



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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EUROSUR kicks off: new tools to save migrants' lives and prevent crime at EU borders

On 2 December 2013 the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) becomes operational. EUROSUR will make an important contribution to saving lives of those who put themselves in danger to reach Europe's shores. It will also equip the EU and its Member States with better tools to prevent cross-border crimes, such as trafficking in human beings or trafficking in drugs, while at the same time detect and provide assistance to small migrant boats in distress, in full compliance with European and international obligations, including the principle of non-refoulement.

"I welcome the launch of EUROSUR. It is a truly European response to save the lives of migrants travelling in overcrowded and unseaworthy vessels, to avoid further tragedies in the Mediterranean and also to stop speed boats transporting drugs. All these initiatives are highly dependent on a timely information exchange and coordinated efforts between the national and European agencies. EUROSUR provides that framework, in full respect of international obligations," said Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs.

EUROSUR will be operational in 30 countries in total. In this first phase, it will become operational in 19 countries, the 18 EU Member States at the southern and eastern external borders and the Schengen associated country Norway. As of 1 December 2014, the remaining 8 EU Member States and 3 Schengen associated countries will join EUROSUR. Ireland and the United Kingdom do not take part in the Schengen cooperation and therefore also not in EUROSUR.

Interagency cooperation, information exchange and joint response

The backbone of EUROSUR is formed by 'national coordination centres', via which all national authorities with a responsibility for border surveillance (e.g. border guard, police, coast guard, navy) are required to cooperate and to coordinate their activities. Information on incidents occurring at the external land and sea borders, the status and position of patrols as well as analytical reports and intelligence are being shared via 'national situational pictures' among these national authorities.

This cooperation and information exchange allows the concerned Member State to react much faster to any incidents concerning irregular migration and cross-border crime or relating to a risk to the lives of migrants.

The EU border agency Frontex plays an important role in bringing together and analysing in the 'European situational picture' information collected by Member States, thereby detecting changing routes or new methods used by criminal networks. This European situational picture also contains information collected during Frontex joint operations and on the pre-frontier area. Furthermore, Frontex supports Member States in detecting small vessels by closely cooperating with other EU agencies, such as the European Maritime Safety Agency and the EU Satellite Centre.

EUROSUR allows Member States to react faster not only to single incidents, but also to critical situations occurring at the external borders. For this purpose the external land and sea borders have been divided into 'border sections' and a low, medium or high 'impact level' is being attributed to each of them, similar to a traffic light. This approach allows to identify hotspots at the external borders, with a standardised reaction at national, and if needed, European level.

Special emphasis has been given to ensure the compliance with fundamental rights and obligations under international law. For instance priority must be given to vulnerable persons, such as children, unaccompanied minors or persons in need of urgent medical assistance. The [EUROSUR Regulation](#) clearly stipulates that Member States and Frontex need to fully comply with the principles of non-refoulement and human dignity when dealing with persons in need of international protection. Since the exchange of information in EUROSUR is restricted to operational information, such as the location of incidents and patrols, the possibility to exchange personal data is very limited.

Useful links

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[Infographics](#) on EUROSUR

Audio-visual material on EUROSUR:

[Link](#) to Video

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Cecilia Malmström's [website](#)

Follow Commissioner Malmström on [Twitter](#)

DG Home Affairs [website](#)

Follow DG Home Affairs on [Twitter](#)

Contacts :

[Michele Cercone](#) (+32 2 298 09 63)

[Tove Ernst](#) (+32 2 298 67 64)