

Our internal ref. STRAT/EUA/2026

**Mr Michael Shotter**

Director of Directorate C - Borders, Migration and Anti-Smuggling  
DG HOME, European Commission

Dear Mr Shotter,

In reference to your inquiry, please see below the necessary elements for a concise reply to the questions to written question [E-001620/2026] on: “Frontex participation in Finnish pushback exercise”, submitted by MEP Özlem Demirel:

*“In March 2026, the Finnish Border Guard carried out a four-day training exercise at three closed border crossings with Russia, an exercise in which the European Gendarmerie Force (EUROGENDFOR) was involved for the first time. The aim was to test a new border protection law that empowers authorities to push back asylum seekers and use force under certain conditions. Frontex also participated and, according to its own statements, undertook tasks such as mobile surveillance, weapons and document checks, as well as the securing of transports.*

*1. What were the objectives and purposes of the exercise from Frontex’s point of view, and how does the Commission assess its compatibility with the fundamental right to asylum and the principle of non-refoulement?*

The objective of Frontex’s participation in the exercise was to support the Finnish authorities in a fictional migration crisis scenario by providing operational, logistical, and technical assistance. The purpose was to test the readiness, efficiency, and level of coordination of Frontex units in seamless cooperation with national authorities in an emergency context.

We would like to highlight that the organising authorities invited also the Fundamental Rights Office of Frontex (FRO) to observe this exercise. As per understanding of FRO and as explained by the organising authorities, the objective of the contingency exercise was to “gain experiences in the implementation of the national law (Act on temporary measures to Combat Instrumentalised Migration (482/2024)”. It must be also noted that while this Act was adopted in July 2024, it has not been activated so far, and the exercise was a simulation of its theoretical implementation.

*2. What specific tasks did Frontex take on during the exercise, and how do the Commission and Frontex explain the participation in an exercise explicitly aimed at trialling pushbacks and the use of force?*

During the exercise, Frontex Standing Corps officers carried out tasks consistent with their standard operational mandate and training. These activities fall within the scope of the applicable Frontex Operational Plan for Finland and reflect tasks that Standing Corps officers perform routinely in joint operations. Standing Corps officers were deployed in a border surveillance capacity, with tasks including mobile surveillance, support to local readiness units, weapon search support, passport and document checks, information gathering at first point of entry, security cordons for Finnish medical and first aid units, and escort support for transport to migrant support centres.

Frontex's participation did not extend to planning or directing the exercise, nor to implementing the simulated measures derived from the Finnish Act on temporary measures to combat instrumentalised migration (482/2024). That Act has not been activated, and the scenario remained a simulation throughout.

The Fundamental Rights Office was invited by the organising authorities to observe the exercise. Fundamental Rights monitors were present at several locations and observed the conduct of the live exercise within their mandate under Articles 109 and 110 of the EBCG Regulation. Their presence served a practical purpose: it allowed the FRO to assess the potential fundamental rights implications of any future activation of the Act and to advise the Agency accordingly.

Since Frontex was not the organiser of this exercise, questions about the overall exercise design, the simulated use-of-force scenarios, and the decision to model the exercise on the provisions of the Act are best directed to the Finnish authorities.

*3. Which Member States and other actors were involved in the exercise, and what were the respective percentage shares accounted for by the Frontex contingent, the forces deployed by EUROGENDFOR, and the Finnish and Estonian officials?"*

Since Frontex was not the organiser of this exercise, we do not have an overview of which other authorities participated or with what assets they did so. The Finnish authorities may be better placed to provide this information.

We remain available for further clarifications, should these be required.

Yours sincerely,

*Electronically signed*

Hans Leijtens  
Executive Director

CC: Angelina Gros Tchorbadjiyska