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## **Business Opportunities in the Defense and Surveillance of Mediterranean and Eastern Borders of EU**

### **Background**

EU countries are a popular destination for illegal migration of refugees and asylum seekers due to cohesive high standards of protection of property rights and of relatively high living standards. Illegal immigration to the EU has different characteristics, mainly infiltration attempts through existing border crossings (land border crossings, airports and sea ports), and illegal infiltration attempts between these border crossings.

The Arab Spring, which started in 2011 in some Middle East countries and North Africa, increased the phenomenon of illegal immigration, which the European Union has been dealing for many years. In addition to these countries, one can also specify other source countries for refugees in countries bordering on the east side of EU and North Africa.

According to FRONTEX report<sup>1</sup>, in 2014 detections of illegal border-crossing reached a new record with more than 280,000 detections. This was twice as many as the previous record of 140,000 detections in 2011, the year of the Arab Spring. This unprecedented number of migrants crossing illegally the external border has roots in the fighting in Syria that have created the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War. Indeed, most of the detections at the borders concern migrants from Syria, who later applied for asylum within the EU.

The nature of the eastern border of the European Union was changed almost completely as a result of addition of countries joining it. Over 10 countries (mainly from Eastern and Central Europe) joined the Union in as of late. These changes fundamentally altered the nature of the eastern border of the European Union. The current configured extends between Finland and Bulgaria to the North and Greece in the South and in immigration and illegal immigration through. The borders of the new Member States with the

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<sup>1</sup> FRONTEX – Annual Risk Analysis 2015.



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countries of the former Soviet Union, and in many respects part of the eastern border is a sort of buffer between the relative prosperity of the West and the poverty of the Soviet republics. The phenomenon of illegal migration to EU countries has different properties that are primarily log on attempts through the existing border crossings (land border crossings, airports and sea ports). Alongside these infiltration attempts and illegal infiltration between these border crossings, this is where we focus and this is the nature of this project.

The eastern border of the EU is one of the favorite areas for illegal immigration into the EU countries. In this field there have been resources invested, many technologies been enabled, but additional technologies are required. There is a need to improve the ability to cope with this situation, as well as with Greece which threatens the stability of Europe, its economy and its ability to defend and monitor against infiltration of terrorist threats.

The eastern borders include two main routes:

- **The Western Balkan** - This route remained largely a function of the transiting flow of migrants that enter the EU at the Greek-Turkish borders and later continue towards other Member States through the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. This is reflected in the large number of detections of Afghans and Syrians at the Hungarian land border, whose number increased five-fold compared to 2013, like they increased in the Aegean Sea.
- **The Eastern Land Border**- This route is, in effect, an amalgam of detections of illegal border-crossing reported by Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. Despite the total length of all the border sections, detections on this route tend to be lower than on other routes, possibly due to the long distances between major hubs and many countries of origin. Detections of illegal border-crossing remained stable (approximately 1,300 detections per year) in 2014, most detections were reported at the land border between Lithuania and Belarus.

By contrast to other routes, a large proportions of these detections were connected with the smuggling of goods rather than with illegal immigration. Detections of illegal border-crossing are also kept at low levels along this route thanks to the surveillance efforts of neighboring third countries, in particular the Russian Federation and Belarus.



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The second area, **the Mediterranean basin**, is most intensity activity of illegal immigrations attempts compared to the eastern borders. In the Mediterranean, there are three main routes:

- **Eastern Mediterranean route** (to Greece, Bulgaria and Cyprus). Since data collection began in early 2008, the Eastern Mediterranean has maintained its status as a hotspot of illegal migration. In 2014, more than 50,000 detections were reported from the area, representing 18% of the EU total. This was twice as many as in 2013, mostly due to a sharp increase in detections in the Aegean Sea (from more than 11,000 in 2013 to more than 43,000 in 2014). Detections remained comparatively lower at the Bulgarian and Greek land borders with Turkey (more than 12,000 in 2013 and fewer than 6,000 in 2014).
- **Central Mediterranean route** (to Italia and Malta). In 2014, more than 170, 000 migrants arrived illegally to the EU through the Central Mediterranean route. As in 2013 and in 2011, the Central Mediterranean route was the main area for illegal border-crossing into the EU, representing 60% of all detections in 2014.
- **Western Mediterranean route** (to Spain). In 2014 there were less than 8,000 detections of illegal border-crossing in the Western Mediterranean region, which consists of several areas of the southern Spanish coast and the land borders of Ceuta and Melilla. This sum shows an increase of 15% compared to the total of less than 7,000 reported in 2013.

Like in 2013, the first half of 2014 showed most detections being reported at the land border, mostly from Melilla. In fact, the Spanish authorities reported several violent attempts to cross the fence.

#### **In summary,**

Intrusion attempts of illegal immigrants to EU countries are expanding, being more complex and sophisticated. Despite the efforts and resources invested in numerous projects designed to eradicate the phenomenon, success is partial at best and some countries have emerged literally helpless. There is a high likelihood that also terror organizations may try to take advantage of the situation. Now imagine ISIS among those and the picture looks grim.