not merely an enforcement apparatus, but a dynamic, multi-layered governance structure that reflects the EU's commitment to regulated, humane, and intelligent border control. Its legitimacy depends on the continuous reporting, auditing, and adaptation of its practices to changing geopolitical and migratory conditions.

Advanced technologies, coordinated institutions, and harmonised legal frameworks are not optional extras, but essential elements of a functioning border management system. Together, they enable the EU to safeguard its borders, uphold its legal obligations, and facilitate lawful movement across its territory.

And as Ana might still insist, the core principle remains unchanged: report, report, report—not only as a personal habit, but as a cornerstone of accountability and institutional credibility in a complex and interconnected world.

Comparative Analysis of Border Frontier systems

A comparative analysis of the frontier and migration systems of the United States, Russia, China, the European Union, Israel, and India reveals distinct strategic orientations shaped by differing security priorities, governance models, and theoretical frameworks. While all six actors pursue some form of border control, their methods and justifications vary significantly based on domestic imperatives and geopolitical contexts.

The United States adopts a heavily securitized approach to migration and border governance, primarily driven by national security concerns. The American strategy emphasizes the protection of state sovereignty and the deterrence of irregular migration. This is operationalized through substantial investments in physical barriers, advanced surveillance technology, biometric systems, and expanded border enforcement personnel. Policies such as the “Remain in Mexico” program and the implementation of Title 42 during the COVID-19 pandemic reflect a strategic emphasis on containment and deterrence. This approach is often situated within theoretical frameworks such as Realism and the Security Dilemma, which prioritize state security and the preservation of national interest over liberal humanitarian concerns.

Russia’s frontier management strategy similarly emphasizes security but is distinguished by its pursuit of strategic depth and geopolitical influence across its periphery. The militarization of border regions, especially in the Caucasus and the Arctic, is central to Moscow’s vision of border control. Surveillance and digital visa regimes are selectively implemented, while internal migration within the post-Soviet space is facilitated under the Eurasian Economic Union. This system reflects principles aligned with Neo-Eurasianism and Realpolitik, highlighting the use of migration and mobility controls as tools of statecraft and regional dominance rather than humanitarian engagement.

China’s border strategy diverges from the Western model by focusing more intensively on internal migration than external inflows. The key institutional mechanism is the *Hukou* system, which regulates the movement of citizens from rural to urban areas and controls access to public services. The Chinese model prioritizes social stability and economic planning over external border securitization. Theoretical perspectives such as Authoritarian Developmentalism and Social Control Theory are highly applicable, as the state maintains strict oversight of population mobility as a means of preserving regime stability and guiding economic development. While China maintains secure external borders, its frontier policy is largely subordinated to domestic governance goals rather than transnational cooperation or humanitarian considerations.

The European Union presents a hybrid model, combining supranational governance with national-level implementation. The Schengen Agreement enables free movement within the EU’s internal borders, while external borders are subject to increasingly sophisticated surveillance and control mechanisms, including the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), EUROSUR, and biometric entry-exit systems. The EU’s approach is heavily constrained by international law and human rights norms, and it seeks to balance mobility with security. Liberal Institutionalism and Human Security theory are particularly relevant in this context, as EU policies emphasize cooperation, shared responsibility, and the protection of individual rights. However, the challenges posed by irregular migration, coupled with divergent national priorities, have led to externalization strategies, such as agreements with Turkey, Libya, and Tunisia, to manage migration upstream.

Theoretical Frameworks for Border and Migration Governance

Understanding the diverse approaches to frontier and migration systems across geopolitical actors requires a solid grounding in political theory and international relations. Theoretical frameworks not only illuminate the strategic logic behind policy choices but also reveal the normative assumptions and institutional constraints shaping state behavior. The cases of the United States, Russia, China, the European Union, Israel, and India can be mapped onto distinct theoretical traditions, each offering insights into the nature of sovereignty, security, and governance in border policy.

1. Realism and the Security Dilemma (United States)

Realism, one of the foundational paradigms of international relations theory, posits that states operate in an anarchic international system where survival is the primary objective. Within this framework, borders are seen as critical instruments of sovereignty and security. The U.S. approach to border governance exemplifies this logic through its emphasis on deterrence, surveillance, and militarization.

The **Security Dilemma**—a concept within the realist tradition—further explains how efforts by one state to secure its borders may be perceived as threatening by others, prompting reciprocal securitization. The militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border, implementation of strict visa regimes, and policies like "Remain in Mexico" or Title 42 illustrate how a preoccupation with national security can lead to restrictive, unilateral border regimes. These policies are rationalized through realist logic: the state must prioritize the safety of its citizens even at the cost of mobility, multilateralism, or humanitarian obligations.

2. Neo-Eurasianism and Realpolitik (Russia)

Russia's border policies reflect a distinctive blend of **Neo-Eurasianism** and classical **Realpolitik**. Neo-Eurasianism, an ideological framework emerging in post-Soviet Russia, views the country not merely as a European or Asian state but as a civilizational entity with a mission to integrate and lead the Eurasian continent. This worldview justifies Russia's efforts to control migration flows from its periphery, especially from Central Asia, while maintaining open mobility within select post-Soviet spaces such as the Eurasian Economic Union.

Realpolitik, with its focus on pragmatic, power-based foreign policy, informs Russia's selective engagement in border management. Its willingness to militarize borders (e.g., in the Caucasus), manage refugee flows for geopolitical leverage (e.g., at the Belarus-Poland border), or restrict entry on ideological grounds reflects a border policy driven less by legal norms and more by strategic calculation. In this view, borders are instruments for projecting influence, asserting sovereignty, and reshaping regional dynamics, rather than gateways for cooperative migration governance.

3. Authoritarian Developmentalism and Social Control Theory (China)

China's frontier policy, particularly its internal migration governance through the *Hukou* (household registration) system, is best understood through **Authoritarian Developmentalism** and **Social Control Theory**.

Authoritarian developmentalism refers to a model in which the state exerts strong control over the population in order to achieve rapid economic development. In China's case, mobility is not an individual

right but a regulated privilege, allocated to sustain urban growth while preventing social disorder. The *Hukou* system restricts access to public services for internal migrants, effectively managing population flows in line with economic planning goals.

Social Control Theory, typically applied in criminology, holds that strong social institutions and surveillance mechanisms reduce deviant behavior. This theory is extended in China to explain how state power is deployed to regulate migration, enforce compliance, and preserve political stability. The pervasive use of surveillance technologies, facial recognition, and data profiling in managing both internal and external borders reflects a model of governance that prioritizes order, discipline, and state legitimacy above liberal notions of freedom of movement or individual rights.

4. Liberal Institutionalism and Human Security (European Union)

The European Union's approach to border and migration governance is largely shaped by **Liberal Institutionalism** and the **Human Security** paradigm. Liberal institutionalism posits that international cooperation, rule-based governance, and multilateral institutions can mitigate anarchy and promote shared interests among states. The EU embodies this logic through its creation of supranational institutions such as Frontex, the Schengen Information System, and the European Asylum Support Office. This framework allows for coordination in managing external borders, while simultaneously preserving the free movement of persons within the Union. Yet, the EU's border policies are not purely functional—they are undergirded by the **Human Security** approach, which shifts the referent object of security from the state to the individual. Human security emphasizes the protection of human rights, dignity, and well-being of all people, including migrants and asylum seekers. This dual focus on cooperation and rights explains the EU's efforts to implement fair asylum procedures, externalize responsibility through agreements with third countries, and balance migration control with humanitarian obligations—even if these efforts often fall short in practice.

5. Offensive Realism and Frontier Defence Doctrine (Israel)

Israel's frontier policy is firmly rooted in **Offensive Realism**, a variation of realism developed by theorists such as John Mearsheimer, which posits that states must not only defend but actively maximize their power in order to ensure survival. Given its unique geopolitical environment, Israel perceives its borders not just as defensive lines but as critical zones of strategic advantage.

The **Frontier Defence Doctrine**, historically shaped by military leaders like Ariel Sharon, sees the frontier as both a physical barrier and a tactical platform. The construction of fortified walls, anti-tunnel systems, and the deployment of cutting-edge surveillance systems are emblematic of a strategy that seeks to prevent infiltration, deter adversaries, and maintain a permanent state of readiness. At the same time, the use of border zones as tools of political negotiation (e.g., in the Gaza Strip or West Bank) underscores how Israel's frontier policy is deeply intertwined with national security doctrine, territorial identity, and political leverage.

6. State-Centric Realism and Postcolonial Sovereignty (India)

India's border policies reflect a synthesis of **State-Centric Realism** and **Postcolonial Sovereignty**. Like other realist actors, India treats border security as an extension of national interest and views irregular migration, especially from Bangladesh and Myanmar, as a potential threat to national cohesion and resource stability. This perspective justifies large-scale fencing projects, visa restrictions, and

stringent internal surveillance measures.

However, the postcolonial dimension introduces a unique layer to India's approach. **Postcolonial Sovereignty** refers to the legacy of colonial borders, identity politics, and the challenge of integrating diverse populations into a coherent national framework. The implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam reflects this tension, wherein border policy intersects with questions of ethnic, religious, and linguistic identity. Unlike purely statist or security-oriented frameworks, postcolonial sovereignty highlights the internal dilemmas of nation-building and the contested meanings of citizenship in a plural society.

Summary: A Theoretical Cartography of Border Regimes

Taken together, these theoretical frameworks offer a cartography of the contemporary border regimes shaping global migration governance. While **Realism** in its various forms dominates the policies of the United States, Israel, Russia, and India, the models diverge in their emphasis on deterrence, strategic depth, or internal sovereignty. **Authoritarian frameworks** underpin China's model of internal migration control, highlighting the role of surveillance and central planning. The **European Union**, despite increasing securitization, continues to operate within a liberal-institutionalist paradigm, aspiring—however imperfectly—to align security with humanitarian values.

The inclusion of postcolonial and human-centric theories challenges the state-centric orthodoxy of border studies, drawing attention to the lived experiences of migrants, the legacies of empire, and the ethical responsibilities of states. As migration pressures intensify due to conflict, climate change, and economic inequality, the need for a more integrated, reflexive, and theoretically grounded understanding of border governance becomes ever more urgent.

Let us now turn to the different comparative dimensions of how these approaches at operational level are imbibed:

Comparative Analysis of Frontier and Migration Systems

Country / Region	Strategic Orientation	Technological Infrastructure	Legal / Policy Tools	Regional / International Engagement
United States	Security-dominant; deterrence-based; focus on sovereign control and counterterrorism	Advanced surveillance (drones, sensors, biometrics), physical barriers (e.g. wall), AI-supported vetting	Title 42 (COVID-era expulsion), "Remain in Mexico" policy, strict visa regime	Limited multilateral cooperation; bilateral agreements with Mexico and Central America; some international obligations
Russia	Strategic depth; perimeter control of influence zones; militarised border zones	Surveillance along key regions (e.g., Caucasus, Arctic); heavy military presence; digital visa systems	CIS migration rules; selective openness for Eurasian Economic Union states	Bilateral agreements; limited cooperation with EU or international regimes; strategic use of migration

China	Internal control over mobility; stability-oriented; control of rural-to-urban flows	Nationwide digital surveillance, facial recognition, grid policing; control through Hukou system	Hukou system; tight external migration control; limited refugee policies	Minimal external migration engagement; selective Belt & Road-related labour mobility
European Union	Balance between mobility and security; human rights and cooperation-oriented	Frontex coordination, integrated surveillance systems (EUROSUR, biometric entry-exit systems), smart borders	Dublin Regulation, Schengen Borders Code, Asylum Procedures Regulation	Strong multilateralism; ENP, agreements with Turkey, Libya, Tunisia; reliance on externalisation
Israel	Security-maximalist; deterrence against irregular entry; linked to existential threat perception	Iron Dome, smart fences, underground sensors (anti-tunnel); total perimeter surveillance	Law of Return, Infiltration Prevention Law; closed asylum policy	Selective cooperation with Egypt and Jordan; limited multilateral asylum cooperation
India	Security-driven with elements of demographic control; selective economic migration	Fencing (Bangladesh), biometric ID (Aadhaar), border patrol modernisation; low-tech in some regions	Citizenship Amendment Act, Foreigners Act, NRC (Assam)	Regional security cooperation with SAARC weak; recent tightening of migration controls

Israel exemplifies a high-security frontier model shaped by existential threat perceptions and an ongoing state of conflict with several neighboring entities. Its borders are defined by heavily fortified barriers, including smart fences and underground tunnel detection systems. The Iron Dome missile defense system further illustrates the strategic integration of border security within broader military doctrine. Israel's policies are guided by an offensive realist orientation and a frontier defense doctrine that views border security as a precondition for national survival. Legal instruments such as the Law of Return and the Infiltration Prevention Law reflect a restrictive asylum and immigration regime, privileging ethno-national criteria and security over international humanitarian obligations.

India's frontier system reflects a complex interplay of security concerns, demographic management, and regional tensions. The country has implemented fencing projects along the Bangladesh border and utilizes biometric systems such as Aadhaar to regulate internal identification and service access. However, technological capacity varies regionally, and political decisions—such as the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam—highlight tensions between inclusive citizenship and ethno-religious exclusion. The Citizenship Amendment Act, for instance, has introduced religious criteria for naturalization, sparking significant domestic and international debate. India's approach reflects elements of state-centric realism

and postcolonial sovereignty, with migration policy serving both security and identity functions.

When viewed comparatively, the six actors demonstrate varying degrees of securitization, openness, and regional engagement. The United States and Israel prioritize deterrence and control, viewing migration primarily through the lens of security threats. Russia and China, though employing different methods, similarly subordinate migration management to broader goals of state stability and geopolitical strategy. The European Union attempts to balance freedom of movement with the need for external border control, constrained by liberal norms and legal obligations. India, operating within a democratic framework, combines high-security practices with political instrumentalization of migration.

Technologically, Israel and the United States lead in deploying advanced surveillance and biometric systems, while the EU continues to develop integrated digital frameworks across member states. China's digital surveillance is directed inward, reflecting a different application of similar technologies. India and Russia demonstrate uneven technological integration, often shaped by geopolitical urgency and regional instability.

From a theoretical perspective, Realism dominates in most contexts, particularly where borders are seen as barriers against external threats. In contrast, Liberal Institutionalism and Human Security guide the EU's approach, though these frameworks face increasing political and practical challenges. China's and Russia's systems align with authoritarian models that prioritize regime stability and strategic autonomy, respectively.

The recent conflict in Gaza offers a critical lesson for all frontier systems. Despite Israel's formidable border technology and intelligence apparatus, the events of October 7, 2024, demonstrated that no border system is invulnerable in the absence of political resolution. The failure to anticipate or prevent a breach—despite massive investments in surveillance and defense—underscores the limitations of militarized or technologically driven frontier strategies. Ariel Sharon's military doctrines, developed in the context of traditional warfare, have limited applicability in a highly asymmetric, politicized conflict such as that with Hamas. The episode reinforces the notion that frontier security must be embedded within a broader diplomatic and strategic framework.

For the European Union, the Gaza conflict underscores the need to integrate frontier management with the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Secure borders cannot be achieved solely through technological fortification or externalization agreements. Instead, sustainable security requires robust political engagement with neighboring countries, investment in development partnerships, and a commitment to addressing the root causes of migration and instability.

By examining these different approaches and theories, policymakers can better understand the trade-offs and develop more balanced and effective migration systems combined with a better understanding of the Roman strategy of frontier defence.

The Eastern Wall Initiative (EWI)

The Eastern Wall Initiative is a coordinated border security project launched by several EU member states (notably Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) along the eastern frontier of the Schengen Area — primarily in response to perceived threats from Russia and Belarus, including hybrid warfare tactics such as weaponized migration.

The Scoping paper , a sequel to the Defense White Paper, now recognises the need for a both camps and watch at the eastern border advocated for in this paper.

The European Union's **Drone Wall** initiative is designed to create an advanced, multi-layered defense system against aerial threats, particularly hostile drones. This system integrates cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, sensors, and electronic countermeasures to detect, track, and neutralize unauthorized drones. The Drone Wall aims to enhance interoperability among EU member states and align closely with NATO defense infrastructure to ensure coordinated responses. Operational capability is projected to be achieved by the end of 2026, with full deployment expected by 2027.

Complementing this, the **Eastern Flank Watch** initiative focuses on strengthening the EU's eastern borders adjacent to Russia and Belarus. It encompasses enhanced military readiness across land, air, and maritime domains, alongside increased cybersecurity measures to protect critical infrastructure from cyberattacks. The initiative also prioritizes improving rapid deployment capabilities to ensure swift responses to potential threats in the region. Together, these programs reflect the EU's broader strategy to bolster external border security and reinforce regional stability amidst evolving geopolitical challenges.²

Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, is meant to support and coordinate border management across the EU, operating under the principle of *shared responsibility* between the EU and its member states.

However, the EWI raises questions about the extent to which Frontex's authority and purpose align with or diverge from the priorities of national governments — especially in crisis-driven, securitized border contexts.

Executive Agent Theory: Who Acts for Whom?

Executive agent theory (derived from principal-agent theory) examines the relationship between a principal (who delegates authority) and an agent (who executes on behalf of that principal).

In EU governance, this theory is often applied to understand how agencies like Frontex act as agents of multiple principals — namely,

The European Commission and the European Parliament (representing EU-wide interests), and The member states (who both empower and constrain the agency).

The Eastern Wall Initiative tests this relationship because it blurs the line between EU-level coordination and national sovereignty.

² [Scoping Paper Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030.pdf](#)

If Frontex acts as an *executive agent* of the EU, it should primarily enforce EU-level border and asylum law, including fundamental rights protections.

But if member states dominate the initiative, Frontex risks becoming an *agent of national security priorities* — focusing more on deterrence and defense than on EU legal and humanitarian standards.

Thus, the “who is Frontex for?” question becomes crucial:

Is Frontex ultimately for the EU as a whole, ensuring uniformity and rights compliance?

Or is it for member states, providing resources and legitimacy for their border control practices?

Control of force is per force a monopoly under central control, yet drone war changes the dynamics of war by extending reach and persistence for surveillance and precision strike, letting forces observe and engage targets for long durations at much lower cost and risk than manned systems. By reducing political and personnel costs of using force, they lower the threshold for kinetic action and enable asymmetric tactics—widening access to strike capabilities for states and non-state actors and making escalation harder to manage. Their integration of autonomy and real-time data links speeds decision cycles and reshapes command structures, producing difficult legal, ethical, and attribution challenges for accountability and strategic stability. Frontex’s strategic and operational concepts emphasize integrated border management, combining surveillance, intelligence-sharing, and rapid response across EU member states. This approach enhances situational awareness and coordination but also blurs lines between security, defense, and humanitarian responsibilities. As a result, it raises implications for sovereignty, accountability in border operations, and the protection of migrants’ fundamental rights. Enter the need for rules of engagement and parliamentary accountability

Leadership and Institutional Authority

Leadership here is not just about individuals, but about institutional leadership — the capacity of Frontex to steer, coordinate, or assert influence among powerful national actors.

The Eastern Wall Initiative reveals competing forms of leadership:

National leadership, where border states like Poland and Lithuania take the initiative in constructing physical barriers and defining security priorities.

EU leadership, where Frontex is expected to provide technical, operational, and normative guidance consistent with EU law.

However, when national leaders act unilaterally (or through intergovernmental arrangements), Frontex’s leadership role is diminished — it becomes more of a follower than a coordinator.

This situation underscores the asymmetry of authority in EU external border governance: while Frontex has expanded powers on paper, its operational legitimacy still depends on the consent and cooperation of member states.

Recruitment

Frontex has reported about the challenges of recruitment and scaling-up and that they are behind schedule due to Frontex faces slow, complex hiring with medical, fitness, and vetting delays, along with frequent schedule changes and cancellations. Training capacity is limited, with too few trainers and facilities, and COVID disruptions delayed in-person courses. Administrative planning has been unclear, with uncertain staffing needs and slow equipment procurement. Funding and logistics bottlenecks, along with added compliance steps for rights oversight, have also caused delays. Member-state secondments are often late or inconsistent, creating uneven standards. Finally, Frontex's expanding mandate—from coordination to a full operational agency—has outpaced planning, and the 30,000 target remains a political goal rather than a concrete plan.

Addressing the challenges of scaling up the Frontex standing corps from its current personnel levels to 30,000 requires a multidimensional and strategically coordinated approach.

Rectifying Delays in the Expansion of Frontex: A Framework for Resolute Action

The persistent delays in the expansion of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) reflect structural, administrative, and political challenges inherent in its rapid institutional transformation. Addressing these obstacles in a resolute manner requires an integrated approach encompassing recruitment, training, planning, procurement, funding, intergovernmental coordination, and governance reform.

A fundamental prerequisite for organizational acceleration is the establishment of a unified, digitally managed recruitment system applicable across all Member States. Such a mechanism would reduce redundancies, enhance transparency, and enable the agency to maintain continuous rather than episodic recruitment cycles. Simultaneously, the expansion of regional training facilities and the formalization of partnerships with national border academies would strengthen training capacity and ensure consistent professional standards throughout the standing corps.

Frontex would benefit from a clearly delineated, phased staffing roadmap aligned with operational realities rather than political projections. Annual or biannual milestones, supported by an independent human resources audit mechanism, could facilitate accurate progress tracking and timely corrective interventions.

Operational readiness is contingent upon timely access to standardized equipment and infrastructure. Granting Frontex greater autonomy in contracting and procurement—particularly for essential items such as vehicles, communication systems, and uniforms—would mitigate procedural bottlenecks associated with complex EU tendering processes. The establishment of a strategic reserve of operational assets could further enhance deployment flexibility.

Multiannual budgetary frameworks should replace ad hoc funding cycles, thereby ensuring predictability in long-term planning. Funding allocations ought to be linked to performance indicators encompassing recruitment targets, operational readiness, and compliance with fundamental rights obligations.

The agency's dependency on Member State secondments remains a structural vulnerability. The introduction of binding secondment commitments, accompanied by harmonized training and certification standards, would reduce disparities in readiness and deployment timelines.

Finally, the integration of rights-compliance mechanisms within the operational planning stage—rather than as post hoc oversight—would enhance both legitimacy and efficiency. Transparent communication through quarterly progress reports would also contribute to public accountability and institutional credibility.

In sum, rectifying Frontex's delayed expansion necessitates a shift from fragmented bureaucratic management toward a coherent, performance-based governance model. A reformed Frontex must combine administrative agility with normative accountability, thereby functioning as a modern, professionalized, and rights-compliant European security actor. It is unacceptable the defence of the EU is tampered with and progress subjected to *Sachzwang* logic and progress in EU integration when it comes to defence is undertaken in a business as usual crisis Policy mode. Piecemeal engineering can not substitute for choice over military doctrine on the use of lethal force at the border, an inherent part of territorial defence and one that must be both effective as a deterrent, subject to economy of force, commandeered and deployed with psychological effect and precision integral to the overall posture, now that the EU's borders have been defined pace the putative accession of Iceland, Norway, Schweiz and Armenia. This is a wake-up call for Europe and a warning not to be complacent and that there are limits to rally to the flag tactics in the absence of coherent and integrated defence organisation.

Implications

The Eastern Wall Initiative thus highlights:

Tensions in the principal-agent chain: multiple principals (EU institutions vs. member states) with conflicting objectives lead to "agency drift" or "mission ambiguity" for Frontex.

Leadership dilemmas: Frontex's credibility and authority hinge on balancing EU norms with

national imperatives.

Legitimacy questions: If Frontex aligns too closely with member state priorities, it risks being seen as complicit in practices that undermine EU fundamental rights. If it asserts too much autonomy, it may face political backlash from those same states.

Training: There will per force have to be paramilitary training a la Finland embedded into the Frontex Academy for the rank and file, who already wonders about the viability of the surveillance drones.

Governance: A Frontex Camp Commander will be necessary in the leadership team of Frontex, and DG defence where the directorate for drone warfare will be anchored, will have to be represented in Frontex HQ.

The Eastern Wall Initiative serves as a test case for the limits of EU executive agency and the nature of supranational leadership in security governance. It raises fundamental questions about *who Frontex serves, whose priorities it enacts, and how authority is distributed between the EU and its member states* in the contested domain of border control. The use of force at the border must be a monopoly of Frontex, yet drone warfare often requires nimble cross functional teams. The 2024 review authorized in the annex of the standing corps regulation will now be superseded but not by involvement in attrition warfare of the EU, which has allocated 2bn to Ukraine's efforts. . "

RENOVI

EU Overextension and Peace Promotion

There is an ongoing debate about whether the EU is becoming overextended. Some argue that expanding too quickly or without sufficient integration can strain resources and create instability. Others believe that promoting peace and stability through enlargement and integration is a core mission of the EU. In summary, while the EU has made significant strides in promoting peace and stability, it continues to face challenges related to expansion, integration, and maintaining a balance between its various goals. Enlargement in the EU is high politics, and has always involved instances of Franco-German trade-offs such as the IGC25 via the simple method, and the Big Bang in 2030 in return for the harmonization of the debt issuance calendars in the Eurozone in conjunction with a Convention.

Managing the sense of security for rim and bordering nations is a complex task, and there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. However, here are some key strategies that could be employed:

Tailored Partnerships: The EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) emphasizes differentiated partnerships, recognizing the unique aspirations and needs of each neighboring country. This approach allows for tailored support and cooperation based on specific regional contexts.

Cross-Border Cooperation: Programs like the ENI CBC (Cross-Border Cooperation) aim to address common needs and priorities along the EU's external borders. These programs foster collaboration on issues such as economic development, security, and migration.

Shared Responsibility: The EU promotes shared responsibility among member states and neighbouring countries, ensuring that border management and security are a collective effort. This includes joint operations, information sharing, and coordinated responses to security threats.

Respect for Fundamental Rights: The EU's border management policies emphasize respect for fundamental rights, ensuring that security measures do not undermine human rights. This approach helps build trust and cooperation with neighbouring countries.

Economic Integration: Greater access to the EU's market and regulatory framework can help stabilize neighboring regions and reduce security risks. Economic development and integration are key components of the EU's strategy for promoting peace and security.

By employing these strategies, the EU can effectively manage the sense of security for rim and bordering nations, while promoting peace and stability in the region.

More research is needed on political theories on why polities expand and the implications for frontier security in comparative perspective. Focus is on geopolitical, economic, and security interests. Realist theories emphasize the pursuit of power and security, while liberal theories highlight the benefits of economic interdependence and cooperation. Constructivist theories point to the role of ideas, identities, and norms in shaping state behavior.

Conclusion: Inchoate, non-strategic, and barely democratic

EIBM is primarily designed to serve the territorial security of the European Union alongside the protection of economic actors and EU citizens. While the European Commission plays a critical coordinating and regulatory role, EIBM is not merely an instrument to enhance Commission control. Rather, it aims to harmonize and integrate border management efforts across member states to secure external borders, facilitate legitimate trade and travel, and uphold fundamental rights. By promoting cooperation and shared responsibility, EIBM balances the need for effective security with the facilitation of economic activity and protection of citizens within the Union.

Effective organizational structures for EIBM typically involve multi-level governance frameworks that incorporate EU institutions, national border authorities, law enforcement agencies, and private sector partners. Network-based models that encourage information sharing and joint operations are essential. Strategies emphasizing inter-agency collaboration, data interoperability, and coordinated response mechanisms enhance system resilience. Such structures clearly delineate roles, empowering national authorities with operational control while enabling EU bodies to provide strategic oversight, technical support, and legal frameworks. This division ensures flexibility, fosters mutual trust, and enhances overall responsiveness to security threats.

Analyzing the policy-making process requires examining the interaction between EU institutions, member states, and stakeholders through a multi-level governance lens. Key factors include policy coordination, communication channels, and feedback mechanisms. Employing policy network analysis can identify bottlenecks and enhance stakeholder engagement. Ensuring transparency, inclusivity, and adaptability in decision-making promotes policy coherence. Additionally, integrating evidence-based approaches and continuous evaluation helps align policies with operational realities, thereby improving the effectiveness and legitimacy of EIBM initiatives.

Effective leadership within EIBM necessitates an understanding of the cultural dimensions that influence communication, decision-making, and collaboration among diverse actors. Leveraging frameworks such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions or Trompenaars' model can enhance leaders' cultural intelligence, enabling them to navigate differences in values, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. Leadership practices emphasizing inclusive communication, emotional intelligence, and adaptive problem-solving foster trust and cohesion in multicultural teams. Moreover, cultivating transformational leadership helps inspire shared goals and commitment, ensuring that leaders can manage the complexity and diversity inherent in EIBM's transnational context.

Thus, the European Commission has started a spring cleaning and laid the foundation for an integrated management policy for the EU's external border security. The EU's IBM strategy aims to ensure that the EU's external borders are secure and well-functioning. The strategy includes comprehensive situational awareness, safe and secure external frontier management, and sustained European Border and Coast Guard capabilities. The rationale of the EIBM strategy review is geared towards the integration of the EIBM system and reshuffling of the 140,00 personnel within the EIBM system. In this way, the power of The European Commission and the entire EIBM system – of which everyone is a part – is not diminished. At the same time, DG HOME derives a role conception in modernizing and internationalizing the EIBM system spearheaded by the European Border and Coast Guard. The stratagem was to merge the EIBM system into the Asylum and Migration Pact¹⁰⁸. By adopting a principled approach and using the policy space, DG HOME's strategy accommodates the economic actors' demands for external border security while allowing for future development and expansion. Furthermore, the strategy's emphasis on connecting with a four-tiered critical risk analysis will also increase economic activity and visitors to the EU and enhance situational awareness through better information management. As a result, the capacity of the EIBM will be upgraded if by no means other than the EU's enlargement. And the number of illegal migrants are coming down. From 175,000 in 2018 the number of illegal migrants are now 140,000 out of 2,1, million migrants, according to Eurostat¹⁰⁹

By the spring of 2023, the EU has allocated € 7 billion through funds to ensure integrated and consistent European Integrated Border Management practices and now has to weave the pieces

together. The leadership challenge is integrating the member states' IBM organization into the policy fabric and building a broader organization. DG Home relies on an executive administrative model for that purpose. An implementation plan has been hatched around specific institutional vertical and horizontal "components" annexed to the EIBM communication to ensure successful integration. This constitutes an adjustment to the formula of the 2022 policy document and must be based on a calculation of the advantages by those who provide direction to the policy during the delay in delivery of the EIBM-communication 2022-23. At the same time, it suggests DG Home has fallen back on monitoring, a technique consonant with the Executive-Agency-theory that also flows from the EU Commission's policy on Better Regulation regarding OECD's best practices.¹¹²

As Ursula and Yrsa went into spades, they tended to rely on Corina Ulrich, a former Frontex Management Board member, to provide guidance and the council working group for Schengen matters to sort out the mess and preparatory work. However, they forgot that no strategy exists for restoring the Schengen acquis, which has been subject to "temporary border controls" since 2015.¹¹⁰ This is an additional reason for adopting an action plan a la Suisse. Harmonizing the policy cycles of Schengen and the European Integrated Border Management (EIBM) requires aligning their monitoring, evaluation, and strategic planning processes to foster coherence and synergy. This can be achieved by synchronizing data collection and situational assessments to provide a unified operational picture. Joint policy reviews and coordinated stakeholder consultations enhance transparency and reduce duplication. Furthermore, establishing integrated feedback loops ensures lessons learned in one framework inform the other. Collaborative governance mechanisms, supported by shared digital platforms, facilitate real-time information exchange and collective decision-making. By fostering institutional interoperability and harmonized timelines, the EU can strengthen border security while preserving free movement within the Schengen area.

Is EIBM meant to underpin Commission control? Or Does EIBM serve the territorial security of the European Union, the economic actors, and the union citizens? Is it Julian or Antonine?

The findings suggest that both objectives are pursued simultaneously but that the implications of this dual purpose need to be drawn and that administrative inefficiencies continue to prevail throughout the EIBM system. Therefore, the prospects of an integrated, effective, and uniform EIBM system seem far-fetched.

To sum up, DG Home is unlikely to achieve its objectives through the strategy adopted, which amounts to ineffective introspection. It is not convincing, this widow, this baby, this EIBM incarnated by an.... new underground railway station with a park on top. Therefore, if we resist the temptation to measure the policy's incongruity, we had better leave it to DG Home to cut underbrush.

How might the EIBM system evolve?

Perspective

I propose taking the following perspective on my findings for the use and consideration of policy-makers:

First, Frontex should adopt a Border Management dress code and uniform for Frontex and member state frontier police officers and a uniform EU-wide rank structure, logo, and epaulet. This should always be the case when ECBG is deployed. Training and stimulating a common culture should be extended beyond the Border Guards' corps. Thus, the Frontex Partnership Academies network¹⁵¹ should be strengthened with a centralised external relations unit and a follow-up on basic induction be added in terms of core curriculum. For instance, the training of Magav units under the Israeli police encompasses CT, riot control, combat training, policework and specialised courses. This could be supplemented by advanced training in EU Integrations Studies, EU law & Policy-making and human rights and international law. Compulsory 6-8 weeks Frontex boot camp and training sessions at Frontex bases in different geographical settings across types of the border are welcome. In the interest of the formation of all-round frontier police officers throughout the EIBM system have experience with the other disciplines and the challenges in the various areas of Europe's borders and who sleep, work and eat together. Frontex could strengthen its HR unit with due diligence reporting and integrate performance criteria and learning from Frontex partners into the EIBM system and educational activities¹⁵². In addition, there should be accessible online courses for the cadres of the EIBM system, emphasising the transmissive, transformational, and transactional aspects of the theory and practice of good educational practice at the organizational level¹⁵³. Border Police Officers wishing to make a career as a leader should be subjected to rigorous training in a Frontex Leadership Academy offered for free. This would relate to CEPOL and instructors educated in Strategic Border management under existing programs and involve the theory and practice of European Integrated Border Management. Frontex should be a vehicle for the internationalization of integrated border management and foster a European approach characterized by a multicultural identity, a sense of purpose, and a shared culture. However, the masks can often become too large in a network-centric society. Thus, the Frontex Liaison Officers Network's remit should be fully exploited to ensure a proactive outreach. For instance, the FLON could address real and imagined threats to border security in both broader and operational terms without them developing into commissars in the interest of managerial control. The point is that the member states should be able to rely on Frontex to be there for them when the member states' BM organizations feel stretched or need operational assistance.

Second, Frontex could propose a harmonized, standardized approach to defining member states' border sectors and their minimum equipment. For example, naval and Land Border bases should be established as the need arises, their minimum equipment and level of personnel should be decided on, and their location should be published on Frontex's home page. The Frontex Border Guards Corps should be present at all these bases and commandeer the EU-MS joined frontier and coast guards. Outreach to the Frontex bases' local community should be streamlined into

guidelines on Frontex bases. This is essential to the psychological aspect of the EU's presence at the external borders, a key feature of border management for diplomatic partnership and protecting a more advanced society against threats¹⁵⁴. A sound material base and adequate security are essential for an evolving civilization like Europe. This implies conserving force and using military power indirectly as the instrument of political warfare, i.e., by working on the perceptions of others of The European Union's strength rather than using that strength. Thus, Frontex should make judicious use of force against low-intensity threats and have a robust presence at the border. That is to say, the organisational advantages of Frontex falling under the remit of DG HOME are modified by the need to consider the strategic aspects of the EU's external border management and EIBM's integration into the overall diplomatic strategy. This should provide the conditions for lifting the Netherlands and Austria's reservations concerning Romania¹⁵⁵ and Bulgaria's entry into the Schengen area's visa-free travel zone¹⁵⁶.

Third, Frontex could move forward with establishing the total capacity of the EU Border Guard's Corps to 2024-25 and change the distribution of personnel between Frontex Statutory Staff and MS seconded border guards on a 75%-25%-basis. Furthermore, a decision has been made to increase the number of Border Guards to 30,000, a timeline which needs to be established.

Fourth, DG HOME should propose amendments to annex I—V of the Border Guards Corps regulation by 2024. This would include the purchase of more surveillance and attack drones, patrol boats, bright buoys, etc. This could be undertaken following a thorough discussion in Enfopol to better understand the intelligence service's chiefs' view on the suitable course of action on EIBM. In addition, rules of engagement on using attack drones should be deliberated with the European Parliament's Frontex scrutiny working group.

Fifth, DG Home still needs to address the question of forming a Counter-Terrorism Unit (CTU), given that counter-terrorism is one of its objectives listed in the EIBM communication. This is reflected in the EU Commission's Counter-Terrorism Agenda, adopted in 2020.¹⁵⁷ The terrorism threat is one of the reasons the Member States cite as a cause for the manning at the border when notifying DG Home about the maintenance of national controls. But, again, DG Home needs to act more forcefully. I propose to remedy the matter and follow in the footsteps of the Australian Border Police. In Europe, a Frontex CTU could be present not only in selected airports but also at the land and sea border and in critical areas of deployment where Frontex is active or at Member States' request or per recommendation by a member of the Frontex Liaison Officer Network.

Sixth, I propose that the evaluation mechanism and vulnerability assessment under the Schengen mechanism are activated, and respect for the authority of the Frontex Liaison Officers' competencies is to be observed by the member states so that a normalization of the Schengen

playbook is put into effect in practice nonostante. In addition, consider giving publicity to the vulnerability and evaluation mechanism results. Finally, I recommend bringing the remaining four to five recalcitrant states that resist compliance with the Schengen acquisitions to ECJ.

Seventh, replacing or integrating the IT system with Eurosur should not only be implemented, but Frontex should also adopt a digital transformation strategy for the organization. DG Home does not cite the failure and delay in implementing the new IT system as an obstacle to moving forward but notes its introduction as a principle flowing from the objectives DG Home pursues. The new IT system could have a structural effect on the forms and content of cooperation. There are two systems: EES and ETIAS born out of EU-LISA. The first is linked to entry-exit at borders¹⁵⁸.

ETIAS is linked to travel authorization within the Schengen for non-EU nationals¹⁵⁹. The cited objectives (1) security (2) the prevention of illegal immigration (3) the protection of public health (4) more effective border checks (5) underpinning SIS (6) the prevention, detention and investigation of terrorist offences or other serious crimes¹⁶⁰. Concerns are being expressed about digital surveillance in the area of Freedom, Security and Justice concerning rules on advanced screening, profiling, lack of transparency, human rights, bias, lack of European ownership of the technology¹⁶¹. This does provide an additional layer of security from a superficial observation. From a deeper observation, it is equivalent to unrealistic fly-fucking, given the number of regular migrants who have not become naturalised – estimated at a mere 6 % of the EU's population – and would then become the subject of ETIAS measures. I emphasise the break-down of barriers – lack of understanding and partial implementation, of silos and politics, poor leadership and culture – towards strengthened policy capability on anti-radicalisation and integration at EU and MS level – not just mere orientations. Subsidiarity, after all, is a principle in social organisation that suggests matters should be handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralized competent authority. Essentially, it means that a central authority should only perform tasks which cannot be effectively carried out at a more local level. It is closely related to federalism, both emphasizing the idea of decentralizing authority. In federalism, subsidiarity means dividing powers between national and regional governments. Subsidiarity supports handling matters at the most local level possible.

Subsidiarity aims to ensure decisions are made as closely as possible to the citizens affected by them, enhancing efficiency and responsiveness. Federalism similarly allows regional governments to address local needs more effectively. Federalism provides regional governments with autonomy to govern themselves in certain areas. Subsidiarity reinforces this by suggesting that higher levels of government should only intervene when lower levels cannot effectively manage an issue. Both the principle of federalism and subsidiarity seek to balance power, preventing over-centralization and promoting a more equitable distribution of authority. KUK-KUK-KUK.

Eighth, the relationship between the military mobility of EU soldiers and the EU's external border management security is there and should be clearly articulated. Therefore, I propose that a representative of INTDIR/MILINT get a seat on the Frontex Board of Directors. Consider publishing a Frontex study on establishing a situational awareness network and integrating sensor assets with satellites at the level of member state surveillance systems in the interest of the economy of force.

Ninth, I propose that the Frontex Management Board adopts a collaborative crisis management concept¹⁶², provided the integration of the new IT system has been completed based on evaluating the functioning of Eurosur amongst all actors involved in the EU's integrated border management.

Tenth, I suggest publishing on Frontex.europa.eu an EU Capabilities Development Plan, which should stipulate the developmental potential of the EIBM system at EU and MS levels pending the completion of organizational adaptation and reduction of redundancies inside the EIBM system and the modalities to consider.

Eleventh, a policy and strategy for reducing the number of deaths in the Mediterranean are to be addressed by DG Home and Frontex as a matter of urgency. This could be done in terms of transactional performance indicators published in an annual report: reduction of deaths in geographical settings, number of returns effectuated, drop in the years spent in processing asylum applications in the Member states, reduction in the numbers of trafficked people, terror plots uncovered, reduction in illegal crossings etcetera. In addition, metrics concerning the time and costs of clearance of goods and persons could be developed from the World Customs Organisation standards on facilitation and customs procedures and given the publicity on Frontex' homepage¹⁶³. This could be combined with dialogue with stakeholders to test-proof the EIBM system's administration and maintenance at the operational level. In addition, DG Home could provide incentives tied to aim fulfillment regarding specific budget allocations. At the same time, Frontex's leadership could offer personnel rewards – bonuses, extra holidays, vocational training - to link up the EIBM strategy with Frontex's performance to ensure good governance, rule-of-law, and human rights prevail at the EU's external border. That is an effect chain.

Twelfth, the use of Trust Funds, where over €7 billion in public funding is being channeled to border management and migration management, according to EPC,¹⁶⁴ should be addressed by Commissioner Johansen. Undoubtedly, the European Commission can find a way to leverage this state of affairs while increasing accountability without loosening sight of the broader political

objectives pertinent to advancing overall EU interests. Cigar boxes are an imperial practice, and the EU has no legal basis for funding member states' border management equipment. This is reserved for candidate countries. The trust funds should come under the purview of the European Parliament. Or rather, the bribes to uphold already existing legal obligations by the Member States should come to a halt and be replaced by a strategic approach to migration of the Member States and externally by the formulation of an annual foreign economic statement by the European Commission with a project portfolio on the development of a competitive power of EU as a collective and the member states individually. Thus, a semblance of order could be restored to the pretty banged-up external frontier regime of The European Union.

Thirteenth, the difficulties the EU has in reconciling open borders with the national security of member states also calls for closer coordination inside the EU Commission at strategic level and with the apposite Council working group in the field of JHA and Schengen¹⁶⁵. To provide strategic guidance beyond 2024 rather than a programmatic update¹⁶⁶, the EU must put on the agenda, coordinate and cooperate better with the countries that are the main sources of illegal migrants and address the root causes in a coherent and integrated manner: Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. On Libya, Ghadaffi used to keep the Jihadis down and the migrants out and was a stable regime.

Libya has now regressed into civil war, a fragile truce, and gone back to tribalism in the absence of a renewal of a winning tribal coalition that has always undergirded governance in Libya. Militia and Islamists roam freely, sucking in and destabilising the Sahel and causing harm to Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia's sense of security and economy. EU's contribution, partnership, and relationship with the Egyptian-Turkish effort, UN-led mediation, and the prodding of better coordination amongst the Maghribs on the management and impact of the destabilization of Libya are to be reviewed and carefully calibrated by the European Union. The weakened authoritarian power structure is to be augmented and strengthened in terms of public administration reform, a new social contract, and reintegration of the plethora of militias, along with the ceasing of outside meddling, the building of civilized migration management, and practical and modern Libyan Border Management organization in terms of a strengthened and better funded EUBAM Libya¹⁶⁷. There are spill-over effects into the Sahel from Libya, and the policies and funding of IBM programs within AU and ECOWAS are not working satisfactorily. In Syria, I propose establishing an EU-led contact group with all major contestants along the lines proposed by academics.¹⁶⁸ This could be coupled with a concrete target-oriented UN action plan for progress in reconstruction, reconciliation, and political reform¹⁶⁹ complemented by a public administration program backed by KSA and inspired by the one needed in Iran, from which Shams is desirous of taking the lead¹⁷⁰. Getting control of the Syrian territory is a priority of Assad. And so is addressing the plight of the internally displaced. In turn, the IBM project in Lebanon needs to be prolonged, receive better funding, and be more involved by Frontex and member states toward institution-building, legislative reform, and policy development.¹⁷¹ In

addition, the various EUBAMs provide relative security to The European Union, promote European interests, and further its diplomatic objectives – not system export or 100% isomorphic BM organisations. If DG Home is the one who makes the EIBM the chariot of the Migration Pact, DG Defence must become the rider of Frontex.

Fourteenth, the excessive and inhuman delay in member states' asylum procedures will be raised as part of a broad-based, comprehensive, careful policy and legislative review at the EU and MS levels. For example, according to press reports, some asylum applicants fester in transition camps for 3-6 years and then move onto departure centers if they refuse to leave, where they stay for another 3-5 years. This is unacceptable and inhuman. According to European Union agency for Asylum, the Eu received 1,4 million applications for Asylum in 2023¹⁷², mostly from Syria and Afghanistan. Determining the exact number of economic refugees is challenging, as asylum applications are generally based on claims of persecution or conflict. However, economic factors often play a role in migration decisions. Official statistics typically do not categorize asylum seekers explicitly as economic refugees. The number of deportations varies by year and country. In 2021, for example, around 70,000 people were returned to their countries of origin from the EU. This number fluctuates based on various factors, including legal challenges, bilateral agreements, and the capacity of countries to enforce deportations. DG Home & Migration should address the problem in a firm and supportive manner under the Migration and Asylum Pact¹⁷³.

Fifteenth, Frontex has published a study, "The Green Deal & The European Border and Coast Guard– A Research Study." A governance structure is being put in place to lead change. To follow up, I propose pilot projects are launched to ensure feedback and test commitment within time and budget to remain agile. The departure point for Frontex's contribution could be purchasing EV vehicles, introducing hydrogen-driven drones, testing maritime e-fuels on Frontex Ships, and applying New Bauhaus principles in the new Frontex HQ.

Sixteenth, it is proposed that Frontex adopt a contemporary understanding of strategy development. The strategic departure point: mission, vision, and values. The task is clear and sound, but the idea is somewhat fuzzy while discounts are mentioned. The Frontex Executive Director could publish a blog. Frontex could use story-telling, emphasizing how Frontex contributes to security at the border and the results of its work for people's lives and the over 500 million lawfully crossing EU borders. The revised version of Frontex's technical and operational strategy for EIBM¹⁷⁴ must be proper¹⁷⁵ – not listing enabling legalities and technicalities. A proposal for establishing a FRONTEx HL IBM WG has been made. Consider the assignment of desk analyst operational intelligence officers responsible for geographical sectors across types of borderland, sea, harbor & air - to integrate data into the overall situational picture in the format of Europol or the Frontex Situation Centre through the establishment of intelligence

units with responsibility for geographical areas. Assign intelligence agents to accompany BSGC when deployed and liaise with Frontex FSC. To move beyond the preliminary disarray in DG Home, consider adopting a Frontex (comprehensive) security concept proper with a duration dovetailing with the multi-annual policy cycle. At the same time, it seems opportune for the EIBM system to relate to and review the guidelines for Integrated Border Management in European Commission External Cooperation, which is directed towards practitioners within the EIBM system rather than the EU delegations¹⁷⁶ Thus, a joint task force could review and compare the functioning of the EIBM model, work that might feed into the policy-making process on a Frontex security concept once the pact has been fused into the EIBM system.

Seventeenth, I look forward to a study providing a comparative overview of the Member States Border Management administrations and evaluating their IBM strategies published nonostante on DG Home's webpage¹⁷⁷. On Frontex's webpage, a link could be inserted to the national members of the European Integrated Border Management system – the national partners-in-power. An authoritative commentary on the evolution of the Frontex regulations is relevant for educational and training purposes and helpful for researchers and the wider public. Such a book could be commissioned.

Acknowledging this explorative study's shortcomings, we would welcome a more systematic evaluation of public policy in the EIBM domain in conformity with OECD standards regarding relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability towards a complete integrated study of EIBM in the interest of better dialogue between academia and circles of policy-making.¹⁷⁸

Eighteenth, I recommend a review of Frontex's personnel salary and benefits package. The basic entry-level salary should be set at 3000€ paid out and tax-free. I also envisage polls and surveys conducted on the rank-and-file experiences and sentiments on salient issues throughout the EIBM system. This testing of the perceptions of users of the EIBM system could be extended into systematic surveys of the EU's external partner's assessment of the EIBM system as part of Frontex's management of its relationships.

Nineteenth, Frontex could publish an annual report to reflect on the European Parliament's desire for greater democratic accountability of Frontex, structured around (1) Activities (2) Performance Stats (3) KPI's vs stakeholder satisfaction surveys (4) Discussion of public policies pertinent to the policy domain (5) Action Plans by JHA Ministers to close gaps. Frontex could draw on "Frontex in Brief" and the redundant Frontex annual activity report, which could be folded into the annual report. An annual report contains references to activities, but its purpose and social meaning change when oriented toward policy-makers. The Frontex Annual report could then add value to the yearly reports currently produced by some EUBAM and the Frontex

Fundamental Rights office, refer to the achievements of the Frontex Consultative Forum on Human Rights, reflect and add value to the various strategic practices within the organizations, sum-up the results of the evaluation mechanisms of the Schengen acquis, address the activities and results of the FLON-Network. If a result contract is introduced, the assumptions of an accountable EIBM system would be embodied in a share of Frontex's budget allocation against which the above-cited performance criteria of Frontex are to be judged. Frontex should, therefore, apply statistical evidence to that end in the annual report. The Frontex yearly report could be deliberated on in the LIBE Committee, and Parliament's views could be submitted to the JHA Council of Ministers and DG Home. Interaction with Union citizens and stakeholder management is to be encouraged in the annual report.¹⁷⁹ The outreach on the annual report to the non-EU members of the Schengen-convention – Norway, Schweiz, Iceland, Liechtenstein – is to be determined by DG Home.

Twentieth next, there is the Strategic Risk Analysis report. Strategic risk analysis may be defined as "the process of identifying and managing the specific risks that affect an organization's ability to achieve key objectives. Strategic risks can harm or weaken the corporation's goals and objectives, potentially affecting shareholder value and the viability of the entire company".¹⁸⁰ The science of Strategic risk analysis is based on microeconomics and shareholder value, nourishing itself from the same waterhole as principal-agent analysis. This report is submitted to Parliament, the EU Commission, and the Council and feeds into the policy-making process. But which results and actions does this process yield? This is not being communicated. Scenarios make policy-makers think about long-term strategies that are not an extension of current plans through mega-trends, such as global developments, demographics and society, technology and science, and economic developments. But is this what Frontex relates to when it conducts strategic risk analysis?

Twentieth-one Frontex's communication on the agency's role in international search and rescue is not comprehensive and somewhat odd, notably concerning the SAR convention¹⁸¹. It should dive into the literature¹⁸² and clearly state how the European model relates to the SAR convention and how and why to move beyond it – not just how Frontex adds value to the coastal states of the European Union's international obligations and who does what, when, and where under the EU Commission's half-baked measures under the Action Plan on the Mediterranean¹⁸³. In addition, it should engage with stakeholders who express concern about how the operating mode of Frontex may unintentionally contribute to deaths on the sea and communicate a plan to bring the numbers down. EU Regulation 656/2014 establishes rules on Search and Rescue operations and disembarkation and provides a common EU concept of a "place of safety," which is protection-driven¹⁸⁴. EU could move forward on SAR in several ways under the existing legislation. First, Frontex could support the Member States in fulfilling legal obligations under international law to assist any persons in distress at sea and to ensure their disembarkation in a place of safety. Second, Frontex could enhance coordination and cooperation among Member

States and with third countries and international organizations, such as the IMO, IOM, and UNHCR¹⁸⁵, on issues related to frontier security. Third, providing financial, technical, and operational assistance to the Member States, especially those facing extreme migratory pressure through Frontex, EUAA, and other EU funds and instruments. Fourth, a common framework and mechanism for solidarity and responsibility- sharing among the Member States, based on voluntary relocation of asylum seekers or other forms of support following disembarkations from search and rescue events. Fourth, addressing the root causes of irregular migration and preventing the loss of life at sea by promoting safe and legal pathways for migration and asylum, combating smuggling and trafficking networks, and enhancing cooperation with countries of origin and transit.¹⁸⁶

Twentieth-two concerns about corruption in the EIBM system are being expressed. Therefore, I recommend Frontex's management get hold of Transparency International to review the needs for Institution-Building, Policies, and Legislation in anti-corruption throughout the EIBM system.

Twentieth-three, The New Pact on Migration and Asylum aims to create a comprehensive and cohesive approach to managing migration and asylum across the EU¹⁸⁷:

- **Common Migration and Asylum Information System:** Enhances coordination and information sharing among EU countries.
- **Management of Arrivals:** Establishes efficient procedures for processing non-EU nationals at external borders.
- **Reception Standards:** Ensures adequate living standards and prevents unauthorized movements.
- **Streamlined Asylum Procedures:** Promotes fair and efficient decision-making processes.
- **Return Processes:** Encourages voluntary return and cooperation from returnees.
- **Responsibility Criteria:** Defines the country responsible for an asylum application.
- **Solidarity Mechanism:** Introduces a legally binding but flexible solidarity mechanism.
- **Crisis Resilience:** Enhances preparedness and response to migratory crises.
- **Fundamental Rights Protection:** Increases monitoring and safeguards for asylum seekers.
- **Resettlement and Integration:** Focuses on the inclusion and integration of migrants.

The evolving EIBM system cannot digest such a large legislative package without a strategy for integrating it into the system, which has 140,000 personnel. Thus, member state implementation plans on the migration and asylum pact is due in 2026 “common to all member states, common to the whole slew of legislative instruments, common to the need for all to be well-prepared”¹⁸⁸. In practice, the EU Commission’s Common Implementation Plan, due by the end of 2024, will have to provide guidance on how to align people, organisations and technology behind the core obligations of the Pact to be integrated into the EIBM system. At the EU level, DG Home is running the show; at the member states level, it expects cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial groupies to oversee the elaboration of their implementation plan.

Strategy for Integration of the Pact into the European Integrated Border Management (EIBM) System

The successful integration of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum into the European Integrated Border Management (EIBM) system requires a comprehensive and phased strategy that addresses institutional, legal, technical, and operational dimensions.

The process should begin with a thorough assessment of the current EIBM framework in order to identify existing gaps, inefficiencies, and opportunities for alignment with the objectives of the Pact. This diagnostic phase is essential for establishing a clear baseline from which integration efforts can proceed. Once identified, the objectives and operational priorities of the EIBM system should be realigned to reflect the core principles and commitments outlined in the Pact, thereby ensuring strategic coherence across EU migration and border management policies.

Following this, the technical infrastructure of the EIBM system must be upgraded to incorporate the common migration and asylum information system envisaged by the Pact. A key component of this upgrade is the enhancement of interoperability between the EIBM and other relevant EU databases, which would facilitate real-time information exchange, streamline coordination among actors, and improve decision-making capacities across Member States.

Training and capacity-building initiatives will play a critical role in supporting the integration process. Personnel operating within the EIBM framework must receive tailored training on the new procedures, standards, and operational requirements introduced by the Pact. In parallel, capacity-building programmes should be developed to ensure that staff across all levels are equipped with the necessary skills and technical competencies to manage the updated systems effectively.

Legal and policy harmonisation is another essential element of the strategy. National policies and legal frameworks should be revised to comply with the obligations introduced by the Pact. In doing so, it is important to establish clear implementation protocols and guidelines that provide legal certainty, institutional clarity, and administrative consistency across Member States.

To ensure the effectiveness of this integration process, a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism must be implemented. This mechanism should track progress through defined indicators and benchmarks while allowing for periodic review and adaptive responses based on empirical evidence and stakeholder feedback. Such an approach will enable continuous refinement of the integration process in response to evolving operational needs and political realities.

Finally, the strategy must prioritise active engagement with key stakeholders, including EU institutions, Member State authorities, and civil society organisations. A collaborative and participatory approach will not only enhance legitimacy but also facilitate the identification of practical solutions, the exchange of best practices, and the management of implementation challenges. Regular communication and structured coordination among stakeholders will be vital to maintaining momentum and ensuring a coherent and unified approach to border and migration governance within the EU. That is to say, the rationale for the withholding of documentary access could be linked to the EU Commissions desire for control over migrants data via ETIAS. Could there be other motives ?

This strategy plan aims to ensure a smooth and effective integration of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum into the EIBM system, rationalize the reviews that are designed to ensure a consistent and orderly lay-out at Europe's borders without tampering of the legal text in practice by the Member States through the promotion of a baseline for a unified and efficient approach to migration management across the EU. A baseline is a fixed reference point used to measure and compare the performance of a project or process over time. It serves as a starting point against which progress and changes can be tracked. It says: "Across all ten building blocks, it will be necessary for Member States to evaluate the costs to match needs with resources, fully considering national budgetary cycles and the availability of EU Funds". Certainly, the move from strategy to implementation is a common denominator of strategic management, and if the EIBM is to be integrated into the Pact, and the Pact into the EIBM the combination could create a more cohesive and efficient system for managing migration and asylum in the EU. The integration of EIBM into the Migration and Asylum Pact is designed to strengthen coordination between border management and asylum procedures, ensuring that border controls and asylum processes are aligned and efficient.

Utilizing shared databases like Eurodac can help streamline the identification and processing of asylum seekers, improving both border security and the asylum process. The integration of the Migration and Asylum Pact into the EIBM focuses on human rights and fair treatment can be integrated into EIBM, ensuring that border management practices respect the rights of migrants and asylum seekers. The Pact's emphasis on efficient and humane return procedures can be incorporated into EIBM, providing a more comprehensive approach to managing returns and readmissions. The Pact's crisis protocols can be integrated into EIBM, enhancing the EU's ability to respond to migration crises and ensuring that border management is part of a broader crisis response strategy. The mutual influence would lead to improved efficiency towards enhanced

security and solidarity and responsibility. Integrating EIBM and the Asylum and Migration Pact can lead to more efficient and streamlined processes, reducing bottlenecks and ensuring that migrants and asylum seekers are processed in a timely manner. A coordinated approach can enhance border security while ensuring that the rights of migrants and asylum seekers are protected, creating a balance between security and humanitarian considerations. Mutatis mutandis, the organisational framework's fusion with the Pact can promote solidarity and shared responsibility among EU member states, ensuring that no single country bears the brunt of migration pressures alone. Collaborative operations involving Frontex and national authorities can enhance the management of external borders while ensuring that asylum seekers are treated fairly and efficiently. This is then supplemented by additional push-ups and an annual discharge to ensure effectiveness and coherence on policy-making until the 10-year-long saga on the Pact may finally be said to be at cruising speed, cf. above sections 6 & 7¹⁸⁹.

Am I the only one who wonders about how the EU spends its money and what the citizenry gets in return per spent Euro ?

Twentieth-fourth, DG Home & Migration should apply itself to adopt an effective strategy on streamlining of a rational migration strategy at the EU and MS-level. Contrary to the perception of DG Home, this will not trickle down by a seminar in Bruxelles+You Tube video. A rational migration strategy is a comprehensive and evidence-based approach to managing migration. It aims to balance the needs and rights of migrants with the socio-economic and security interests of the host country¹⁹⁰.

Key Elements of a Rational Migration Strategy

A rational migration strategy is grounded in principles of sustainability, legality, and inclusivity.

It aims to balance national interests with the rights and needs of migrants, ensuring that migration contributes positively to both sending and receiving societies.

At the core of such a strategy is evidence-based policymaking. Migration policies should be informed by robust data, empirical research, and ongoing analysis of demographic, economic, and geopolitical trends. Policymakers must ensure that these strategies remain adaptive by regularly updating them in response to new evidence and shifting circumstances.

A coherent legal and regulatory framework is also essential. This involves the establishment of clear, accessible, and fair legal pathways for migration. National legislation should be harmonised with international standards and human rights obligations, ensuring legal certainty for migrants and the states that host them.

Successful migration strategies must also address integration and inclusion. Migrants should be provided with meaningful opportunities for social and economic participation. This includes

access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and employment, all of which are crucial for fostering long-term cohesion and social stability within host communities.

Border management and security remain critical components of a rational strategy. These must be implemented in a manner that is both efficient and humane, balancing the need for national security with respect for human dignity. Effective cooperation with other countries is also necessary to address shared cross-border challenges, such as irregular migration, trafficking, and transnational crime.

Particular attention must be given to the protection of vulnerable groups. Refugees, asylum seekers, and other individuals in precarious situations require targeted safeguards. Special support should be provided for women, children, and victims of trafficking, recognising their specific vulnerabilities and needs.

Public engagement and communication are integral to the legitimacy and effectiveness of migration policy. Governments should foster public understanding by promoting transparent discourse, addressing misinformation, and encouraging balanced narratives that highlight both the challenges and benefits of migration. This approach can help to build societal support and counter xenophobic or exclusionary rhetoric.

International cooperation plays a vital role in managing migration effectively. States should collaborate with each other and with international organisations to develop coordinated responses, share best practices, and participate in global and regional frameworks aimed at promoting safe, orderly, and regular migration.

Finally, a rational migration strategy must include mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. The impact of policies should be continuously assessed through established indicators, with feedback loops used to refine and adapt strategies over time. This ensures accountability and promotes a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

In sum, a rational approach to migration seeks to balance control with compassion, aligning national interests with international responsibility. It aspires to create a system that not only manages migration flows effectively but also upholds the rights and dignity of all individuals involved, thereby fostering long-term social cohesion and mutual benefit for migrants and host communities alike.

Twenty-fifth, the MEDIA program could fund a factual television program in the form of an observational documentary on the model of *Border Security: Australia's Front Line*, with the working title *Limes—Borders of the European Union*.

These measures could then be consolidated into an action plan *la Suisse*¹⁹¹. Follow-up could be in terms of an implementation report or an annual report. It is a political exercise distinct from

Frontex'operational and technical strategy¹⁹² addressing the need for a strategic approach to integrated border management that are accountable, well-structured and make use of targeted approaches. The Eu is a political system -not a technocracy, concerned about playing the system and technicalities instead of meaningful progress are made and that tax payer's money is optimally spent¹⁹³. In more crude terms, the Eu has allocated € 30 billion in the period 2021-2027 and achieved a modest reduction in illegal migration amidst sloppy strategic management and administrative disarray. The truth is that the evolving EIBM-system is a giant construction site and that it can not be better than the humans manning it, the barriers to implementation being well-known: lack of understanding, partial implementation, silos and politics, lack of resources, poor leadership and crap culture.

On this basis, I see no reason for treaty change. On the contrary, the treaty and regulations must be fully exploited to ensure a coherent , effective and integrated law-abiding institutional framework towards solution-oriented and problem-solving approaches. The transnational cleavage in the European Union is running like an understream under the Schengen area, and the entire EIBM construct, addressing or softening, is a common interest¹⁹⁴. Relationships and adopting German business interests are a condition for leadership but may be insufficient to make a difference.

Determination and ambition are required.

To lead change, strong leadership and sound management are necessary.

Unfortunately, DG Home fails in leadership, needs clear strategy and communication, empathy, and effectiveness¹⁹⁵. It is creating a prolonged crisis that is not entirely of its own making but is leading to multiannual rear-guard actions and even modification of the Schengen play-book¹⁹⁶. Without denying the complexity of the EIBM system and while discounting the grindingly slow JHA policy- making process, it must be clear that the EU's external frontier security is poorly led, managed in a wasteful manner, fragmented , corrupt in the suburbs of the world, plagued by poor communication, and faces considerable challenges in evolving forcefully in an interdependent and rapid-evolving political system and security environment. It is time for Europe to come to its senses. From the contradictions between Freedom, Justice, and Security, unity may be derived, and what appears impossible can be turned into an opportunity. No wonder UVL has decided Frontex needs to take charge by scaling-up.

The closure of the internal borders signals an accommodation of the Member States and represent not only a failure of leadership on behalf of the Eu Commission but also a certain tone-deafness, unimaginative Eurocrats and, above all, a lack of political will to wield the powers entrusted in the EU Commission as guardian of the Treaties. To assert its authority, Infringement

proceedings are a key mechanism through which the European Commission ensures that EU law is uniformly applied across all member states. Here's a brief overview of the process:

- **Preliminary Stage:** The Commission first engages in a dialogue with the member state, often referred to as the "EU Pilot" process, to clarify the issue and seek a resolution without formal proceedings.
- **Formal Notice:** If the issue is not resolved, the Commission sends a formal notice to the member state, outlining the alleged breach and giving the state an opportunity to respond.
- **Reasoned Opinion:** If the member state's response is unsatisfactory, the Commission issues a reasoned opinion, detailing why it believes the state is in breach of EU law and setting a deadline for compliance.
- **Referral to the ECJ:** Should the member state fail to comply with the reasoned opinion, the Commission can refer the case to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The ECJ then examines the case and issues a judgment.
- **Compliance and Penalties:** If the ECJ finds that the member state has indeed breached EU law, the state must take corrective action. Failure to comply with the ECJ's judgment can result in financial penalties.

This process ensures that member states adhere to their obligations under EU law, maintaining the integrity and uniformity of the legal framework across the Union. EU citizens will have none of the sloppy strategic management, poor communication, wasteful spending, economic irrationality, political scheming, lack of accountability, and erosion of public authority the mismanagement of the Schengen area represents¹⁹⁷. DEAL WITH IT – BIG BLACK DADDY!

Now that the EAAS is gearing the organisation towards geoeconomic competition and the EU's borders are defined, the question of the definition of the regional order on the borders of Europe has several implications:

Increased Border Length: As the EU expands, its external borders also extend, requiring more resources and coordination to secure these new frontiers.

Diverse Security Challenges: New member states often bring different security challenges, such as organized crime, human trafficking, and illegal migration, which require tailored responses.

Geopolitical Stability: Enlargement can promote stability in neighboring regions by fostering economic development and political cooperation

Security Challenges: New member states often bring different security challenges, such as organized crime, human trafficking, and illegal migration, which require tailored responses.

Integration of Security Policies: The EU must integrate the security policies of new member states into its existing framework, which can be complex and resource-intensive.

Regional Stability: Expanding the EU can promote stability in neighboring regions by fostering economic development and political cooperation¹⁹⁸.

These strategic implications highlight the need for a balanced approach to enlargement, ensuring that security and stability are maintained while promoting economic and political integration.

While the defined borders help maintain security and facilitate free movement, they also present ongoing challenges that require continuous cooperation and resource allocation. However, it can also create tensions if neighboring countries feel threatened by the EU's growing influence.

Heather Grabbe's work on EU enlargement and its transformative power has been influential. While the situation has evolved, many of her highlighted core issues remain relevant. The EU struggles with balancing expansion, integration, and maintaining stability. Overall, while EU expansion can bring economic and political benefits, it also requires careful management of security challenges to ensure the safety and stability of its external frontiers.

The EU applies the Copenhagen criteria for membership, which include stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and a functioning market economy. Additionally, the EU emphasises regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations, especially for countries in the Western Balkans.

My detailed action plan offers a structured and comprehensive approach, resembling Swiss precision and thoroughness. This can ensure all aspects of border management are addressed, including resource allocation, training, technology integration, and stakeholder engagement.

Such a plan allows for accountability, regular assessments, and adaptability to emerging challenges, making it a robust strategy for asserting the EIBM-system authority, increasingly spearheaded by Frontex. The Union and its citizens have had enough of the fragmented nature of governance.

If the appendices are then executed and a credible and comprehensive plan hatched to increase the travel experience combined with a realistic scale-up from 10.000 to 20.000 until 2030, Commissioner Brunner still needs to communicate how the reshuffling between the 125.000 working in the EIBM system and the corpse could be undertaken. In organisational terms, robust recruitment process to attract qualified candidates must be in place. Infrastructure to support the increased personnel, including facilities, equipment, and technology is necessary. Adequate funding and resources are allocated to support the scale-up, including salaries, allowances, and operational costs. The expansion of the workforce will require strengthened coordination mechanisms within Frontex and with member states to ensure seamless integration and efficient management. In legal terms, the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation to reflect the

new staffing levels and operational requirements. The legal mandates for Frontex operations are clear and comprehensive, covering all aspects of border management and security. And robust compliance and oversight mechanisms must be established to ensure that all operations adhere to EU laws and ethical standards. In terms of policy, it will become necessary with a detailed strategic plan outlining the objectives, timelines, and milestones for the scale-up. something the Pact-EIBM fusion has prepared the member states for. To ensure broad support and cooperation, engage with key stakeholders, including member states, EU institutions, and international partners. Implement public communication strategies to inform citizens about the scale-up and its benefits for EU security. Establish monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track progress and identify areas for improvement. By addressing these organisational, legislative, and policy considerations, Frontex can effectively manage the scale-up and enhance its capacity to secure the EU's external borders.

This has to be compared to the conceptual analytical framework we have adopted:

My conceptual framework, which includes executive-agency theory, multi-level policy-making, and leadership theory, offers a comprehensive and dynamic approach to migration policy. Here's why it can be considered superior to the processes depicted in the US, Chinese, and European approaches:

Executive-Agency Theory

- **Flexibility and Responsiveness:** This theory emphasizes the role of executive agencies in implementing policies. It allows for more flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances, such as sudden increases in migration flows or emerging security threats.
- **Specialization and Expertise:** Executive agencies often have specialised knowledge and expertise, enabling them to design and implement more effective and nuanced policies.
- **Accountability and Efficiency:** This approach can enhance accountability and efficiency in policy implementation by clearly delineating responsibilities.

Multi-Level Policy-Making

- **Integration and Coordination:** Multi-level policy-making ensures that policies are coordinated across different levels of government (local, national, and supranational). This is particularly important in migration, where local impacts can be significant.
- **Inclusivity and Representation:** This approach allows for the inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including local communities, NGOs, and international organisations, leading to more inclusive and representative policies.
- **Adaptability:** Policies can be adapted to different regions' specific needs and contexts,

making them more effective and sustainable.

Leadership Theory

- **Vision and Direction:** Effective leadership provides a clear vision and direction for migration policy, ensuring it aligns with broader national and international goals.
- **Innovation and Change Management:** Strong leadership can drive innovation and manage change, essential for addressing migration's complex and evolving challenges.
- **Collaboration and Consensus-Building:** Leadership theory emphasises the importance of collaboration and consensus-building, which can help to overcome resistance and build broad support for migration policies.

Comparative Advantages

- **Holistic Approach:** Your framework integrates multiple perspectives and levels of analysis, providing a more holistic and comprehensive approach to migration policy.
- **Dynamic and Adaptive:** By incorporating executive-agency theory, multi-level policy-making, and leadership theory, your framework is more dynamic and adaptive to changing circumstances and challenges.
- **Enhanced Effectiveness:** The combination of specialised expertise, coordinated action, and strong leadership can enhance migration policies' overall effectiveness and sustainability.

And that is all I have to say about how theory may shape analytical forms, and describe how the instruments are to be tuned.

Appendix 1 – Remit of an Integration EIBM Governance Study

Hans Lejtens recently announced the priorities of the Frontex management Group to address the issue of culture in Frontex, and the wider EIBM community, suggesting the need for instilling a leadership culture to buttress the decentralized organisation of external frontier security in the EU, and reflecting the fluidity of the situation on the borders of the EU. Mr. Lejtens is confused. He mixes command-and-control-issues with the role of cultural of an organization, which ethnographers has found is less than cohesive at Headquarters. It is lagging the game he is playing. The motive may be more prestigious. Frontex leadership lost control and overview of what is going on at the EU border, doesn't command the dossier isn't equipped with the knowledge and expertise about the challenges of forging a business culture of such an unwieldy organization like Frontex and EIBM. At the same time, recruitment is stalling, implying a trade-off would have to made between tweaking and due diligence reports in order to scale-up the standing border guards, which was supposed to reach 7000 by 2027, but is already behind

schedule and which UVL now has decided is to reach 30,000 without giving a timeline nor indicate a method to do so. The Eu's credibility is at stake, and above all, its security.

The organisation may be defined as the division of labour+integration of effort+ rules for information flow. How the flow from policy, strategy, tactics, concept and operational and technical aspects works in practice is beyond this study. The calls for discarding coordination clearly would weaken a structured and coordinated approach in the EIM system and run against the most essential features of the IBM concept if it is tempting from the point of view of Frontex' practitioners and men of action. The complexity of the integration challenge has not been realized, but if DG Home can not figure out how to proceed and explain why it is in everyone's interests, the EIBM system will remain rudderless, and the Schengen area will likely disintegrate. Clearly, the EIBM System needs help from outside to succeed.

The Integration EIBM (European Integrated Border Management) Governance Study aims to enhance the effectiveness and coherence of the EIBM system by leveraging insights from renowned organizational theorists and cultural experts.

The remit of this study group includes:

- Analyzing Organizational Structures and Strategies:
 - Henry Mintzberg: Utilize Mintzberg's framework on organizational structures to identify the most effective configurations for EIBM. This includes understanding the balance between centralization and decentralization, and the roles of different actors within the system.
 - Edgar Schein: Apply Schein's model of organizational culture to assess how shared values, beliefs, and norms within EIBM entities influence their operations and interactions.
- Cultural Dimensions and Leadership:
 - Geert Hofstede: Examine Hofstede's cultural dimensions to understand how national and organizational cultures impact the behavior and cooperation of EIBM stakeholders from different countries.
 - Manfred Kets de Vries: Incorporate Kets de Vries' insights on leadership and organizational dynamics to foster effective leadership practices within EIBM, ensuring that leaders can manage cultural diversity and complexity.
- Organizational Behavior and Change Management:
 - Zainotti: Investigate Zainotti's contributions to organizational behavior and change management to develop strategies for managing transitions and transformations within the EIBM framework.

Contribution of Organizational Culture to EIBM Effectiveness

Organizational culture plays a crucial role in the effectiveness and coherence of the EIBM system. A strong, cohesive culture can:

- **Enhance Coordination:** Shared values and norms facilitate better communication and coordination among various actors, reducing the risk of fragmented and uncoordinated approaches.
- **Improve Adaptability:** A culture that promotes learning and adaptability helps EIBM entities respond effectively to emerging threats and changes in the operational environment.
- **Strengthen Trust and Collaboration:** Trust and mutual respect fostered by a positive organizational culture enhance collaboration between different stakeholders, leading to more efficient and effective border management.

Operational Level Challenges and Solutions

At the operational level, the complexity and sophistication of integrated border management can lead to challenges such as duplication of efforts and exploitation of loopholes by criminal networks. To address these challenges:

- **Enhanced Coordination:** Establish clear protocols and communication channels to ensure all actors are aligned and working towards common goals. Regular joint training and exercises can help build a cohesive operational culture.
- **Integrated Systems:** Develop and implement integrated information systems that allow for real-time data sharing and analysis, reducing the risk of duplication and improving situational awareness.
- **Collaborative Frameworks:** Create collaborative frameworks that bring together various stakeholders, including law enforcement, customs, and immigration authorities, to streamline operations and close potential loopholes.

By focusing on these areas, the Integration EIBM Governance Study Group can significantly contribute to the effectiveness and coherence of the EIBM system, ensuring a more secure and efficient management of EU external borders.

Appendix 2 – Strengthening Asylum laws and practices

Resettlement has been advanced as an alternative solution to halt pressures on member states. Resettlement is defined as 'the selection and transfer of refugees from a first State of asylum where they are protected but in precarious or unsafe situation, to a third State that has agreed to accept them as refugees with permanent residence status. It involves a pre-selection by UNHCR, followed by a selection by the resettlement State. Resettlement aims to show international solidarity with countries that host the majority of the world's refugees, and to ensure durable protection for the most vulnerable among them'. The global numbers of resettled refugees is increasing exponentially, albeit the EU has a very low share thereof. There is no right to resettlement in international law, and so the Pact seeks to harmonise how this selection takes place under the new Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission regulation. It does so to provide 'a common approach to the legal and safe arrival in the EU of persons in need of international protection' to 'increase resettlement and humanitarian admission efforts and reduce divergences between national resettlement practices and procedures'.²⁰⁰ This gives the member states an open door to determine who is a refugee, who goes to purgatorio – resettled - typically in a third country in cooperation with UNHCR, before even having reached the shores of the European Union. Resettlement is an alternative legal avenue to asylum, a safety valve to manage the unequal distribution of the world's millions of refugees 75% of whom are hosted in low and middle income countries. This also reflects the fragmented nature of the EU Asylum legislative system and the impotence of the Eu Commission. Send in the Plummers!

According to the EU Asylum Agency (EUAA), the focus of the asylum system during 2023-24 was anchored in four principles:

- Advancing the adoption of the instruments included in the Pact on Migration and Asylum through a gradual approach based on a balance between solidarity and responsibility;
- Effective management of external borders, which has implications for the effective internal functioning of the Schengen area
- Strengthening cooperation with countries of origin and transit to address irregular migration, ensure effective returns and readmission, and
- Protecting those who may be in a position of vulnerability, such as children and victims of human trafficking²⁰¹.

Reinforcing the resilience of the EU in handling asylum applications involves a multifaceted approach at political, legislative, and administrative levels. Here are some key strategies:

Political Level

- Enhanced Solidarity and Responsibility Sharing: Implementing a permanent and legally-binding mechanism to ensure fair distribution of asylum seekers among member states¹.

- **Strengthening External Borders:** Ensuring effective control of the EU's external borders while respecting fundamental rights.
- **Cooperation with Third Countries:** Enhancing partnerships with countries of origin and transit to manage migration flows and ensure effective returns.

Legislative Level

- **Common European Asylum System (CEAS):** Continuing to reform and harmonize the CEAS to ensure uniform standards and fair treatment across all member states²⁰².
- **Asylum Procedures Regulation:** Establishing a common procedure for processing asylum applications, including a border procedure to swiftly assess applications at the EU's external borders.
- **Qualification Directive:** Clarifying the grounds for granting international protection to make asylum decisions more robust and consistent²⁰³.

Administrative Level

- **Efficient Processing:** Streamlining administrative procedures to ensure quick and fair processing of asylum applications.
- **Resource Allocation:** Ensuring adequate resources and support for member states facing high numbers of asylum applications.
- **Training and Support:** Providing continuous training and operational support to national authorities through the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA).

Harmonizing Asylum Policies

To harmonize asylum policies, the EU should focus on:

- **Uniform Standards:** Ensuring that all member states adhere to the same standards for processing asylum applications and providing reception conditions.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Implementing mechanisms for fair distribution of asylum seekers to prevent overburdening certain member states.
- **Legal Framework:** Adopting and enforcing common legislative instruments like the Asylum Procedures Regulation and the Qualification Directive²⁰⁴

Criteria to Differentiate Genuine Asylum Seekers from Economic Migrants

- Well-Founded Fear of Persecution: Genuine asylum seekers must demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.
- Objective and Subjective Fear: Evaluating both the subjective fear (personal testimony) and objective fear (country conditions) of the applicant.
- Economic Motivation: Economic migrants typically move to improve their economic prospects and do not qualify for asylum under the 1951 Geneva Convention.

-

Strengthening the Role of EUAA

- Operational Support: Enhancing the EUAA's capacity to provide operational support and deploy personnel quickly to member states under pressure.
- Training and Capacity Building: Expanding training programs and practical tools for national authorities to ensure high-quality asylum procedures.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Establishing a robust monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance with EU standards and identify areas for improvement.

Appendix 3 - Action Plan for Frontex-MS Camps on the Eastern Border of the EU

Frontex is already authorised to protect the EU's external frontiers at the Treaty level, and Commission President von der Leyen has announced scaling up the Border Guard Corps.

Objectives

- Enhance Border Security: Strengthen the EU's external borders to prevent illegal crossings and manage migration flows effectively.
- Humanitarian Support: Provide adequate facilities and services for migrants, ensuring their safety and dignity.
- Operational Efficiency: Utilize resources effectively to maintain a high level of security and support.

Key Components

- Site Selection and Infrastructure
 - Strategic Locations: Identify key points along the eastern border where security threats and

migration flows are the highest as informed by the Risk Analysis²⁰⁵

- Facilities: Construct camps with necessary infrastructure, including accommodation, medical facilities, and administrative offices.
- Technology: Implement advanced surveillance systems, including drones, cameras, and sensors.

- Resource Allocation

- Personnel: Deploy a significant portion of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps. Given the scale of the operation, allocate approximately 10,000 officers (one-third of the 30,000 promised) to ensure robust coverage and support
- Equipment: Provide necessary equipment such as vehicles, communication tools, and medical supplies.

- Coordination and Management

- Frontex Leadership: Ensure Frontex takes a leading role in coordination, working closely with national border agencies.
- Training: Conduct regular training sessions for personnel on border management, humanitarian aid, and crisis response.
- Collaboration: Foster cooperation with local authorities, NGOs, and international organizations to ensure comprehensive support for migrants.

- Humanitarian Measures

- Basic Needs: Ensure camps provide food, water, sanitation, and healthcare services.
- Legal Assistance: Offer legal support to migrants, helping them understand their rights and the asylum process.
- Psychosocial Support: Provide mental health services and support for vulnerable groups, including women and children.

- Monitoring and Evaluation

- Regular Assessments: Conduct regular evaluations of camp conditions, security measures, and overall effectiveness.
- Feedback Mechanisms: Implement systems for receiving and addressing feedback from

migrants and staff.

Allocation of the European Border and Coast Guard Corps

- Total Corps: 30,000 officers
- Allocated to Eastern Border Camps: 10,000 officers (approximately one-third)
- Rationale: This allocation ensures a strong presence to manage high migration pressure while leaving sufficient personnel for other EU border regions and operational needs.

Implementation Timeline

- Phase 1 (0-6 months): Site selection, initial construction, and deployment of the first wave of personnel.
- Phase 2 (6-12 months): Full operationalization of camps, including all facilities and services.
- Phase 3 (12-24 months): Ongoing operations, monitoring, and adjustments based on feedback and evaluations.

This action plan aims to balance security and humanitarian needs, ensuring that the EU's eastern border is well-managed and that migrants receive the support they need. The plan ensures robust and effective border management by allocating a significant portion of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps.

Appendix 4 -Rules of Engagement on the use of lethal force at the EU Border

Io Romeno. The Roman frontier defence depended heavily on the psychological effect of presence at the border and on the effective use of rarely applied lethal force for diplomatic purposes. Thus, the Roman empire was well-armed and had staying power.

General Definition of Rules of Engagement (ROE)

Rules of Engagement (ROE) are directives issued by competent authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which forces will initiate and continue combat engagement with other forces encountered. These rules are designed to provide a framework for using force and ensure that actions are consistent with national and international law, military objectives, and political considerations.

Critical Elements of Rules of Engagement

- Circumstances for the Use of Force: Specifies when force can be used, such as in self-

defence or to accomplish a mission.

- Degree of Force: Defines the level of force permissible, ranging from non-lethal to lethal.
- Manner of Engagement: Outlines how force should be applied, including tactics and procedures.
- Conditions and Limitations: Set boundaries on force used to prevent unnecessary escalation and ensure proportionality.
- Authorization and Control: Establishes who has the authority to approve the use of force and under what conditions.

Draft Rules of Engagement for Frontex at the EU Border

Preamble

These Rules of Engagement (ROE) are established to guide Frontex personnel's use of force at the EU border. They are designed to protect EU borders while respecting human rights and international law.

Principles

- Economy of Force: Use the minimum force necessary to achieve the objective.
- Psychological Impact: Consider the psychological effects of Frontex presence on the border and force on both the target and the broader population.
- Purposeful Use of Lethal Force for Diplomatic Coercion: Lethal force should only be used as a last resort and must serve a clear diplomatic purpose²⁰⁶.
- Central Control of the Occasional Use of Force: To ensure consistency and accountability, a central command must authorise all uses of force.
- Types of Use of Force:
 - Non-lethal: Includes physical restraint, tear gas, water cannons, etc.
 - Lethal: Firearms, drones, etc., only under strict conditions.
- Protection Against Threats, Not Destruction of the Opponent: The primary goal is to neutralise threats, not ransom the danger's destruction.

Specific Rules

- Authorization:
 - The designated command authority must authorise the use of force.
 - Lethal force requires higher-level authorisation and must be reported immediately.
- Engagement Criteria:
 - Force may be used in self-defence or defence of others.
 - Force may be used to prevent illegal entry or to apprehend individuals posing a significant threat.
- Proportionality:
 - The level of force used must be proportional to the threat encountered. Non-lethal options must be exhausted before resorting to lethal force.
- Accountability:
 - All incidents involving the use of force must be documented and reviewed.
 - Personnel must undergo regular training on the ROE and human rights considerations.
- Use of Technology:
 - Drones and other surveillance technologies may be used for monitoring and intelligence gathering.
 - Armed drones may only be used under strict conditions and with appropriate authorisation under the remit of the Defence Commissioner as delegated to a decision-making body consisting of the Frontex Executive Secretary, his three deputies, Frontex Commander of the Border Camps, and a representative of the Defense Comissioner.

Review and Approval

These Rules of Engagement are subject to review and approval by the European Parliament. Any

amendments or updates must be communicated to all relevant personnel and incorporated into training programs.

Appendix 5 – Strategy for the European Union’s Borderlands

Creating a comprehensive strategy for the European Union (EU) border areas involves multiple facets, including cross-border cooperation, economic support, security, and migration management. Here’s a proposed strategy:

Cross-Border Cooperation

- **Interreg Programs:** Enhance and expand Interreg programs to address specific challenges in border regions, focusing on economic development, healthcare, and infrastructure.²⁰⁷
- **European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs):** Promote the use of EGTCs to facilitate cooperation on projects like cross-border transport and healthcare services.
- **Joint Task Forces:** Establish joint task forces with neighbouring countries to address common issues such as environmental protection, disaster response, and public health²⁰⁸.

Support for Farming and Settlement

- **Agricultural Subsidies:** Provide targeted subsidies and grants to farmers in border regions to promote sustainable agriculture and rural development.
- **Rural Development Programs:** Implement programs to support the settlement and development of rural areas, including infrastructure improvements and access to services.
- **Innovation Hubs:** Create innovation hubs in border regions to support agricultural technology and practices that can boost productivity and sustainability.

Security and Migration Management

- **Frontex Coordination:** Strengthen Frontex's role in coordinating border security efforts, including establishing more Frontex-MS bases at strategic points.
- **Integrated Border Management:** Develop an integrated border management system with surveillance, intelligence sharing, and rapid response teams.
- **Migration Agreements:** Negotiate agreements with neighboring countries to manage migration flows, ensure humane treatment of migrants, and efficiently process asylum applications.

Outreach by Frontex camps

- **Public Information Campaigns:** Organize campaigns to inform local communities about the role and activities of Frontex, emphasising the importance of border security and cooperation²⁰⁹.
- **Workshops and Training:** Conduct workshops and training sessions for residents on topics such as border security, emergency response, and legal rights²¹⁰.
- **School Programs:** Develop educational programs for schools to teach students about the EU's border management and the importance of cross-border cooperation²¹¹.

Economic and Social Support

- **Local Employment:** Create job opportunities for residents by hiring them for various roles within Frontex operations, such as administrative support, translation services, and logistics.
- **Support for Local Businesses:** Partner with local businesses to supply goods and services needed for Frontex operations, boosting the local economy.
- **Community Projects:** Invest in community projects that improve local infrastructure, such as building or renovating schools, healthcare facilities, and recreational areas.

Cultural and Social Integration

- **Cultural Exchange Programs:** Facilitate cultural exchange programs that promote understanding and cooperation between Frontex personnel and local communities.
- **Community Events:** Host sports tournaments, cultural festivals, and open days at Frontex bases to build trust and foster positive relationships.
- **Support for Vulnerable Groups:** Partner with local NGOs and social services to assist vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees.

These outreach efforts can help build strong, cooperative relationships between Frontex-MS bases and their communities, enhancing security and social cohesion in border areas.

Economic and Trade Relations

- **Trade Incentives:** Offer trade incentives and investment opportunities to neighbouring countries in exchange for cooperation on security and migration management.
- **Economic Zones:** Establish special economic zones in border areas to attract investment and

create jobs, fostering financial stability and growth.

- **Infrastructure Projects:** Invest in cross-border infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, and energy networks to facilitate trade and economic integration.

Support for Border Management Organizations

- **Capacity Building:** Provide border management organisations with training and resources to enhance their surveillance, intelligence, and crisis management capabilities.
- **Technology Integration:** Invest in advanced technologies such as drones, biometric systems, and data analytics to improve border security and management.
- **Community Engagement:** Engage local communities in border areas to foster cooperation and support for border management initiatives.

Environmental and Social Sustainability

- **Environmental Protection:** Implement cross-border environmental protection initiatives to preserve natural resources and biodiversity.
- **Social Programs:** Develop social programs to support the integration of migrants and refugees, including language training, education, and employment opportunities.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Promote cultural exchange programs to build mutual understanding and cooperation between border communities.

This strategy aims to create a balanced approach that addresses security concerns while promoting economic development and social cohesion in the EU's border regions.

Appendix 6 – Features of a Frontex App

Creating a comprehensive Frontex app for travelers entering the EU could include a variety of useful features to ensure a smooth and informed journey. Here's a detailed outline of what such an app might encompass:

Key Features

- **Real-Time Border Processing Times**
 - **Air, Sea, and Land Borders:** Provide up-to-date information on processing times for passengers and vehicles at various border points.
 - **Customs Clearance for Lorries:** Specific information on customs clearance times for lorries

entering the Schengen zone and the EU.

- Entry/Exit System (EES) Information
 - Biometric Data Registration: Guidance on the process of registering biometric data (fingerprints and facial images) for non-EU nationals.
 - Automated Border Checks: Information on how automated border checks work and what travelers need to prepare.
- European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS)
 - Application Process: Step-by-step guide on how to apply for ETIAS authorization.
 - Requirements and Validity: Details on the requirements for ETIAS and its validity period.
- Travel Documentation
 - Required Documents: List of necessary travel documents for different types of travelers (tourists, business travelers, etc.).
 - Document Scanning: Feature to scan and store copies of important travel documents.
- Customs Regulations
 - Allowed and Prohibited Items: Information on what items can be brought into the EU and what is prohibited.
 - Duty-Free Allowances: Details on duty-free allowances for various goods.
- Health and Safety Information
 - Vaccination Requirements: Up-to-date information on vaccination requirements for entering the EU.
 - Travel Advisories: Real-time travel advisories and safety information.
- Language Assistance
 - Translation Services: Built-in translation tool for common phrases and important information in multiple languages.
 - Local Language Tips: Basic language tips and phrases for easier communication.
- Transportation and Accommodation

- Public Transport Information: Details on public transport options from major entry points.
- Accommodation Booking: Integration with booking platforms for hotels and other accommodations.
- User-Friendly Interface
 - Personalized Alerts: Customizable alerts for changes in border processing times, travel advisories, and document requirements.
 - Interactive Maps: Maps showing border crossing points, customs offices, and other relevant locations.
 - Offline Access: Features that allow travelers to access important information even without an internet connection.
 - Peak Hours and Border Crossing Information
 - Real-Time Updates: Provide real-time updates on peak hours at various border crossing points to help EU nationals plan their travel.
 - Historical Data: Display historical data on border crossing times to predict busy periods.
- Issue Reporting and Delay Notifications
 - Report Issues: Allow travelers to report issues or delays they encounter at border crossings directly through the app.
 - Delay Notifications: Send notifications about significant delays or disruptions at specific border points.
- Plain Sailing Visas
 - Visa-Free Travel Information: Detailed information on visa-free travel within the Schengen area for EU nationals.
 - Long-Stay Visas: This section provides guidance on obtaining long-stay visas for EU nationals who plan to stay for extended periods in non-Schengen countries.

Enhanced Features for All Travelers

- Customs and Immigration Assistance
 - Customs Declarations: Simplified process for declaring goods and understanding customs regulations.

- Immigration Procedures: Clear instructions on immigration procedures for different types of travelers.
- Traveler Support and Assistance
 - 24/7 Support: Access to 24/7 customer support for any travel-related issues.
 - Emergency Contacts: Quick access to emergency contacts and local embassy information.
- Interactive Features
 - Interactive Maps: Enhanced maps showing border crossing points, customs offices, and other relevant locations.
 - Personalized Alerts: Customizable alerts for changes in border processing times, travel advisories, and document requirements.
- User Experience Enhancements
 1. Language Support
 - Multilingual Support: Expanded language support to cater to a diverse range of travelers.
 - Translation Services: Built-in translation tools for common phrases and important information.
 - Offline Access
 - Offline Mode: Access to essential information even without an internet connection.
 - User-Friendly Interface
 - Intuitive Design: A user-friendly interface that makes it easy to navigate and find information quickly.

These features would ensure that both EU nationals and non-EU travelers have all the information and support they need for a smooth and hassle-free journey into the EU.

Appendix 7 – Strategic Framework

Creating a strategic framework for inter-agency coordination to combat trafficking in humans, drugs, and arms, as well as investigating the nexus between organized crime and terrorism, involves several key components. Here's a detailed outline:

Strategic Framework

Vision and Objectives

- Vision: To create a secure and coordinated EU ecosystem that effectively combats trafficking and organized crime through seamless inter-agency cooperation.
- Objectives:
 - Enhance operational coordination among EU agencies and Member States.
 - Strengthen intelligence sharing and joint operations.
 - Improve legal and procedural frameworks.
 - Foster international cooperation.

Key Actors

- Frontex: European Border and Coast Guard Agency.
- Europol: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation.
- Eurojust: European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation.
- EMSA: European Maritime Security Agency
- INTERPOL: International Criminal Police Organization.
- National Law Enforcement Agencies: Police, customs, and border control agencies of EU Member States.
- EMPACT: European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats.

Division of Labour

- Frontex: Lead on border security operations, intelligence gathering at borders, and coordination of joint border operations.
- Europol: Central hub for intelligence sharing, coordination of cross-border investigations, and support for Member States in tackling organized crime.
- Eurojust: Facilitate judicial cooperation, support cross-border prosecutions, and ensure legal frameworks are harmonized.
- INTERPOL: Provide global intelligence, support international operations, and facilitate cooperation with non-EU countries.
- National Agencies: Implement operations on the ground, provide local intelligence, and enforce national laws.

Roadmap and Timeline

- Phase 1 (0-6 months):
 - Establish a central coordination unit involving all key actors.
 - Develop a comprehensive intelligence-sharing platform.
 - Conduct joint training sessions for inter-agency teams.
- Phase 2 (6-12 months):
 - Launch pilot joint operations in high-risk areas.
 - Implement standardized procedures for intelligence sharing and joint operations.
 - Begin regular inter-agency meetings to review progress and adjust strategies.
- Phase 3 (12-24 months):
 - Expand joint operations across all EU borders.
 - Integrate new technologies for real-time data sharing and analysis.
 - Conduct periodic evaluations and update the strategic framework as needed.

Metrics for Success

- Operational Metrics:
 - Number of joint operations conducted.
 - Amount of intelligence shared and utilized.
 - Number of arrests and prosecutions resulting from joint operations.
- Impact Metrics:
 - Reduction in trafficking incidents.
 - Disruption of organized crime networks.
 - Improved border security and reduced illegal crossings.
- Coordination Metrics:
 - Frequency and effectiveness of inter-agency meetings.
 - Level of participation and cooperation among agencies.
 - Feedback from participating agencies on coordination efforts.

Inter-Agency Coordination and Cooperation

1. Joint Operational Impact

- Joint Action Days: Regularly scheduled operations targeting specific threats (e.g., trafficking routes, organized crime hubs).
- Task Forces: Specialized units combining resources from multiple agencies to tackle complex cases.
- Shared Resources: Pooling of technical and human resources for more effective operations.

2. Inter-Institutional Coordination

- Regular Meetings: Monthly or quarterly meetings to discuss strategy, review operations, and share intelligence.
- Shared Platforms: Centralized databases and communication tools for real-time information exchange.
- Legal Harmonization: Aligning national laws with EU directives to ensure seamless cooperation.

3. EU and Member State Cooperation

- Funding and Support: EU funding for joint operations and capacity-building initiatives.
- Policy Alignment: Ensuring national policies are in line with EU strategies.
- Public Awareness Campaigns: Joint efforts to raise awareness about the dangers of trafficking and organised crime.

By implementing this strategic framework, the EU and its Member States can enhance their collective ability to combat trafficking and organised crime, ensuring a safer and more secure environment for all.

Capabilities and Operational Impact

Trafficking in Humans

Capabilities:

- Surveillance and Intelligence Gathering: Monitoring known trafficking routes and networks.
- Rescue Operations: Coordinated efforts to rescue victims from traffickers.
- Legal Frameworks: Enforcing laws against human trafficking and prosecuting offenders.
- Victim Support Services: Providing medical, psychological, and legal support to victims.

Operational Impact:

- Disruption of Networks: Breaking up trafficking rings and arresting key figures.
- Victim Rehabilitation: Helping victims reintegrate into society.
- Awareness Campaigns: Educating the public and potential victims about the dangers of

trafficking.

Trafficking in Drugs

Capabilities:

- Border Control: Enhanced screening and detection at borders.
- Undercover Operations: Infiltrating drug trafficking organizations.
- Interdiction: Seizing drugs and arresting traffickers.
- International Cooperation: Working with global partners to dismantle drug networks.

Operational Impact:

- Reduction in Drug Supply: Decreasing the availability of illegal drugs.
- Prosecution of Traffickers: Bringing traffickers to justice.
- Public Health Initiatives: Reducing drug abuse through education and rehabilitation programs.

Trafficking in Arms

Capabilities:

- Tracking and Seizure: Identifying and confiscating illegal arms shipments.
- Intelligence Sharing: Collaborating with international agencies to track arms flows.
- Regulatory Enforcement: Implementing and enforcing arms control regulations.
- Technical Expertise: Utilizing advanced technology to detect and trace firearms.

Operational Impact:

- Reduction in Armed Violence: Lowering the incidence of gun-related crimes.
- Disruption of Supply Chains: Preventing the flow of illegal arms.
- Enhanced Security: Improving overall security and stability in affected regions.

Similarities and Differences

Similarities:

- Intelligence Gathering: All three types of trafficking rely heavily on intelligence to identify and disrupt networks.
- International Cooperation: Effective operations often require collaboration with international partners.
- Legal Enforcement: Strong legal frameworks and enforcement are crucial in combating all forms of trafficking.
- Resource Allocation: Significant resources are needed for surveillance, operations, and victim support.

Differences:

- Nature of Goods: Human trafficking involves people, drug trafficking involves narcotics, and arms trafficking involves weapons.
- Victim Impact: Human trafficking has a direct and severe impact on individuals, while drug and arms trafficking primarily affect public health and security.
- Operational Tactics: The methods used to combat each type of trafficking can vary significantly, such as rescue operations for human trafficking versus interdiction for drug trafficking.

Victim Protection

Human Trafficking Victims:

- Immediate Care: Providing medical and psychological care immediately after rescue.
- Legal Assistance: Helping victims navigate the legal system and secure their rights.

- **Safe Housing:** Offering secure and confidential housing to protect victims from traffickers.
- **Reintegration Programs:** Supporting victims in rebuilding their lives through education, job training, and social services.

Drug Trafficking Victims:

- **Rehabilitation Programs:** Offering drug rehabilitation and addiction treatment services.
- **Support Groups:** Providing access to support groups and counseling.
- **Legal Protection:** Ensuring victims are not prosecuted for crimes committed under duress.

Arms Trafficking Victims:

- **Community Support:** Offering support to communities affected by armed violence.
- **Psychological Services:** Providing counseling and mental health services to victims of gun violence.
- **Reconstruction Aid:** Assisting in the rebuilding of communities and infrastructure damaged by armed conflict.

By addressing these areas, the strategic framework can effectively combat trafficking and provide comprehensive support to victims.

Appendix 8 – Towards an EU Customs Organisation ?

"When coming back home from a holiday or business trip, you will often notice border guards and customs officers working side-by-side at Europe's external borders. Their cooperation is key to combatting cross-border crimes such as drug and weapon smuggling and protect internal security of all EU Member States. Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, too, is developing its collaboration with customs officials from all around Europe. Frontex already cooperates with customs in the fields of coast guard functions, combatting cross-border crime in joint operational activities, as well as training"²¹²The customs organisations of the member states form part of the EIBM system but have yet to be addressed so far in the literature. As the number of border crossings into the EU and the number of arrivals of non-EU nationals is set to increase to exponentially, cooperation between Frontex and the member states' customs organisations will gain in salience.

Enter also the EU Customs Authority.

The EU Customs Union is a cornerstone of European integration, facilitating the free movement of goods within the EU and ensuring a unified voice in international trade. The proposal to build an EU Customs Authority made by the EU Commission in 2023 seeks to address the increasing complexity and volume of customs operations, especially with the rise of e-commerce and the need for compliance with new environmental, security, and digital standards.

Institution-Building

EU Customs Authority: The establishment of a new EU Customs Authority to oversee customs operations across member states

EU Customs Data Hub: A centralized data hub to streamline customs processes and improve data quality and access.

Legislation

Union Customs Code: Revision of the Union Customs Code to reflect the new regulatory framework.

Compliance and Enforcement: Strengthening compliance and enforcement mechanisms to ensure adherence to customs regulations.

Policy Development

Trade Facilitation: Simplifying customs procedures for businesses, especially for trusted traders

Risk Management: Enhancing risk management and customs checks to better protect the EU's economy and citizens.

Digital Transformation: Embracing digital transformation to reduce administrative burdens and improve efficiency.

Sustainability: Promoting sustainable customs practices in line with the EU's environmental goals

The proposal aims to make the EU Customs Union more efficient, secure, and competitive, while also supporting the EU's green and digital transitions.

The linkage between Frontex and the EU Customs Authority is centered around **enhanced cooperation and coordination** to ensure the security and efficiency of the EU's external borders.

Here are some key areas of collaboration:

Joint Operations: Frontex and customs authorities often conduct joint operations to combat cross-border crime, such as smuggling of drugs, weapons, and illegal goods. These operations involve sharing information and intelligence to improve risk analysis and enforcement.

Training and Capacity Building: Frontex collaborates with customs authorities to provide training and capacity-building programs, helping to improve the skills and knowledge of border and customs officers.

Coast Guard Functions: Both organizations work together in coast guard functions to monitor and secure maritime borders, preventing illegal activities at sea.

Technology and Innovation: Frontex and customs authorities leverage innovative technologies, such as the Entry-Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), to enhance border security and streamline traveler processing.

Policy and Regulation: The two organizations coordinate on policy development and regulatory frameworks to ensure a unified approach to border management and customs control.

By working together, Frontex and the EU Customs Authority aim to create a more secure and efficient border management system that will benefit both member states and businesses.

Thus, the proposed EU Customs Authority aims to add value in several key areas:

Simplification of Customs Processes: The authority will streamline customs procedures by introducing a data-driven approach and a centralized EU Customs Data Hub, reducing administrative burdens for businesses.

Enhanced Risk Management: The new framework will improve risk management and customs checks, ensuring better protection against security threats and non-compliant imports.

Cost Savings: By replacing outdated customs IT infrastructure, the centralized data hub is expected to save up to €2 billion annually in operating costs.

Support for Trusted Traders: The "Trust and Check" category will allow the most reliable traders to move goods without active customs intervention, further facilitating trade.

Environmental and Digital Standards: The authority will help enforce environmental, security, social, and digital standards, contributing to the EU's green and digital transitions.

These measures aim to make the EU Customs Union more efficient, secure, and competitive, benefiting both businesses and consumers.

Rationale of an EU Customs organisation

The rationale for establishing a European Customs Organization (ECO) proper would be to enhance the efficiency, security, and compliance of customs operations across the EU. By centralizing and standardizing customs processes, the ECO can better manage the increasing volume of international trade, combat fraud and organized crime, and ensure the safety and security of goods entering the EU.

Institution-Building

1. Establishment of the ECO: The European Customs Authority would oversee the ECO, ensuring uniformity in customs operations across member states.
2. Integration of National Customs Agencies: Integrate national customs agencies into the ECO framework, maintaining their expertise while aligning their operations with EU-wide standards.
3. Resource Allocation: Allocate sufficient resources, including funding, personnel, and technology, to support the ECO's operations.

Legislation

1. Customs Legislation: Develop and implement comprehensive customs legislation that covers all aspects of customs operations, including import/export controls, trade facilitation, and security measures.
2. Regulatory Framework: Establish a clear regulatory framework for the ECO, outlining the roles and responsibilities of the authority and member states.
3. Compliance and Enforcement: Ensure robust compliance and enforcement mechanisms to uphold customs regulations and standards.

Policy Development

1. Trade Facilitation: Develop policies that facilitate legitimate trade while ensuring compliance with customs regulations.
2. Security Measures: Implement policies to enhance the security of the EU's external borders, including advanced surveillance and risk management systems.
3. International Cooperation: Foster international cooperation with non-EU countries to streamline customs procedures and combat cross-border crime.
4. Digital Transformation: Embrace digital transformation by implementing a data-driven approach to customs operations, such as the EU Customs Data Hub.
5. Sustainability: Develop policies that promote sustainable customs practices, contributing to the EU's environmental goals.

By following this strategy, the European Customs Organization can effectively manage the

complexities of modern customs operations, ensuring the smooth flow of trade while maintaining security and compliance.

Evolution of the EU Customs Authority

The EU Customs Authority has undergone significant changes over the years, adapting to new challenges and technological advancements.

Key areas for further evolution include:

Digital Transformation: Implementing advanced digital systems for customs declarations and processing

Risk Management: Enhancing risk assessment and management capabilities to better identify and address potential threats

Simplified Procedures: Streamlining customs procedures to reduce administrative burdens on businesses

Global Trade Integration: Adapting to changing global trade patterns and geopolitical realities

Pros and Cons of an EU Customs Organisation Proper Pros:

- Trade Facilitation: Simplifies trade within the EU by eliminating customs duties and checks at internal borders
- Economic Integration: Promotes economic cooperation and integration among member states
- Common External Tariff: Strengthens the EU's negotiating power in international trade deals
- Security: Enhances security by implementing uniform customs controls at external borders

Cons:

- Loss of Sovereignty: Member states cannot negotiate individual trade deals
- Administrative Burden: Potential for increased administrative complexity and costs
- Trade Diversion: May lead to trade diversion, where trade is redirected to less efficient producers within the union.

Desired Relationship and Coordination

The relationship between the EU Customs Authority and businesses should be based on mutual transparency, fairness, and cooperation

Key aspects include:

- Trust and Check Traders: Establishing a category of trusted traders who can benefit from simplified customs procedures
- Single Interface: Providing a single online portal for customs declarations to reduce administrative burdens
- Data Hub: Implementing a centralized data hub to compile and analyze customs information

Assuaging Businesses and Member States

To address concerns about the need for development in the e-commerce sector and strengthened tax governance, the EU Customs Authority should:

Support E-commerce: Simplify customs procedures for e-commerce to facilitate the growth of online trade and the development of e-commerce markets in the EU.

Enhance Tax Governance: Strengthen tax governance to ensure fair and efficient customs duties and taxes collection.

Engage Stakeholders: Actively engage with businesses and member states to address their concerns and gather feedback.

By focusing on these areas, the EU Customs Authority can better support the development of the e-commerce sector and ensure robust tax governance within the EU. For the member states to feel comfortable about strengthening tax governance, the management of the EU's evolving customs union must be consolidated. The further strengthening of the EU customs authority will contribute to this objective without neglecting the added complexity to the analysis of the policy-making system, even as a recruitment pool of member state customs officials and frontier guards is being established and enmeshed and cross-fertilize each other in a well-structured manner and in a target-rich environment.

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Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

While preparing this piece, the author asked AI BING several questions to control a huge amount of empirical material better and to provide structure to the analysis. AI analysis is a digital method based on data processing, predictive analysis and automation of data processing. By processing and retrieving information stored digitally, it leads to knowledge maps, enhancing analytical insights, more accurate predictions and communication towards better problem-solving in the network society. AI-analysis can be compared to a report presenting findings that provide context and narrative around the data, explaining what it means and why it is essential. The information is static and provides a snapshot at a specific time, rather than continuously updating. Reports come with human conclusions and interpretations, whereas AI analysis often consists of personalized context on human prompts. AI wields autonomous power, and knowledge maps are the result of work processes that are more often than not non-sequential and non-linear. Virtual collaborative structures should not be mistaken for free lunches or used to cut slack in the camp of the opponent or inside your organization nor lead to organisational capture on the cheap, nor reduce the researcher to a monad. The exchange involves a reciprocal relationship whereby acquisition of information turned knowledge allows decision-makers to concentrate on human relationships and strategic activities in return for remuneration and reward of the researcher, unless you prefer the square to take charge over

the tower. I also used Paperpal and Grammarly to control for linguistic and grammatical errors. In-between using these services, the author reviewed and edited the content and clashed with DG Home over document access. I take full responsibility for the publication's content.