

OPERATIONS DIVISION

JOINT OPERATIONS UNIT

Concept of reinforced joint operation tackling the migratory flows towards Italy: JO EPN-Triton

to better control irregular migration and contribute to SAR in the Mediterranean Sea

Approved by

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Signature

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ANNEX

1. ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENT ON THE SITUATION OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN

1.1. Introduction

The aim of this assessment is to provide analytical support to decision making at Frontex, in relation to the reinforcement of Joint Operations Hermes 2014 and or launching a new operation.

The JO Hermes 2014 was launched on 1 May 2014 and is scheduled to conclude on 30 September 2014. The operational aim of the Joint Operation is the implementation of coordinated operational activities for the purpose of controlling and combating illegal migration flows and other cross-border crimes from Algeria, Egypt, Greece, Libya and Tunisia towards the Pelagic Islands, Sicily and Sardinia. In order to detect as many of boats carrying the migrants as possible, three operational areas have been established:

- Operational Area M1 (Mike 1), covering the Pelagic Islands and Sicily, excluding Malta;
- Operational Area M2 (Mike 2), covering the area south of Sardinia;
- Common Patrolling Area (CPA), covering the East of Sicily.

In order to receive operational intelligence, debriefing teams have been deployed in Mineo, Ragusa and Syracuse.

1.2. General Situation in 2014

From 1 January until 15 August 2014, the number of migrants crossing the **Central Mediterranean Sea** towards Italy reached **98 875 persons**¹ (555% more than in 2013). From 1 May, i.e. the beginning of the Joint Operation Hermes 2014, until 15 August 70 314 migrants were detected. Most of those migrants departed from Libya (59 592), followed by Egypt (6 788) and Tunisia (335). The predominant nationalities² were Eritreans (16 587), followed by Syrians (12 081), Malians (3 294) and Nigerians (2 822).

Considering the operation Mare Nostrum has been ongoing throughout 2014, it is not possible to indicate the main targeted destination areas, as the naval assets under this operation detected and intercepted the vast majority of the migrants at high seas. Thus, the coastline of Sicily and the islands of Lampedusa and Pantelleria have not been affected by primary impact of migration. It must be mentioned, however, that farther Italian cities, such as Catania, Taranto or even Salerno are used as disembarkation points by the Italian Navy and therefore keep receiving migrants who were detected not far from the Libyan coast.

In 2014, the most **important factors** that have influenced migratory patterns include:

- The current readmission agreement between Italy and Tunisia, whereby up to 100 migrants can be repatriated per week;
- The effective readmission agreement in place between Italy and Egypt, where Egyptian nationals are repatriated within 48 hours;

¹ Due to the heavy workload of Italian authorities processing the migrants, several incidents are still pending validation, therefore the indicated figures are subject to change.

² Where known. At the time of writing this assessment the nationality of about 14% of migrants apprehended is still unknown.

- The volatile situation in Syria, which is a strong push factor for Syrians to leave the country;
- The feeling of insecurity perceived by Syrian nationals residing in Egypt; The active use of the Central African route for sub-Saharan Africans intending to depart by sea from Libya;
- The facilitated travel of migrants from the Horn of Africa via Sudan, Ajdabiya and Tripoli to the EU;
- The high level of insecurity in Libya;
- The low level of surveillance along the coast of Libya;
- The large number of would-be migrants waiting for departure in Libya;
- The presence of the naval assets of Mare Nostrum close to the Libyan coast, which may encourage migrants belonging to those nationals whose countries have no readmission agreements with Italy.

1.2.1. Migration from Tunisia

Between 1 January and 15 August 2014, 424 migrants were apprehended in 40 incidents (410 migrants in 33 incidents in 2013, a stable trend). In this period, the Tunisian authorities prevented the departure of 114 persons. 92

1.2.2. Migration from Libya

In contrast to the figures of Tunisian nationals and departures from Tunisia, the number of departures from Libya has been extremely high. Since the beginning of the year, 86 497 irregular migrants have arrived to the EU; the main last points of departures being Zuwarah, Tripoli and Gasr Garabulli.

More than a quarter of the migrants departing from Libya were Eritreans and 13.4% Syrians. Gambian, Malian and Senegalese migrants together accounted for another 13.2% of the total. The high number (4 081) of Nigerians should also be mentioned. Apart from the main nationalities, the relatively high number of Moroccans (1 224) is significant as it shows a displacement effect from the Western Mediterranean. All together more than 40 various nationalities of irregular migrants have been identified departing from Libya.

In 2014, the set-up of the sea-trips in Libya has been adjusted to the presence of the naval assets of the Italian Navy not far from the Libyan Coast. The boats are equipped with little fuel (only enough to reach Mare Nostrum coverage area), many migrants carry no life jackets, little food and water. Both wooden and inflatable boats have departed from Tripoli, laden mainly with Eritrean or West African migrants.

Due to the fact that there is no central power that could exercise control in Libya, the country is a hot bed of all types of crime including the facilitation of illegal migration. The surveillance of the coast is very inefficient and corruption as well as the involvement of official personnel in the facilitation are reported by all the migrants to be at high level.

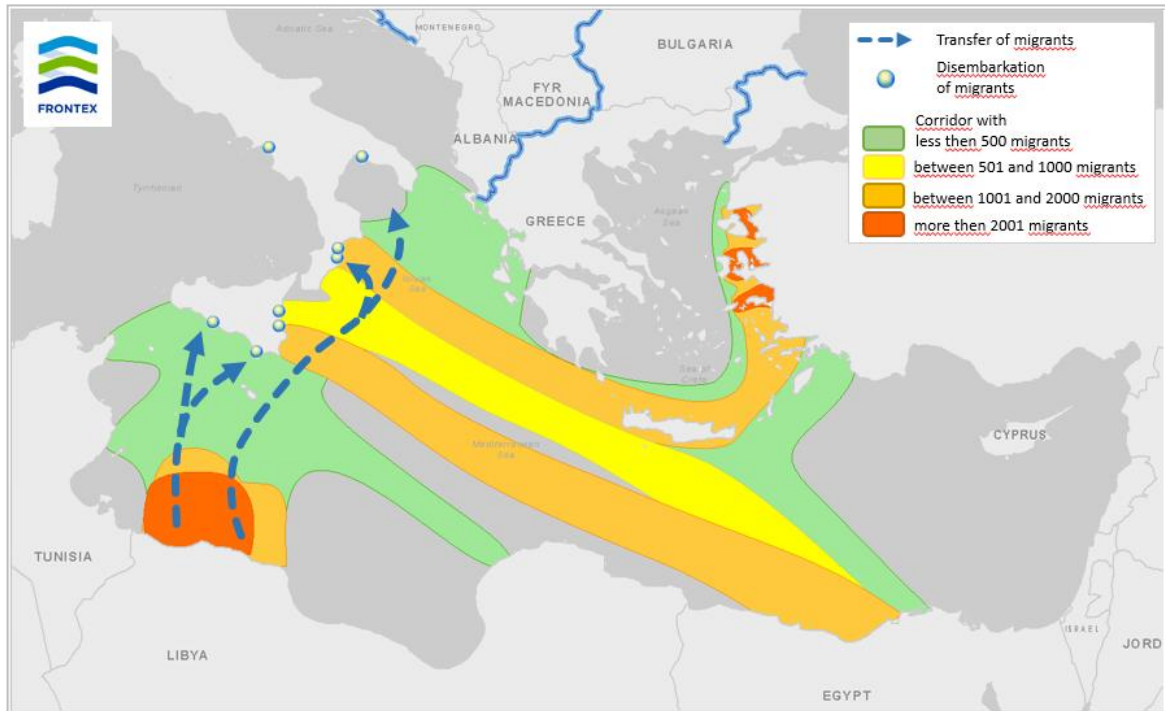


Figure 1: Main sea corridors affecting the Central Mediterranean Region from Turkey, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia in 2014, until 15 August.

1.2.3. Migration from Egypt

In 2014 until 15 August, 7 640 migrants arriving from Egypt were apprehended in 30 incidents; 69 facilitators were also apprehended. 44% of the migrants were Syrian nationals, 24% were Egyptians while the nationality of 1 815 migrants is still unknown. In order to avoid repatriation, some Egyptian migrants swap nationalities and claim to be Syrian.

The set-up of the sea-trips is rather similar to what it used to be in 2013. However, a slight displacement in the corridor from Alexandria up to Sicily was noticed: after departure, several boats apparently stayed close to the African coast as far as El Salloum and then headed for Sicily instead of going north to approach Crete and then turning west, as it was the case one year ago.

1.3. General Situation in 2014

To have a general overview of the weekly number of arrivals in 2013 and 2014, the chart below depicts the total number of migrants apprehended from the beginning of the year to week 33. The numbers of 2013 and 2014 have been collected either directly from the Joint Operation Reporting Application or provided by the Italian authorities for the period when there was no Joint Operation in the area.

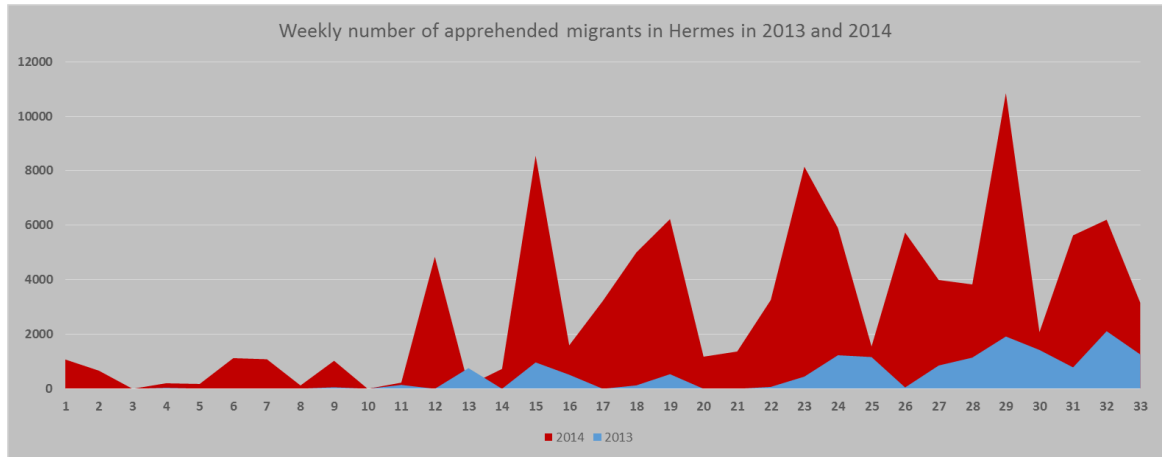


Figure 2: Migrants apprehended in the first 33 weeks of 2013 and 2014 in the operational area of JO Hermes

Tunisia

Without significant political or economic change in Tunisia in the forthcoming months, and under the current readmission conditions it can be assumed that the number of migrants trying to reach Italy from Tunisia will remain relatively low.

Libya

The presence of the naval vessels close to the Libyan coast changed the earlier trends and patterns of sea trips from the country. Therefore, the forecasts largely depend on whether the naval assets remain there and keep patrolling the area or not. If they remain, then a constantly high number of arrivals should be expected not only in the summer, but also during the winter time, i.e. when migrants would normally not attempt crossing the rough seas. With the discontinuation of patrolling there, the trends of the previous years should resume. It is very likely that with the disappearance of the naval assets in the area considerably fewer migrants would risk departing in bad weather and the prices of the sea-trips would rise due to the fact that more fuel and food/water would be needed for a longer trip.

It is has to be stressed that the withdrawal of navel assets from the area, if not properly planned and announced well in advance, would likely result in a higher number of fatalities.

Regarding the situation in Libya and on land routes, no significant changes are foreseen until the end of 2014, which means that a larger number of migrants can be expected to be facilitated from West African and Horn of Africa countries into Libya.

Egypt/Syria

Taking into account the situation of Syrian nationals in Egypt and the ongoing war in Syria it can be assumed that Syrian nationals will continue to flee from Egypt towards Italy across the Mediterranean Sea. The targeted area for those would-be migrants is most likely the eastern coast of Sicily (Syracuse) or the region of Calabria.

1.4. Recommendations

1.4.1. Recommendation on the Extension of the JO Hermes

Considering the very high trend of arrivals towards the operational area of the JO Hermes, as well as the high number of search-and-rescue cases, together with the analysis of information collected and intelligence gathered by the Joint Debriefing Teams deployed in the relevant areas,

in order to:

- provide support to the Italian authorities in managing the large-scale migration flow in the Mediterranean region; and
- be able to track changes in the *modus operandi* and in migrant profiles;

It is recommended to **extend the current JO Hermes 2014 beyond September 2014.**

1.4.2. Operational Area and Deployment of Assets

Concerning the operational area, based on the location of interception observed during the ongoing Joint Operation, the primary focus should remain on the Pelagic Islands and on the south-eastern coastline of Sicily.

If operation Mare Nostrum discontinues in the future, then Frontex should consider extending the operational area of the JO Hermes 2014 and consider to which extent the objectives of effective border control and contribution to saving lives can be achieved. Also, it would be of importance to maintain a flight zone for sea surveillance in the maritime area southeast of Sicily in order to increase the number of early detections.

For sea border surveillance, long-range **fixed-wing aeroplanes** are recommended and should be deployed to the south-eastern area of Syracuse in order to increase the chance of early detection of migrant boats in this area. Therefore, the maintenance of the operational area (flight zone) for aerial assets is highly recommended.

For the interception of migrant boats inside the operational area, the deployment of **CPVs** are recommended. However, the additional deployment of fixed wing aeroplanes and OPVs in order to cover an extended operational area, cannot be thought in terms of substituting the current set up of operation Mare Nostrum as the main focus of Frontex Joint Operations is border surveillance and border management, and it would imply an increase of the budget for Frontex, far beyond the level available to the agency.

1.4.3. Debriefing Activities

The deployment of the three debriefing teams composed of one Team Leader, one SGO, one Guest Officer and two Cultural Mediators per Joint Debriefing Team (JDT) should be established during the extension. One JDT should stay in Mineo in order to interview migrants who are transferred to the CARA, while the deployment of one JDT in Ragusa and one in Syracuse is recommended in order to provide updated intelligence regarding newly arriving migrants departing from Libya and Egypt.

In addition, the deployment of a JDT in Lampedusa is recommended in case of a high number of arrivals.

The same reporting structure, including the role of the Intelligence Officer should be kept during the extension of the Joint Operation.

1.4.4. Supplementary findings with regard to JO EPN Aeneas

The **JO EPN Aeneas 2014** started on **1 June** and is scheduled to run until **30 September 2014**. The Operational Plan defines two operational areas: Apulia and Calabria, covering the coast along the Ionian Sea and a part of the Adriatic Sea. The “common patrolling area” (JO EPN Hermes - Aeneas) remains active in 2014 in order to adjust the operational areas to seasonal migration flows.

From the beginning of 2014 until 15 August **2 347 irregular migrants** were apprehended in the operational areas of Apulia and Calabria, showing a **-14% decrease** in the number of irregular migrants apprehended compared to the same period in 2013.

Forecast:

Although there was a decrease in the number of irregular migrants apprehended in this area, the regions of Apulia and Calabria will remain a targeted destination point for criminal networks.

An increased number of vessels departing from Egypt towards Italy is expected, especially since the facilitation networks are exploiting the proximity of Mare Nostrum operational area to North African countries.

Recommendations

- It is suggested to extend only the operational area of Calabria until 30 November, while suspending the operational support in the Apulia region, unless circumstances change suddenly.
- The routes used to smuggle migrants at sea from Egypt, Turkey and Greece towards Italy require an efficient operational coordination between the Coordination Centres in Italy and Greece.
- It is important to continue the coordination between aerial and maritime assets, as well as between assets and land patrols.
- Coordination with other Frontex JO in the area: For the “Common Patrolling Area” (shared area between Hermes & Aeneas), the deployment of FWA (long-range) or an OPV should be considered.
- If the operation is extended, debriefing activities should continue in the extended operational area (Calabria). At least one **Joint Debriefing Team (JDT) in Calabria** should be maintained (one JDT should include 1 Team Leader, 1 SGO, 1 Guest Officer, and 2 Cultural Mediators of Persian/Arabic).

2. FRONTEX PROPOSAL

Bearing in mind Frontex mandate and risk analysis, related to possible factors affecting the migratory flows in the Central Mediterranean area, a new operational concept as well as an operational area has to be established.

2.1. Basic scenario: extension of EPN Hermes 2014 with current calibre (scale of deployments with appropriate costs per month)

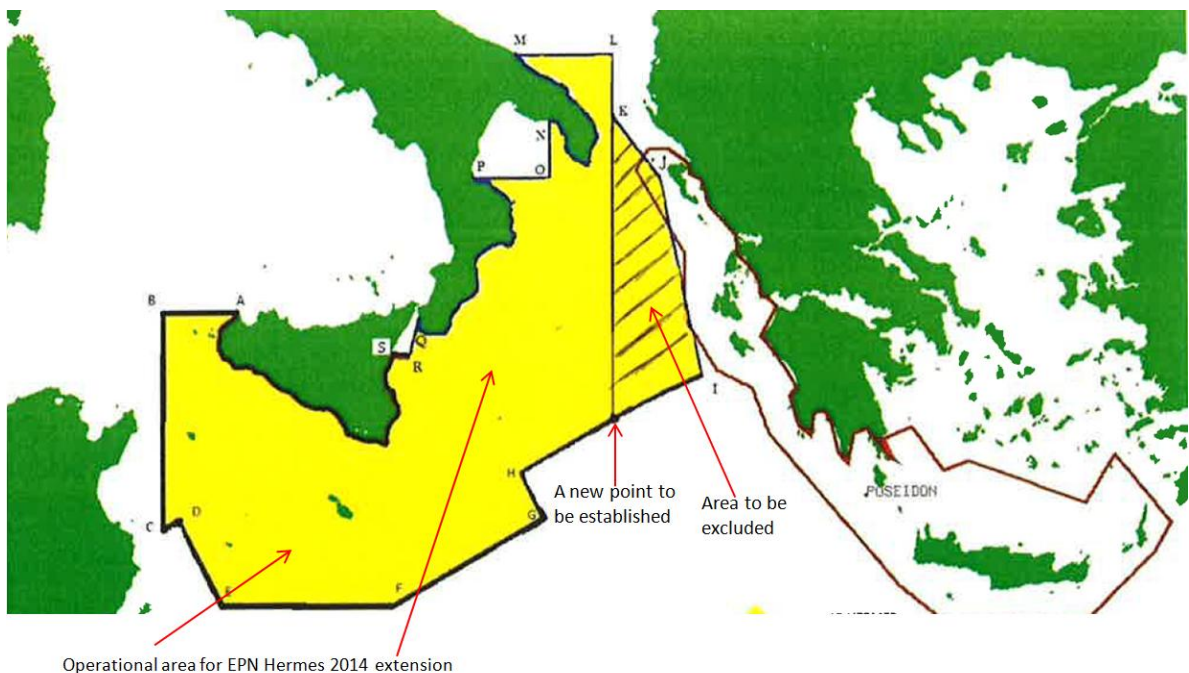
The general operational aim and objectives would remain the same as for current EPN Hermes 2014 established in the operational plan.

Operational area:

Modified operational area and management of activities of JO EPN Aeneas 2014 would become a consolidated part of extended JO EPN Hermes 2014 as from 1 October 2014. JO EPN Hermes 2014 extension area will not overlap with national JO Mare Nostrum as they serve different purposes.

That area would have its limits closer to the EU shores and could also include area around Malta (MT), if such possibility would be confirmed by MT authorities. This provides clarity regarding tasks, duration and responsibility including command and control. Indeed, border surveillance JO does not require the same calibre as Mare Nostrum. However, there is an estimation for low operational effectiveness of JO Hermes 2014 as long as Mare Nostrum is running (because the latter is covering and intercepting the migratory routes beforehand).

Therefore, having IT proposal as a base, Frontex suggest limiting the operational area of EPN Hermes 2014 extension adjusting some of the suggested coordinates as presented in the map below:



This proposed operational area would allow deploying type of means as listed below in order to contribute to national efforts at external sea borders. Management of means will depend on operational situation on scene but as a principle CPVs will focus on patrolling coastal areas while FWA will be dedicated to cover external perimeter of the operational area. In this regard, Frontex will contribute to Mare Nostrum by providing information on potential boats of interest detected in the operational area of Mare Nostrum.

Nevertheless the naval and aerial means to serve as SAR capacity under national responsibility and not being part of joint operation should be planned and managed by MS.

Proposed deployment:

- 1 FWA from participating MS - 530,000 EUR
- 1 IT helicopter and 2 IT³CPVs - 100,000 EUR (due to limited number of patrols covered).
- 1 CPV from participating MS - 340,000 EUR
- 4 Joint Debriefing Teams - 120,000 EUR
- ICC/LCC staff and core infrastructure - 40,000 EUR
- FSO at Lampedusa - 10,000 EUR
- Frontex LO at Navy HQ - 10,000 EUR - a new element added by Frontex in agreement with IT from 1st September to strengthen coordination and information exchange between JO EPN Hermes and Mare Nostrum.*

The costs of extension of EPN-Hermes 2014 would be 1.150,000 EUR per month.

Total cost of extension for two month would be 2.300,000 EUR.

2.2. Proposal - JO EPN Hermes 2014 upgraded to new JO EPN Triton considering that IT national operation Mare Nostrum is terminated

The general operational aim of the joint operation will be to implement coordinated operational activities at the external sea borders of EU MS in the Central Mediterranean region in order to control irregular migration flows towards the territory of the European Union and to tackle cross border crime. The operational aim of joint operation will be achieved by combining different type of operational activities, particularly: border surveillance (involving seaborne and airborne assets as well as using Eurosur/Fusion services) and gathering of information through debriefing and screening activities (involving experts).

Operational objectives:

- To reinforce national efforts related to border surveillance by providing EU added value;
- To support national efforts of MS as regards SAR;

The activities during the operation include deployment of technical and human resources in order to:

- Provide support to Italian Authorities in border surveillance activities at external sea borders;
- Support debriefing activities in order to collect information for risk analysis purposes;

³ In case MT will join operation by deploying CPV proportion of IT means would be adjusted accordingly.

- Share experiences and exchange expertise as well as to constantly update knowledge on the irregular migration trends in order to adopt counter measures to tackle the phenomena;
- Collect and assess information in order to improve the detection of human smuggling and trafficking in human beings' facilitation by individuals and/or criminal networks and assist wherever possible identification and detention of facilitators;
- Provide with a clear and updated situational picture concerning the operational areas, modus operandi, main trends and possible rapid changes in this respect;
- Carry out daily and ad-hoc exchange of information between Frontex and all operational actors and structures involved;
- Promote the inter-agency cooperation and cooperation with other international and EU bodies and Third Countries.

Operational area: Operational area would remain the same as for JO EPN Hermes 2014 extension (see previous map).

This proposed operational area would allow deploying type of means as listed below in order to contribute to national efforts at external sea borders. Management of means will depend on operational situation on scene but as a principle CPVs will focus on patrolling coastal areas while FWA will be dedicated to cover external perimeter of the operational area in order to ensure early detection of the boats with irregular migrants as well as report on distress situations to respective MRCC.

Nevertheless, Frontex proposed deployment should not be seen as limitation for Host MS to plan and deploy their means to respond to irregular migratory flows in the Central Mediterranean as well as to ensure efficient SAR capacity under national responsibility and not being part of joint operation should be planned and managed by respective MS authorities.

Deployment of means is within the scope of effective added value following Frontex risk analysis: (scale of deployments and costs described per month)

- **Contribution of participating MS:**
 - 2 FWA - 1.060,000 EUR
 - 1 Helicopter - 300,000 EUR
 - 3 CPV's - 1.020,000 EUR
 - 2 CPB's - 180,000 EUR
 - 7 Joint Debriefing Teams - 210,000 EUR
- **Contribution of Host MS:**
 - ICC/LCC staff and core infrastructure - 40,000 EUR
- **Frontex contribution from operational budget:**
 - FSO at Lampedusa - 10,000 EUR
 - Frontex LO at Navy HQ - 10,000 EUR

The costs of new JO Triton would be 2,830,000 EUR per month.

- **EUROSUR/Fusion Services:**

In order to mitigate risks for maritime border surveillance in the remote areas of IT and MT shores beyond EPN Hermes operational area, as proposed by Frontex we would propose IT to consider using Frontex Fusion services available within EUROSUR.

These specific services include Traffic information systems (Automatic Identification System, Long-Range Identification and Tracking and Vessel Monitoring Systems) in combination with Vessel Detection capabilities that use radar-based earth observation technology. Besides, alerts on the suspicious behaviour of vessels could be made available, too. In addition, weather services based on the available state-of-the-art technology, in order to get timely and accurate information on weather conditions, obtained from observation data and forecast models, could be available for operational management.

Moreover, the tailored environmental services, including but not limited to, air temperature, cloud cover, wave height and wind direction and speed can be delivered to decision makers, operational planners and situational centres in order to support their decision making, planning and execution of mission across the spectrum for national and Frontex-coordinated joint operation.

Total budget needs would depend the scale of the operation depending on the operational elements (vessels, aircrafts, and experts) to be added and the envisaged period of implementation subject to additional transfer to Frontex budget.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

General outcome

EU maritime external border surveillance in the Central Mediterranean area is maintained on increased level and EU laws, international conventions, and treaties against irregular migration and criminal activities at Mediterranean Sea are enforced by MS.

Specific outcomes

- by means of enhanced aerial surveillance during the 1st phase of the JO specific emphasis on early detection as contribution to national MS SAR obligations;
- enriched operational capacity of MS by effective and efficient deployment of assets and a flexible tailored response in the right place at the right time, hence reaching greater surveillance coverage of the external EU borders in the Mediterranean Sea;
- irregular migrants and facilitators detected and apprehended at sea while trying to reach EU via irregular entry channels at the same time contributing to national SAR in order more human lives would be saved and potential tragedies prevented in the Mediterranean Sea;
- increased solidarity among MS and level of knowledge among experts from MS increased and best practises exchanged and/or elaborated among MS;
- enhanced interagency cooperation by further exploring cooperation on national and EU level addressing irregular migration and cross-border threats addressed;
- enriched situational picture including ESP/CPIP (EUROSUR, Frontex Fusion Services) for an effective and efficient deployment of operational assets and a flexible targeted response;
- valuable information collected on new modus operandi and trends as regard irregular migration and cross-border crime;
- higher level of integrated border management achieved by involvement of the EU MS of the Mediterranean area.

4. BUDGET ESTIMATION

The budget estimation for the implementation of concept EPN-Triton would depend on the intensity of the operational activities.

Comparison of the budget required to implement various scenarios:

Budget	Current EPN Hermes 2014 till 1 st October	EPN Hermes 2014 extended as from 1 st October till November 30	New JO EPN Triton
	1 FWA 1 IT Helicopter 6 IT CPV (financially covered by Frontex for limited number of patrolling hours equal to 1 full scale deployment of one CPV), 3 Joint Debriefing teams, ICC/LCC staff, FSO.	1 FWA from participating MS 1 IT Helicopter and 2 IT CPVs and (due to limited number of patrols covered) 1 CPV from participating MS 4 Joint Debriefing Teams ICC/LCC staff and core infrastructure FSO at Lampedusa Frontex LO at Navy HQ as from 1 st September	2 FWA 1 Helicopter 3 CPV's 2 CPB's 7 Joint Debriefing Teams FSO at Lampedusa Frontex LO at Navy HQ
Monthly cost	850,000 EUR	1.150,000 EUR	2,830,000 EUR

Please note that the current budget availability at Frontex does not allow implementing new JO EPN Triton.