

European Border and Coast Guard: final approval

On 14 September 2016, the Council gave its final approval to the European Border and Coast Guard. The adoption of the regulation, which the Council approved by written procedure, paves the way for the Border and Coast Guard to begin its activities in mid-October.

Robert Kaliňák, Minister for the Interior of Slovakia and President of the Council, said "I welcome the speed and the efficiency with which the Council and the Parliament have acted on this important issue. The way we manage our external borders directly affects the entire Schengen area, including its internal borders. The European Border and Coast Guard will help us better face today's challenges together. Only with effective management of our external borders can we return to normality within Schengen. There is no other way."

The main role of the European Border and Coast Guard is to help provide integrated border management at the external borders. It will ensure the effective management of migration flows and provide a high level of security for the EU. At the same time it will help safeguard free movement within the EU and respect fully fundamental rights.

It will consist of a European Border and Coast guard agency (the current Frontex agency with expanded tasks) and those national authorities responsible for border management. The main focus of its activities will be the establishment of an operational strategy for border management and the coordination of assistance from all member states.

The tasks required to carry this out include:

- drafting of vulnerability assessment of member states' border control capacity;
- organising joint operations and rapid border interventions to strengthen the capacity of the member states control the external borders, and to tackle challenges at the external border resulting from illegal immigration or cross-border crime
- assisting the Commission in the coordination of support teams when a member state faces disproportionate migratory pressures at specific points on their external border;
- ensuring a practical response in cases requiring urgent action at the external borders;
- providing technical and operational assistance in support of search and rescue operations for persons in distress at sea during border surveillance operations;
- helping establish a rapid reserve pool of at least 1500 border guards;
- appointing liaison officers of the agency in member states;
- organising, coordinating and conducting return operations and interventions;
- promoting operational cooperation between member states and third countries on border management.

As part of an overall improvement in coast guard functions, there will be better cooperation between competent agencies. For this reason, the mandates of the European Fisheries Control Agency and the European Maritime Safety Agency have been aligned to that of the new European Border Guard.

The European Border and Coast Guard will start its activities once the regulation enters into force on 6 October 2016 (20 days after its publication in the Official Journal). The provisions related to the setting up of the reserve and technical equipment pools will enter into force two months after the rest of the regulation and those related to the return pools, three months after the rest of the regulation.

[European Border and Coast Guard regulation](#)
[Amended European Maritime Safety Agency regulation](#)
[Amended European Fisheries Control Agency regulation](#)
[Strengthening the EU's external borders](#)

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