

# COVID-19

## Response of EU Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) agencies

### Supporting Member States and EU institutions to:


- ▶ meet the operational challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ▶ gather expertise and provide analyses; and
- ▶ foster dialogue and learning between key stakeholders.





# COVID-19 RESPONSE

## Summary of main actions taken by EU Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) agencies




During the pandemic, JHA agencies have supported Member States and EU institutions in ...

	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
<p><b>Promoting and protecting fundamental rights and gender equality</b></p>  <p>The logos for EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality), FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), and EUROJUST (European Union Agency for Asylum) are displayed vertically.</p>	<p>Immediate support to stakeholders by establishing a dedicated webpage with <b>statistics</b> and EIGE's resources to highlight the <b>different realities women and men are facing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic</b> (EIGE)</p> <p>Association with the <b>EAW coordination group</b> initiated by the Commission to facilitate exchanges of information in case of urgent need (e.g. COVID-19, ECJ rulings ...) (Eurojust, FRA)</p>	<p>Study on the implications of COVID-19 for <b>women victims of intimate partner violence</b> (EIGE)</p> <p><b>Analysis of the economic impacts of COVID-19 from a gender perspective</b> (EIGE)</p> <p><b>Monthly bulletins</b> (April-July 2020) on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on fundamental rights across the 27 EU Member States - in different areas of daily life, including work, education, travel and the judicial system. In addition to declarations of states of emergency, the bulletins look at certain population groups disproportionately affected by the pandemic, such as people with disabilities, older people, detainees, homeless people and victims of domestic violence; at issues such as xenophobic speech, harassment and violent attacks, disinformation and fake news relating to the virus; <u>Bulletin 2</u> had a special focus on <b>contact tracing apps</b>; <u>Bulletin 3</u> had a special focus on the</p>	<p><b>Online public debate</b> on fair technologies to safeguard public health, drawing from FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey data and monthly bulletin on the impact of COVID-19 and contributions to public hearings of the European Parliament on the topic (FRA)</p> <p>Joint statement calling on the EU and Member States to bolster <b>measures to protect victims of domestic violence</b> (FRA and EIGE)</p> <p><b>'Stories of hope'</b> on social media from civil society partners, showing how they give essential support to at risk communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (FRA)</p>

	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
		<p><b>fundamental rights of older persons</b> in relation to responses to COVID-19 (FRA)</p> <p>Sex-disaggregated <b>statistics</b> that reflect the <b>impact of the pandemic on women and men</b> (EIGE)</p> <p>Gender impacts of COVID-19 on health as part of <b>Gender Equality Index 2021</b> (EIGE)</p> <p>Dedicated <b>research</b> on COVID-19 related <b>fundamental rights challenges with respect to Roma</b> (FRA)</p>	
<p><b>Managing Large-scale IT Systems for Internal Security</b></p> 	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic did not affect the <b>continuity of the operations of the core systems</b> managed by the Agency. All systems (Eurodac, SIS II and VIS) have been available to Member States without interruption nor major incidents (eu-LISA)</p> <p>All <b>meetings of the governance bodies of the Agency</b> took place as planned in videoconference format without any cancellations (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>Thorough <b>analysis and various documents on the impact of the COVID-19</b> pandemic on its operations and the development of <b>new systems</b> and their foreseen <b>interoperability</b> (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Additional <b>studies</b> to define the long term strategy of the Agency subsequent to the pandemic and the lessons learned (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>Daily information on the status of its operations provided to the European Commission (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Two <b>surveys</b> to Member States to collect information <b>concerning the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their national planning</b> with regard to EES, ETIAS and the Interoperability package (eu-LISA)</p> <p><b>Public video-statement on the importance of SIS</b> (to mark its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary) in ensuring through digital technologies a stronger and safer Europe and the functioning of the Schengen area (marking its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary), which was put under certain test during the COVID-19 pandemic, but sustained the challenge seamlessly (eu-LISA)</p>

	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
<p><b>Managing EU external borders, asylum and migration</b></p>  <p>The logos shown are: Frontex (blue text with a stylized 'X'), EASO (blue circle with yellow stars and 'EASO' text), Europol (blue and yellow stylized 'E' and 'POL'), FRA (blue text with a scale of justice icon and 'EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS' below), and Eurojust (blue text with a scale of justice icon above).</p>	<p>Uninterrupted <b>support to asylum authorities</b> in Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Malta continued (EASO)</p> <p><b>Continued operational support</b> to the Member States along the EU's <b>external land and sea borders</b> and <b>field deployments</b> in Greece, Italy, Spain, Cyprus and the Balkans region, with about 1000 officers deployed (Frontex)</p> <p>Support to <b>relocation of unaccompanied minors</b> from Greece to participating Member States (EASO)</p> <p><b>Establishment of the European Border and Coast Guard Standing Corps</b>, Europe's first uniformed law enforcement service: First 286 officers from 21 MS recruited (Frontex)</p> <p><b>Health and safety of all officers deployed to operations is of top priority.</b> Frontex acquired <b>two tonnes of protective equipment</b> (including 30 000 face masks) and established a <b>strategic buffer of 250 000 masks</b> in case of a sudden PPE equipment market shortage (Frontex)</p> <p>With commercial flights suspended and land borders closed, Frontex transports the deployed officers with charter planes to ensure operational continuity and uses its planes to ship PPE equipment to all its operations (Frontex)</p>	<p>Dissemination of a <b>daily COVID-19 Situation Report</b> with information from open sources and contributions from the Joint Research Centre which is shared with National Frontex Points of Contact, the Commission and other European institutions (Frontex)</p> <p>Dissemination of a <b>regular COVID-19 Situation Report</b> with an outline of internal and external border control measures, including a map of COVID-19 <b>restrictions</b> imposed by the Member States (Frontex)</p> <p>Analysis of <b>how the asylum and reception authorities of EU+ Member States adapted their working methods</b> concerning remote asylum interviews, online asylum registrations, Dublin transfers, remote court hearings and management of reception centres, including the issuing of recommendations (EASO)</p> <p>Publication of the <b>Annual Risk Analysis for 2020 which provides a comprehensive picture of the situation</b> at Europe's external borders and cross-border crime challenges, including the effect of the pandemic on border control (Frontex)</p> <p>Reports on the <b>impact on asylum and reception authorities, on asylum trends and impact of travel bans</b> and other</p>	<p><b>Network Meetings</b> continued by videoconference, addressing the challenges arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (EASO)</p> <p><b>Exchanging situational updates</b> with international partners and preparing new cooperation and capacity building activities <b>covering health-related measures at the borders</b> (Frontex)</p> <p><b>Focus Group on migrants' smuggling initiative</b> launched during the pandemic to provide a platform for prosecutors to exchange good practices and discuss issues on this topic (Eurojust)</p>

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	<p>Continued support to <b>pre-return activities</b> and <b>return operations</b>. Regular updates of restrictive measures adopted by non-EU countries and air companies. COVID-19 tests offered to ensure safety and facilitate the return to ordinary return activities in Member States (Frontex)</p> <p>Introduction of <b>remote interpretation</b> methods in operational areas (Frontex)</p> <p><b>Europol Guest Officers</b> continued to be deployed <b>in the hotspots</b> (Greece, Italy, Cyprus), performing Secondary Security Checks where these were necessary (Europol)</p> <p><b>Monitoring migratory developments</b> within the Schengen Area (Frontex)</p> <p><b>Visits to the Eastern Aegean islands</b> in Greece to observe the treatment of new arrivals and their fundamental rights situation in the COVID-19 context (FRA)</p> <p><b>Support to capacity-building projects</b>, such as those in the Western Balkans or the <i>Southern Neighbourhood</i> using video-conferencing (Frontex)</p> <p><b>Joint guidelines on health and safety</b> updated with specific COVID-19-related measures to ensure the safety of personnel deployed in operations (EASO, Frontex and Europol)</p>	<p>emergency measures, resulting in a reduced number of asylum applications lodged in the EU+ and a dramatic cut in asylum applications in Europe (EASO)</p> <p>Reporting on <b>fundamental rights challenges in the area of asylum, migration and borders</b> as part of FRA’s regular migration bulletins (FRA)</p> <p><b>Frontex Operational Guidance on the lifting of temporary restrictions on non-essential travel to the EU imposed due to COVID-19</b>, prepared as a practical follow-up to the Council Recommendation of 30 June 2020 (Frontex)</p> <p><b>FRA-Council of Europe note</b> on key human and fundamental rights at borders, also covering special measures in case of restrictions due to public health emergencies- published on 27 March 2020 (FRA)</p> <p>Contribution to <b>sanitary guidelines for border control</b> during the pandemic (Frontex)</p> <p>2020 <b>updated compilation of search and rescue vessels</b> in the Mediterranean Sea, held in ports due to COVID-19 restrictions or other reasons (FRA)</p>	

	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
<p><b>Informing policy and practice on drugs and drug addiction in Europe</b></p>  <p>European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction</p>	<p>Immediate support to stakeholders by establishing a dedicated set of online resources and a briefing on the <b>implications of COVID-19 for people who use drugs and drug service providers</b> (EMCDDA)</p> <p>Continuation to operate the <b>EU Early Warning System</b> (EWS) on NPS (EMCDDA)</p>	<p>An <b>online</b> (continuously updated) <b>COVID-19 topic hub page and a resources page</b>, including <b>advice</b> to people who use drugs and professionals working in the drugs field (e.g. national bodies, associations, networks and NGOs) (EMCDDA)</p> <p><b>Monthly briefings</b> resulting from an EMCDDA ‘trendspotter’ study, launched in April to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the drug situation and responses to it. <b>Two trendspotter briefings:</b> <u>Briefing 1</u>: The impact of COVID-19 on drug services and help seeking in Europe; <u>Briefing 2</u>: The impact of COVID-19 on patterns of drug use and drug-related harms in Europe (EMCDDA)</p> <p><b>Analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on drug markets</b> in 15 <i>European Neighbourhood Policy</i> countries is ongoing (EMCDDA)</p>	<p>A <b>Mini European Web Survey on Drugs: COVID-19</b> launched in April (EMCDDA)</p> <p><b>Launch of a survey</b> investigating the impact of COVID-19 on people who use drugs, drug markets and challenges for drug service provision in the Western Balkans (EMCDDA)</p>
<p><b>Fighting cross-border crime</b></p>  <p>EUROJUST</p>  <p>EUROPOL</p>	<p>Uninterrupted <b>24/7 support to national judicial and law enforcement authorities</b> to detect, investigate and prosecute serious cross border crime (Eurojust and Europol)</p> <p>Uninterrupted <b>support to Joint Investigation Teams (JITs)</b> (Eurojust and Europol)</p> <p>The signature of 18 <b>new JITs agreements</b>, publication of two new</p>	<p><b>Strategic analysis and thematic reports</b> on how criminals are adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic, including in relation to <b>cybercrime, disinformation, counterfeits, terrorism, migrant smuggling, financial and economic crime</b> and <b>Online Child Sexual exploitation</b> (Europol)</p> <p>Mapping of the main <b>practical and legal issues</b> relating to the issuing of <b>judicial</b></p>	<p>Series of <b>online events for prosecutors and investigative judges</b> organised via secure video conferencing, including for the correspondents of the <i>European Judicial Network</i>, the <i>European Intellectual Property Prosecutor’s Network</i>, the <i>Joint Investigation Teams Network</i> and the <i>European Judicial Cybercrime Network</i> (Eurojust)</p>



European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

**FRONTEx**

## MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

calls for proposals for proposals for **JITs funding and adjustments of funding procedures** in reaction to practitioners needs. Receipt of 33 new funding applications in those two calls approval of 41 requests for extensions of JIT grants ([Eurojust](#))

**200 mobile offices** provided to operational law enforcement staff ([Europol](#))

**80 coordination meetings** were organised via secure video links and **six joint action days** were supported by the deployment of **Eurojust remote coordination centre**. Full support to **965 new criminal cross-border cases registered** at Eurojust, including **128 COVID-19 related cases** (March-Jun). 221 cases involved third States of which 25 COVID-19 related cases. Liaison Prosecutors registered 70 cases and the UK 12 cases ([Eurojust](#))

Special **operational rooms** prepared at Europol HQ to continue large-scale operations on High Value Targets ([Europol](#))

**Guidelines on Operational Support** during COVID-19 pandemic to guide the execution of core business activities during the physical restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 emergency. The guidelines covered the **use of secure**

## GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS

**cooperation instruments** such as **European Arrest Warrants (EAWs), European Investigation Orders (EIOs)** or requests for mutual legal assistance (MLA) during the pandemic, as well as with procedures for the **transfer of sentenced persons and freezing and confiscation orders** ([Eurojust and the European Judicial Network](#))

Supplement to the *European Drug Market Report* on **the impact** of the pandemic on the **drug market and organised crime** ([EMCDDA and Europol joint publication](#))

Special **report** COVID-19 and drugs – **Drug supply via darknet markets** to understand the impact of these developments on drug markets ([EMCDDA](#))

**Production of an analysis on COVID-19 – related cross border crime scenarios** including smuggling of forged medical devices, tests and sanitary products for the use of EU Member States border control authorities ([Frontex](#))

## FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING

**Public prevention and awareness safety campaigns** on the ‘new normal’ after COVID-19, cyber safety at home and safe teleworking ([Europol](#))

‘Virtual’ organisation of the **5<sup>th</sup> EU Day Against Impunity** focussing on the emerging best practice to **combine terrorism and war crime criminal charges** ([Eurojust](#))

Facilitating good practice exchanges of law enforcements COVID-19 Out of Mandate related issues (via **Europol Platform for Experts – EPE**) ([Europol](#))




Support to Commission in analysing business needs concerning **digitalisation of judicial cooperation**, as revealed by the pandemic ([Digital Criminal Justice – Eurojust](#))

A dedicated web page on COVID-19 and **drug markets** ([EMCDDA](#))

Development of a **Quick Check Brochure and Operational Handbook** for Advanced Level Document Officers to support them in the fight against **document fraud** ([Frontex](#))

	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
	<p><b>video conferencing systems</b> to allow prosecutors to still meet and discuss cooperation strategies on common cases during the pandemic (Eurojust)</p> <p><b>Connection</b> of the 2000<sup>th</sup> competent authority to the <b>Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA)</b> (Europol)</p> <p>Launch of the <b>European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC)</b> on 5 June) (Europol)</p> <p>In March <b>Serbia seconded a Liaison Prosecutor</b> to Eurojust and in June <b>Georgia</b> (Eurojust)</p> <p>Internally, a <b>new video conferencing application</b> (Ops Talk) was introduced, which also allows for the exchange of operational data up to the classification level EU Restricted (Europol)</p> <p>Staff provided since day one of the lock down with <b>technical equipment and secure connection</b> to work remotely (Eurojust)</p> <p><b>Creation of a forum to discuss the state of play of ongoing operational activities</b> with the Member States and Schengen Associated Countries in order to better coordinate the activities during COVID-19 (Frontex)</p>		



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	<p>Launch of a pilot project on the <b>Investigation Support Activities for Cross-Border Crime</b> focusing on countering drugs trafficking at sea and continued support to the Member States provided remotely (Frontex)</p> <p><b>Document fraud detections</b> - remote support to Advanced Level Document Officers who work in operational areas and helping to report document fraud (Frontex)</p> <p><b>Continuation of Operation Tayrona</b>, targeting trafficking of drugs at sea within the EU Policy Cycle/EMPACT (Europol and Frontex)</p>		
<p><b>Providing training</b></p>   	<p>Enable Member States to continue <b>training and education of law enforcement officials</b> among lockdown conditions through utilisation and prioritisation of CEPOL's available e-infrastructure and online tools (CEPOL)</p> <p>Contributions to awareness raising sessions on the <b>fundamental rights impact of COVID-19</b> (FRA)</p>	<p>Completed <b>analysis of operational training needs</b> that have become apparent during this crisis within the <b>EMPACT</b> structure (CEPOL)</p> <p>Ongoing <b>analysis of operational training needs</b> on domestic violence and child abuse as a consequence of COVID-19 lockdown (CEPOL)</p>	<p>On top of its own outreach, CEPOL provided infrastructure to <b>train on-line 2796 law enforcement officials</b> by 6 Member States during this period (CEPOL)</p> <p><b>Online training</b> - 3 380 individuals (5780 participations) enrolled (Jan-Jun) (EASO)</p> <p>Dedicated <b>webinars</b> designed: on remote personal interview, supporting staff wellbeing during COVID-19 and communication and provision of information to asylum seekers (EASO)</p> <p>Temporary replacing <b>face-to-face training sessions</b> as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic and adaptations of</p>

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 <p>FRONTX</p> <p>EUROPOL</p> <p>EUROJUST</p> <p>FRA EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS</p>			<p>training sessions which continued to be delivered via webinars (EASO)</p> <p>A new series of <b>webinars</b> to help those working in the drugs field deal with COVID-19. These are held every second Wednesday of the month. Six virtual seminars have been organised to date (EMCDDA)</p> <p>Launch of <b>online courses for border and coast guard officers</b> (Frontex)</p> <p><b>Online awareness course for border guards to deal with infectious diseases</b> while performing border checks and surveillance (Frontex)</p> <p><b>New webinar series</b> on topical matters affected by COVID-19 (CEPOL), including a webinar for law enforcement on the <b>impact of COVID-19 on EU drug markets</b> (CEPOL, EMCDDA and Europol)</p> <p>CEPOL Online conference on “<b>Policing the pandemic</b>”, in co-operation with the Croatian Presidency (CEPOL, Eurojust, Europol, Frontex)</p>