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Commission

# FACTSHEETS

Internal Security  
Fund - Borders (ISFB)



Migration and  
Home Affairs



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# HELPING ITALY'S COAST GUARD TO SAVE REFUGEES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

**Project name:**  
Implementation of a specific  
operational framework to  
safeguard human life at sea

**Purpose:**  
Preventing migrant fatalities  
in the Mediterranean

## AT A GLANCE

**Geographical coverage:**  
Italy

**Project coordinator:**  
Comando Generale del Corpo delle  
Capitanerie di Porto – Guardia  
Costiera (coast guard)

**Budget:**  
€ 1 584 472

**EU contribution:**  
90% co-funded by the  
European Union

**Type of funding:**  
Internal Security Fund – Borders and  
Visa (ISFB) / Emergency Assistance  
(EMAS)

**Start date:**  
January 2016

**End date:**  
December 2016

## Overview

In 2013, Italy's coast guard rescued 42 457 migrants from the Mediterranean Sea. The following year, it saved 167 114. In 2015, at the height of the migrant crisis, 152 341 migrants were rescued by the coast guard's patrol boats and aeroplanes. And in 2016, the Guardia Costiera saved a further 35 875 migrants.

In these 4 years, the overcrowded boats used by migrants became increasingly rickety and unsafe, making the rescue operation more urgent and far more difficult as the coast guard had to sail further and further away from the coast. Its operations continued day and night, even in bad sea conditions, with its search and rescue boats now covering the huge area of sea between the coasts of Italy, Libya and Tunisia.

The coast guard, Corpo delle capitanerie di porto – Guardia Costiera (or Corps of the Port Captaincies, part of the Italian navy), has to coordinate its search and rescue with those carried out by border patrol boats managed by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. It is also the point of contact for merchant ships that pick up migrants, and for the non-governmental organisations doing their own rescue operations.

All of this stretches Italy's coast guard to its limits. It's facing shortages in staff, while operations are getting more complex and increasingly costly.

In late 2015, the Guardia Costiera reached out to the European Commission for financial assistance. The Commission made available close to EUR 1.5 million in emergency funds, which helped the coast guard to pay overtime to its staff, enabling them to continue their emergency activities for longer. The assistance also gave the coast guard the means to better manage operations and provide basic care to close on 36 000 refugees who were rescued by coast guard boats in 2016. In addition, it contributed to the coordination of search and rescue operations for a total of 178 415 migrants.



## Results

Thanks in part to the extra funds made available by the Commission, the Italian coast guard in 2016 rescued 35 875 migrants. Its border surveillance and search and rescue operations involved almost the same number of personnel (35 609).

These funds made it possible to pay overtime to staff, enabling them to continue their emergency activities. This had an impact on both land, where the coast guard helped with coordination, and at sea, where the coast guard's high-speed patrol boats and the much larger patrol boats were directly involved in search and rescue.

The emergency funding directly helped the migrants. Once rescued by the coast guard, the migrants got medical care, food, water and rehydrating drinks. The funds were also used to buy first aid materials, with the coast guard providing a very detailed list of requirements: 138 000 ID bracelets, 36 669 thermal blankets, 104 000 pairs of gloves, 7 400 single-use masks, 5 912 single-use suits, 2 800 pairs of single-use shoes and 59 pairs of safety shoes. In addition, the coast guard, in close cooperation with the Italian police, managed to capture and arrest more than 220 people smugglers.

Thanks to the Commission's emergency funds, the coast guard overcame the most difficult border surveillance and search and rescue operations in 2016, enabling them to be ready for interventions and to manage several extreme periods: for example, during the last 4 days of August the coast guard rescued close to 14 000 migrants in 112 operations. A similar peak took place in the first 2 days of October, when another 11 000 migrants were saved in 76 operations.

## MORE INFORMATION

**Website:** [HOME/2016/ISFB/AG/EMAS/0027](#)

**Title:** Implementation of a specific operational framework to safeguard human life at sea

**Contact:** [cgcp@pec.mit.gov.it](mailto:cgcp@pec.mit.gov.it)

**Website:** [www.guardiacostiera.gov.it](http://www.guardiacostiera.gov.it)



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# HELPING ITALY'S POLICE PROVIDE FIRST AID TO MIGRANTS

## Project name:

Acquisition of units and vehicles of  
rescue and medical principals – HEALTH

## Purpose:

Supporting Italy's medical assistance  
capacity for migrants

## AT A GLANCE

### Geographical coverage:

Hotspots and other disembarkation  
areas in southern Italy

### Project coordinator:

Italian Ministry of Interior

### Budget:

€ 892 800

### EU contribution:

90 % co-funded by the  
European Union

### Type of funding:

Internal Security Fund - Borders (ISFB) /  
Emergency Assistance (EMAS)

### Start date:

April 2017

### End date:

December 2018

## Overview

In 2016, Italy faced unprecedented pressure from migrants reaching its southern shores: over 180 000 migrants arrived, around 30 000 more than in 2015. These exceptionally high numbers put pressure on the resources of the country's medical police force. There was an urgent need for extra medical equipment, from first aid kits, medicines, masks, gloves and disinfectants to ambulances.

The Servizio Sanitario, part of Italy's national police force (Polizia di Stato) provides rapid medical assistance in emergencies. Since the onset of the migrant crisis in 2015, its specialist medical staff has been extremely busy attending to the migrants when they are brought ashore. The Servizio Sanitario della Polizia di Stato (the health services of the national police) is one of the providers of first aid at the landing sites and works in close collaboration with other police services and the military.

By late 2016, the Italian government was under pressure to provide the necessary budget to allow the police's medical staff to continue its work. Italy therefore turned to the European Commission for financial help. The Commission allocated EUR 736 160.36 in emergency funds for this action. In relative terms, this was a small contribution, but it enabled the police to complete the purchase of several ambulances and a great deal of medical equipment.

## Medical equipment

The police has a detailed list of all the medical equipment it purchased in 2016, 2017 and 2018. The Servizio Sanitario also bought seven ambulances to serve in Bari, Palermo, Reggio Calabria, Messina, Crotona, Taranto and Brindisi, all cities and towns in the south of Italy.



This number includes:

Two 2WD transport ambulances, complete with a stretcher trolley, spinal board, scoop stretcher, evacuation stair chair, first aid equipment and a defibrillator;

Two fully equipped 4WD emergency ambulances, similar to the previous two but additionally equipped with electrocardiogram devices and with a fridge for the storage of special medicines and biological samples;

Three ambulances serving as mobile resuscitation centres – specialised intensive-care versions of the emergency ambulances.

The police purchased 71 520 FFP3 medical masks with filters, 1 million pairs of nitrile gloves - both to protect against infectious diseases – 700 spray cans with disinfectants to quickly clean the crowded reception areas and first aid rooms, and 60 rucksacks for doctors and nurses for the transport of medical supplies necessary for first-aid and triage (sorting the seriously ill from those who are in less urgent need of care).

## MEDICAL TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT PURCHASED

Ambulances

FFP3 masks with filters

Nitrile gloves

Ambient disinfectants with diffuser

Emergency rucksacks

## COMPLEMENTARITIES WITH OTHER EU FUNDING SOURCES

Most of the Italian border management projects implemented with EU funding are part of Italy's Internal Security Fund (ISF) national programme, which has an overall budget of EUR 330 million for 2014-2020 and includes the procurement and upgrading of border surveillance assets (e.g. ships and helicopters), the improvement of border control capacities at international airports, the enhancement of security and border management cooperation with other Member States and EU agencies and so on. By providing additional financial assistance for specific needs which were not being addressed via Italy's ISF national programme at the time, this project proved to be of particular added value in ensuring swift EU support to Italy where it was most needed.

A similar project to purchase ambulances and medical equipment is funded through emergency assistance (HOME/2017/ISFB/AG/EMAS/0053 – HEALTH2).

These emergency actions complement the crisis actions of the national programme.

## Current situation and possible future developments

Over the last 2 years, the number of migrants that arrived in Italy through the central Mediterranean route has dramatically decreased and is today very close to zero. In this context, the urgency of acquiring medical transport and equipment for first aid to migrants has also considerably decreased. However, a possible new worsening of the migratory crisis could change these circumstances. If this were to happen, it may again become necessary to implement emergency measures funded through similar actions.

## MORE INFORMATION

**Project reference:** HOME/2016/ISFB/AG/EMAS/0045

**Title:** Acquisition of units and vehicles of rescue and medical principals – HEALTH

**Contact:** [dipps.direzionecentralesanita.segreteria@interno.it](mailto:dipps.direzionecentralesanita.segreteria@interno.it)  
[dipps.dirsan@pecsps.interno.it](mailto:dipps.dirsan@pecsps.interno.it)



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Courtesy of the project

# COMBATting FORGERY OF EU VISAS

**Project name:**  
Development of next-generation uniform-format EU visa sticker

**Purpose:**  
Strengthening the EU visa regime and helping to effectively manage immigration

## AT A GLANCE

**Geographical coverage:**  
EU-wide

**Project coordinator:**  
German Federal Criminal Police Office

**Budget:**  
€ 1 million

**EU contribution:**  
95% co-funded by the European Union

**Type of funding:**  
Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visa (ISFB)

**Start date:**  
February 2016

**End date:**  
October 2017

## Overview

The EU has a common visa policy for short-stay visits to the Schengen area, comprising a set of harmonised rules that set out the countries whose citizens require a visa to travel to the EU and those which do not. The EU's visa policy also covers the procedures and conditions for issuing short-stay visas, a common Visa Information System that records all visa applications and decisions, and a uniform format for visa stickers. It is this final element of the common visa policy that is the subject of this project.

Strengthening the EU's borders is a significant challenge for all EU Member States, and the forgery of EU visas, in particular, has been identified as an issue that needs to be addressed. This project contributed to this process by strengthening the security of the EU's uniform-format visa stickers.

## Addressing a pressing problem

An EU Regulation from July 2017 found the existing design of the EU visa sticker, already in circulation for 20 years, to be compromised due to serious incidents of counterfeiting and fraud. As a result, it stipulated that visas should be made tamper-proof in an effort to strengthen the EU's border controls.

The Regulation defines the new design, which was created with modern security features that make the visa sticker more secure and prevent forgery. The task – to develop a secure EU visa sticker in a uniform format – was the core aim of this project, which was coordinated by the German Federal Criminal Police Office (Bundeskriminalamt, or BKA).



## Main project activities

To make the new EU visa forgery-proof, the Article 6 Committee (set up under Article 6 of the Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 on laying down a uniform format for visas) and the committee's Visa and Residence Permit sub-group selected the design proposal that was submitted by Germany. The committee worked on the technical specifications and the BKA carried out a wide-ranging series of tests on the aspects and components of the production process of the visa to make sure that they were all the same and technically suitable for every Member State.

Once the uniform design and security features were agreed, quality checks were completed and a successful 'zero series' of visa stickers was developed and produced in Berlin, Germany.

All of this work was carried out to ensure that the visa was ready for serial production and could be introduced as soon as possible by all Member States in a harmonised manner.

## EU-wide involvement

Every EU Member State was involved in the project through their participation in the Article 6 Committee and in the committee's Visa and Residence Permit sub-group.

Ireland and the United Kingdom will not be subject to the application of the new measures, in line with protocols annexed to the EU treaties. However, upon request from these Member States, the European Commission can provide them with technical information on the visa format, which they can use for their national visas.

## Project impact

After significant problems with high-quality counterfeits of the then current EU visa sticker, the new uniform format for the visa sticker provides more security against forgery and tampering. It is made using state-of-the-art security printing, and will be produced and issued by the Member States based on harmonised technical specifications. Each and every EU Member State benefits from the project and has received a visa kit that allows them to promptly produce a high-quality visa sticker in line with the specifications. Some Member States have already started issuing the new visa; others will follow soon.

## VISA SECURITY ELEMENTS

Security printing;

Microlettering;

Serial number;

Intaglio;

Laser image effect;

Ink with optically variable properties;

Diffractive Optically Variable Image Device (DOVID);

Personalisation;

UV-reactive ink.

## MORE INFORMATION

**Project reference:** HOME/2015/ISFB/AG/VISA/0001

**Title:** Development of next-generation uniform-format EU visa sticker

**Contact:** HOME-ARTICLE6-CTE-SEC@ec.europa.eu

**Resources:** [EU Visa Code](#)  
[Factsheet](#)





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# IDENTIFYING THE NEED FOR A HARMONISED ID CARD



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## Project name:

Development of a new model of uniform format for residence permits for third-country nationals

## Purpose:

The creation of a harmonised identification card for third-country nationals

## AT A GLANCE

### Geographical coverage:

EU-wide

### Project coordinator:

Fabrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre  
– Real Casa de la Moneda

### Estimated budget:

€ 550 000

### EU contribution:

92 % co-funded by the European Union

### Type of funding:

Internal Security Fund – Borders and visa (ISFB)

### Start date:

October 2017

### End date:

June 2018

## Overview

For as long as there has been a need to identify one's self, forged or fake identifications have existed. Over the past several years, a number of very sophisticated forgery attempts have been detected in a number of EU Member States. These forgery attempts have been focused mainly on residence permits and, as a result, the residence permits of some countries are now considered to be compromised.

In order to protect the integrity and security of residence permits, a new design needs to be developed. This will result in the residence permit for third-country nationals (people from countries outside the European Union) being more secure for legal border crossings because, in the Schengen area, it substitutes the need for a visa. A number of proposed designs were put forward and Spain has been selected to develop the new design and layout for the new EU residence permit for third-country nationals.

The main reason for changing the design, besides forgeries, is that the current format for the residence permit was adopted back in 1997. In 2009 new security features were introduced in order to improve the security of the residence permit. Nevertheless, the high quality of counterfeited EU residence permits found in recent years has now forced the Member States to start working on a new design.

## Building a better ID card and its benefits

The overall objective of the project is to produce technical specifications for the new EU residence permit. This will include the actual technical specifications, as well as the development of a 'Residence Permit Kit' for each Member State. This kit will contain the drafts of the printing plates and all other technical material, which will enable printing houses in the Member States to produce versions of the residence permit that are as similar as possible. The obvious result of this will be a more secure and harmonised permit across all Member



States for third-country nationals. An added benefit of this is that it will also help guard against threats that could impact the security of European citizens.

## Results that will benefit everyone

The overall results of the project will include a much more harmonised and secure form of identification for third-country nationals. In turn, this will help combat terrorism, radicalisation, organised crime and cybercrime. Residence permits are often used in the Member States as identity documents required for bank transactions, hotel bookings, mobile telephone contracts and so on. Indeed, one of the most positive outcomes from a higher level of harmonisation will be at border controls, where officers will be in a position to check these documents with ease due to their uniformity. Additionally, by providing a uniform means of identification for third-country nationals residing in EU countries, the new residence permit will help them integrate with much less friction than without such identification.

## WHY THE NEED FOR A NEW ID DESIGN?

It will raise the standards in terms of document security features of the new EU residence permit;

Europe will attain a higher level of harmonisation in the design of the new EU residence permit;

The project will help produce more concise technical specifications for the new EU residence permit.

## MORE INFORMATION

**Project reference:** HOME/2016/ISFB/AG/IBA/RESI/0001

**Title:** Development of a new model of uniform format for residence permits for third-country nationals

**Contact:** Fábrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre - Real Casa de la Moneda (FNMT-RCM)  
Jorge Juan 106, 28009 Madrid, Spain  
Tel: +34 915 666 666



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# STRONGER BORDERS THROUGH COOPERATION

**Project name:**  
Improvement of the security at the EU external borders and enhance the cooperation with Turkey for addressing the migratory pressure (PRIORITY)

**Purpose:**  
Building stronger cross-border cooperation to help build safer and more secure borders

## AT A GLANCE

**Geographical coverage:**  
3 countries: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey

**Project coordinator:**  
Chief Directorate Border Police

**Estimated budget:**  
€ 707 550

**EU contribution:**  
95 % co-funded by the European Union

**Type of funding:**  
Internal Security Fund – Border (ISFB)

**Start date:**  
January 2018

**End date:**  
December 2019



## Overview

The aim of this project is to enhance the development of functional, effective and integrated systems in border management between Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. In addition to this, the security of the EU’s borders, along countries that are not EU members, will be looked at, as well as cooperation with Turkey in addressing the migration issue. This will be achieved through building trust among the staff in charge of border management, at all levels, by raising awareness on the benefits of daily cooperation with border management-related tasks and by enhancing the operational capacities of the three countries’ border agencies.

Due to the geographical location of both Bulgaria and Greece, migration continues to be an issue for these countries. The challenges faced, while great, can be addressed through greater cooperation between neighbouring border agencies. By communicating, cooperating and sharing knowledge and best practices, a more secure and safe border can be ensured for Europe, while at the same time helping non-members to build stronger border controls.

## How will the project achieve its goals?

In addition to stronger border management cooperation, the project also aims to further develop and improve border management by purchasing newer equipment, and developing a wider overview and understanding of the borders between Greece and Bulgaria. Due to the increased illegal border crossings, the addition of new and upgraded equipment is necessary. This new equipment will be based in areas where the levels of illegal border crossings are quite high, allowing authorities to build a clearer understanding of how these crossings are taking place, at what time and their frequency.

In addition to these efforts, training sessions will also be carried out that will build upon the skills and knowledge that are already in place. The training will aim at strengthening the joint investigation abilities of border agencies in tackling cases of irregular border crossings. It will also set the stage for

more effective information exchanges between the border agencies of the three countries. Practical exercises and case studies will focus on investigation techniques and methodologies of irregular migration.

The training will also set out to deepen the knowledge of the participants on risk analysis and methodology. This will strengthen border officials' knowledge when it comes to the examination of travel documents, including profiling, forgery techniques and the security features of travel documents. In addition, it will also assist officials in carrying out screenings and gathering information for the purpose of collecting intelligence on irregular migrants. All the training sessions are given by the border and migration management experts from EU Member States and EU institutions, such as the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA). This, combined with local knowledge and skills from border agencies, will lead to a more robust and secure border management system.

## **THROUGH COOPERATION, COMES RESULTS:**

Sharing knowledge and best practices;

Building a more effective rapid response based on the trends and threats between the three countries;

Through strengthening the legal and regulatory frameworks related to cross-border cooperation;

By enhancing the cooperation and coordination between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

## **Results based on cooperation**

Through continued communication, cooperation and training, the border agencies will be better prepared to deal with irregular migration and stem the flow of border crossings. The knowledge gained from the training, and also from listening to the border patrol agents who work on the ground every day, will help to further increase awareness about the issues, while at the same time give them the skills to cope with the difficult situations they deal with on a regular basis. In doing so, this will lead to a safer and more secure border, on both sides, while also ensuring the safe and humane treatment of those crossing by irregular means.

## **MORE INFORMATION**

**Project reference:** HOME/ISFB/2016/AG/ESUR/0002 – Priority

**Title:** Improvement of the security at the EU external borders and enhance the cooperation with Turkey for addressing the migratory pressure (PRIORITY)

**Contact:** [nsgp@mvr.bg](mailto:nsgp@mvr.bg)

**Website:** [www.nsgp.mvr.bg](http://www.nsgp.mvr.bg)