



# Annual activity report 2022

DG MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

# Table of Contents

- Acronyms and other short forms .....3
- THE DG IN BRIEF..... 6
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....8
  - A. Key results and progress towards achieving the Commission’s general objectives and DG’s specific objectives.....8
  - B. Key performance indicators ..... 13
  - C. Key conclusions on financial management and internal control .....16
  - D. Provision of information to the Commissioner ..... 17
- 1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE COMMISSION’S GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT ..... 18
  - Specific objective 1: Strengthened Internal Security .....18
  - Specific objective 2: An effective asylum and migration management policy .....24
  - Specific objective 3: A fully functioning area of free movement .....32
  - Specific objective 4: Stronger cooperation with partner countries.....36
- 2. MODERN AND EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION AND INTERNAL CONTROL .....44
  - 2.1. Financial management and internal control.....44
    - 2.1.1. Control results .....45
    - 2.1.2. Audit observations and recommendations.....67
    - 2.1.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems.....68
    - 2.1.4. Conclusions on the assurance.....69
    - 2.1.5. Declaration of Assurance and reservations .....71
  - 2.2. Modern and efficient administration – other aspects .....72
    - 2.2.1. Human resource management.....72
    - 2.2.2. Digital transformation and information management .....73
    - 2.2.3. Sound environmental management .....75
    - 2.2.4. Initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities.....76

## Acronyms and other short forms

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
AAR	annual activity report
BMVI	Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa policy
CEPOL	EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training
DG BUDG	Directorate-General for Budget
DG CNECT	Directorate-General Communications Networks, Content and Technology
DG EMPL	Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG MARE	Directorate-General Maritime affairs and Fisheries
DG MOVE	Directorate-General Mobility and Transport
DG REGIO	Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EEAS	European External Action Service
EMAS	Emergency Assistance
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum (successor of EASO as of 19/1/2022)
EURES	European Employment Services
eu-LISA	European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
Europol	EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
FY	Financial Year
FP7	7 <sup>th</sup> Framework Programme
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCG)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISF	Internal Security Fund
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
RAL	open commitments / <i>reste à liquider</i>
RER	Residual Error Rate
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## Foreword

*Dear Reader,*

*The unexpected and unjustified Russian aggression against Ukraine, this tragic and devastating war on Ukrainian soil that has impacted the Ukrainian people so brutally and which we witness every day through media or in person, brought out the best in the people working for the EU institutions and more specifically DG HOME: their unfaltering commitment to the values of territorial integrity, freedom, solidarity, security, and justice. Under the leadership of the President of the Commission von der Leyen and Commissioner Johansson, DG HOME played a major role in addressing the consequences of the war. Many of HOME's policies were impacted by the war in Ukraine.*

*The actual success story of DG HOME of last year is without any doubt the proposal to trigger the temporary protection directive, swiftly implemented and applied in the EU Member States. More than 16 million entries from Ukraine and Moldova into the EU have been recorded since the beginning of the war, and over 4 million persons fleeing the war obtained the protection they needed in the EU, where they were given the right to residence, access to medical care, labour market, education, and housing. And as part of the sanctions' packages against Russia, DG HOME proposed – and the Council agreed – the suspension of the visa facilitation agreements with Russia.*

*With the war in Ukraine came also new threats to the EU's internal security situation, such as an increased risk of trafficking in human beings – which remained limited thanks to quick reaction and prevention actions – and of organised crime activities, critical entities. All these challenges required swift actions. Ties with Moldova were strengthened through the EU support hub for internal security and border management to support the country in addressing emerging security threats. Relocations of people fleeing Ukraine from Moldova to several Member States have been coordinated by the Commission.*

*All these actions were developed on top of the already dense DG HOME work programme for 2022 – with over 260 acts adopted – and in parallel with the negotiations on the reform of the EU migration and asylum rules. DG HOME provided all possible advice, support, input, and guidance to the Council and the European Parliament to ensure that they can live up to their political agreement of September and adopt the Pact on migration and asylum before the 2024 EU elections.*

*A key priority for Commissioner Johansson and for DG HOME is delivering on the Childs Rights package. To effectively address the misuse of online services for the purposes of child sexual abuse, clear rules are needed, with robust conditions and safeguards. We proposed an unprecedented piece of legislation with the obligations on the service providers to detect, report and remove child sexual abuse material on their services. Providers will need to assess and mitigate the risk of misuse of their services and the measures taken must be proportionate to that risk and subject to robust conditions and safeguards.*

*In December, the Council took a historic decision: the enlargement of the Schengen area to Croatia, which joined on 1<sup>st</sup> January. At the same time, the Schengen area has continued to be tested through increased pressure at its external borders particularly as of autumn. Through outreach to Western Balkan countries as well as African countries, we managed to stabilise the situation.*

*The Home Affairs Funds were instrumental in addressing the impact of the war in Ukraine. More flexibility was introduced under the 2014-2020 Funds to enhance Member States' possibilities to channel funding towards the new needs, and EUR 400 million of Emergency Assistance was triggered under the Thematic Facilities. In parallel, Member States' programming for 2021-2027 advanced, allowing the Commission to adopt programmes before the end of the year. Member States now have access to more than EUR 10 billion under the new Funds. In 2022, DG HOME policies were supported by € 3.97 billion of commitment appropriations representing approximately 2.4% of the EU budget, and a corresponding amount of payments appropriations equal to € 3.98 billion*

*You will find the enormous variety of actions prepared, implemented, negotiated as well as monitored by DG HOME staff in the report. Although so many of them were neither foreseen in the work programme for 2022 nor predictable, my staff delivered all of them with the highest level of motivation and the greatest degree of professionalism. I want to thank them for that.*

*Monique Pariat*

## THE DG IN BRIEF

The Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) is responsible for EU policy, legislation, and operational action in the fields of security, borders and migration. Commissioner Ylva Johansson gives political guidance, while Director-General Monique Pariat steers the DG operationally.

DG HOME policies are **shared competences** of the European Union<sup>1</sup>, based on European core values and principles: human dignity, freedom, democracy as well as the rule of law, equality, tolerance, and respect for human rights.

DG HOME's **vision** is an open and secure Europe, where people can enjoy their rights and freedoms.

DG HOME's **mission** is to help ensure that the European Union protects and makes a real positive difference in the areas of migration and security.

The requirement to provide swift and effective responses to migration challenges – including the need to coordinate the reception and integration of all persons fleeing from Ukraine following the military aggression by Russia on 24 February, including the registration of around 4 million for **temporary**

**protection** – and to increasing security threats has led to some necessary staff reinforcements in the past years<sup>2</sup>: 654 **people worked in DG HOME in 2022**.

Working for a comprehensive approach on migration and security, the Schengen area and borders, DG HOME prepares **legislative proposals** to establish EU rules and develops common policies in these areas; monitors and enforces Member States' correct **implementation** of applicable rules; and provides **financing** to support policies. DG HOME supports Member States in **migration management** by long term deployment of staff to Greece, Italy, Spain, Cyprus, and Malta, following the 2015-16 migration crisis. Staff has also been deployed to Poland, as well as through short term regular missions to Czechia, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary, following the war of aggression against Ukraine. One DG HOME colleague is posted at the EU Delegation in Washington DC.

DG HOME accommodates a **Taskforce for Migration Management**, which coordinates the Union's work on all strategic, operational, legal, and financial issues related to migration management. It supports migration management in Greece and responds to other emerging migration crises, like the one triggered by Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. DG HOME also hosts the **EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator**, the Commission **Counter-Terrorism Coordinator** since May 2021, the **EU Return Coordinator** who was appointed in March 2022 and the **Schengen Coordinator** since July 2022.

The EU has established **six decentralised Agencies**<sup>3</sup> in the area of Migration and Home Affairs, which have a key role in the effective implementation of Home Affairs policies. DG

<sup>1</sup> Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU – Title V of Part three).

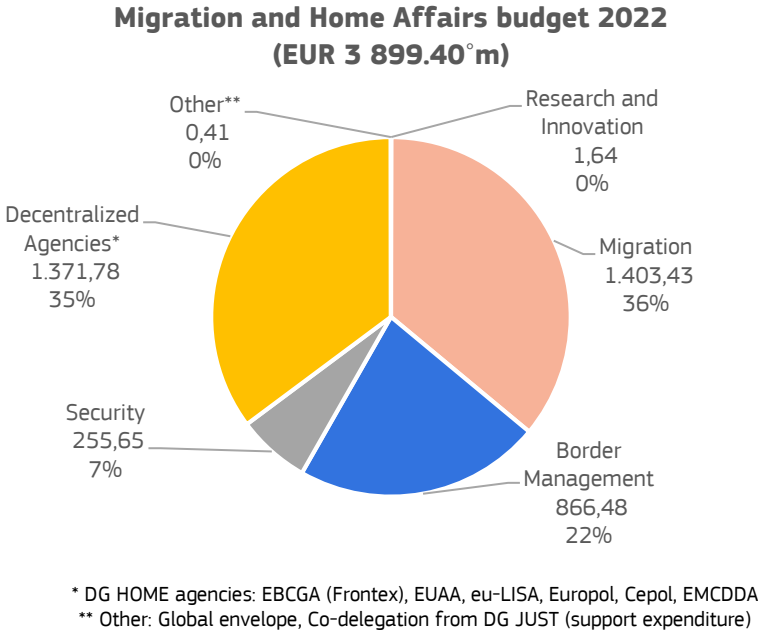
<sup>2</sup> As of February 2023, more than 16 million entries from Ukraine and Moldova into the EU have been recorded, out of which 14 million were Ukrainian nationals. Border crossings from the EU to Ukraine and to Moldova amounted to more than 11 million (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM(2023) 140 of 8.3.2023, p. 1).

<sup>3</sup> The EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol); the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL); the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA); the EU Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA); the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex); <https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/dg/home/whatwedo/Pages/EU-JHA-Agencies.aspx>.

HOME supervises the Research Executive Agency for the ‘Civil Security for Society’ part of the Horizon Europe programme.

In 2022, DG HOME managed a budget of EUR 3.9 billion<sup>4</sup>, mainly through three Funds: the **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)**, the **Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI)** and the **Internal Security Fund (ISF)**. This represents almost 2.4% of EU’s 2022 budget. Overall, HOME funds account with EUR 18.2 billion<sup>5</sup> for 1.5% of the MFF period 2021-2027<sup>6</sup>. For the implementation of the allocated budget, DG HOME uses different implementation modes<sup>7</sup>:

- **Shared management** of AMIF/BMVI/ISF (2021-2027), AMIF/ISF funds (2014-2020).
- **Direct management** of research and non-research grants and procurement.
- **Indirect management** of decentralised agencies and entrusted entities.



<sup>4</sup> In terms of commitment appropriations expiring in 2022 as per underlying data for Annex 4 to the present annual activity report.  
<sup>5</sup> EUR 18.2 billion does not include reinforcements/transfers from other shared management funds, but it includes fines under the BMVI.  
<sup>6</sup> The Next Generation EU or fines are not taken into account when calculated the total of the MFF 2021-2027.  
<sup>7</sup> See Part 2 for more information and reporting on the commitments that have been made in 2022.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This annual activity report is a management report of the Director-General of DG HOME to the College of Commissioners. Annual activity reports are the main instrument of management accountability within the Commission and constitute the basis on which the College takes political responsibility for the decisions it takes as well as for the coordinating, executive and management functions it exercises, as laid down in the Treaties<sup>8</sup>.

### A. Key results and progress towards achieving the Commission's general objectives and DG's specific objectives

DG HOME continued to contribute mainly to the Commission's General Objective 5, *Promoting our European way of life*, in a context of the diminishing Covid-19 crisis and the rise of a new crisis triggered by the unjustified and unprovoked Russian aggression in Ukraine. It soon became clear that the war in Ukraine would impact most of the home affairs priorities.

#### *In 2022, DG HOME contributed to...*

#### *... strengthened internal security and stronger engagement with partner countries:*

*Fighting organised crime:* Protecting society from **organised crime**<sup>9</sup> is a priority. The most effective way to fight organised crime is going after their profits. With this aim in mind, DG HOME prepared a proposal for a **Directive on asset recovery and confiscation**<sup>10</sup> to disrupt the business model of organised criminal groups and to recover their illicit revenues. Moreover, to address the threat of firearms trafficking, a proposal to update the rules on the import, export, and transit of **firearms**<sup>11</sup> for civilian use was put forward. Furthermore, DG HOME proposed to strengthen the mandate of the European Drugs Agency to increase its capacity to address **illicit drugs** that pose a complex security and health problem that affects millions of persons in the EU. The Commission also proposed strengthened **rules against trafficking in human beings**<sup>12</sup>, as a particularly serious form of organised crime and committed EUR 13 million for anti-trafficking actions. Following Russia's full-scale invasion in Ukraine, the EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator swiftly developed the Common Anti-trafficking **Plan**<sup>13</sup> to prevent and fight trafficking in human beings and protect the victims – in particular women and children – fleeing the war. The sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines made it also clear that the resilience of the critical infrastructure in the EU and of critical entities operating that infrastructure is under threat. Very timely, the European Parliament gave its final approval in November and the Council adopted the **Directive on**

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<sup>8</sup> Article 17(1) Treaty on European Union.

<sup>9</sup> COM(2021) 170 final of 14.4.2021.

<sup>10</sup> COM(2022) 245 final of 25.5.2022.

<sup>11</sup> COM(2022) 480 final of 27.10.2022 as well as Annexes.

<sup>12</sup> COM(2022) 732 final of 19.12.2022.

<sup>13</sup> [Common Anti-Trafficking Plan\\_Victims fleeing war Ukraine.pdf](#)



**the resilience of critical entities**<sup>14</sup> in December. DG HOME held the pen on the Commission proposal<sup>15</sup>. In addition, a **recommendation**<sup>16</sup> was also adopted, which was drafted with major input from DG HOME and which aims at strengthening the preparedness, response and international cooperation when it comes to the **resilience of critical infrastructure**.

*Engaging partner countries on security:* Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine also triggered the need for an even more coordinated approach between Member States to guarantee that the EU's internal security remains solid. To that end **internal security dialogue** was launched with both Ukraine and Moldova<sup>17</sup>. Work continued as well with the Western Balkans on the implementation of the **Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism**<sup>18</sup> with the signature of the revision of the arrangement with North Macedonia<sup>19</sup> and Albania<sup>20</sup>. An agreement on the exchange of personal data between **Europol and New Zealand**<sup>21</sup> was concluded.

*Fighting crimes in a digital age:* Digital technologies and the way children use them have changed dramatically, exposing children to harmful and illegal content. In May 2022, the Commission adopted a **proposal for a new EU legislation to prevent and combat child sexual abuse, notably online** and to oblige providers to detect, report and remove child sexual abuse material on their services<sup>22</sup>.

*Exchange information:* Building on the notion that the rapidly changing European security landscape demands an EU coordinated response for the whole of society, the Commission, with DG HOME in the lead, proposed new rules on **Advance Passenger Information**<sup>23</sup> to facilitate and strengthen the external border management. This initiative is one of the key actions in the **EU Security Union Strategy**<sup>24</sup> and implements commitments made in DG HOME's 2020–2024 Strategic Plan<sup>25</sup>, which aim to strengthen the overall security architecture and enhance the protection of citizens.

**... an effective asylum and migration management policy both inside the EU and in cooperation with partner countries:**

To reach the objectives set in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, DG HOME continued to

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<sup>14</sup> Directive (EU) 2022/2557 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on the resilience of critical entities and repealing Council Directive 2008/114/EC, OJ L 333 of 27.12.2022.

<sup>15</sup> COM(2020) 829 of 16.12.2020.

<sup>16</sup> COM(2022) 551 final of 18.10.2022.

<sup>17</sup> The EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova was launched at the margins of the informal Justice and Home affairs Council on 11.7.2022.

<sup>18</sup> [joint-action-plan-on-ct-for-wb.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> EU Home Affairs on Twitter: "Signing of the Revision of the Arrangement with North #MacedoniaMK for the Implementation of the Joint Action Plan on Counter Terrorism for the #WesternBalkans This is a concrete sign of our continuous engagement and support for our partners @YlvaJohansson @o\_spasovski <https://t.co/grSeocOkXo>" / Twitter on 9 December 2022.

<sup>20</sup> EU Home Affairs on Twitter: "Signing of the Revision of the Arrangement with #Albania AL for the Implementation of the Joint Action Plan on Counter Terrorism for the #WesternBalkans We welcome the progress made by Albania in the implementation of the priority actions. @YlvaJohansson @bledicuci #securityEU <https://t.co/jQIhtAlxM>" / Twitter on 9 December 2022.

<sup>21</sup> COM(2022) 208 final of 13.5.2022. Council Decision (EU) 2023/368 of 14.2.2023, OJ L 51 of 20.2.2023.

<sup>22</sup> COM(2022) 209 final of 11.5.2022.

<sup>23</sup> COM(2022) 729 final of 13.12.2022; COM(2022) 731 final of 13.12.2022.

<sup>24</sup> COM(2020) 605 final of 24.7.2020.

<sup>25</sup> [Strategic plan 2020-2024 – Migration and Home Affairs \(europa.eu\)](#)

support the negotiations on the **Pact on Migration and Asylum**<sup>26</sup>. DG HOME also contributed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> report on **migration and asylum**<sup>27</sup> which took stock on the progress made on the Pact proposals and highlighted the need for further progress. With the **Joint Roadmap on the Pact on Migration and Asylum**<sup>28</sup> a political agreement between both co-legislators was reached to take all necessary steps towards the adoption of the proposals before the end of the 2019-2024 legislative period.

*Providing help to people in need:* Considering the exceptional nature of the Russian attack and the sheer number of people leaving Ukraine, the EU had to act swiftly and provide concrete support to the Ukrainian government and those fleeing the war. In record time, DG HOME drafted the Decision<sup>29</sup> that activated for the first time **the Temporary Protection Directive**<sup>30</sup>, specifically designed to give immediate protection to persons in need and to avoid overwhelming Member States' asylum systems. Within days, Member States could offer to the ones in need a residence permit, access to education, to the labour market and health services.

DG HOME subsequently was at the forefront to **coordinate and support Member States** in their efforts to manage the arrival of people. The **10-point action plan** for stronger European coordination on welcoming those fleeing the Ukraine was another tool for which DG HOME was in the lead. The first point referred to the setup of a **Solidarity Platform "Ukraine"**, chaired by DG HOME. It allows for all stakeholders to meet, and exchange on the urgent needs and how to address them. Given the geopolitical context, the **Blueprint network**<sup>31</sup> started to focus on Ukraine at the beginning of the year. By the end of 2022, EU Member States had recorded almost 4 million registrations on the **Temporary Protection platform**<sup>32</sup> set up by DG HOME together with DG JUST's shared Information Resource Management. In support of the immediate needs of the Member States that were the most affected at the start of the war and hosted a large number of refugees. **EUR 400 million in emergency assistance** was made available from the Home Affairs Funds 2021-2027.

*Promoting legal pathways to the EU and integration:* To address labour market shortages and to ensure that the EU attracts the skills and talent it needs, an efficient legislative framework is needed. The **Long-Term Residents Directive**<sup>33</sup> and the **Single Permit Directive**<sup>34</sup> set the framework in terms of procedures and rights for a large part of the non-EU workers legally residing in the EU but **needed to be revised** to fully achieve their objectives. Other initiatives such as the **EU Talent Pool**, the **EU Talent Pool project** for Ukrainians, and negotiations towards **Talent partnerships** proposed by DG HOME, a

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<sup>26</sup> [Migration and Asylum Package: New Pact on Migration and Asylum documents adopted on 23 September 2020 \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>27</sup> COM (2022) 740 final of 6.10.2022.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20220907RES39903/20220907RES39903.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> COM(2022) 91 final of 2.3.2022.

<sup>30</sup> Directive 2001/55/EC of 20.7.2001, OJ L 212, 7.8.2001, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> The Blueprint Network includes the Commission, the Council, EU Member States, the European External Action Service, and relevant EU Agencies: the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Frontex, Europol, eu-LISA and EUAA. The Schengen Associated Countries, IOM and UNHCR have observer status.

<sup>32</sup> [Solidarity with Ukraine: Commission launches an EU platform for registration of people enjoying temporary protection or adequate protection under national law \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>33</sup> COM(2022) 650 final of 27.4.2022.

<sup>34</sup> COM(2022) 655 of 27.4.2022.

migration management took to be launched with key partners of origin and transit, to allow i.a. for the integration of skilled nationals from outside of the EU. **Resettlements** in 2022 decreased in comparison to 2021. As regards integration of third country nationals, Member States are supported through DG HOME Migration and Home affairs funds. In 2022 the number of persons assisted by the AMIF Fund through integration measures in the framework of national, local, and regional strategies doubled compared to 2021<sup>35</sup>.

*Preventing irregular migration and returning migrants with no right to stay:* In addition to supporting the inter-institutional negotiations on the **recast of the Return Directive**, DG HOME continued the implementation of the **EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration**<sup>36</sup> and closely followed the **European Border and Coast Guard Agency's** (Frontex) work to ensure the full operationalisation of its mandate on return and reintegration. With the additional support of the **EU Return Coordinator**, DG HOME continued its work to support Member States in improving the return process, linking the **EU visa policy** to **cooperation on readmission**. The Commission adopted the third assessment report on third countries' level of cooperation on **readmission**<sup>37</sup> under Article 25a of the Visa Code. DG HOME held the pen for proposals to the Council to temporarily restrict visa applications for nationals of **Senegal**<sup>38</sup> and increase the restrictive measures already in place for nationals of **The Gambia**<sup>39</sup> based on the relevant assessment reports from 2021<sup>40</sup>. The operational partnerships to fight **migrant smuggling** with **Morocco**<sup>41</sup>, **Niger**<sup>42</sup> and the **Western Balkans**<sup>43</sup> are additional tool to disrupt the business model used by criminal networks, prevent migrants from becoming victims of violence and exploitation and protect their fundamental rights.

*Strengthening the external dimension of migration policy:* A cross cutting priority throughout 2022 was to establish comprehensive and balanced partnerships with third countries on migration management covering all aspects. Towards the end of 2022, with the increase of arrivals and attempted irregular border crossings at the EU external border specific Action Plans<sup>44</sup> were developed for the **Central Mediterranean and the Western Balkan** routes, containing operational measures to address the immediate and ongoing challenges on these routes.

### **... a fully functioning Schengen area of free movement:**

As set out in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, free movement across internal borders is intrinsic to the headline ambition of a *European Way of Life*.

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<sup>35</sup> In 2021: 895 °364 migrants (see also 2021 Annual Activity Report - [Annual activity report 2021 - Migration and Home Affairs \(europa.eu\)](#)).

<sup>36</sup> EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration, COM(2021) 120 final of 27.4.2021.

<sup>37</sup> COM(2022) 735 final of 8.12.2022.

<sup>38</sup> COM(2022) 631 of 9.11.2022.

<sup>39</sup> COM(2022) 632 final of 9.11.2022.

<sup>40</sup> COM(2021) 56 final, of 10.2.2021 and COM(2021) 828 final, of 21.12.2021.

<sup>41</sup> Joint Press Release, 8.7.2022.

<sup>42</sup> Joint Press Release, 15.7.2022.

<sup>43</sup> Launched by the Commission during the EU-Western Balkans Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial on 3 November 2022. Joint Press Statement with the Council of the EU, 916/2022 of 4.11.2022. See also footnote 36 below.

<sup>44</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/EU%20Action%20Plan%20for%20the%20Central%20Mediterranean\\_en.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/EU%20Action%20Plan%20for%20the%20Central%20Mediterranean_en.pdf);  
[https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/Western%20Balkans\\_en.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/Western%20Balkans_en.pdf)

*Ensuring the correct and full application of the Schengen acquis:* The **State of Schengen Report** was presented for the first time in 2022, as part of the Commission's initiative to **reinforce the Schengen governance**. The new **Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism**<sup>45</sup> adopted in June 2022 plays a crucial role in the new Schengen governance model.

Furthermore, in autumn 2022, the **Schengen coordinator** entered into an **intense dialogue** with a number of Member States, to put practical measures in place to manage the increased inflow of migrants, notably from the Western Balkan countries, and therefore reduce the need for the reintroduction of internal border controls.

*Protecting the external borders:* The start of the Russian war in Ukraine in February 2022 was a stark reminder of the importance of a **well-functioning and integrated border management**. As soon as the Russian war started, the law enforcement authorities of the Member States, Frontex (EBCGA) and the Fundamental rights agency started **cooperating and** demonstrating commitment and solidarity, which ensured that the millions of persons fleeing the war in Ukraine could cross the EU-Ukraine external border safely. DG HOME prepared Commission **guidelines on the management of borders with Ukraine**<sup>46</sup> to facilitate the entry of the war refugees, while maintaining a high level of security for the entire Schengen area, and, within a few weeks, negotiated a **status agreement with Moldova**, to alleviate the pressure on that country's border through Frontex support. More generally, to ensure the continuous cooperation between the European Union and its Member States to achieve a fully effective European integrated border management, DG HOME led the work on a policy document on the **Multiannual Strategic Policy for European Integrated Border Management**<sup>47</sup>.

*Guarantee an effective and efficient visa policy:* In 2022 the Council **suspended the visa facilitation agreements with Russia**<sup>48</sup> and DG HOME led the work for the guidelines on the visa issuance<sup>49</sup> - as part of the sanctions following the war against Ukraine, as well as on the Commission's proposal on the partial suspension of the visa waiver agreement with **Vanuatu**<sup>50</sup> to address risks linked to golden passport schemes. The effective functioning of the border-free Schengen area requires an EU common visa policy which is efficient in process; for that aim DG HOME was in the lead of the **proposal for a Regulation on the digitalisation of visa procedures**<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/922 of 9.6.2022, OJ L 160 of 15.6.2022.

<sup>46</sup> Commission Communication, Providing operational guidelines for external border management to facilitate border crossings at the EU-Ukraine borders, OJ C 104 I, 4.3.2022.

<sup>47</sup> COM(2023) 146 final of 14.3.2023.

<sup>48</sup> Based on a Commission proposal: COM(2022) 661 of 6.9.2022.

<sup>49</sup> C(2022) 6596 of 9.9.2022 and C(2022) 7111 of 30.9.2022.

<sup>50</sup> First the partial suspension: COM(2022) 6 of 12.1.2022 (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/222 of 1.12.2022, OJ L 32 of 3.2.2023); then the full suspension: COM(2022) 531 of 12.10.2022.

<sup>51</sup> COM(2022) 658 final of 27.4.2022.

## B. Key performance indicators

**Key performance indicator 1:** *Enhanced cooperation and information exchange between law enforcement authorities, measured using EU and decentralised information exchange databases and mechanisms by law enforcement authorities* (result indicator 1.3). This indicator shows the growing importance of cross border information exchange; overall it is developing as planned, as indicated in the table:

	2016	2017	2018	2019 (baseline)	2020	2021 (milestone)	2022	2024 (target)
<b>SIS<sup>A</sup></b>	Ratio: 0.28	Ratio: 0.32	Ratio: 0.32	Ratio: 0.31	Ratio: 0.22	Ratio: 0.25	Ratio: 0.21	Increase
<b>Prüm<sup>B</sup>: total matches</b>	2 806 642	3 466 995	4 538 388	3 500 000	4 753 373	6 201 192	no full set of data available <sup>52</sup>	Increase
<b>SIENA<sup>C</sup>: messages exchanged</b>	869 858	1 005 610	1 110 962	1 244 000 <sup>53</sup>	1 266 233	1 542 658	1 636 115	Increase
<b>ARO<sup>D</sup>: messages exchanged via SIENA</b>	3 382	5 268	5 912	6 966	7 964	18 603	21 599	Increase
<b>EIS<sup>E</sup>: searches performed</b>	1 436 838	2 478 825	4 062 974	7 489 400 <sup>54</sup>	10 231 322	12 256 546	13 374 862	Increase
<b>PNR<sup>F</sup>:</b>								
i) total number of spontaneous transfers	n/a <sup>55</sup>	n/a	n/a	91	88	142	262	Increase
ii) total number of emergency requests	n/a	n/a	n/a	61	9	0	2	
iii) total number of case-by-case requests	n/a	n/a	n/a	1 827	4 404	7 507	13 095	

A) Schengen Information System (SIS). Measuring the ratio between the number of hits on discreet or specific check alerts and the total number of such alerts issued. Data source: eu-LISA.

B) Data source: Council/Member States.

C) Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA). Data source: Europol.

D) Asset Recovery Offices (ARO). Data source: Europol.

E) Europol Information System (EIS). Data source: Europol.

F) Passenger Name Record (PNR). Data source: Council/Member States.

**Key performance indicator 2:** *An effective asylum policy, measured by number of asylum applications pending for more than 6 months in first instance* (result indicator 2.1).

At the end of 2022, 265 394 applications<sup>56</sup> had been pending for more than 6 months, which is about 54 019 more than at the end of 2021. There was a considerable increase in asylum applications in 2022 compared to 2021: one can observe a particular strong increase in asylum applications pending for less than 6 months in first instance but also an increase in those pending for more than 6 months. Efforts will continue to reach the objective of reducing the number of pending cases until 2024<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> No data published yet by the Council Secretariat General due to data lacking for Germany. Possible date for release of data end of April 2023.

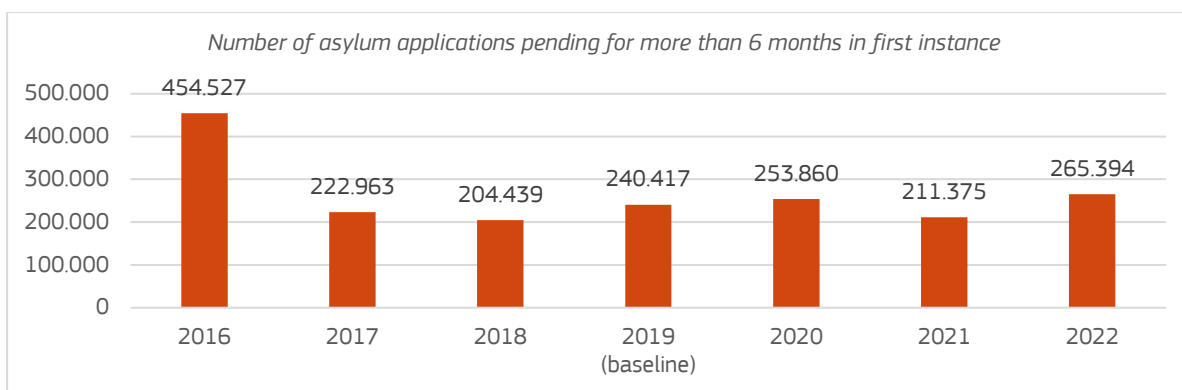
<sup>53</sup> The baseline in the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan of 1 100 000 has been updated to 1 244 000.

<sup>54</sup> The baseline in the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan of 4 000 000 has been updated to 7 489 400 as 2019 was the first year when Europol reported QUEST searches together with the searches performed directly in EIS. For the duration of the Strategic Plan this way of reporting will remain unchanged.

<sup>55</sup> The deadline for transposing the PNR Directive was 25.5.2018; no data available before that date.

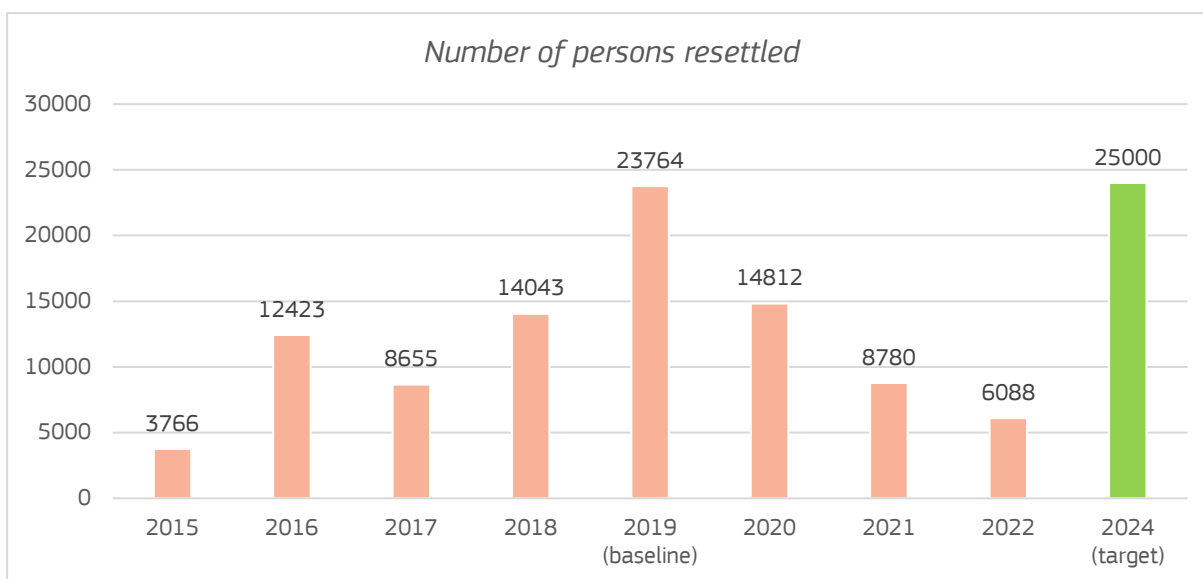
<sup>56</sup> The complete data for Lithuania and Slovakia are not available yet.

<sup>57</sup> Data source for KPI 2: EU Asylum Agency. The baseline in the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan referred to EU-27+ (including Norway and Switzerland). This has been updated, and only the EU Member States are included in this chart.



**Key performance indicator 3:** *Genuine legal pathways available, measured by number of persons resettled (result indicator 2.3).*

This indicator shows the number of persons who arrive yearly in the Member States via resettlement under EU schemes<sup>58</sup> and mirrors the number of persons resettled for whom Member States made a payment request under AMIF. The actual number of arrivals of resettled persons as shared by the Member States for 2022 is higher<sup>59</sup>. The Commission is launching the next pledging exercise (2024-2025) in May 2023 in the hope that the Member States will keep the level of efforts or even increase it.



**Key performance indicator 4:** *A well-protected external border, measured by the gradual establishment of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps (result indicator 3.1).*

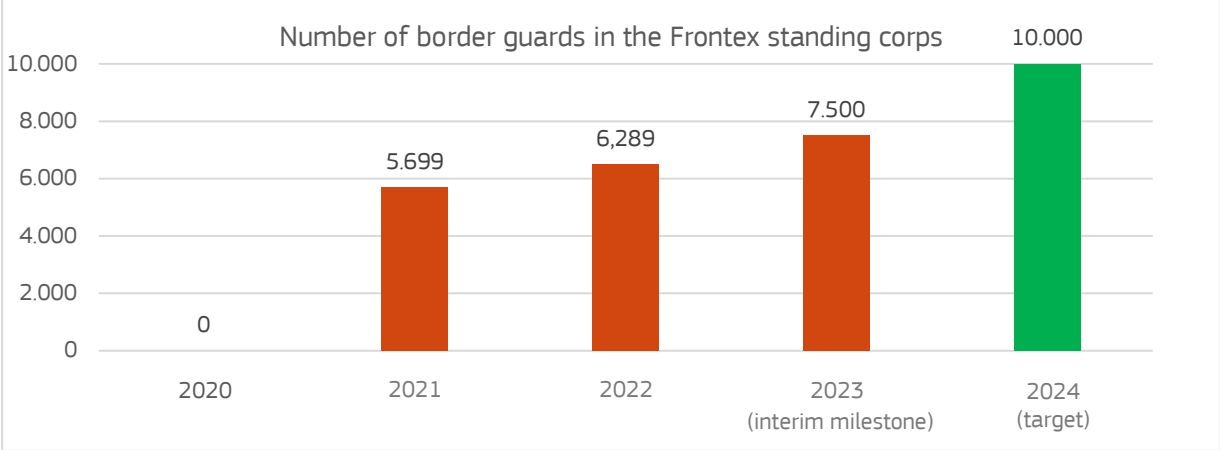
This indicator measures the establishment of a standing corps by Frontex and the Member States<sup>60</sup>. In only 3 years, the number of border guards selected for the standing corps went

<sup>58</sup> Data source for KPI 3: The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund Programme Statement, based on Member States' Annual Accounts for the 2022 financial year (16.10.2021–15.10.2022). The baseline in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan referred to the calendar year. The baseline has now been adapted and aligned with the Programme Statement of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

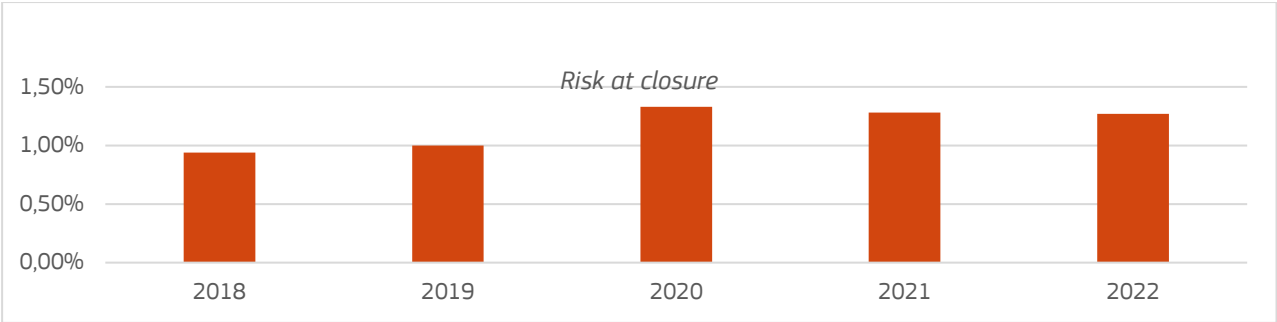
<sup>59</sup> The difference between the values reported in 2022 and the actual resettlements carried out is larger than in any given year due to a combination of factors, including the need to cope with displaced people from Ukraine and related extensions to the national programs, the reporting timeframe for the recently approved 21-27 programs and the effects of COVID.

<sup>60</sup> Required by Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 on the European Border and Coast Guard.

from 0 to 6°289<sup>61</sup> by 31 December 2022 (just below the interim milestone for 2022 of 6 500). The challenges for the recruitment of such a high number of qualified border guards were Covid-19 and the ensuing backlog, a complex and long recruiting period, and the fact that several selected candidates turned down employment offers. However, the recruitment proceeds steadily in a more simplified manner and determined to reach the target in 2024.



**Key performance indicator 5:** Overall risk at closure (indicator 1 for ‘sound financial management’). This indicator illustrates that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that cost-effective controls are in place that give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions. The estimated risk at closure for 2022 was 1.27%, which is well below the target for 2022 of under 2%.



<sup>61</sup> The target for 2024 initially set for 10°000 was aligned with the target for 2024 set in Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 which is 8°000.

## C. Key conclusions on financial management and internal control

In line with the Commission's Internal Control Framework, DG HOME has assessed its internal control system during the reporting year and has concluded that it is effective, and the components and principles are present and functioning well overall, but some improvements are needed as minor deficiencies were identified. Please refer to annual activity report section 2.1.3 for further details.

In addition, DG HOME has systematically examined the available control results and indicators, including those for supervising entities to which it has entrusted budget implementation tasks, as well as the observations and recommendations issued by the internal auditor and the European Court of Auditors. These elements have been assessed to determine their impact on management's assurance about the achievement of the control objectives. Please refer to Section 2.1 for further details.

**In conclusion, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated. Improvements are necessary to address audit recommendations and internal control weaknesses. The following actions will be taken in this respect: communication actions to raise staff awareness about whistleblowing; implementation of the open audit recommendations issued by the ECA; and update of the DG's HR strategy.**

**The Director-General, in her capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation, has signed the Declaration of Assurance albeit qualified by 2 reservations concerning<sup>62</sup>:**

**1) Shared management – Reservation concerning AMIF and ISF 2014-2020 in several Member States**

**2) Centralised Direct Management - Union actions and emergency assistance grants**

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<sup>62</sup> Please see details in Part 2.1.4 and Annex 9.



## **D. Provision of information to the Commissioner**

In the context of the regular meetings during the year between the Director-General and the Commissioner on management matters, the main elements of this report and assurance declaration, including the reservations envisaged, have been brought to the attention of Commissioner Johansson, responsible for Home Affairs.



# 1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE COMMISSION'S GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT

In 2022, DG HOME continued to work towards its vision of an open and secure Europe, by developing EU-level rules, monitoring their implementation, and giving financial and operational support to the Member States on the ground. This Activity Report provides an overview of DG HOME's main achievements.

A number of initiatives were put forward in line with its 2022 Management Plan. These initiatives form the basis for achieving the objectives as set in the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan. In addition, DG HOME was in the lead for several unplanned initiatives addressing the impact on home affairs of Russia's unprecedented aggression in Ukraine and showing solidarity and support to Ukraine. DG HOME's activities contribute mainly to the Commission's General Objective 5, *Promoting our European way of life*, divided on four Specific Objectives:

Promoting our European Way of Life			
<b>Strengthened Internal Security</b>	<b>An effective asylum and migration management policy</b>	<b>A fully functioning area of free movement</b>	<b>Stronger cooperation with partner countries</b>

The list of deliverables relating to the Specific Objectives are detailed in Annex 2. Indicators that come from the Programme Statements for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Border Management and Visa Instrument, and the Internal Security Fund<sup>63</sup> are drawn from the Annual Implementation Reports submitted by the Member States.

## General Objective: Promoting our European way of life

### Specific objective 1: Strengthened Internal Security

On 24 February 2022, Russia launched its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU reacted swiftly. DG HOME was in the lead of a few initiatives focusing on maintaining robust internal security.

The EU and its Member States quickly mobilised the **European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats** (EMPACT) to ensure vigilance against criminals taking advantage of the ongoing war in Ukraine<sup>64</sup>. An **EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management was set up in Moldova** in July 2022. It supports the cooperation on internal security and border management, focusing on specific threats such as organised crime, trafficking of firearms and in human beings, aiming to counter the internal security risk for the EU.

<sup>63</sup> The programme statements for AMIF, BMVI and ISF are included in the Working Document Part I *Programme Statements of operational expenditure* annexed to the Draft General Budget of the European Union.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/common-response-to-serious-and-organised-crime-linked-to-war-in-ukraine>

The vulnerable situation of people fleeing Ukraine increased opportunities for traffickers to exploit human tragedies for their financial gain. A **Common Anti-Trafficking Plan** was therefore presented under the lead of the EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator in May 2022, addressing the risks of trafficking, and supporting potential victims among those fleeing the war in **Ukraine**<sup>65</sup>. Due to the comprehensive measures to reduce people's vulnerability and the extensive awareness raising and preventive actions, the number of confirmed human trafficking cases **has remained limited**.

Together with the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and the European External Action Service, DG HOME launched an **internal security dialogue with Ukraine**. The dialogue, which was endorsed by Ministers during the October JHA Council, aims to enhance information exchange and to strengthen operational cooperation to address common security threats, such as trafficking in human beings, trafficking of firearms and counterterrorism. DG HOME committed to addressing the internal security implications of the war in Ukraine, ensuring maximal vigilance against organised crime and the enforcement of EU sanctions against Russian and Belarussian persons. To ensure that proceeds derived from the violation of sanctions are effectively traced, frozen and confiscated, DG HOME prepared a proposal for a **Directive on asset recovery and confiscation**<sup>66</sup>, in line with the EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime (2021-2025)<sup>67</sup>. The proposal, that followed a combined evaluation of the current rules and an impact assessment<sup>68</sup> aims to ensure that crime does not pay, depriving criminals of their ill-gotten gains and limiting their capacity to commit further crimes. DG HOME is also part of the 'Freeze and Seize' Task Force, set up by the Commission in March 2022<sup>69</sup>. In this context, **Europol** is supporting financial investigations targeting criminal assets owned by individuals and legal entities sanctioned. All EU Member States participate, together with 14 partner countries, Frontex and Eurojust. Europol is also present on the ground and works closely with all Member States to prevent and counter crimes, such as human trafficking, firearms trafficking, money laundering and labour exploitation. **Frontex** is offering support at the EU borders with Ukraine, Russia and continues to assist local authorities at the EU borders with Belarus.

In response to the acts of sabotage against the Nord Stream gas pipelines, the Commission led by DG HOME adopted a **proposal for a Council recommendation on a coordinated approach by the Union to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure**<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/Anti-Trafficking%20Plan\\_en.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/Anti-Trafficking%20Plan_en.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> COM(2022) 245 final of 25.5.2021.

<sup>67</sup> COM(2021) 170 final of 14.4.2021.

<sup>68</sup> SWD(2022) 245 final of 25.5.2021.

<sup>69</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement\\_22\\_1850](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_1850)

<sup>70</sup> COM(2022) 551 final of 18.10.2022.

### Focus of DG HOME funding in security in 2022

€ 27 million<sup>71</sup>

Exchange of security related information

€ 25.5 million<sup>72</sup>

Combatting and preventing crime, including terrorism

In 2022, DG HOME continued working on key areas of the **Security Union Strategy**<sup>73</sup>, as well as implementing the EU Strategy to tackle organised crime, the EU Counter Terrorist Agenda, the EU Strategy in combatting trafficking in Human Beings and the EU Drugs Strategy, aiming to increase the resilience of our societies against organised crime; crimes in the digital age; terrorism and radicalisation. DG HOME adopted an Action Plan against Trafficking in Cultural Goods<sup>74</sup> in December, to disrupt this lucrative criminal activity and protect cultural heritage.

To address complex cross-border security threats, the EU must intensify cooperation and the exchange of information. For that aim, DG HOME put forward proposals for two Regulations<sup>75</sup>, revising the **Advance Passenger Information Directive (API)**<sup>76</sup>, as announced in the **2022 Commission Work Programme** and prepared based on an impact assessment<sup>77</sup>. The proposals aim to extend the current scope to intra-EU flights, improve the effectiveness of the use of data and the coherence with other instruments (such as the Entry/Exit System, the European Travel Information and Authorisation System, and the **Passenger Name Record System**) to fight terrorist offences and other serious crime.

To further facilitate important information exchange, DG HOME supported the negotiations on legislative proposals presented in 2021: a Regulation on **Automated Data Exchange for Police Cooperation** (Prüm II)<sup>78</sup> and a Directive on **information exchange between the law enforcement authorities** of the Member States<sup>79</sup>; provisional political agreement was reached between the European Parliament and the Council at the end of 2022 on legislative proposals<sup>80</sup> aiming to improve **cross-border access to electronic evidence for criminal investigations**, endorsed in early 2023<sup>81</sup>. For interoperability of the large-scale security information systems, see Specific objective 3. Based on a Commission proposal<sup>82</sup>, the Council adopted a **Recommendation on operational law**

<sup>71</sup> Member States' Annual Accounts for ISF for the 2022 financial year (16.10.2021–15.10.2022). Related to National Objective "Exchange of information".

<sup>72</sup> Member States' Annual Accounts for ISF Police for the 2022 financial year (16.10.2021–15.10.2022). Related to National Objective "Preventing and Combating".

<sup>73</sup> COM(2020) 605 final of 24.7.2020.

<sup>74</sup> COM(2022) 800 final of 13.12.2022

<sup>75</sup> Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the collection and transfer of advance passenger information for enhancing and facilitating external border controls, amending Regulation (EU) 2019/817 and Regulation (EU) 2018/1726, and repealing Council Directive 2004/82/EC, COM/2022/729 final of 13.12.2022, and Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the collection and transfer of advance passenger information for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime, and amending Regulation (EU) 2019/818, COM(2022) 731 final of 13.12.2022.

<sup>76</sup> Council Directive 2004/82/EC of 29.4.2004, OJ L 261 of 6.8.2004, p. 24.

<sup>77</sup> SWD(2022) 422 final of 13.12.2022.

<sup>78</sup> Proposal COM(2021) 784 final of 8.12.2021.

<sup>79</sup> COM(2021) 782 final of 8.12.2021.

<sup>80</sup> Proposal for Directive COM(2018) 226 final of 17.4.2018 and Proposal for Regulation COM/2018/225 final of 17.4.2018.

<sup>81</sup> On 25.1.2023 the Council confirmed the agreement reached between the Council presidency and the European Parliament on the draft regulation and the draft directive on cross-border access to e-evidence.

<sup>82</sup> COM(2021) 780 final of 8.12.2021.

**enforcement cooperation**<sup>83</sup> in June 2022. The purpose of the Council Recommendation is to strengthen operational cooperation between the law enforcement authorities of Member States by addressing obstacles when police officers operate in other Member States, especially regarding cross-border hot pursuit, cross-border surveillance, and joint patrols and other types of joint operations.

DG HOME also continued to lead the negotiations on behalf of the EU with **INTERPOL** to connect databases on Travel Documents to ETIAS and the Visa Information System (VIS) and enhance or establish cooperation between INTERPOL and JHA agencies (Europol, Eurojust, the EPPO, Frontex).



On 28 June 2022, the recast<sup>84</sup> of the **Europol** Regulation entered into force. With its stronger mandate, Europol will be able to step up its expertise and

operational capabilities, notably to better support the EU Member States in combating serious and organised crime and terrorism. In addition, the amended Regulation further strengthens the data protection framework applicable to Europol as well as the European Data Protection Supervisor's (EDPS) oversight function. DG HOME will continue supporting the full operational implementation of the Europol amended Regulation.<sup>85</sup>

Limiting criminals' access to firearms is an important step to limit their activities. To this aim and in line with the EU Action Plan on firearms<sup>86</sup>, DG HOME prepared a legislative **proposal**, based on an impact assessment<sup>87</sup>, to revise the **Regulation on export authorisation of firearms and ammunition**<sup>88</sup>, which was adopted on 27 October 2022<sup>89</sup>. Among others, the **new proposal** clarifies on the import, export, and transit of civilian firearms, improves their traceability, and ensures a more uniform implementation of EU law.

**Trafficking in human beings** is a serious crime, which affects all Member States. Every year over 7 000 people become victims of human trafficking in the EU. That figure can be expected to be much higher as many victims remain undetected. More than half of the victims are EU citizens. While sexual exploitation is the main form of trafficking, labour exploitation is on the rise. The annual cost of trafficking in human beings in the EU reaches EUR 2.7 billion. These are part of the findings included in the **report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings**<sup>90</sup> in 2019–2020. Based on an evaluation<sup>91</sup> of



<sup>83</sup> Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/915 of 9 June 2022, OJ L 158 of 13.6.2022.

<sup>84</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/99 of 8 June 2022.

<sup>85</sup> To be finalised in 2023.

<sup>86</sup> COM(2020) 608 final of 24.7.2020.

<sup>87</sup> SWD(2022) 298 final of 27.10.2022.

<sup>88</sup> Regulation (EU) No 258/2012 of 14.3.2012, OJL 94/1.

<sup>89</sup> COM(2022) 480 final of 27.10.2022 as well as Annexes.

<sup>90</sup> COM(2022) 736 final of 19.12.2022, (Fourth Report).

<sup>91</sup> SWD(2022) 427 final of 19.12.2022. IA Report SWD(2022) 425 final of 19.12.2022.

the Anti-trafficking Directive<sup>92</sup> carried out by DG HOME, the Commission proposed in December 2022 a **revision<sup>93</sup> of the Directive**. The amendments provide stronger tools to investigate and prosecute new forms of exploitation; make explicit reference to the online dimension; and make it a criminal offence to knowingly use services provided by victims of trafficking. It also sets up an EU-wide annual data collection on trafficking in human beings. These initiatives are among the key actions of the EU Strategy on combating trafficking in human beings 2021–2025<sup>94</sup>.

Child sexual abuse is a particularly serious crime that has wide-ranging and serious life-long consequences for victims. In May 2022 following an impact assessment<sup>95</sup>, the Commission adopted a **proposal for a Regulation on rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse<sup>96</sup>**. It sets out obligations for service providers to prevent child sexual abuse online by assessing and mitigating risks and, where needed, adopt targeted orders to **detect, report, and remove online child sexual abuse**; and it proposes an independent **EU Centre to prevent and combat child sexual abuse**. Concerning prevention activities, DG HOME continued to develop the Network on Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse. DG HOME also supported international cooperation by hosting the global summit of *WeProtect* Global Alliance<sup>97</sup>, a multi-stakeholder organisation co-founded by the Commission with the aim of bringing about a more effective global response to this matter.

In line with the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021–2025<sup>98</sup> DG HOME led the preparation of the legislative proposal on the **European Union Drugs Agency<sup>99</sup>**, adopted by the Commission in January 2022, and supported the ensuing interinstitutional negotiations between the Council, where a general approach was reached in June 2022, and the EP. DG HOME also started work on the Commission recommendations<sup>100</sup> on alternatives to coercive sanctions for drug using offenders.



DG HOME continued and increased its support to the **European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT)**, a security instrument “driven” by EU Member States to identify, prioritise and address threats posed by organised and serious international crime, and which tackles ten EU crime priorities for the period 2022–2025<sup>101</sup>. In July 2022, through the Internal Security Fund (ISF), DG HOME allocated **EUR 15.7 million** to Member States to further support long-term projects and activities within EMPACT<sup>102</sup>.

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<sup>92</sup> Directive 2011/36/EU of 5.4.2011.

<sup>93</sup> COM(2022) 732 final of 19.12.2022.

<sup>94</sup> COM(2021) 171 final of 14.4.2021.

<sup>95</sup> SWD(2022) 209 final of 11.5.2022.

<sup>96</sup> COM(2022) 209 final of 11.5.2022.

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.weprotect.org/>

<sup>98</sup> Council Decision 2021/C 272/02 of 8.7.2021.

<sup>99</sup> COM(2022) 18 final of 12.1.2022, Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Union Drugs Agency {SWD(2022) 8 final} - {SWD(2022) 9 final}

<sup>100</sup> Commission call for evidence on [Drug-using offenders - alternatives to punishment \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>101</sup> Fight against organised crime: Council sets out 10 priorities for the next 4 years (europa.eu).

<sup>102</sup> C(2021) 8460 final. Commission Implementing Decision of 26.11.2021 on the financing of the components of the Thematic Facility under the Internal Security Fund and the adoption of the work programme for 2021 and 2022.

DG HOME continued participating and contributing as a **core DG on anti-corruption** to the **annual Rule of law report**, the proposal for a Council Implementing Decision to **trigger the application of the Conditionality Regulation** in relation to Hungary<sup>103</sup>, the **European Semester** recommendations on anti-corruption and the Recovery and Resilience Plans through the design of anti-corruption indicators and the monitoring of newly created milestones.

**Security research and innovation** plays a crucial role in enabling the achievements of the different security policies, as it allows keeping up with the rapidly changing threats to security and societal resilience. In the course of 2022, DG HOME co-lead the process for the drafting of the security research part of the **2023-2024 Horizon Europe Work Programme**<sup>104</sup>. In particular, the Civil Security for Society cluster supports the implementation of EU policy priorities on security, including cybersecurity, and disaster risk reduction and resilience. In addition, it builds on lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and capacity building for crises. The current 2023-2024 Horizon Europe Work Programme will be amended to allow for the further strengthening of the budget for the cluster ‘Civil security for society’.

The new **Community of European Research and Innovation for Security (CERIS)** is integrating stakeholders and work strands related to security research<sup>105</sup> under one umbrella<sup>106</sup>. The establishment of the **European Forum on Security Research** is still in the shaping and being discussed with Member States.

Following the positive experience with Frontex and eu-LISA, DG HOME will further structure the integration of **Europol** into the research landscape through the renewed mandate, based on Terms of Reference currently under discussion. DG HOME will further consolidate its footprint in the EU Innovation Hub for internal security by becoming also formal member of the Hub’s governance Steering Group.

Testing the EU response to a complex crisis of a hybrid nature with an internal and external dimension, as well as the EU cooperation with NATO and how EU response could be complemented by NATO, DG HOME coordinated the preparations and the conduct phase of the **EU Integrated Resolve 2022 Parallel and Coordinated Exercise (PACE)**, in cooperation with the Secretariat-General and other Commission services, selected EU agencies and Member States.

Enhancing Law Enforcement Training is also a key action in strengthening internal security. In 2021 CEPOL, the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training, was evaluated to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of its action and of its working practices since 2015 and elaborate recommendations to better respond to the challenges posed by the constantly changing environment against the background of the

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<sup>103</sup> COM (2022) 485 of 18.9.2022.

<sup>104</sup> European Commission Decision C(2022)7550 of 6 December 2022. Hyperlink: [wp-6-civil-security-for-society\\_horizon-2023-2024\\_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022D1204&from=doctrines).

<sup>105</sup> Fighting Crime and Terrorism incl. Resilient Infrastructures, Disaster Resilient societies, Border Management and Strengthened Security Research and Innovation.

<sup>106</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/ceris-community-european-research-and-innovation-security\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/ceris-community-european-research-and-innovation-security_en)

currently authorised financial and human resources for CEPOL<sup>107</sup>. The evaluation recognised the Agency's overall positive contribution to the policy needs, objectives and values of the Security Union and their valuable activity in third countries, while making a few recommendations to increase its outreach and impact and further improve its efficiency.

**Enforcement** work continued the **incomplete transposition** of legislation relating to firearms, combating fraud, money laundering, and access to financial information; and on **incorrect** transposition of legislation in the areas of child sexual abuse, cyberattacks, combating terrorism, drugs, and confiscation.

As a principle, DG HOME applied the **rules of Better Regulation**, conducting a thorough impact assessment based on external studies and detailed input from all stakeholders, including the public which provided input in each public consultation organised as part of the impact assessment. However, in justified circumstances exceptions from these rules apply, as was the case for the launch of the Temporary Protection Directive.

**External communication** promoted the policy narrative on internal security through DG HOME and corporate communication channels (website, press, and social media), supporting legislative adoptions (including on Firearms, Critical Infrastructure, Asset Recovery and Confiscation, Trafficking in Cultural Goods, Advance Passenger information, Trafficking in Human Beings); raising awareness on relevant international days (European Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Terrorism, EU Anti-Trafficking Day, European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation) and contributing to promote and celebrate the success of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT). A separate communication campaign on Child sexual abuse legislation was designed and was running in 2022 to support the legislative process.



The activities under the Specific Objective of *Strengthened Internal Security* contribute to the United Nations' **Sustainable Development Goal**

**16**<sup>108</sup>, aiming to tackle terrorism and prevent radicalisation, disrupt organised crime, fight cybercrime, and fight corruption, financial crime, counterfeiting crime and trafficking in human beings and firearms.

## Specific objective 2: An effective asylum and migration management policy

Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine triggered the largest forced displacement of people in Europe since the Second World War. At the same time, in the second half of the year, irregular migration increased via the Mediterranean and the Western Balkans. Migratory pressure remained at the Eastern border with Belarus where the regime continued to use migrants for political purposes (even if figures of attempted irregular crossings at the borders with Belarus are lower than in 2021). Asylum applications have also been on the rise. These developments have been vivid reminders that structural

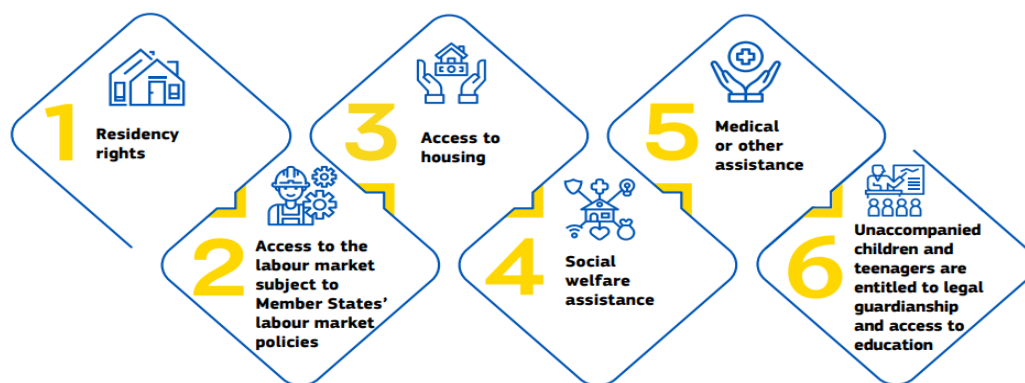
<sup>107</sup> COM(2022) 153 final of 6.4.2022 and SWD(2022) 103 final of 6.4.2022.

<sup>108</sup> Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.



reforms to the EU's asylum and migration system are needed to equip the EU to address both crisis situations and longer-term trends. Given the extraordinary nature of the Russian military invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Council unanimously decided to activate the **Temporary Protection Directive (TPD)**<sup>109</sup> for the first time since its adoption in 2001.

**Temporary protection means:**



**DG HOME** reacted swiftly and led the work on the **proposal for a Council Implementing Decision**<sup>110</sup>, **adopted by the Council** on 4 March 2022<sup>111</sup>. Those fleeing the war are now granted temporary protection in the EU, meaning that they are entitled to a residence permit, suitable accommodation, access to health care, to the labour market and to education. Right thereafter, the Commission presented **operational guidelines** giving guidance to Member States' border guards on how to manage arrivals at the borders with Ukraine efficiently<sup>112</sup> and on the implementation and application of the TPD Decision<sup>113</sup>. At the request of the European Council of 24-25 March 2022, the **Commission outlined all necessary steps to support Member States** in intensifying their efforts to welcome refugees from Ukraine, in a continued spirit of unity and solidarity in a **Communication**<sup>114</sup>. Strong coordination and prioritisation at the European level, in support of Member States, is key for an effective response. For this purpose, the Commission set up the **Solidarity Platform 'Ukraine'**<sup>115</sup>, chaired by DG HOME, which has allowed for continuous exchanges and coordination between the Member States and stakeholders concerned. This coordination has notably focused on the implementation of the TPD and on the operationalisation of the **10-point plan on Stronger European Coordination on Welcoming People Fleeing the war against Ukraine**<sup>116</sup> that was presented in the JHA Council in March 2022, containing a list of priority actions to be undertaken.

Under the Solidarity Platform DG HOME has been supporting and coordinating specific actions to

<sup>109</sup> Directive 2001/55/EC of 20.7.2001, OJ L 212, 7.8.2001, p. 12.

<sup>110</sup> COM(2022) 91 final of 2.3.2022.

<sup>111</sup> Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC and having the effect of introducing temporary OJ L 71 of 04.03.2022.

<sup>112</sup> OJ C 1041 of 4.3.2022.

<sup>113</sup> OJ C 1261/1 of 21.3.2022.

<sup>114</sup> COM(2022) 131 final of 23.3.2022.

<sup>115</sup> See also the Website "EU Solidarity with Ukraine": [https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>116</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/10-point-plan-stronger-european-coordination-welcoming-people-fleeing-war-ukraine\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/10-point-plan-stronger-european-coordination-welcoming-people-fleeing-war-ukraine_en)

facilitate the **transfers** from **Moldova of vulnerable persons fleeing Ukraine** and eligible for temporary protection. So far, 12 Member States, as well as Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, and Iceland have **made pledges to welcome 17 870 persons transiting Moldova**. As of 20 January 2023, a total of **2 344 persons have been transferred** from Moldova. The Commission provided financial support to the International Organisation for Migration to support the process, as part of a EUR°15°million project. The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) deployed staff for support in Moldova as of May 2022.

One of the main achievements of the Solidarity Platform is to ensure that beneficiaries of temporary protection can effectively benefit from their rights in all Member States, while limiting possible abuse. This was made possible with the establishment of the **Temporary Protection Platform**<sup>117</sup>, allowing Member States to exchange information about beneficiaries while ensuring temporary protection or adequate protection under national law.

DG HOME also played a major role in establishing a **dedicated corporate website “EU Solidarity with Ukraine” and helpline** in Ukrainian and Russian with useful information for people fleeing the war<sup>118</sup>. In close cooperation with the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE), DG HOME also helped to establish a **joint interactive map of transport and information hubs** on this website to facilitate the onward movement of people fleeing the war. Through Frequently Asked Questions on the provisions of the TPD published in 2022<sup>119</sup> DG HOME contributed to sharing information with all stakeholders in the Member States and the Ukrainians alike.

In cooperation with Member States, DG HOME also coordinated the establishment of a **contingency planning** document, presenting different scenarios of increased arrivals of displaced persons and outlining the preparedness measures needed to respond at EU level.

Concerning access to accommodation as provided under the TPD, DG HOME presented the **‘Safe Homes’** guidance<sup>120</sup> to support Member States, regional and local authorities as well as civil society that are organising private housing initiatives, and all those who are making their homes available. On 30 November 2022, the Commission announced the decision to award financial support of EUR°5.5°million<sup>121</sup> to a project to be carried out by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Crescent Societies (IFRC) to support hosts and all those involved in providing private accommodation to displaced people, putting together good practices for future needs.

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<sup>117</sup> [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/solidarity-ukraine-commission-launches-eu-platform-registration-people-enjoying-temporary-protection-2022-05-31\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/solidarity-ukraine-commission-launches-eu-platform-registration-people-enjoying-temporary-protection-2022-05-31_en)

<sup>118</sup> [https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/information-people-fleeing-war-ukraine\\_en](https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/information-people-fleeing-war-ukraine_en)

<sup>119</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-07/Frequently%20asked%20questions%20received%20on%20the%20interpretation%20of%20the%20Temporary%20Protection%20Directive%20and%20Council%20Implementing%20Decision%202022-382\\_en.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-07/Frequently%20asked%20questions%20received%20on%20the%20interpretation%20of%20the%20Temporary%20Protection%20Directive%20and%20Council%20Implementing%20Decision%202022-382_en.pdf)

<sup>120</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/safe-homes-guidance\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/safe-homes-guidance_en)

<sup>121</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/stand-ukraine-ec-awards-eu55-million-ensure-safe-homes-those-fleeing-ukraine\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/stand-ukraine-ec-awards-eu55-million-ensure-safe-homes-those-fleeing-ukraine_en)

To speed up the integration of people fleeing the Ukraine in the EU labour market, DG HOME has launched, together with the European Labour Authority and the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL), the **EU Talent Pool**



**Pilot**<sup>122</sup>. Thanks to this pilot, beneficiaries of temporary protection can register their CV on the European Employment Services (EURES) Portal, make their profiles visible to 4 000 employers and to Public Employment Services, and access over 3 000 000 vacancies. The development of the EU Talent Pool will build

on the lessons learnt from the Talent Pool Pilot.

In 2022 the **Blueprint Network**<sup>123</sup>, as a permanent operational framework to ensure situational awareness, better preparedness, and timely response, continued to prove to be a useful and dynamic tool to address emerging challenges such as the impact on migration to the EU of the Russian invasion in Ukraine issuing 106 reports. DG HOME continued to contribute to the consolidation of the situational awareness component of the mechanism, and initiated discussions with stakeholders on modalities to improve forecasting and build resilience.

#### Examples of DG HOME funding for Ukraine in 2022

€ 248 million<sup>124</sup>

15 million<sup>125</sup>

€ 137 million<sup>126</sup>

Moreover, the Commission's proposal to help Ukraine by increasing flexibilities in the use of 2014-2020 funds was adopted in April 2022.

As regards the Migration and Asylum Pact, with the active support of DG HOME, in 2022 an agreement was found between the co-legislators on the **Union Resettlement Framework Regulation**<sup>127</sup>, the recast of the **Reception Conditions Directive**<sup>128</sup> and the **Qualification Regulation**<sup>129</sup>. DG HOME also continued to support the European Parliament and the Council to advance the negotiations on the remaining legislative proposals of the **Pact on Migration and Asylum**<sup>130</sup>, in line with the **Joint Roadmap**<sup>131</sup> agreed between the European Parliament and the rotating Presidencies of the Council on 7 September 2022:

- the amended proposal for a **Regulation on the establishment of 'Eurodac'**<sup>132</sup>,
- the **Regulation on asylum and migration management**<sup>133</sup>,

<sup>122</sup> [https://eures.ec.europa.eu/eu-talent-pool-pilot\\_en](https://eures.ec.europa.eu/eu-talent-pool-pilot_en)

<sup>123</sup> In 2022, the Blueprint network issued five reports on the migration situation in the Western Balkans, 28 reports on the situation at the borders with Belarus and 18 reports on the crisis in Afghanistan. Three Blueprint plenary meetings took place, in two of which the forecasting and implications of Russia's aggression in Ukraine was discussed.

<sup>124</sup> Ares(2022)3750955, 18.05.2022, Decision authorising the use of financing not linked to costs.

<sup>125</sup> Smaller grants: Safe homes, Psychosocial support.

<sup>126</sup> Ares(2022)7496348 28.10.2022, Decision authorising the use of financing not linked to costs.

<sup>127</sup> Proposal COM/2016/0468 final of 13.7.2016.

<sup>128</sup> Proposal COM/2016/0465 final of 13.7.2016.

<sup>129</sup> Proposal COM/2016/0466 final of 13.7.2016.

<sup>130</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/migration-and-asylum-package-new-pact-migration-and-asylumdocuments-adopted-23-september-2020\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/migration-and-asylum-package-new-pact-migration-and-asylumdocuments-adopted-23-september-2020_en)

<sup>131</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20220907RES39903/20220907RES39903.pdf>

<sup>132</sup> Proposal COM(2020) 614 final of 23.9.2020.

- the amended proposal for a **Regulation on establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union**<sup>134</sup>,
- the **Regulation introducing a screening of third country nationals at the external borders**<sup>135</sup>,
- the **Regulation addressing situations of crisis and force majeure**<sup>136</sup>, and
- the recast of the **Return Directive**<sup>137</sup>.

Work also continued on the Commission proposal for a **Regulation to address situations of instrumentalisation in the field of migration and asylum**<sup>138</sup>. According to the **Joint Roadmap**, the negotiations on all pending legislative proposals **should be concluded by February 2024** to allow for their adoption before the end of this parliamentary term.

In October, the **Commission presented its 2<sup>nd</sup> report on migration and asylum**<sup>139</sup> to which DG HOME was a major contributor and which took stock on the progress made on the Pact proposals, identified key challenges ahead, and highlighted the need for further progress towards a responsible and fair migration management system in the EU.

On 19 January 2022 the **new mandate**<sup>140</sup> of the **European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) entered into force**. The EUAA replaces the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) with more and modernised tools to support Member States in bringing greater convergence to asylum and reception practices.

In June 2022 under the steer of the French presidency 21 European countries signed the Declaration on Solidarity. It established the set-up of the **Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism (VSM)** to provide targeted solidarity to countries most affected by migratory flows in the Mediterranean, with needs-based assistance from other Member and Associated States by offering relocations and financial contributions. The Commission has been coordinating the process and supporting its implementation. The coordination is carried out through the **Solidarity Platform ‘Pact’**, while the participating States keep the lead on the operationalisation of the mechanism.

#### **Relocations in 2022 with DG HOME funding**

€ 0.3 million<sup>141</sup>

47 persons were relocated from Italy to Portugal and 4 persons from Malta to Portugal

<sup>133</sup> Proposal COM (2020) 610 final of 23.9.2020.

<sup>134</sup> Proposal COM(2020) 611 final of 23.9.2020.

<sup>135</sup> Proposal COM(2020) 612 final of 23.9.2020.

<sup>136</sup> Proposal COM(2020) 613 final of 23.9.2020.

<sup>137</sup> Proposal COM (2018) 634 final of 12.9.2018.

<sup>138</sup> Proposal COM(2021) 890 final of 14 July 2021.

<sup>139</sup> COM (2022) 740 final of 6.10.2022.

<sup>140</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of 15.12.2021, OJ L 468 of 30.12.2021, p. 1.

<sup>141</sup> Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Data source: Member States' 2022 Accounts for the financial year 16.10.2021–15.10.2022 from the perspective of the sending Member States.

€ 38.3 million<sup>142</sup>

700 persons relocated from Greece, Cyprus, Malta and Italy to 8 Member States under Emergency Assistance

For the EU asylum system to be credible, migrants with no right to stay need to be returned. The Pact sets the path for establishing a common EU system for **returns**, which combines stronger structures inside the EU with more effective cooperation with third countries (for information on this cooperation, see Specific Objective 4).

The rate of returns to third countries in 2022 was 18.5% (compared to 20.1% in 2021). Efforts to promote returns were among others done based on the first **EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration**<sup>143</sup>. Structures and tools needed to ensure that voluntary return and reintegration are streamlined in the common EU system for return were put in place.

DG HOME closely followed the **European Border and Coast Guard Agency's (Frontex)** work to ensure the full operationalisation of its mandate on return and reintegration, particularly to carry out Frontex-led return activities and operations, to roll out the Frontex Joint Reintegration Services and to help Member States improve their return case management systems by aligning them to the return model developed by Frontex.

In March 2022, an **EU Return Coordinator** was appointed to make the return process seamless, linking the different strands of the EU return policy and fostering cooperation between Member States. The High-Level Network for Return, the Schengen-associated countries, and Frontex will all support this work.

#### Examples of DG HOME funding for returns in 2022

€ 107.7 million<sup>144</sup>

45 046 persons returned under shared management<sup>145</sup>

The Commission also works on implementing a more ambitious and sustainable legal migration policy. To provide a more effective framework for legal pathways to the EU, streamlining migration procedures and enhancing rights of third-country nationals, the Commission proposed a recast of the **Long-term Residents Directive**<sup>146</sup> and of the **Single Permit Directive**<sup>147</sup>, based on an impact assessment carried out in 2021. Discussions on both proposals started in the Council and the European Parliament in 2022. These proposals will also provide further simplifications in the process of admitting third countries nationals and will incur significant savings for private businesses and third country nationals.

<sup>142</sup> Relocations took place in the context of the emergency assistance projects HOME/2019/AMIF/CA/EMAS/0124 (relocations from Greece and newly from Cyprus, which started in April 2020 with current end date on 31 October 2023, amounting to € 35.1 million), HOME/2019/AMIF/AG/EMAS/0100 (relocations from Malta, which started in August 2019 with a current end date on 31 October 2023, amounting to € 1 million) and HOME/2019/AMIF/CA/EMAS/0128 (relocations from Italy, which started in September 2020 with a current end date on 30 June 2023, amounting to € 2.2 million).

<sup>143</sup> EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration, COM(2021) 120 final of 27.4.2021

<sup>144</sup> Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Data source: Member States' 2022 Accounts for the financial year 16.10.2021–15.10.2022. It refers to NO2 "Return measures"

<sup>145</sup> Data source: The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund Programme Statement, based on Member States' 2022 Annual Implementation Reports for the financial year 16.10.2021–15.10.2022. Indicator relates to voluntary and forced returns.

<sup>146</sup> COM(2022) 650 final of 27.4.2022 (recast), Annexes

<sup>147</sup> COM(2022) 655 final of 27.4.2022 (recast).

To help attract talent needed in the EU, DG HOME proposed the **Skills and Talent package**<sup>148</sup>, which includes initiatives that will benefit the EU's economy, strengthen cooperation with non-EU countries and improve overall migration management in the long term. It proposes some **exploratory work** on youth mobility, long-term care, and innovative entrepreneurs. Specific actions to facilitate integration of those fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine into the EU's labour market are also included.

A further initiative, the **Talent Partnerships**, is part of the EU's toolbox for engaging with selected partner countries strategically on migration management and aims to boost international labour mobility and development of talent in a mutually beneficial and circular way (see Specific Objective 4).

DG HOME stepped up the implementation of the **Action Plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027**<sup>149</sup> and reinforced cooperation with the **European Integration Network**<sup>150</sup> and **local and regional authorities** through the Urban Agenda on the inclusion of migrants and refugees<sup>151</sup>. In the framework of the European Partnership on Integration<sup>152</sup>, the Commission and the Economic and Social Partners agreed to support the integration of people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine into the EU labour market.

#### Integration and legal migration in 2022

€ 138 million<sup>153</sup>

1 951 764 migrants benefiting from integration measures on national, local, and regional level<sup>154</sup>.

Regarding **resettlement and humanitarian admission**, DG HOME supported Member States in the implementation of their 2021-2022 pledges and organised a pledging exercise for 2023. On 29 November, Commissioner Johansson hosted a **High-Level Forum on legal pathways to protection** to promote closer cooperation with partner countries and organisations. 17 EU Member States pledged more than 29 000 places for resettlement and humanitarian admission for 2023.

#### Resettlements in 2022 with DG HOME funding

€ 60.2 million<sup>155</sup>

6088 persons resettled to 7 Member States (mainly to DE, UK and FR)

The **European Contact Group on Search and Rescue**<sup>156</sup>, chaired by DG HOME, achieved new impetus through the Commission's Action Plan for the Central Mediterranean of 21

<sup>148</sup> Commission Communication COM(2022) 657 final of 27.4.2022.

<sup>149</sup> COM(2020) 758 final of 24.11.2020.

<sup>150</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/eu-grid/european-integration-network\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/eu-grid/european-integration-network_en)

<sup>151</sup> <https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/urban-agenda/inclusion-migrants-and-refugees>

<sup>152</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/cooperation-economic-and-social-partners/european-partnership-integration\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/cooperation-economic-and-social-partners/european-partnership-integration_en)

<sup>153</sup> Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Data source: Member States' 2022 Accounts for the financial year 16.10.2021–15.10.2022. Refers to SO2 "Integration/Legal migration".

<sup>154</sup> Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Data source: Member States' 2022 Annual Implementation Reports for the financial year 16.10.2021–15.10.2022. Indicator SO2.C2: Number of target group persons assisted by this Fund through integration measures in the framework of national, local and regional strategies.

<sup>155</sup> Data source: The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund Programme Statement, based on Member States' 2022 Annual Accounts for the 2022 financial year (16.10.2021–15.10.2022).

November 2022<sup>157</sup>. It aims at strengthening cooperation among Member States and Schengen Associated countries, as well as other relevant stakeholders in line with a more coordinated EU approach to **search and rescue** as proposed in the Pact.

To address **illegal employment** as one of the drivers of irregular migration, the Commission worked closely with stakeholders on the implementation of the **Communication on the Employers Sanctions Directive**<sup>158</sup>. Work focused notably on sanctions against employers, measures to protect the rights of irregular migrants and labour inspections.

In Greece, the situation for asylum seekers and migrants continued to improve thanks to better cooperation and communication between all relevant stakeholders, initiated and coordinated by the DG HOME **Taskforce Migration Management**. In 2021, new Multi-Purpose Reception and Identification Centres were established on the islands of Samos, Kos and Leros, providing those residing on the islands with winterised reception facilities and the necessary infrastructure to support adequate reception conditions. The new Multi-Purpose Reception and Identification Centre on Lesbos<sup>159</sup> is expected to be in place in 2023; and work continued on a strategic framework on reception, asylum, integration, returns and the protection of children in migration.

**Examples of achievements in Greece with funding from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund in 2022<sup>160</sup>**

*€ 24,1 million ---13,961 children benefiting from Non-Formal Education classes*  
*€ 35,4 million --- 1,973 asylum seekers have received support to access the labour market*  
*€ 276 million ---finalisation of the construction of the Multi-Purpose Reception and Identification Centres in Samos, Kos and Leros islands*

The Taskforce also coordinates the operational response to the emerging new migration challenges at the EU external border, mainly Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Cyprus<sup>161</sup>, as well as the overall response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In terms of **enforcement**, discussion continued with Member States on the transposition of the Asylum Directives. The Commission took formal steps in ongoing infringement procedures in the field of return and sent letters of formal notice to Member States who had incorrectly transposed or implemented the Return Directive 2008/115/EC or failed to implement the European travel document for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/1953.

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<sup>156</sup> See Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/1365 of 23 September 2020 on cooperation among Member States concerning operations carried out by vessels owned or operated by private entities for the purpose of search and rescue activities.

<sup>157</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/EU%20Action%20Plan%20for%20the%20Central%20Mediterranean\\_en.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/EU%20Action%20Plan%20for%20the%20Central%20Mediterranean_en.pdf)

<sup>158</sup> COM(2021) 592 final of 29.9.2021.

<sup>159</sup> Annex to the Commission Decision C(2020) 8657 final of 2.12.2020.

<sup>160</sup> The figures refer to the total amounts of the projects. The achievements referred represent a part of the deliverables of the actions.

<sup>161</sup> The Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission, EU agencies and Cyprus was signed on 21 February 2022, [Migration management in Cyprus \(europa.eu\)](#); [Commission Decision on the implementation of the EU-Cyprus Action Plan for Migration Management-Annex 1 \(europa.eu\)](#).

The promotion of a balanced policy narrative on asylum and migration management through **external communication** remains a priority for DG HOME for the effective delivery of initiatives in this field. Targeted external and internal communication actions (social media, audio-visual and press material) support the ongoing roll-out and adoption of the Pact and overall migration policy. Outreach was stepped up by further engaging with various stakeholders, including in the annual European Migration Forum as well as through cooperation with UN partners on World Refugee Day and International Migrants Day.

The activities under the Specific Objective *an effective asylum and migration management policy* contribute to the United Nations' **Sustainable Development Goal 10**<sup>162</sup>, which calls for the facilitation of orderly and safe migration and mobility of people.

For activities on the external dimension of migration management, see Specific Objective 4.

### Specific objective 3: A fully functioning area of free movement

The Schengen area without controls at internal borders is among the most emblematic achievements of European integration and one of the most tangible manifestations of the European way of life. What started as an intergovernmental project between five Member States in 1985 – France, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg – has gradually expanded over seven enlargement stages to become what is today the largest area of free movement across borders in the world. In the current challenging geopolitical and economic context, a fully functioning Schengen area is instrumental to stability, resilience and recovery. Throughout 2022, the Commission fully supported **Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania** in the process of joining the Schengen area<sup>163</sup>. On 1 January 2023, Croatia joined the Schengen area as its 27<sup>th</sup> member, leading to the eighth enlargement of the Schengen area and the first after 11 years, and paving the way for Bulgaria and Romania to follow. The Schengen area now allows 420 million people to travel freely between member countries without going through border controls.

In May 2022, the Commission adopted the first **State of Schengen Report 2022**<sup>164</sup>, a key deliverable **following up** on the Schengen Strategy<sup>165</sup>. The State of Schengen Report includes the results of Schengen evaluations and describes how the EU Member States responded to recent challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic and the instrumentalisation of migrants by Belarus, as well as the refugee situation resulting from the Russian military aggression against Ukraine. It recommends priority actions for the way forward and serves as a basis for discussions in the Schengen Councils and the Schengen Forum.

**Schengen Barometers** provide a comprehensive assessment of the main threats and risks for the Schengen area, allowing the Schengen Councils to take political action.

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<sup>162</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

<sup>163</sup> Communication of the Commission of 16 November 2022 'Making Schengen stronger with the full participation of Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia in the area without internal border controls', COM(2022) 636 final.

<sup>164</sup> COM(2022) 301 final/2 of 24.5.2022.

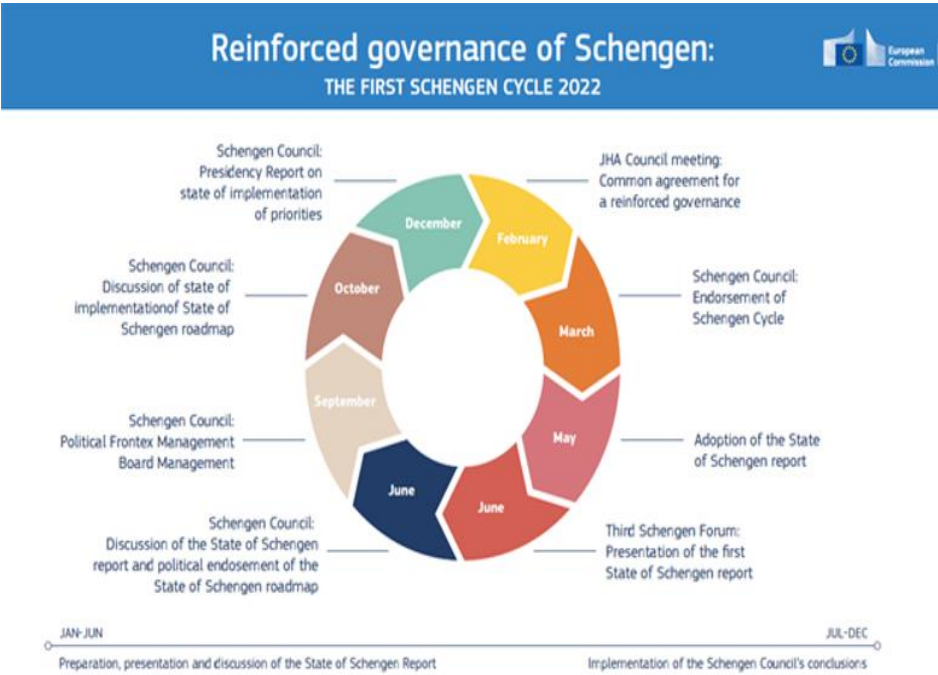
<sup>165</sup> COM(2021) 277 final of 2.6.2021.



The State of Schengen Report 2022 is also the starting point for **the new annual Schengen cycle**, the new structured governance framework for the Schengen area. The cycle provides for a regular ‘health-check’ on Schengen, allowing to identify problems early on to ensure common responsibility and to promote the uptake of appropriate measures. Interinstitutional discussion will take place at the annual Schengen Forum<sup>166</sup>, and political deliberations will follow in the Schengen Councils. The **new Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism Regulation**<sup>167</sup> adopted in June 2022 will allow moving away from fragmented, policy area based ‘compliance’ evaluations to comprehensive assessments of Member States overall performance to effectively implement the Schengen acquis. This new Schengen governance model will also incorporate and interlink all Schengen related policy initiatives and operational activities of the relevant EU agencies.

Protecting the integrity of the Schengen area requires a modern and effective management of the **external borders**, in full compliance with EU law and fundamental rights. To achieve this, DG HOME launched a **multiannual strategic policy cycle** to steer the activities of the European Border and Coast Guard in the areas of border management and return. It is based on the **policy document developing the multiannual strategic policy for**

**European Integrated Border Management**<sup>168</sup>, elaborated by DG HOME and presented in parallel with the State of Schengen Report. Following the consultation of the European Parliament<sup>169</sup> and the Council<sup>170</sup><sup>171</sup> on the policy document, the Commission adopted the **Communication establishing the first multiannual strategic policy for European Integrated Border Management** for the next five year in spring



<sup>166</sup> The Third Schengen Forum, held on 2 June 2022 and chaired by Commissioner Johansson, brought together Member States’ Ministers for Home Affairs, Members of the European Parliament, EU Home Affairs agencies and other stakeholders for a high-level political discussion on the state of Schengen and on the priorities included in the Schengen report.

<sup>167</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/922 of 9 June 2022, OJ L 160 of 15.6.2022.

<sup>168</sup> COM(2022) 303 final of 24.5.2022.

<sup>169</sup> Letter from the Chairman of the European Parliament’s Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, IPOL-COM-LIBE D(2023) 1361, 17.1.2023

<sup>170</sup> Multiannual strategic policy cycle for European integrated border management (EIBM) - Council conclusions (14 October 2022) 13585/22

<sup>171</sup> Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of 13.11.2019.

2023<sup>172</sup>. This comprehensive strategy framework shares a common vision, across EU institutions, outlining the work at the external borders.

Finally, DG HOME was in the lead of a **report on the reinforcement of checks against relevant databases at external borders**<sup>173</sup> which was also presented together with the State of Schengen Report 2022.

DG HOME in cooperation with DG JUST (on data protection) continued carrying out **evaluation and monitoring activities** in line with the Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism. The on-site visits have been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore, certain visits had to be postponed from 2020 to 2021 and 2022. Furthermore, DG HOME coordinated and implemented two voluntary fact-finding missions to Bulgaria and Romania in October and November 2022 that highlighted that both Bulgaria and Romania not only continue implementing the new rules and tools, but that they have also substantially reinforced the overall application of the Schengen architecture in all its dimensions<sup>174</sup>. DG HOME prepared the **annual and multiannual evaluation programme** for evaluations to take place in 2023 and between 2023-2029 based on the **new Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism**.

The Pact on Migration and Asylum set the objective to fully digitalise visa procedures by 2025. DG HOME put forward for adoption by the Commission a **proposal** for a Regulation on the **digitalisation of visa procedures**<sup>175</sup>, following consultations and an impact assessment carried out in 2021. This initiative will improve the visa application process by reducing the costs and the burden on Member States as well as the applicants, while also improving the security of the Schengen area. For further information on the visa policy, see Specific Objective 4.

For the development and upgrade of the **large-scale security information systems** and for ensuring interoperability, DG HOME continued in 2022 to work hard to put in place all steps and proposed 8 implementing decisions and delegated acts to that end, which were adopted. **Major milestones**<sup>176</sup> were planned to be reached in 2022, some of which listed below were indeed met. The implementation of other milestones has been delayed repeatedly again at central level. DG HOME is continuously working with Member States and stakeholders to ensure that interoperability is given the priority it requires and to prevent that the accumulation of the delays puts at risk the project as a whole. Notwithstanding a slight delay, the **renewed Schengen Information System (SIS)** entered into operation on 7 March 2023. This new strengthened Schengen Information System brings new types of alerts to protect the most vulnerable, for example with preventive alerts for children at risk of abduction. It also provides new tools for investigations in the form of inquiry check alerts and alerts on unknown wanted persons. The new return alerts lead to a new era of increased cooperation on return between

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<sup>172</sup> COM(2023) 146 final of 14.3.2023.

<sup>173</sup> COM(2022) 302 final of 24.5.2022.

<sup>174</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/bulgaria-and-romania-fact-finding-mission-report\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/bulgaria-and-romania-fact-finding-mission-report_en)

<sup>175</sup> COM(2022)658 final of 27.4.2022.

<sup>176</sup> The entry into operation of the renewed Schengen Information System, Entry/Exit System and shared Biometric Matching Service.

Member States, allowing them to mutually recognise each others' return decisions: Member States will be required to create an alert in SIS each time they issue a return decision on a third-country national with no legal right to stay in the EU, allowing them to actively follow up whether the returnee effectively leaves the EU territory. These improvements have to be seen against the background of a staggering number of **12 billion searches**, carried out in the Schengen Information System, in 2022. This led, for example, to over 9.000 arrests of dangerous criminals, whereas almost 10.000 missing persons were found and brought to safety. **Major efforts continued on the development of the Entry/Exit System (EES), the entry into operation of which was postponed due to delays in the development of its central part.** The Commission continued to assist Member States to progress in view of their readiness from an operational perspective, coordinating the development of practical guidelines and guiding carriers and infrastructure operators on fine-tuning procedures. As a result, solutions were developed to accommodate possible pressure points on border checks such as the progressive application of the EES. Work continued as well on the **implementation of the Interoperability Regulations** laying the groundwork for a series of new features that will greatly facilitate and improve access to valuable information for police officers, border guards, visa and migration officers and judicial authorities. It will furthermore, enhance the detection of identity fraud when the Multiple-Identity Detector goes live, allowing information already present in the EU information Systems to be cross-checked in an advanced but data protection compliant way. A Rapid Alert process is in place to monitor and ensure that all IT systems and components are implemented timely. In this context more than 40 bilateral meetings between DG HOME and Member States were organised in 2022. In addition, work has started together with eu-LISA, on developing a comprehensive guidance for the Member States concerning the operational implementation of the different interoperability components.

€ 0.6 billion in 2021–2027 <sup>177</sup>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IT systems for border management</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">To increase the interoperability between IT systems</p>
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The **Covid-19 pandemic** continued to impact the daily lives of persons residing in or visiting the EU throughout the year, but gradually decreased. Safe travel was guaranteed through the continuous application of a coordinated approach throughout the EU. **Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/107<sup>178</sup>** of 25 January set out a more person-based approach to travel measures and a standard acceptance period for vaccination certificates of 9 months since the primary vaccination series<sup>179</sup>. Following the subsequent improvements of the epidemiological situation **Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/2548<sup>180</sup>** of 13 December 2022 recommended – based on several safeguards – that

<sup>177</sup> Adopted MS programmes 2021–2027 for BMVI.

<sup>178</sup> Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/107 of 25 January 2022 on a coordinated approach to facilitate safe free movement during the COVID-19 pandemic and replacing Recommendation (EU) 2020/1475, OJ L 18, 27.1.2022. Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/108 of 25 January 2022 amending Recommendation (EU) 2020/1632 as regards a coordinated approach to facilitate safe travel during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Schengen area, OJ L 18, 27.1.2022.

<sup>179</sup> Add CID 8/9/2022; Prop COM(2022) 50 of 3.2.2022.

<sup>180</sup> Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/2548 of 13 December 2022 on a coordinated approach to travel to the Union during the COVID-19 pandemic and replacing Council Recommendation (EU) 2020/912, OJ L 328 of 22.12.2022.

the Member States lift all COVID-19 related restrictions for travellers to the Union in December 2022.

Targeted **external communication** campaigns ensuring awareness of relevant authorities and the public in target countries, both within and outside the EU, are being prepared to support the entry into operation of the new border systems: the renewed SIS, the EES and ETIAS. Last year specific focus was given to the enlargement of the Schengen area to include Bulgaria, Romania and finally Croatia, reporting the success in the latter case through press, social media, and web.

#### Specific objective 4: Stronger cooperation with partner countries

Cooperating with international organisations and strategic partners outside the EU in the fields of security and migration is a core task for DG HOME and in line with the Commission's ambition for "A stronger Europe in the world". (For cooperation linked to the invasion of Ukraine, see Specific objectives 2 and 3).

#### HOME funding for cooperation with partner countries

€ 36 000 000 million<sup>181</sup> relating to migration

€ 9 100 000 million<sup>182</sup> relating to security and borders

DG HOME continued in 2022 to **strengthen the engagement and cooperation with key partner countries** of origin, transit, and destination for migrants, focusing on mutually beneficial and comprehensive partnerships and in line with the Pact on Migration and Asylum. The toolbox for cooperation includes *inter alia*:

- **Dialogues on migration and/or security**, which were held with a range of key partners in Asia, Africa, and the Western Balkans. This was done bilaterally (with Morocco, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the U.S., Canada, *et al*), as well as in international fora.

- **Action Plans for countries of origin and transit** through active contribution of DG HOME in: the **Council's Working Party on External aspects of asylum and migration (EMWP)** (two presented for Egypt and Pakistan, and eight re-discussed/updated for Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Iraq, Nigeria, Niger, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan/regional)<sup>183</sup>; and in the **operational coordination mechanism** for the **external** dimension of migration (**MOCADDEM**)<sup>184</sup> (Afghanistan, The Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, Tunisia, Iraq, Niger, Nigeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina - in addition to discussions focusing on specific aspects, e.g. returns and reintegration, instrumentalisation).

- The **European Migration Network**; work focused in 2022 in particular on Ukraine, Armenia and Montenegro becoming Observer Countries, concluding the negotiations on Serbia's application and receiving North Macedonia's request to join as well.

<sup>181</sup> From AMIF - HOME-2022-AMIF-TF1-CA-ICMPD-RRF and HOME-2022-AMIF-ISF-BMVI-TF1-CA-ICMPD-MPF-IV

<sup>182</sup> From ISF and BMVI - HOME-2022-AMIF-ISF-BMVI-TF1-CA-ICMPD-MPF-IV and HOME-ISF-2021-TF1-CA-UNTOC-IBA

<sup>183</sup> The Plans were operationalised with engagement and financial support and are aimed at preventing the loss of life and reduce the pressure on European borders.

<sup>184</sup> MOCADDEM was set up through the Council Implementing Decision EU (2022) 60 of 12.1.2022.

- **European Migration Liaison Officers**, operationalising the external dimension of the Pact.

- **The European network of Immigration Liaison Officers**, who provide a valuable connection in the fight against irregular migration and migrant smuggling and enhance cooperation on return related activities. Financial support for the coming years is ensured through the Border Management and Visa Instrument.

- **Tailor-made, HOME funded projects**, for example in the context of the Migration Partnership Facility and the Regional Development and Protection Programme (protection pillar) in North Africa. DG HOME also worked closely with the external DGs to ensure that 10% of the funding under the **Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument** (NDICI) and **the Instrument for Pre-Accession** correspond to the needs identified in the Pact on Migration and Asylum, as far as the external dimension is concerned.

- **Team Europe Initiatives on Migration** (on the **Atlantic, Western Mediterranean route**<sup>185</sup>; **the Central Mediterranean route**<sup>186</sup> – both formally launched in December 2022 – and on the Afghan Displacement situation<sup>187</sup>). These Initiatives represent a

framework for strategic coordination and technical exchange with EU Member States, including on funding (estimated total funding EC plus EUMS 2021-22: EUR 1.1 billion for the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean route TEI, and EUR 900 million for the Central Mediterranean route TEI).



In 2022, irregular arrivals to the European Union increased across most routes, confirming once more the need to find sustainable and structural European solutions to our common challenges based on the comprehensive approach set out in the Pact on Migration and Asylum, including renewed action on the external dimension of migration.

Following the increase of illegal border crossings on the Central Mediterranean route (over 105 600 in 2022, equalling a 56% increase<sup>188</sup> compared to 2021), the Commission presented an **EU Action Plan on the Central Mediterranean**<sup>189</sup> for which DG HOME held the pen. In the Plan 20 operational measures are proposed to address the immediate and ongoing challenges along this migratory route. They are designed to reduce irregular and unsafe migration, reinforce solidarity balanced against responsibility between Member States and help provide solutions to the main challenges in the area of search and rescue.

In parallel, the increase in 2022 of detected illegal border crossings at the EU external

<sup>185</sup> <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/tei-jp-tracker/tei/western-mediterranean-migration-route>

<sup>186</sup> <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/tei-jp-tracker/tei/central-mediterranean-migration-route>

<sup>187</sup> <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/tei-jp-tracker/tei/afghan-displacement-situation>

<sup>188</sup> Source: Frontex

<sup>189</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/EU%20Action%20Plan%20for%20the%20Central%20Mediterranean\\_en.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/EU%20Action%20Plan%20for%20the%20Central%20Mediterranean_en.pdf)

borders on all Western Balkan routes (144 100, which is a 134% increase<sup>190</sup> compared to 2021) triggered the presentation of the **EU Action Plan on Western Balkan**<sup>191</sup>. The measures are focused on support to or actions by Western Balkan partners and action in the EU to strengthen the cooperation on migration and border management. In line with the conclusions of the European Council of 9 February 2023<sup>192</sup>, DG HOME will put forward proposals for Action Plans for the Western Mediterranean/Atlantic and Eastern Mediterranean routes later in 2023.

To make it possible to increase the return of people with no right to stay in the EU, more effective cooperation with third countries on **readmission** is essential, including through linking it with other policies and tools (see Specific objective 2 for information on returns).

DG HOME continued ongoing negotiations of the **Readmission Agreement** with Nigeria and closely **monitored the effective implementation of the 24 readmission agreements and arrangements**<sup>193</sup> in place with third countries. Furthermore, DG HOME implemented the European Court of Auditor's recommendations<sup>194</sup> on readmission cooperation and continued to facilitate **readmission cooperation** through exchanges at operational, technical, and political levels.

On 8 December 2022, the Commission adopted the third **assessment report on third countries' level of cooperation on readmission**<sup>195</sup> under Article 25a of the Visa Code. Based on the assessment and on discussions with the Member States, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will continue their engagement with relevant partner countries to foster concrete progress in readmission cooperation.

**Following up to the previous, second assessment report** on third countries' cooperation on readmission, and considering the additional steps taken by the EU to improve cooperation as well taking into account the overall relations with relevant third countries, on 9 November 2022, the Commission proposed to the Council to adopt temporary restrictive measures for applicants who are nationals of **Senegal**<sup>196</sup> and to increase the already existing restrictive measures for applicants who are nationals of **The Gambia**<sup>197</sup>. In parallel, the Commission continued to continuously and closely monitor countries proposed for restrictive measures under the first cycle under the mechanism of Article 25a of the Visa Code (i.e., Bangladesh, Iraq), with whom it is pursuing intensified engagement.

Other external dimension activities envisaged by the Pact include the implementation of the

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<sup>190</sup> Source: Frontex. As data refers to cross-border movements, not persons, double-counting of the same person is possible.

<sup>191</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/Western%20Balkans\\_en.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/Western%20Balkans_en.pdf)

<sup>192</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>193</sup> Readmission agreements: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Georgia, Hong Kong, Macao, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Russia, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Ukraine; Readmission arrangements: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Guinea, Ethiopia, The Gambia and Côte d'Ivoire.

<sup>194</sup> European Court of Auditors' special report 17/2021 on readmission: <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eca/special-reports/readmission-cooperation-17-2021/en/>

<sup>195</sup> COM(2022) 735 final of 8.12.2022.

<sup>196</sup> COM(2022) 631 final of 9.11.2022.

<sup>197</sup> Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2459 of 8 December 2022, OJ L 321 of 15.12.2022.

renewed **EU action plan against migrant smuggling** (2021-2025)<sup>198</sup>, which foresees the development of Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnerships with partner countries along migratory routes towards the EU. Forming part of the EU's migration partnerships, the Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnerships aim at strengthening legal, policy, operational and strategic frameworks in partner countries. In 2022, the Commission launched Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnerships with Niger, Morocco, and the Western Balkans. Following open calls for proposals, DG HOME selected five Common Operational Partnership projects and seven information and awareness-raising campaigns to be launched in priority partner countries in early 2023.

Furthermore, progress took place in relation to **status agreements with** European Border and Coast Guard Agency (**Frontex**). An agreement was concluded with **Moldova and signed with North Macedonia**<sup>199</sup> supporting in border management and deployed equipment. Negotiating **mandates** were obtained for the Commission for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Mauritania, and Senegal, allowing for the negotiation of status agreements for the deployment of the Standing Corps for joint operations also to border sections of partner countries not neighbouring a Member State<sup>200</sup>.

In view of the increase in irregular arrivals seen in 2022, discussions with African partner countries focused on addressing irregular migration - fighting migrant smuggling, and trafficking in human beings as well as boosting cooperation on border management and on opportunities for legal pathways – improving cooperation on return, readmission and reintegration, circular migration projects and international protection. DG HOME pursued the engagement with several **North African countries**. This included the launch of an Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership with Morocco<sup>201</sup> as well as promising technical level meetings with Egypt and Algeria; with the former, DG HOME was involved in designing a new NEAR-funded border management programme.

DG HOME also pursued close engagement and dialogue, including through high level exchanges, on all migration strands with key partners in **sub-Saharan African countries**<sup>202</sup>. With Mauritania in particular, discussions and negotiation rounds on the status agreement took place in September and December 2022. However, engagement with some countries (such as Sudan or Ethiopia) was impeded due to the political situation in those countries.

The Commission started discussions towards the launch of several tailor-made **Talent Partnerships** with key partner countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. They will address labour shortages in the EU, mitigate the risk of brain drain from our partner countries, and foster mutual relations in line with the comprehensive approach to migration.

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<sup>198</sup> COM(2021) 591 final of 29.9.2021.

<sup>199</sup> The EP gave its consent on 15 February and the Council gave its final green light on 28 February 2023. For the agreement to be considered concluded North Macedonia needs to notify the ratification to the EU.

<sup>200</sup> Albania, Montenegro and Serbia status agreements already in force to allow joint operations in place at borders with EU; the new negotiating mandates allow for the deployment at non-EU borders.

<sup>201</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_22\\_4388](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_4388)

<sup>202</sup> Including Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Niger, and Nigeria.

Cooperation continued with Türkiye under the **EU-Turkey Statement** with participation of DG HOME in several follow-up meetings to the High-level dialogue initiated in 2021. Between March 2016 and December 2022, over 37°000 resettlements took place from Türkiye to EU Member States, with the support of EUAA. Also, HOME funds participate in the additional support for refugees and migration management package for Türkiye 2021-2023, with a global amount of EUR 150 million, focusing mainly on resettlement activities and to smaller capacity-building projects, on the fight against trafficking in human beings, reintegration, and anti-smuggling. Most of this amount has been committed.

The Commission also **proposed first a partial<sup>203</sup> then a full<sup>204</sup> suspension** (adopted by the Council<sup>205</sup>) **of the visa exemption for nationals of Vanuatu** to mitigate the risks of the Vanuatu investor citizenship (or “golden passports”) schemes on the security of the EU. It is the first time that the visa exemption suspension mechanism provided for in the Visa Regulation has been used.

The EU has a **visa-free regime with five Western Balkan partners**. The visa liberalisation regime for **Kosovo<sup>206</sup>** was endorsed by Coreper on 21 December 2022 and signed on 19 April by the President of the European Parliament. The starting date is expected for November 2023 but will in any case not be later than 1 January 2024.

DG HOME continued to monitor the compliance of all visa-free partners with the visa liberalisation requirements through the **5<sup>th</sup> Visa Suspension Mechanism Report<sup>207</sup>**. Progress has been made regarding visa alignment of Serbia at the end of 2022 following a common approach of political engagement, further to the increase of irregular arrivals to the EU of migrants who travelled vis-free to Serbia. DG HOME also worked with the Western Balkans to progress towards the objectives in the Joint Action Plan on Counter Terrorism for the Western Balkans and the bilateral implementing arrangements; the revision of two arrangements with Albania and North Macedonia was concluded on 9 December 2022.

After having proposed the **partial suspension of the Visa facilitation agreement with Russia<sup>208</sup>**, which was in force since 25 February 2022<sup>209</sup>, and presented **guidelines<sup>210</sup>** for the implementation of these measures, DG HOME drafted the **Commission proposal on the full suspension of the Visa facilitation agreement with the Russian Federation<sup>211</sup>**, following Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and related heightened security risks. The Council formally **adopted the proposal on 9 September**

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<sup>203</sup> COM(2022) 6 of 12.1.2022. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/222 of 1.12.2022, OJ L 32 of 3.2.2023.

<sup>204</sup> COM(2022) 531 of 12.10.2022.

<sup>205</sup> Council Decision (EU) 2022/2198 of 8 November 2022 on the suspension in whole of the application of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Vanuatu on the short-stay visa waiver.

<sup>206</sup> Kosovo is a potential candidate for EU accession and unilaterally declared its independence in February 2008. Its independence is currently not recognised by five EU member states (Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain).

<sup>207</sup> COM(2022) 715 final of 5.12.2022.

<sup>208</sup> COM(2022) 84 final of 25.2.2022; Council Decision EU 2022/333 of 25.2.2022, OJ L 54 of 25.2.2022.

<sup>209</sup> Council Decision EU 2022/333 of 25.2.2022, OJ L 54 of 25.2.2022.

<sup>210</sup> C(2022) 3084 of 5.5.2022.

<sup>211</sup> COM(2022) 661 of 6.9.2022.



**2022**<sup>212</sup> and the Commission released **guidelines**<sup>213</sup> to Member States to support their consulates in handling short-stay visa applications lodged by Russian citizens. At the end of October 2022, the Commission released **updated guidelines**<sup>214</sup> upon request of various Member States, which faced increased pressure at their borders with the Russian Federation, but also received an increasing number of visa applications and enquiries from Russian citizens. DG HOME also drafted the **proposal for a Decision on the non-acceptance of Russian travel documents** issued in occupied foreign regions, which entered into force in December 2022<sup>215</sup>.

DG HOME was in the lead for a **proposal**<sup>216</sup> **for a Regulation to exempt from visa requirement Qatari and Kuwaiti nationals holding biometric passports**. The exemption was based on several criteria, such as irregular migration, public policy and security, economic benefits and the Union's relations with both countries. The Commission now follows closely the interinstitutional process and more specifically the developments in the European Parliament.

The European Union and the United States represent 780 million people who share democratic values and the largest economic relationship in the world. Following the established practice, the **EU-U.S. Ministerial Meetings on Justice and Home Affairs** took place<sup>217</sup> in 2022, hosted by the French Presidency of the Council in Paris in June and by the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters in Washington D.C. in December. The meetings were an opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the European Union and the United States to a strong transatlantic partnership, at a time of major geopolitical challenges. Against the background of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the European Union and the United States concurred that close cooperation on Justice and Home Affairs is crucial to face the major challenges of this war.

As far as **cooperation with international organisations** is concerned, migration features as an important element in the **EU-African Union** cooperation. The heads of state or government of the member states of the African Union (AU) and the EU met for the sixth European Union - African Union summit in Brussels on 17 and 18 February 2022. EU and AU leaders agreed on a joint vision for a renewed partnership.

Cooperation between DG HOME and key partner **UN Agencies**, such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was further expanded and strengthened in 2022 due to the very close cooperation on the Ukraine refugee crisis relating Russia's unprovoked and illegal war against Ukraine. In May

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<sup>212</sup> Council Decision (EU) 2022/1500 of 9 September 2022 on the suspension in whole of the application of the Agreement between the European Community and the Russian Federation on the facilitation of the issuance of visas to the citizens of the European Union and the Russian Federation, OJ L 234 of 9.9.2022.

<sup>213</sup> C(2022) 6596 of 9.9.2022.

<sup>214</sup> C(2022) 7111 of 30.9.2022.

<sup>215</sup> COM(2022) 662 of 6.9.2022; Decision (EU) 2022/2512 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the non-acceptance of travel documents of the Russian Federation issued in Ukraine and Georgia.

<sup>216</sup> COM(2022) 189 of 27.4.2022.

<sup>217</sup> 23 June 2022: [Joint EU-U.S. statement following the EU-U.S. Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Meeting - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#); 15 December 2022: [Joint EU-US statement following the EU-US JHA meeting \(europa.eu\)](#).

2022, the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) under the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) took place in New York, with the participation of Commissioner Johansson representing the EU institutions. DG HOME was lead service in the Commission on the negotiations on the UNHCR Executive Committee conclusion on mental health and psychological support, adopted by the Executive Committee in October 2022 with consensus. Commissioner Johansson participated virtually in the high-level segment of IOM's 113<sup>th</sup> Council in November 2022.

The Commission continued to engage with third countries to negotiate international agreements for the **exchange of personal data** between **Europol** and the law enforcement authorities of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Türkiye. The Commission concluded the negotiations with **New Zealand** and adopted the corresponding proposals to sign and conclude the Agreement to exchange personal data between Europol and New Zealand<sup>218219220</sup> for which DG HOME held the pen. The Agreement was signed on 30 June 2022.

DG HOME continued to promote the **EU drug policy model at international level**, notably through preparation of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs within the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and through **dialogues on drugs** with partner countries and regions, in particular the second edition of the EU-China dialogue on drugs and the launch of the EU-Colombia dialogue on drugs.

DG HOME continued to participate in the negotiations for a **new UN Convention on cybercrime** in the framework of the Ad Hoc Committee that has been created by United Nations General Assembly Resolution on countering the use of information and communication technologies for criminal purposes<sup>221</sup>.

Equally, DG HOME facilitated the development of compatible rules at international level on cross-border access to electronic evidence, including by ensuring that Member States can sign and ratify the **Second Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe 'Budapest' Convention on Cybercrime**. On behalf of the EU, DG HOME began the work on the **United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime** EU self-assessment and the review of Greece. DG HOME contributed to the EU review under the **UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)** and adopted the self-assessment in September 2022. An external study on the gaps in the EU acquis regarding corruption was finalised.

**External communication** continued to promote the policy narrative through clear information-sharing via press, online and social media.

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<sup>218</sup> Proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and New Zealand, of the other part, on the exchange of personal data between the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and the authorities of New Zealand competent for fighting serious crime and terrorism, COM(2022) 208 final of 13.5.2022 and Annexes.

<sup>219</sup> Proposal for a Council Decision on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and New Zealand, of the other part, on the exchange of personal data between the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and the authorities of New Zealand competent for fighting serious crime and terrorism, COM(2022) 207 final of 13.5.2022 and Annexes.

<sup>220</sup> Council Decision (EU) 2023/368 of 14.2.2023, OJ L 51 of 20.2.2023.

<sup>221</sup> Resolution A/RES/74/247 Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes resolution / adopted by the General Assembly.

With its activities under this Specific Objective, DG HOME contributed to the Impact Indicator *third countries with migration policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people*.

## **2. MODERN AND EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION AND INTERNAL CONTROL**

### **2.1. Financial management and internal control**

**Assurance is provided on the basis of an objective examination of evidence of the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. This examination is carried out by management, who monitors the functioning of the internal control systems on a continuous basis, and by internal and external auditors. The results are explicitly documented and reported to the Director-General. The following reports / documentation have been considered:**

- the reports by Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation in the DG;
- the reports from Authorising Officers in other DGs managing budget appropriations in cross-sub-delegation;
- the reports on control results from management/ audit authorities in Member States in shared management, as well as the result of the Commission supervisory controls on the activities of these bodies;
- the reports of the external auditors on the results of control on decentralised agencies in indirect management, as well as the result of the Commission's supervisory controls on the activities of these bodies;
- the reports received from entrusted entities (indirect management) in the framework of the delegation agreements;
- the assessment of the Deputy Director-General in charge of Risk Management and Internal Control, including the results of internal control monitoring at the DG level;
- the results of the ex-post supervision and audit;
- the exceptions, non-compliance events and any cases of 'confirmation of instructions' (Article 92.3 FR);
- the limited conclusion of the internal auditor on the state of internal control, and the observations and recommendations reported by the Internal Audit Service;
- the observations and the recommendations reported by the European Court of Auditors.

**The systematic analysis of the available evidence provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in the full coverage of the budget delegated to the Director-General of DG HOME.**

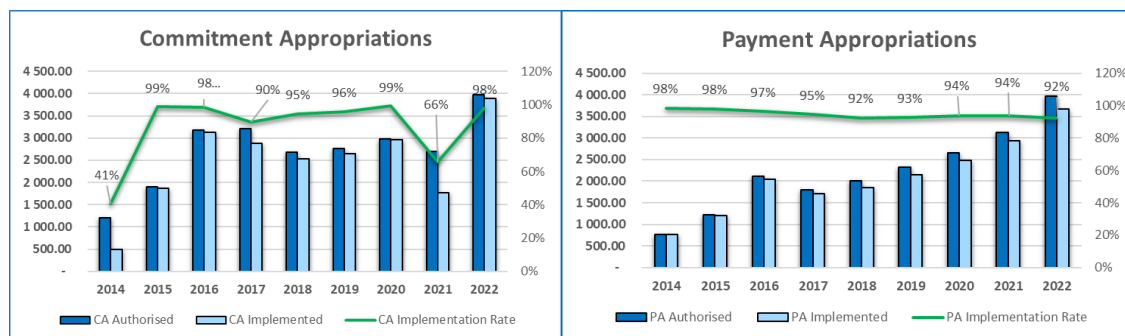
**This section covers the control results and other relevant elements that support management's assurance. It is structured into 2.1.1 Control results, 2.1.2 Audit observations and recommendations, 2.1.3 Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems, 2.1.4 Conclusions on the assurance and 2.1.5 Declaration of Assurance and reservations.**

### 2.1.1. Control results

**This section reports and assesses the elements identified by management which support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives (ICO) <sup>(222)</sup>. The DG's assurance building and materiality criteria are outlined in annex 5. Annex 6 outlines the main risks together with the control processes to mitigate them and the indicators used to measure the performance of the relevant control systems.**

In 2022, the implementation of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 was still continuing, while the implementation of the new Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 only covers the Work Programmes 2021-2022 of the Thematic Facility. Member States' programmes were adopted to large extent in the last quarter of 2022, which is why the implementation process under shared management did not yet start properly in 2022. DG HOME policies are part of Heading 4 *Migration and Border Management*<sup>223</sup>, Heading 5 *Security and Defence* and to a smaller extent Heading 1 *Single Market, Innovation and Digital* (Title 1 *Research and Innovation*) in the financial period 2021-2027.

In 2022, DG HOME policies were supported by € 3.97 billion of commitment appropriations<sup>224</sup> representing approximately 2.4% of the EU budget<sup>225</sup> <sup>226</sup>, and a corresponding amount of payments appropriations equal to € 3.98 billion<sup>227</sup>.



Source: Annex 3 of annual activity reports - Outturn on commitment and payment appropriations in 2021

In 2022, DG HOME maintained good implementation rates as regards total available commitment and payment appropriations, achieving consumption rates of 97.87% for commitments and 92.39% for payments.

When taking into account only appropriations expiring in 2022, the implementation of DG

<sup>(222)</sup> 1) Effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; 2) reliability of reporting; 3) safeguarding of assets and information; 4) prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; and 5) adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments (FR Art 36.2). The 2nd and/or 3rd Internal Control Objective(s) (ICO) only when applicable, given the DG's activities.

<sup>223</sup> This heading also includes the Instrument for financial support for customs control equipment, which is under responsibility of DG TAXUD.

<sup>224</sup> As per the underlying figures in Annex 3 to the present annual activity report.

<sup>225</sup> The total EU Budget 2022 amounted to € 165.34 billion, OJ L 45/385 of 24.2.2022.

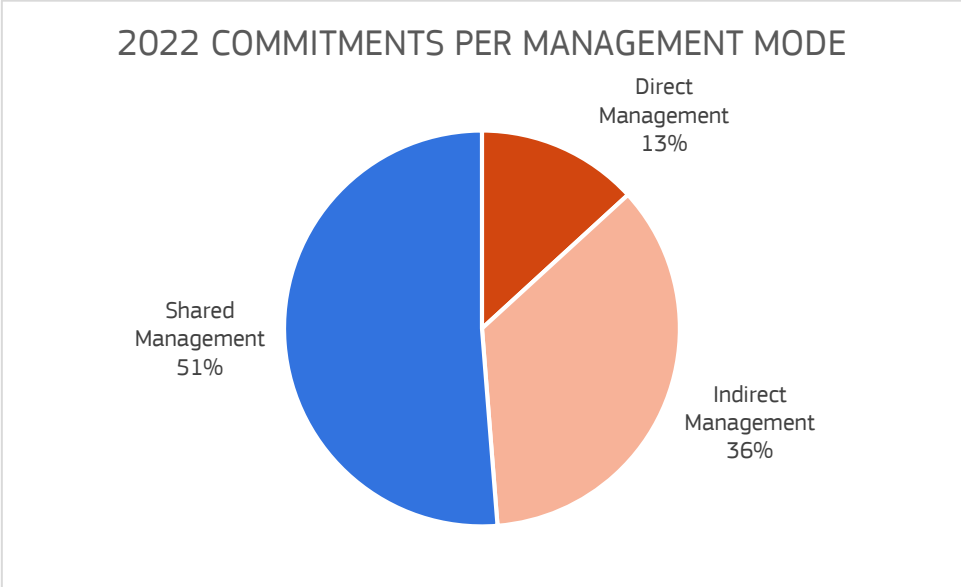
<sup>226</sup> In addition to the budget voted by the legislative authority, authorised commitment appropriations include appropriations carried over from the previous exercise, budget amendments, and miscellaneous commitment appropriations for the period (e.g. internal and external assigned revenue).

<sup>227</sup> These amounts correspond to the appropriations expiring at the end of 2021 on DG HOME budget lines, excluding internal and external assigned revenues received during 2021.

HOME’s budget reaches 100% in commitments and 97% in payments.

DG HOME managed to keep the open amount on commitments (RAL) at € 4.3 billion at the end of 2022, on a similar level as at the end of 2021 (€ 4.2 billion). DG HOME keeps the open commitments under regular observation in order to decrease RAL.

The graph below presents the distribution of individual commitments signed in 2022 per management mode:



The highest share of commitments is for shared management amounts to € 2.18 billion and covers the Member States’ National Programmes and the Specific Actions under the Thematic Facility.

The second highest share of the 2022 commitments is for the indirect management amounting to € 1.51 billion and is mainly covered by budgetary commitments dedicated to six decentralised HOME agencies, in particular Frontex, which has received new resource for tasks relating to the external border management. Remaining budgetary commitments under indirect management covered delegation and contribution agreements signed under emergency assistance and Union actions (under Thematic Facilities).

The share for direct management amounts to € 0.56 billion and covers mainly Union actions and emergency assistance (under Thematic Facilities).

**In line with the 2018 Financial Regulation, DG HOME's assessment for this reporting requirement is as follows:**

- Cases of "Derogations from the principle of non-retroactivity [of grants] pursuant to Article 193 FR" (new FR Article 193.2): 27 grants awarded to actions that had already begun<sup>228</sup>.
- Cases of financing not linked to costs (new FR Article 125.3): 16 EMAS grants awarded under AMIF and BMVI.

**None of these cases below was applicable in 2022:**

- Cases of "confirmation of instructions" (new FR Article 92.3)
- Financial Framework Partnerships >4 years (new FR Article 130.4)
- Cases of flat-rates >7% for indirect costs (new FR Article 181.6)

The activities carried out to control the execution of DG HOME appropriations are presented in this section per control system:

- 2.1.1.1 Control system 1: Shared management
- 2.1.1.2 Control system 2: Direct management of grants
- 2.1.1.3 Control system 3: Direct management of procurement
- 2.1.1.4 Control system 4: Indirect management (decentralised agencies and delegation/contribution agreements)

**Each sub-section is structured in two parts (ex- ante control and ex post controls) and a conclusion on the assessment of the functioning of the management and control system.**

To assess the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the control systems put in place, indicators have been formulated in a management tool used by all the Authorising Officers by Sub-delegation in DG HOME: the Relevant Control Systems for budget implementation.

Based on the identified risks, the Authorising Officers have described in their reports the mitigating controls, the coverage and depth of these controls, their costs and benefits, as well as effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

The overview of the results of this assessment is provided in Annex 6, whilst the set of management and financial indicators used to measure performance is provided in Annex 7.

#### **2.1.1.1 Control system 1: Shared management**

##### **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and Internal Security Fund (2014-2020)**

In 2022, commitments were not made any more since the AMIF and ISF cover the programming period 2014-2020.

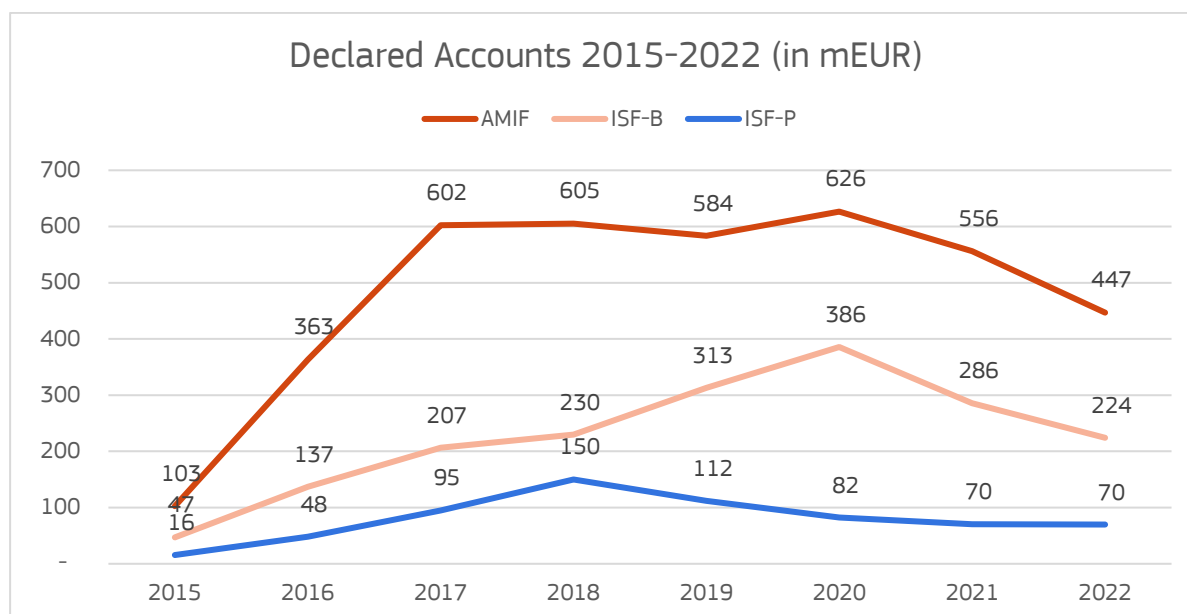
At the end of 2022, the **cumulative absorption rate** of AMIF and ISF under shared management is equal to **82.06%**, up from 74.68% by the end of 2021. This figure reflects

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<sup>228</sup> Please see Annex 7. Direct and indirect management.

the consumption from 2014 to 2022 financial years whose cumulative value is equal to € 6.36 billion out of a total allocation to the national programmes of € 7.75 billion.

The graph below reflects the evolution of AMIF and ISF accounts from 2014 to 2022<sup>229</sup>



Implementation of the 58 multiannual AMIF and ISF national programmes continues, and figures confirm a **decreasing trend in annual absorption**, which is expected considering that we are approaching the end of implementation period.

### Step 1 – ex ante controls

At the beginning of 2022, DG HOME negotiated a change in the Horizontal Regulation (EU) 514/2014, which, *inter alia*, mitigated the risk of de-commitment by allowing a further year of accounts until 30 June 2024.

Whereas the national programmes of AMIF/ISF are multiannual, the Member States submit annually a request for annual payment (supported by an annual 'assurance package') which results in an annual clearance decision by the Commission (by 31/05/N+1). In 2022, the accounts submitted for clearance by the Member States for the 2021 financial year concerned 56 cost claims (cumulative value of € 864.6 million). Overall, clearance decisions adopted in 2022, covering both 2021 accounts as well as any outstanding accounts from previous years, led to payments for a value of **€ 545.74 million accepted for clearance**<sup>230</sup> (compared to the corresponding amount of € 696.81 million accepted in the clearance decisions adopted in 2021).

In 21 cases (16 linked to 2021 accounts and the rest linked to 2020 and 2019 accounts), only partial clearance could be made, due to the need for the Member State to carry out additional controls or audits, or due to insufficient assurance provided by Member States. In line with DG HOME assurance process (Annex 7), the audit opinions and detailed annual

<sup>229</sup> MS 2022 Accounts for period ended 15.10.2022.

<sup>230</sup> Commission Decision C(2022) 4216 of 15 June 2022, Commission Decision C(2022) 7580 of 18 October 2022 and Commission Decision C(2022) 9342 of 7 December 2022.



control reports, in which the national audit authorities document the audit work to underpin the audit opinions issued as part of the annual payment is assessed as part of the ex- ante controls.

During the reporting period, **27 monitoring visits** were carried out by DG HOME in Member States. Beyond field visits, constructive dialogue with Member States competent authorities proved to be crucial to support the implementation, management and control of AMIF and ISF at national level, thus Member States are on a regular basis provided with guidance. This takes places in various forms to suit best the needs of Member States: meetings of the AMIF/ISF Committee, documents clarifying specific topics (e.g. performance framework), and workshops, which are organised on specific issues, e.g. on performance measurement.

The internal structure of DG HOME, having funding Units composed of country desks in a financial Directorate with weekly discussions on FAQs, facilitates the delivery of consistent and sound guidance and support to Member States in the implementation of AMIF and ISF.

**Step 2 – ex post controls**

In addition to the annual clearance procedure, conformity clearance<sup>231</sup> and financial corrections by the Commission are possible up to 3 years after the expenditure has been reported in the annual accounts by the Responsible Authority. Conformity clearance procedures are also launched following ECA audits in the context of the Statement of the annual assurance (DAS), where irregularities are confirmed. As a result of the conformity clearance procedures, the Commission imposes net financial corrections on the Member States by which they reimburse to the EU budget the amounts corresponding to those corrections. During 2022, DG HOME opened one conformity clearance procedure.

**Assessment of the functioning of the management and control systems (including best estimate of error)**

In 2022, DG HOME completed the audit process for the ISF/AMIF compliance system audits for Estonia, Iceland and Ireland.

In addition, DG HOME auditors accompanied the Court of Auditors on the audits for the 2022 Statement of Assurance in a number of Member States.

The methodology to determine reservations and to estimate the net amount at risk is provided in Annex 5. The cumulative outcome of the assessment is presented below (more detailed information per Member State is provided in Annex 7):

Activity/Fund	Cumulative amount at risk (EUR) (31 Dec 2022) in Mio. EUR	Cumulative EU payments (EUR) (31 Dec 2022) in Mio. EUR	Cumulative residual error rate
AMIF	36.20	3.374,79	1.07%
ISF	23.68	2.111,77	1.12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59.88</b>	<b>5 486.56</b>	<b>1.09%</b>

<sup>231</sup> Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/378 Article 2.  
 When the Commission considers that expenditure was not in compliance with Union and national rules, it launches a **conformity clearance** procedure. During this procedure, should expenditure and/or system deficiencies be confirmed, the findings are notified to the MS specifying the corrective measures needed in order to ensure future compliance, and indicating the level of financial correction the purpose to exclude from Union financing any expenditure affected by the non-compliance with Union rules.

The **average residual error rate across AMIF and ISF is 1.09%, well below 2%**. At Member States level, seven Member States present a cumulative residual error rate higher than 2%. In these cases, reservations have been issued as presented in section 2.1.5.

IMPACT on Declaration of Assurance			AMIF			ISF		
				% of MCS	% of EU payments		% of MCS	% of EU payments
1	Reasonable assurance	Number of MCS	1	4%	0,9%	0	0%	0,00%
		Cumulative EU payments	29.658.236,90			0		
2	Reasonable assurance with low risk	Number of MCS	24	89%	86,4%	25	81%	76,77%
		Cumulative EU payments	2.915.512.721,29			1.621.292.098,35		
3	Limited assurance with medium risk	Number of MCS	2	7%	12,7%	6	19%	23,23%
		Cumulative EU payments	429.615.484,05			490.479.853,85		
4	Limited assurance with high risk	Number of MCS	0	0%	0,0%	0	0%	0,00%
		Cumulative EU payments	0			0		

### **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, Border Management and Visa Instrument and Internal Security Fund (2021-2027)**

For the 2021-2027 funding period, Member States need to comply with certain **horizontal enabling conditions** including the effective monitoring mechanisms of the public procurement market, the effective application and implementation of the Charter on Fundamental Rights of the European Union, a cornerstone of the EU acquis, and the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD).

The horizontal enabling conditions are laid down in annex III of the CPR to ensure that an appropriate and sound strategic and legal framework, including the required policy reforms, are in place at the start of the period and during implementation, to allow for the effective implementation of the Funds during the period. The possibility to reimburse expenditure to the Member States in each specific area is conditioned to the continued compliance with the enabling conditions.

Member States had to self-assess in their programmes whether the enabling conditions linked to the selected specific objectives are fulfilled. With the input of other competent Commission services, DG HOME, DG EMPL and DG REGIO reviewed and the Commission decided whether they agreed with the Member State's own assessment on the fulfilment of enabling conditions. When necessary, DG HOME provided recommendations to Member States to improve the situation.

For the applicable horizontal enabling conditions, all Member States fulfil them, **apart from Cyprus, Hungary and Poland**. In the case of Cyprus<sup>232</sup> and Poland, the Member State itself considers that the horizontal enabling condition on the Charter of Fundamental Rights is not yet met. The Commission services are in dialogue with the Member State to ensure that the requirements of the enabling condition are fully met. The Republic of Cyprus has submitted a draft self-assessment that is under evaluation of by the Commission services. This covers notably the institutional and procedural arrangements that are necessary to ensure respect of all relevant principles of the Charter in the implementation of the Funds at all stages. In the case of Hungary, whilst the Hungarian Authorities assessed that they fulfil the horizontal enabling conditions on the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Commission considered that the implementation of the Funds risks violating the Charter. The Commission's concerns can be lifted when Hungary has put in place the necessary arrangements that will ensure that the implementation respects the Charter, and when the Commission has agreed that these arrangements remedy the deficiencies.

Overall, during the accounting year 2021-2022 and in the second semester of 2022 Member States did not declare expenditure to the Commission and did not make interim payments to the 2021-2027 programmes<sup>233</sup>.

In 2022, the monitoring and control systems were not yet implemented in shared management, since Member States' programmes were approved to a large extent only during the last quarter of 2022. Since the intervention logic and management systems remain to a large extent similar as in the 2014-2020 period, DG HOME does not see any significant changes in the management and control systems.

#### **2.1.1.2 Control system 2. Direct management – Grants**

In 2022, DG HOME committed a total amount of € 521.27 million (direct management only):

- € 137.96 million for Union actions grants
- € 383.31 million for emergency assistance grants.

#### **Step 1 – ex ante controls of Union actions and emergency assistance grants**

Union actions and emergency assistance grants under direct management represented 15% (€ 549.92 million) of total value of DG HOME payments in 2022.

'Union actions' are transnational actions or actions of particular interest to the Union covering the objectives under AMIF, BMVI and ISF. These elaborated and often long-term projects support EU-wide networks, new ways of working, testing of tools or methods throughout the Union and cooperation activities between Member States and third countries. In addition, emergency assistance under AMIF and BMVI supported Member States facing urgent needs on the ground in the areas of migration and border management.

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<sup>232</sup> Cyprus declared the enabling condition on the Charter as unfulfilled regarding its AMIF and BMVI programmes.

<sup>233</sup> Apart from the regulatory advances paid at the adoption of programmes that are, by definition, free of risk.

Control activities include preparation and adoption of the multi-annual work programmes, the calls for and evaluation of proposals.

In 2022, the number of signed grants for **Union actions** was less impressive than in the past – 42 (compared to 111 in 2021 and 73 in 2020,) for a total awarded budget equal to € 45.75 million (€ 135.08 million in 2021 and € 90.16 million in 2020). This lower activity is related to the late adoption of the 2021-2022 work programmes and hence delayed, compared to the last years' calendar, publication of the call for proposals. The activity has accelerated in early 2023.

A new type of Union Action for Member States Under Pressure was implemented in 2022 through a call for expressions of interest. This call attracted 28 proposals from both Member States and international organisations, for a total value several times higher than the budget available. Eight proposals could be selected, three from Member States and five from international organisations, for a total EU contribution of € 171.2 million.

As concerns **emergency assistance**, DG HOME awarded 18 grants (vs. 12 grants in 2021), to address urgent and specific needs in the Member States in the fields of migration and border management. These eighteen grant agreements were signed during the year, for a total value of € 383.31 million. Two grants were awarded to Lithuania and Latvia from the AMIF as a result of the relatively high numbers of migrants crossing the border from Belarus in late 2021. The other 16 grants were awarded further to two decisions of the Director-General<sup>234</sup> authorising the use of financing not linked to costs for the implementation of emergency assistance from both the AMIF and the BMVI to support Member States most affected by the mass influx of persons from Ukraine. These Member States were: Poland; Romania; Bulgaria; Hungary; Czech Republic; Slovakia; Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

To illustrate the diverse nature of grants, the average value of a grant in 2022 is around € 1.1 million for Union Actions, € 30.7 million for Union Actions for Member States Under Pressure and € 21.3 million for emergency assistance.

**The number of payments made in 2022 was also much lower than in previous years** – 171 (compared to 255 in 2021 and 166 in 2020). The variation is mostly attributable to payments in Union Actions. There are various elements leading to less intense activity:

- 2021 was a very active year - a large number of projects finalised: those coming from abundant 2017 and 2018 Work Programmes and those that received non-cost extensions due to the pandemic;
- 2022 marked a return to a more sustainable level of activity in terms of final reports;
- in 2022 fewer grants were signed so fewer pre-financing payments were made than in an average year.

The total value of payments increased significantly (€ 549.92 in 2022 versus € 414.94 million in 2021), and the composition changed:

- less than half of the 2021 amount paid for Union Actions in 2022;

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<sup>234</sup> These two decisions combined awarded EUR 385 million in emergency assistance grants in total, not all of which was granted in 2022.

- new Union Actions for Member States Under migratory Pressure (MSUP) paid some € 46.70 million;
- the EMAS payments reached € 447.67 million which was approximately 53% more than in 2021. Within the EMAS payments € 67.41 million were related to grant agreements signed prior to 2022. This relates to the EMAS support to the MS most affected by the influx of people fleeing Ukraine and the use of financing not linked to cost which allowed for 100% pre-financing rates.

**The percentage of ineligible amounts found by the ex-ante controls performed over these claims represented 1.06% of their value (2.03% in 2021).**

## **Step 2 – ex post controls of Union actions and emergency assistance grants**

In addition to the main control objective, the ex-post controls serve other purposes:

- ✓ Detection and correction of any errors remaining undetected after the implementation of ex ante controls;
- ✓ Report to OLAF on any suspicions of fraud observed during the ex-post control (if applicable);
- ✓ Measuring the effectiveness of ex ante controls;
- ✓ Addressing systematic weaknesses in the ex-ante controls based on the analysis of the findings (sound financial management); ensuring appropriate accounting of the recoveries to be made (reliability of reporting, safeguarding of assets and information).

In 2022, DG HOME launched 39 ex post controls<sup>235</sup>, all being part of the annual audit work programme 2022. Taking into account the audits launched in previous annual audit work programmes, DG HOME's auditors finalised 14<sup>236</sup> audit reports in 2022 (1 from the 2022 Annual Work Programme, 12 from the 2021 Annual Work Programme, and 1 from the 2020 Annual Work Programme). The audit coverage<sup>237</sup> for 2014-2020 programming period was 21.7% as of 31.12.2022.

For audits closed in 2022, the majority of the findings relates to subcontracting costs which were not implemented as per the requirements of the grant agreement and therefore were not foreseen and/or the object of appropriate contract amendments. The table below presents an overview of the typology of the errors detected during the audit work.

Unauthorized subcontracting costs	50%
Staff costs not related to the project	32%
Missing/inadequate documentation	17%
Indirect costs impact of ineligible direct costs	1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

For the current programming period 2014-2020, the table below presents a cumulative overview of the primary types of errors detected up to 31 December 2022:

<sup>235</sup> Out of the 39 ex post controls, 19 were on grants implemented by DG JUST and 20 implemented by DG HOME.

<sup>236</sup> Finalised meaning that the final audit reports were signed and sent to the Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation by end-2022.

<sup>237</sup> Based on the finalised audits on 31 December 2022.

Financial findings covering : subcontracting, ineligible VAT, lack of audit trail, budget overruns, incorrect exchange rate,	35%
Incorrect procurement procedure	23%
Missing/inadequate documentation	17%
Staff costs not related to the project	17%
Cost not budgeted or not for project purposes	2%
Indirect costs impact of ineligible direct costs	2%
<b>Total Main Findings</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Assessment of the functioning of the management and control systems (including best estimate of error)**

Based on additional audits closed by end 2022, corporate guidance on the treatment applicable to procedural procurement errors (more details in Annex 5) and the assessment of the functioning of the management and control system for direct management grants (Union actions and emergency assistance), the financial reservation reported in the 2021 annual activity report is maintained in the 2022 AAR, as presented in section 2.1.5. This is due to a cumulative Detected Error Rate for the 2022 annual activity report exceeding 2% resulting from both procedural and financial errors<sup>238</sup> and to the fact that the cumulative Residual Error Rate of 2,99% (excluding procedural procurement errors not having a financial impact) also exceeds the materiality threshold of 2%.

<b>Audit coverage and error rate for direct management 2014-2020 funds (multiannual)</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
<i>Cumulative Auditable Population (in € million)</i>	997,81	916.75
<i>Cumulative Audited Population (in € million)</i>	216,42	132.00
<i>Cumulative Audit coverage (%)</i>	21,69%	14.4%
<i>Cumulative detected error rate (%)</i>	6,76%	8.76%
<i>Cumulative residual error rate (%)</i>	2,99% <sup>239</sup>	2.85% <sup>240</sup>

The assessment of the Residual Error Rate and amount at risk not detected by the supervisory and ex ante elements of the internal control is carried out through analysis of the results of ex post audits. The table above summarises the results of this analysis done according to the four steps detailed in Annex 5. It gives the cumulative coverage rates for grants under direct management (research excluded) and the related Residual Error Rates

### **With reference to research grants (Horizon 2020),**

DG HOME is responsible for the work programme<sup>241</sup> and security appraisal procedure.

<sup>238</sup> Following the corporate guidance provided for the calculation of the detected and residual error rates, while such procedural procurement errors may be excluded from the residual error rate, they should be included and quantified at 100% for the determination of the detected error rate.

<sup>239</sup> In comparison to 2021, the RER shows a very slight increase, as a consequence of the time lag between recoveries and findings, as well as the methodology which emphasises detected error over recoveries. In 2022, the pace of error detection was higher than the pace of recoveries.

<sup>240</sup> The Residual Error Rate (RER) excludes Public Procurement Procedural Errors. Up to the 2019 AAR, procedural and financial errors were taken into consideration for the cumulative error rate. As from the 2020 AAR, in line with the above-mentioned corporate guidance, the calculation of the RER excludes procedural errors having no financial impact.

As the management of grants was handed over to REA and no payments are made by DG HOME (including in 2022), DG HOME does not report any more on error rates or assessment of assurance with respect to research grants.

### **2.1.1.3 Control system 3. Direct management - Procurement**

The control system for direct management – procurement builds on three main processes: procurement procedures, financial operations and supervisory measures.

#### **Step 1 – ex ante controls**

In 2022, 22 tenders (open tenders + reopening of competitions under framework contracts) were published, leading to the signature of 187 contracts for a total value of **€ 36.58 million**.

As compared to 2021, these indicators indicate a stable activity in terms of the number of contracts signed and whereas their financial value slightly decreased. Number of tenders remained stable. Globally, the number of commitments and payments remained high and echo the intensive political framework of DG HOME where procurement and contract activities reinforce policy development in the field of migration, borders and internal security.

The contract management includes payments and monitoring of the delivery of the expected results while complying with regulatory and contractual provisions. To this end, DG HOME carries out ex ante checks of cost claims before processing transactions.

The amount of payments made in 2022 was equal to € 24.30 million, slightly higher than in 2021 (€ 21.32 million).

#### **Step 2 – ex post controls**

This control system is limited to Step 1, as DG HOME does not carry out ex post audit on its own procurement, this being done by external auditors (IAS, ECA) as appropriate.

#### ***Assessment of the functioning of the management and control systems (including best estimate of error)***

Based on the methodology described in Annex 6, no ex-post controls were performed for contracts. The audit findings signalled by the other internal or external auditors are taken into account for the assessment of assurance and the residual error is estimated at 0.50%, as per error rate computed by the European Court of Auditors on administrative expenditure, below the 2% materiality threshold.

### **2.1.1.4 Control system 4. Indirect management - Entrusted Entities and Decentralised Agencies**

#### **Entrusted Entities**

##### Delegation agreements

In 2022, DG HOME did not sign any new delegation agreements. No payments took place in 2022 in relation to delegation agreements.

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<sup>241</sup> The coherence of the Work Programme is guaranteed by the close co-operation of DG HOME, a security Research interservice group and the Horizon 2020/SC7 programme committee.

### Contribution agreements

In 2022, DG HOME made 12 new commitments in relation to contribution agreements under the Union Actions for a total amount of € 136.68 million. Payments made in 2022 in relation to contribution agreements were equal to € 132.48 million (4% of the total payments made) compared to € 252.9 million in 2021.

### Grant agreements

In 2022, DG HOME did not sign any grant agreements with entrusted entities. There were no payments to trust funds in 2022.

The delegation/contribution/grant agreements operating under indirect management throughout 2022 can be found in Annex 11.

### **Step 1 – ex ante controls**

Delegation and contribution agreements were monitored during the year through progress reports, regular meetings (including participation of DG HOME in Steering committees), online monitoring missions and on the spot visits, including the monitoring done with local staff.

### **Step 2 – ex post controls**

Contribution agreements are subject to ex post verifications carried out by DG HOME. In 2022 no verifications were implemented on contribution agreements that were signed under the EU-UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) and for which final payments were made in the reporting period. However, verifications based on FAFA principles were done on 3 grant awarded under direct management and for which international organisations were co-beneficiaries. The control conclusions are taken into consideration for the ex-post controls under Direct Management.

### **Decentralised Agencies**

DG HOME pays annual EU contributions to the decentralised agencies as authorised by the Budgetary Authority. In 2022, the total commitment appropriations were slightly higher than the previous year and amounted to € 1.37 billion, out of which 100% was implemented. The budgeted payment appropriations were equal to € 1.36 billion, out of which 98% was consumed. Total payments made to the six agencies in 2022 represented 36% of all payments made by DG HOME. A table summarising the amounts of commitment and payments appropriations budgeted and implemented in 2022 can be found in Annex 13.

### **Step 1 – ex ante controls**

The overall objective is to ensure that HOME is duly and timely informed of any governance-related issues in agencies that could have an impact on the assurance of the agencies and/or represent a reputational risk for DG HOME. Decentralised agencies have full responsibility for the implementation of their budget, while HOME is responsible for regular payment of annual contributions established by the Budgetary Authority.

DG HOME closely monitors Agencies' activities in policy implementation, budget planning and implementation and internal control, including follow up on recommendations issued by the Internal Audit Service and the European Court of Auditors. DG HOME exercises its oversight role directly through membership (with voting rights) in the Agencies' Management Boards, where the Commission is represented by HOME Director-General and Deputy Director-General in most cases. In addition, DG HOME actively participates in



preparatory meetings usually organised before Management Board meetings. Four agencies - eu-LISA, Frontex, EMCDDA and Cefpol - have set up specialised working groups on resources and audit-related matters. In EUAA, the preparatory working group features a sub-formation dedicated to these matters, while in Europol these topics are discussed by a broader group dedicated to governance and operations.

## **Step 2 – ex post control**

The centralised IAS of the Commission acts as the internal auditor for the agencies<sup>242</sup>, while the European Court of Auditors gives a statement of assurance as to the reliability of the annual accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. Based on these, the European Parliament grants discharge directly to the agencies. DG HOME, therefore, does not carry out ex post audits of its decentralised agencies' expenditure, but monitors closely IAS and ECA audit recommendations, as well as of the discharge.

In 2022, the European Court of Auditors issued unqualified audit opinions on the legality and regularity of revenue underlying the accounts of all HOME decentralised agencies' for the financial year 2021. Five of the six agencies received unqualified opinions on the legality and regularity of the payments underlying the accounts, while eu-LISA received a qualified opinion based on irregular payments that amounted to EUR 18.1 million, which was 6.2 % of the total payment appropriations available in 2021. The qualified opinion was due to non-compliance noted in the procurement and contract management. The issues identified included a specific contract for which the details of the services acquired were not specified. Moreover, some specific contracts deviated from the framework contracts without necessary amendments. The mitigating actions carried out are explained below.

### ***Assessment of the functioning of the management and control system***

From the six decentralised agencies, only eu-LISA notified shortcomings stemming from internal and external audits with possible impact on DG HOME's assurance for 2022. The provisional assessment identifies control weaknesses in the context of operational programmes and projects affecting the regularity of procurement and contract management activities performed in financial year 2022. According to the Statement of Assurance of the eu-LISA's Authorising Officer, these elements could have an impact on DG HOME's annual activity report. However, a preliminary assessment of these shortcomings does not prejudge the outcome of the full assessment by eu-LISA's Authorising Officer of all elements supporting assurance. This will be done in the eu-LISA's annual activity report. Based on DG HOME's assessment, the above does not currently result in a reputational impact thus no reservation on reputational grounds has been issued. DG HOME will monitor results of the assessment by eu-LISA's Authorising Officer and follow-up measures. DG HOME monitors the work of eu-LISA either directly or under the umbrella of the Management Board and the Audit, Compliance and Finance Committee of eu-LISA. At the initiative of DG HOME, the Management Board has already reinforced the monitoring of budget management and internal control of the Agency. DG HOME has undertaken regular discussions with eu-LISA following the ECA preliminary findings on the eu-LISA 2021 accounts and also further to the outcome of the ECA report in October 2022. DG HOME is planning a workshop on public procurement and contract management, with eu-LISA in order to discuss difficulties that the Agency is facing in the area of procurement. Moreover,

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<sup>242</sup> Some Agencies (e.g. Frontex & eu-LISA) have their own internal audit capability.

eu-LISA has been instructed to set up an action plan to address the ECA's findings on the Agency's 2021 accounts. This document will be used to monitor and report on the implementation of the remedy actions to overcome the weaknesses that generated the observations.

The relevant information provided by the agencies in relation to the issues identified as a result of the Commission's involvement in the agencies' Management Board and the results of DG HOME's supervision arrangements are deemed reliable and assessed as sufficient to draw reasonable assurance conclusion. Details on IAS audits will be given by the agencies directly in their annual activity reports, in the framework of their separate discharge procedure.

The European Union Asylum Agency has faced growing expectations to deliver on its mandate, having been tasked with an important role in the war in Ukraine and with migratory flows in some Member States approaching historic highs in 2022. At the same, the Agency is in the process of rolling out its new and extended mandate, which officially entered into force in January 2022. Furthermore, limitations such as those imposed by local labour laws, as well as ECA recommendations, and insufficient numbers of asylum experts made available by Member States, continue to weigh on the Agency's capacity and flexibility in deploying qualified experts to its operations on the ground. All this has put a strain on the Agency's resources, in particular as regards staff. DG HOME is working close with the Agency and Commission services to address identified staffing shortages, to make sure the Agency is adequately equipped to deliver on its new mandate and the growing expectations from Member States.

As regards Frontex, many actions and developments took place during 2022.

Progress has been made in the implementation of the Agency's new mandate and the assessment of the reputational impact of the weaknesses previously identified has been re-performed in the framework of the 2022 AAR:

- The Agency's new administrative structure was adopted in December 2020.
- The new Executive Director was appointed in the Management Board meeting of 20 December 2022.
- The Agency has also made progress in the establishment of the Fundamental rights monitoring framework. In 2022, the Fundamental Rights officer finalised the recruitment of 46 Fundamental Rights Monitors.
- By the end of 2022, the Agency has recruited 938 out of 1000 planned officers for the Standing Corps category 1 and it has launched a call for the recruitment of additional 500 guards to be recruited in 2023 to reach the goal of 1500 standing corps category 1 by the end of 2023.

**Since significant progress has been made over the last two years in the implementation of the Agency's new mandate reducing considerably reputational risk, the reservation on reputational grounds issued in the 2021 AAR is lifted in the 2022 AAR.**

As concerns **delegation agreements with entrusted entities**, DG HOME also considers that the level of information received as well as the supervision arrangements are

sufficient to provide reasonable assurance.

A table summarising the payments made by DG HOME in 2022, in terms of activities per control system, as well as the key indicators (Residual error rates and cost-efficiency) available for each layer can be found in Annex 7.

The analysis of the results of the control activities implemented by DG HOME in 2022 which are described under each Control Systems in sections 2.1.1.1 to 2.1.1.4 allows DG HOME to state that overall reliable and complete control results are available for each Control System. The second part of section 2.1.1 aims at concluding on the cost-effectiveness of these controls and is structured in four sub-sections:

1. Effectiveness of the controls through the analysis of legality and regularity of transactions; fraud prevention, detection and prevention
2. Efficiency of controls
3. Economy of controls
4. Conclusion on cost-effectiveness of controls

### ***Effectiveness of controls***

#### ***Legality and regularity of the transactions***

**DG HOME's portfolio consists of segments with a relatively low error rate (below the 2% threshold for segments representing 90% of relevant expenditure and a 3% residual error rate for 10% of relevant expenditure under direct management grants – emergency assistance and Union actions).**

**The high level of segments with relatively low error rate is due to the design of the control system for the amounts spent under shared management (2014-2020 programmes). The Audit Authorities carry out their audit work prior to the submission of the annual accounts to the Commission by 15 February. In case of ineligible amounts or material errors reported by the Member States in the annual accounts and annual control reports the accounts are partially cleared, reducing considerably the residual error rate. Nevertheless, for a few Member States system deficiencies were detected during system audits, leading to a residual error rate above 2% (Member States included under reservation).**

**For the sub-segment of grants/ emergency assistance and Union actions, the root causes of the issues are mainly missing supporting documents and procurement issues and variety of national rules not corresponding to the requirements of the corporate model grant agreements.** It should be noted though that the rules for direct management of grants have been greatly simplified with the alignment of grant management rules at the corporate level (following the progressive departure from a multitude of fund and programme specific eligibility conditions). Management actions taken to address these weaknesses are kick-off meetings organised at the inception of the project to inform about the rules of the grant management as well as ad-hoc monitoring

meetings with and monitoring visits of the participants. For the MFF 2021-2027 generation of grants, DG HOME is applying to a large extent decisions on unit costs concerning volunteers, travel, subsistence and accommodation. Implementation of these simplified eligibility rules has started with the signature of the first grants in 2022. In addition, for the recently awarded emergency assistance, the use of financing not linked to costs minimised the administrative burden for beneficiaries and simplified the implementation of these projects.

**In addition, DG HOME has in place an effective mechanism for correcting errors, through ex-ante and ex-post controls, resulting in preventive and corrective measures, respectively. Member States play an important role in this corrective mechanism and part of the benefit stems from their actions. Please see table below for details:**

		<b>Preventive Measures (m EUR)</b>	<b>Corrective measures (m EUR)</b>
<b>Implemented by the Member States</b>		<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
	<i>of which from Member States controls</i>	0.00	0.00
	<i>of which from EU controls <sup>(243)</sup></i>	0.00	0.00
<b>Implemented by the Commission</b>		<b>5.47</b>	<b>2.82</b>
	<i>of which from Member States controls</i>	0.36	1.98
	<i>of which from EU controls</i>	5.11	0.84
<b>HOME total</b>		<b>5.47</b>	<b>2.82</b>

**Based on all the above, DG HOME presents in the following Table X an estimation of the risk at payment and risk at closure for the expenditure managed during the reporting year:**

<sup>(243)</sup> As a result of Commission controls and audits, OLAF investigations or ECA audits.

**Table X: Estimated risk at payment and at closure (amounts in EUR million)**

The full detailed version of the table is provided in annex 9.

DG HOME	Payments made	Relevant expenditure	Estimated risk (error rate %) at payment		Estimated future corrections and deductions		Estimated risk (error rate %) at closure	
	m EUR	m EUR	m EUR	%	m EUR	%	m EUR	%
Shared management AMIF/BMVI/ISF	1 635.00	942.26	10.27	1.09%	2.01	0.21%	8.26	0.88%
Direct Management – Union actions and EMAS grants	549.91	262.50	17.74	6.76%	0.56	0.21%	17.18	6.54%
Direct Management - Procurement	25.58	24.93	0.12	0.50%	0.00	0.00%	0.12	0.5%
Indirect Management - Contribution/Delegation agreements	132.48	210.37	1.05	0.50%	0.45	0.21%	0.60	0.29%
Indirect Management - Decentralised agencies	1 330.68	1 039.13	5.20	0.50%	0.00	0.00%	5.20	0.5%
<b>DG HOME total</b>	<b>3 673.65m EUR</b>	<b>2 479.19m EUR</b>	<b>34.39m EUR</b>	<b>1.39%</b>	<b>3.02m EUR</b>	<b>0.12%</b>	<b>31.37m EUR</b>	<b>1.27%</b>

The **estimated overall risk at payment** for 2022 expenditure is the AOD's best conservative estimate of the amount of relevant expenditure during the year, not in conformity with the contractual and regulatory provisions applicable **at the time the payment was made**. This expenditure will subsequently be subject to ex-post controls and a proportion of the underlying errors will be detected and corrected in subsequent years. This amount corresponds to the conservatively **estimated future corrections** for 2022 expenditure.

The difference between those two amounts results in the **estimated overall risk at closure** <sup>(244)</sup>. **The estimated risk at closure for 2022 remained at the same level as for 2021 (1.27% for 2022 against 1.28% for 2021)**

For an overview at Commission level, the departments' estimated overall risk at payment, estimated future corrections and risk at closure are consolidated in the Annual Management and Performance Report (AMPR).

#### Fraud prevention, detection, and correction

DG HOME has developed and implemented its own **anti-fraud strategy** since 2013, based on the methodology provided by OLAF. The strategy is updated every three years.

<sup>(244)</sup> This is the AOD's best, conservative estimation of the expenditure authorised during the year that would remain not in conformity of applicable regulatory and contractual provisions by the end of implementation of the programme.

The last update took place in October 2021. Its implementation is currently being monitored and the completion of all necessary actions is expected by 2024.

DG HOME also contributed to the **Commission anti-fraud strategy** and followed up to **OLAF's financial recommendations** with the following results: of the total amount for which recovery was recommended by OLAF stemming from the previous year, 72% was fully implemented by year end 2022 and 28% is under implementation. The latter percentage refers to two recommendations: the implementation of the first recommendation is at the stage of inter-service consultation, while in the case of the second recommendation, the recovery procedure has already been launched.

**The results achieved during the year thanks to the anti-fraud measures in place can be summarised as follows:**

- DG HOME continued its fraud awareness-raising efforts for its staff, first, by organising an internal lunchtime seminar in January 2022 to present the newly adopted Anti-Fraud Strategy and highlight fraud-related matters. Additionally, a quiz on fraud and red flags was shared with all staff, giving them the opportunity to learn about warning signs of potential fraud. Finally, two invitations to external events/meetings organised by OLAF and the Investigation and Disciplinary Office (IDOC) were shared with DG HOME staff for their participation.

- DG HOME continued to analyse and monitor Member States' anti-corruption policies, in particular through the Annual Rule of Law report, the Recovery and Resilience plans, the Conditionality Regulation and the European Semester. Precisely, DG HOME led the work on the anti-corruption pillar of the 27 country chapters of the second Annual Rule of Law report published in July 2022. This pillar analyses significant developments and challenges as regards the anti-corruption frameworks of Member States across the European Union and for the first time also includes specific recommendations to Member States.

- DG HOME continued its close collaboration with OLAF and the EC anti-fraud networks, like the Fraud Prevention and Detection Network (FPDnet), including the sub-groups on shared management, fraud risk management and EPPO matters.

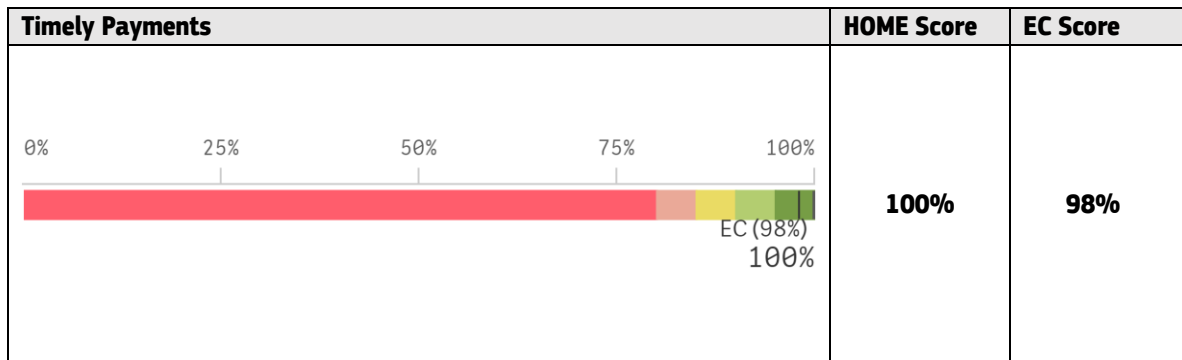
- Finally, DG HOME continued to provide information and administrative support and to collaborate with OLAF selectors and investigators, upon their request.

Additional measures will be taken - as necessary - to work towards the full achievement of the objectives of the DG's anti-fraud strategy, in an effort to tackle the risks identified in its fraud risk assessment.

**Based on the available information, DG HOME has reasonable assurance that the anti-fraud measures in place are effective overall.**

## Efficiency of controls

DG HOME assessed the efficiency of controls on the basis of "time-to" indicators, which measure the time needed to complete specific procedures. The statistics based on all payments covering all management modes made by DG HOME in 2022 show that **100%** of all payments were timely in terms of value, meaning that the average **late payment rate** was equal to **0%**, which constitutes a huge improvement compared to the 2021 level (10%).



The total amount of payments made by DG HOME in 2022 were around 25% higher than in 2021 (€ 3.67 vs € 2.93 billion) while the efficiency indicators show positive results as presented in this section, which proves that in general DG HOME managed its resources and processes efficiently. A closer look at the control systems shows the areas where major improvements were achieved, and where additional efforts will be needed.

In 2022, ten non-compliance events occurred in direct management (in procurement transactions - nine related to dates of budgetary and legal commitments and one to payment of necessary costs not foreseen in the legal commitment). Efforts are ongoing and will continue in 2023 to **improve the general procurement knowledge inside the DG**. In addition, there were three exception events recorded in direct management for grant transactions (for recovery, payment and call for proposals configuration). The number of these events increased compared to 2021, although they remain rather **minor compared to the number of transactions** (251 grants and contracts signed and 467 payments made) and correspond **mostly to small-scale inaccuracies** in the contract and grant management.

As concerns shared management, one non-compliance event occurred which concerned the late adoption of one of the Commission Decisions on the clearance of the 2021 accounts. In addition, one exception event was recorded which concerned the non-application of the Conformity Clearance procedure.

During 2022, 2 093 ex ante verifications (FVA verifications) took place (2 079 in 2021), of which 13% were sent back for correction (16% in 2021).

### Control system 1 – shared management

The indicators on efficiency remained steady in 2022: all payments were made on time. Other efficiency indicators are not relevant in shared management.

### Control system 2 – direct management grants

The individual efficiency indicators as regards "timely payment" improved for Union Actions (100% in 2022 compared to 97% in 2021) and for EMAS (100% in 2022 compared to 87% in 2021). Still there is a high proportion of pre-financing payments, which due to their automatic nature do not bear any risk of delay. As concerns the time-to-grant and time-to-inform indicators, there continues to be improvement as compared to 2021. In the case of Union actions, despite fewer proposals received and evaluated in 2022 (as no call for proposals on integration was organised, which traditionally attracts a lot of attention), time-to-inform has slightly increased (11 days, 9%) still remaining within the limits of the legal deadlines, whereas time-to-grant was slightly shorter (17 days, 7%). To be noted, that 2022 was the first year of call management under new eGrants configuration and the system presented some downtime stalling the processes. In the case of EMAS, results were also very good: time-to-inform improved by 34 days and time-to-grant improved by 64 days.

### Control system 3 – Procurement

As regards procurement, an improvement was also recorded in the timely payment indicator, from 89% to 91% reflecting stable personnel structure and adaptation to virtual working conditions. Indeed in 2021 the procurement workflows have been affected by significant long-term absences and communication with contractors, which greatly relied on physical access to the office (contractual documents sent by physical post only), hence stabilisation in 2022 resulted in a better achievement.

### Control system 4 – Indirect management

The timely payment indicator remained at 100% in 2022 as in 2021 for delegation and contribution agreements under indirect management.

Overall, the evolution over time has been positive in all management modes. The time-to indicators have shown better results than in 2021 in all cases. Based on the above information, DG HOME could reach a positive conclusion with regard to the efficiency of its entire control system, taking into consideration the continuously high volume of the transactions processed and their higher total value in 2022 as compared to previous years, and improved results of the indicators. DG HOME did not have any cases that should have been reported under article 93.2 of the Financial Regulation in 2022. For further details on payment indicators with details on (time-to) indicators per control system is available in Annex 4.



## Economy of controls

The cost of controls has been estimated at DG HOME level and, separately, at the level of Member States and entrusted entities, for shared and indirect management respectively. The costs at DG HOME level are reported in absolute values and as a percentage of the payments made, globally and broken down by relevant control system and step (as described in Annex 6).

The assessment of the economy of the cost of controls has been carried out through analysis of the evolution over time and in relation to the volume of resources managed.

### Cost of controls at DG HOME level

DG HOME has analysed the estimation of the cost of control in relation with the value of the payments made in 2022 per control system (Annex 6) and over the last 3 reporting years, to draw conclusions also on the trend. As a basis for the calculation, DG HOME has quantified the full-time equivalents allocated to the control activities, whilst “other direct costs” are mainly represented by externalised audit work.

As a result, the **total estimated cost of the controls** performed in 2022 by DG HOME has been estimated at **€ 19 160 279.06, which is 0.52% of the total payments**.

This confirms a stable and positive trend in terms of cost of controls per payments (below table see ratio). The slight increase in the cost of controls comes with an increase in the volume of payments made as compared to 2021 and updated annual average FTE costs. In addition, the beginning of the programming period 2021-2027 increased the amount of ex-ante controls related to the programming process.

The performance of cost of the controls continued to improve (from 0.59% in 2021 to 0.52% in 2022). This is explained by the efforts made to provide always appropriate guidance on time to Member States, to decentralised agencies and implementing partners.

The below table provides exhaustive information on the data analysed by DG HOME to draw this conclusion.

Control system	2022			2021			2020		
	Costs (M€)	Payments (M€)	Costs/ payments (%)	Costs (M€)	Payments (M€)	Costs/ payments (%)	Costs (M€)	Payments (M€)	Costs/ payments (%)
Shared management	7.36	1 653.00	0.45%	5.20	1 050.66	0.49%	4.87	913.74	0.53%
Direct management - grants	4.55	549.91	0.83%	5.16	415.63	1.24%	5.07	436.56	1.16%
Direct management - public procurement	2.06	25.58	8.05%	1.84	22.44	8.20%	1.74	23.8	7.31%
Indirect management - Entrusted Entities and Decentralised Agencies	1.77	1 463.16	0.12%	1.13	1 392.55	0.08%	2.2	1 059.5	0.21%
Other	3.42	0	NA	3.79	0	N/A	2.24	0	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.16</b>	<b>3 673.65</b>	<b>0.52%</b>	<b>17.12</b>	<b>2 881.28</b>	<b>0.59%</b>	<b>16.12</b>	<b>2 433.60</b>	<b>0.66%</b>

## **Costs of controls at Member State level**

DG HOME collected the cost of the controls incurred for the implementation of AMIF, BMVI and ISF for the 2022 financial year by responsible and audit authorities (and delegated authorities when applicable) based on the following types of expenditure:

- Supervision to ensure compliance with the designation criteria (Body referred to in Article 26 Regulation 514/2014)
- Audit Authority staff costs and other costs (such as overheads, training courses, travel)
- Responsible Authority (and Delegated Authority) staff costs and other costs (such as overheads, training courses, travel)
- Programming period 2021-2027.

The cumulative cost of control estimated by the Member States is equal to € 33.72 million (€ 32.25 million in 2021). The total amount of the payments requested by the Member States for the financial year was equal to € 740 million (€ 915 billion in 2021). The ratio of estimated cost of control over the amount of funds Member States managed is equal to 4.56% (3.52% in 2021).

The cumulative amount of the cost of control estimated by the Member States has only slightly increased between 2021 and 2022, but the percentage compared to the payments (performance of cost of controls) requested by the Member States has increased more significantly due to decreased amount of payments.

## **Cost of controls at the level of Entrusted Entities**

DG HOME signed 12 new contribution agreements in 2022. DG HOME reports on the cost of control borne by the entrusted entities at the start of each contribution agreement.

### ***Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls***

**Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results, DG HOME has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of its control system and reached a positive conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of the controls for which it is responsible.**

The positive conclusion was reached on the basis of an estimation of costs of control over the value of the related funds, in the form of indicators and their evolution over time for each distinct control system (Annex 6) using the management indicators reported in detail in Annex 7.

DG HOME has managed to ensure an adequate balance of the following components:

- low error rates (overall risk at closure: 1.27%)
- payments made within applicable time limits (100%)
- low costs of controls (cost-efficiency indicator of 0.52% in 2022, in 2021: 0.59%)

Moreover, as reported under 'economy', the implementation pace and amounts paid increased over the last years, but this did not correspond to any significant increase in the

cost of controls, and better cost-efficiency was recorded despite of higher volume of payments. DG HOME's control environment and control strategy remained stable during the reporting year and the conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls remains unchanged.

As we are approaching the end of the 2014-2020 programming period, DG HOME as well as the Member States and implementing partners are well equipped to manage and control the funds received from DG HOME.

Based on the results of its control activities carried out in 2022 DG HOME has decided to issue some reservations, which are described in section 2.1.4.

Since administrative arrangements, cross sub-delegations and contributions to executive agencies are immaterial (total less than 1% of the total payments of DG HOME), these activities are not detailed further in this report.

### 2.1.2. Audit observations and recommendations

**This section sets out the observations, opinions and conclusions reported by auditors – including the limited conclusion of the Internal Auditor on the state of internal control. Summaries of the management measures taken in response to the audit recommendations are also included, together with an assessment of the likely material impact of the findings on the achievement of the internal control objectives, and therefore on management's assurance.**

#### **Audits on DG HOME by the Internal Audit Service in 2022**

Two audits relevant to DG HOME were concluded by the Internal Audit Service in January 2022: Governance, stakeholder management and external communication in the European Border and Coast Guard Agency comprising where relevant the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs & Preparation for the 2021-2027 programming period of DG HOME funds. The IAS issued two very important recommendations in the framework of the audit on the Preparation for the 2021-2027 programming period of DG HOME funds. These were connected to delays in work programmes of the Thematic Facility, as well as monitoring of the programming process for the 2021-2027 period and reporting to senior management (see annex 7). The two recommendations have already been fully implemented by DG HOME.

At the same time, a new audit on IT governance and management in DG JUST and DG HOME commenced in the course of the year and was concluded in January 2023. DG HOME has prepared and communicated to the Internal Audit Service the action plan for the implementation of its recommendations. No critical or very important recommendations were issued.

In its contribution to the 2022 annual activity report process, **the Internal Audit Service concluded that the internal control systems in place for the audited processes are effective**, providing further assurance for year 2022.

## **Audits on DG HOME by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in 2022**

### **Annual discharge**

Regarding the results of the European Court of Auditors' (ECA) reports, the 2021 Statement of Assurance (DAS) report did not identify any major problems with the implementation of HOME funds, namely AMIF and ISF; nor with the procedures and audit programmes developed and implemented by the Member States' audit authorities. All the shortcomings in relation to the Annual Control Reports had already been identified by DG HOME. In relation to the audit work, the impact of any shortcomings on the assurance was limited either because these were not material or because mitigating measures had been taken. The report includes two recommendations addressed to DG HOME, which focus on:

- the provision of further guidance to beneficiaries of Union actions and emergency assistance and the Member States authorities on audit trail and compliance with procurement rules.
- better targeted ex-ante checks on the eligibility of the expenditure, especially in the case of emergency assistance (DG HOME accepted this recommendation only in relation to the emergency assistance).

The recommendations are being implemented or initiatives have been taken to do so by the deadline agreed with the ECA (during 2023).

**In conclusion, the findings presented by ECA do not have any impact on the assurance provided in this annual activity report.**

### **2.1.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems**

**The Commission has adopted an Internal Control Framework based on international good practice, to ensure the achievement of its policy and management objectives. Compliance with the internal control framework is a compulsory requirement.**

**DG HOME uses the organisational structure and the internal control systems suited to achieving its policy and internal control objectives in accordance with the internal control principles and has due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.**

The assessment of the effectiveness of DG HOME's internal control system has been carried out based on the methodology established in the "Implementation Guide of the Internal Control Framework of the Commission".

It relies on a number of monitoring tools and sources of information including:

- an evaluation of the internal control monitoring criteria for the reference year developed in the context of the Annual Management Plan for 2022 and consisting of quantitative and qualitative indicators in conjunction with pre-set targets and existing baseline values;

- the reported exceptions and non-compliance events;
- the results of the internal control self-assessment (iCAT-survey), which referred to the Internal Control Principles, targeted all DG HOME statutory staff and for which the participation was judged sufficient to be representative;
- the results of the audits performed or followed up by the Internal Audit Service, which concluded that the audited internal control systems are effective;
- the European Court of Auditors' findings, which do not undermine the effectiveness of the internal control system in place (more information is provided in section 2.1.2.);
- the annual risk management exercise;
- the reservations issued in the context of the 2022 AAR;
- the reports of the Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation submitted by each Directorate to the Director-General.

**DG HOME has assessed its internal control system during the reporting year and has concluded that it is effective and the components and principles are present and functioning well overall, but some improvements are needed as minor deficiencies were identified related to control activities, competence framework, professional development and separate communication lines.**

**The improvements and/or remedial measures implemented or envisaged are connected, among other areas, to raising staff awareness about whistleblowing, implementing timely the open audit recommendations issued by the ECA and updating the DG's HR strategy.**

#### 2.1.4. Conclusions on the assurance

The information reported in Section 2.1 stems from the results of management and auditor monitoring contained in the reports listed. These reports result from a systematic analysis of the evidence available. This approach provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in a comprehensive coverage of the budget delegated to the Director General of DG HOME.

This section reviews the assessment of the elements already reported above (in sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3), and the sub-conclusions already reached. It draws an overall conclusion to support the declaration of assurance and whether it should be qualified with reservations.

**In conclusion, based on the elements reported above, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Director General, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation has signed the Declaration of Assurance albeit qualified by 2 reservations concerning:**

**1) Shared management – Reservation concerning AMIF and ISF 2014-2020 in several Member States**

**2) Centralised Direct Management - Union actions and emergency assistance grants**

Reservation Title	Financial Impact (in m EUR)		Residual error rate 2022	Evolution
	2021	2022		
Shared management – Reservation concerning AMIF and ISF 2014-2020 in several Member States	0.43	2.46	See individual NPs/MSs - Annex 9	Maintained
Centralised Direct Management - Union actions and emergency assistance grants	9.83	7.01	2.99%	Maintained
Decentralised agencies – European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex): Reservation on reputational grounds	reputational	-	N/A	Lifted

## 2.1.5. Declaration of Assurance and reservations

### Declaration of Assurance

***I, the undersigned,***

***Director-General of DG Migration and Home Affairs***

***In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation***

***Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view*** <sup>(245)</sup>.

***State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.***

***This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-post controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.***

***Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the institution.***

***However the following reservations should be noted (more details are provided in annex 9):***

**1) Shared management – Reservation concerning AMIF and ISF 2014-2020 in several Member States**

**2) Centralised Direct Management - Union actions and emergency assistance grants**

***Brussels, 26 April 2023***

***Monique Pariat***

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<sup>(245)</sup> True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the DG.

## 2.2. Modern and efficient administration – other aspects

To modernise the administration, DG HOME continued to work on efforts to help staff, management and organisation move to a **more balanced and sustainable working environment in 2022**. Through sound financial management, DG HOME made sure that **resources are used with maximum benefit to the organisation**, taking care of the risks by using preventive and corrective mechanisms

Having well-functioning digital solutions in place became crucial during the **COVID-19 pandemic**. In 2022, DG HOME continued to maintain and develop its IT systems for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes, ensuring internal and external communication that is fit for purpose.

### 2.2.1. Human resource management

**Objective: DG HOME employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the Commission's priorities and core business**

In 2022, DG HOME continued its work in line with its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.

At the end of 2022 DG HOME had 654 staff members. DG HOME has fulfilled the target for female managers at middle management level reaching 57.7%. DG HOME continues supporting female colleagues for middle management careers through the corporate development programmes as well as through an internal DG HOME mentoring programme for young talented colleagues. So far, 13 female colleagues have been appointed deputy Head of Unit in DG HOME (with 26 units in total). DG HOME continued to focus on identifying additional actions related to equality, diversity and inclusion also in broader terms.

In 2022, DG HOME focused on analysing the result of the staff survey and consulting staff and managers to identify new priorities and design, all of which resulted in an Action Plan.

DG HOME implemented the following priority actions during 2022:

- Active support for its young talents by establishing a targeted mentoring programme for deputy Heads of Unit;
- Continuous encouragement of female staff to apply when management positions become vacant and to participate in all centrally and locally organised development programmes as well as coaching opportunities;
- Organisation of a Town Hall for all staff to further discuss how the DG can be made fit for purpose and to reconnect after the pandemic. The results together with the analysis



of the staff survey are the basis for the new local HR Strategy which is currently elaborated<sup>246</sup>.

- Organisation of a management Away Day to discuss on the Staff Survey Results and the new HR Strategy with managers and exchange views on the challenges in DG HOME's policy area for the years to come.
- Drafting of the local HR Strategy in line with the Commission's corporate HR Strategy. Finalisation is expected during April/May 2023.
- Prioritisation of unit Away Days instead of DG HOME Away Day. Given the high turnover rate and post-pandemic context, priority was given to small-scale events as means to connect and re-connect colleagues and re-consolidate teams after the long time spent in mandatory telework. 15 units/teams benefitted in 2022.
- Continue monitoring the ratio between workload and available resources through several output indicators (such as number of briefings, initiatives, parliamentary questions etc) and examine the possibility of internal redeployment when needed.
- The Russian war in Ukraine had an important impact on DG HOME from the very start of the year. DG HOME was one of the Directorates-General at the forefront of the events and delivered on many different issues related to its competences and in record time. The workload of DG HOME staff increased considerably and remained continuously very high throughout the year. DG HOME dealt with 1347 Briefings which was an increase of 9% in comparison to 2021, adopted around 260 acts, responded to 533 written questions of the European Parliament (ranking regularly among the Directorates-General receiving the highest number of questions) and that recuperable extra time for HOME staff amounts to 54h26 against 36h53 for Commission.
- Organisation of internal trainings to clarify working procedures and responsibilities including HR management. HOME's HRC team has organised training sessions for Contract Agents and Temporary Agents on topics such as internal competitions and tips and tricks to prepare for competitions.

**Internal communication** actions aimed at further enhancing a more connected and productive working environment and healthy work-life balance. The actions continued to support staff during the hybrid ways of working, while new initiatives were designed to encourage colleagues' gradual return to the offices. The internal communication actions also supported the internal corporate campaigns.

### 2.2.2. Digital transformation and information management

**Objective: DG HOME is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission.**

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<sup>246</sup> [DG HOME: towards a new HR strategy \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

DG HOME in 2022 continued working towards reaching the above objective set in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.

**Digital transformation:** The degree of implementation of the digital strategy principles by the most important IT solution is one of the indicators for digital transformation set in the Strategic Plan. In 2022, existing systems and new planned ones continued to contribute to the achievement of the **Commission's Digital Strategy** principles, in particular on Digital by default, Once Only, User-centric, Cross-border, Data-driven, Interoperability and Security, as they aim at reducing the burden on citizens, increasing efficiency of national and European institutions and bodies, and in their closer cooperation and collaboration in the domain of Home Affairs.

Following the security assessment performed during 2020 and 2021, and the identification of appropriate security measures, the *European Migration Network* system **improved from the security point** of view in 2022. This had a positive effect on the cross-border availability of the system.

After the complete migration of the *European Web Site on Integration* system from ColdFusion to Drupal 8, and of *Anti-trafficking in human beings'* website and of the *EU Immigration Portal* from Drupal 7 to Drupal 8 in 2021, these systems were **optimised** in 2022 for an **improved user centricity and security** in line with the User experience findings. Also, the user centricity of the website on *Security research community of users* was further improved in 2022 with the integration of the necessary features for the CERIS<sup>247</sup> expert group. In areas like Once Only, Cross border cooperation and Interoperability, the Reintegration Assistance Tool module of the *European Migration Network* system was enriched with a set of interoperability interfaces for connecting to Members States national systems and possibly to the International Organisation for Migration. This system's user interface was also subject to a user centricity improvement action plan that started in 2021 and continued in 2022. Finally, the newly initiated project for *Information on IT systems Schengen Area*, aimed at improving the user centricity of the Schengen Area IT systems, entered its execution phase in 2022.

On cybersecurity, staff continued to be encouraged to attend corporate cybersecurity awareness initiatives, while IT security knowledge and expertise will be maintained and further improved by embedding cybersecurity elements into the IT specific working methods. Upcoming releases of IT systems benefitted from improved EC central security services and compliance benchmarks.

In 2022, DG HOME further improved its website in terms of layout and content. DG HOME worked on the accessibility of the website (for people with disabilities) with DG Communication and Publications Office of the EU as well as explored the repatriation of the 3 websites (*Anti-trafficking in human beings*, *EU Immigration Portal* and *European Web Site on Integration*) under DG HOME site.

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<sup>247</sup> Community of European Research and Innovation for Security.

**Data, information, and knowledge management:** DG HOME continued working on the implementation of the corporate rules for data governance and data policies at local level, putting in place **data governance structures and roles** (e.g., designate data owners and data stewards for key data assets). In addition, DG HOME followed the development of the tools and services offered in data management, including the '*data governance hub*', the '*data advisory service*', the country knowledge portal and relevant trainings and, if and when relevant, made use of these tools and services. DG HOME also continued ensuring business continuity and operations of its **Secured Area** (classified up to EU-Secret) which has demonstrated to be a critical asset during COVID-19 pandemic.

Adhering to the corporate initiative on **data assets inventory** set in the Digital Strategy, six key data assets held by DG HOME have been identified and are now included in the Commission's corporate data catalogue. The list of key data assets has been reviewed in 2022 and the related metadata has been updated in the corporate data catalogue.

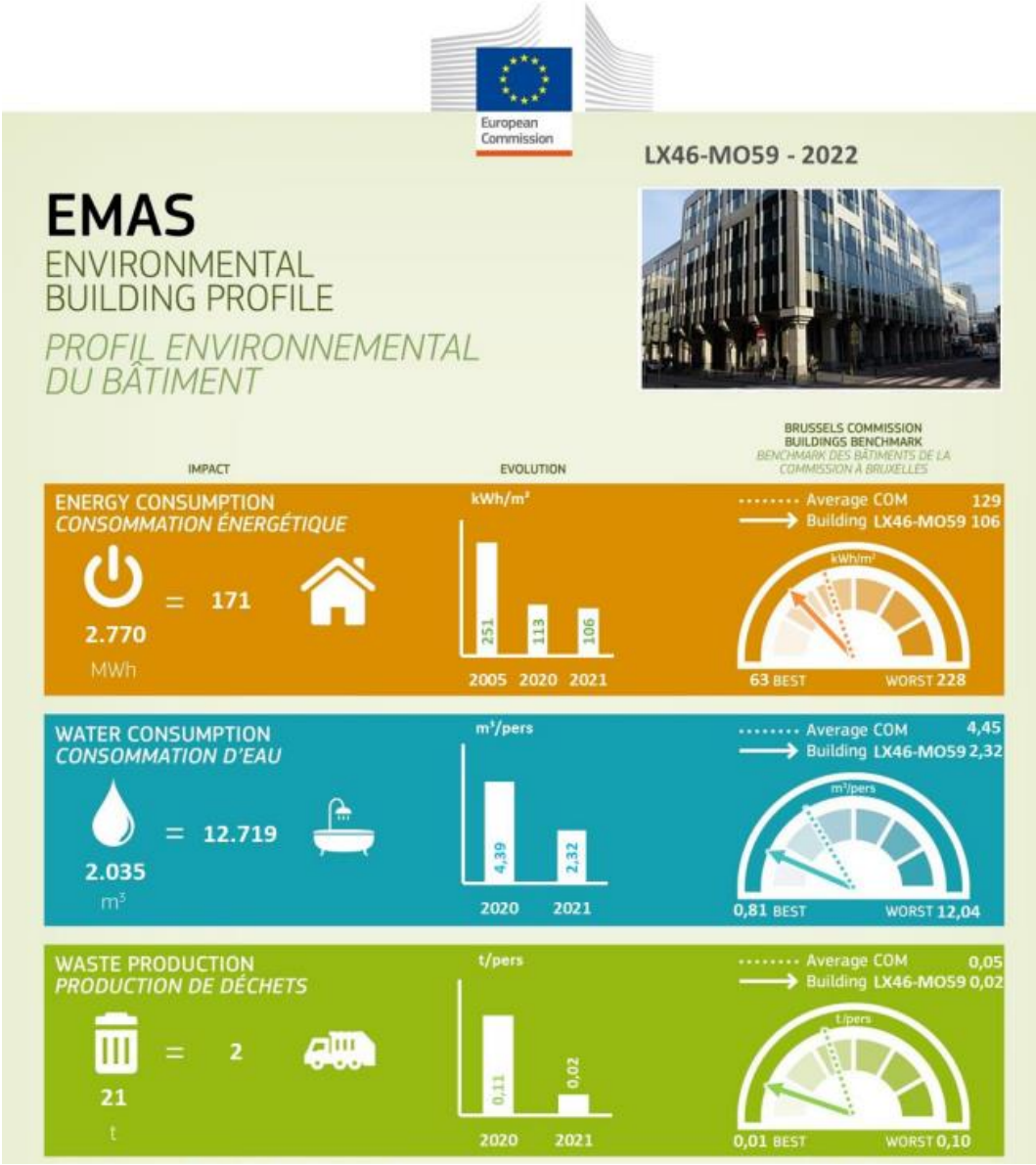
**Data protection:** As regards data protection compliance, DG HOME continued to monitor and update the information regarding its processing operations in records in the *Data Protection Management System* throughout 2022. DG HOME continued to maintain a full inventory of its external data processing agreements, which included the standard contractual clauses developed by DG BUDG. About data subjects' rights, DG HOME continued to apply established administrative practices in particular on identification of data subjects and the responsible operational controller. Adequate resources (0.8 FTE) have been allocated to support compliance through a Data Protection Coordinator (DPC) and a deputy DPC. In terms of awareness raising, DG HOME organised information sessions for units and included a data protection module in the introductory training for newcomers. Awareness raising activities focused on practical issues of relevance to the DG, such as handling data breaches, data subject requests, and organisation of meetings and events. Staff were also encouraged to participate in the data protection trainings organised by other DGs. Approximately 60 DG HOME staff were involved in such activities during the year. Some awareness raising activities had to be postponed to 2023 due to the reprioritisation of IT activities and related data protection measures connected to the war in Ukraine.

### 2.2.3. Sound environmental management

**Objective: DG HOME will take full account of its environmental impact in all its actions and will actively promote measures to reduce the day-to-day environmental impact of the administration and its work.**

DG HOME contributes to the objective of EMAS - The Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, by which the Commission aims to "lead by example" through the reduction of the direct environmental impact of its own activities. In 2022, DG HOME transitioned from the pandemic working pattern to the new HR guidelines, resulting essentially in the return to office work patterns, with substantial teleworking opportunities. The continued widespread teleworking contributed to reducing the DG's environmental footprint throughout 2022:

- DG HOME continued to make extensive use of distance communication and teleworking tools. Hybrid meeting rooms have been fully installed to allow remote participation at onsite meetings. As a result, the need for transport to and from the workplace and meeting points has been considerably reduced, leading to corresponding reduction in emissions.
- Reduced presence in the office meant that waste in the DG HOME's buildings remained at the low level as observed during the pandemic. Furthermore, the buildings of DG HOME were closed during the end of the year holiday, thus reducing the carbon footprint.



**2.2.4. Initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities**

As regards **direct and indirect management** of the Home Affairs Funds, in view of high priorities linked to the implementation of actions resulting from policy initiatives such as the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the new Counter-Terrorism Agenda, and the EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime, DG HOME strived to **further simplify its internal functioning**

**and implement local measures leading to synergies and efficiency gains.** The adoption of Thematic Facility work programmes in 2022 for a three-year period should reduce administrative procedures in these years. Far-reaching alignment of the documents used in the grant and contribution agreements management workflows with the corporate templates, simplified the implementation for beneficiaries and DG HOME staff. The use of financing not linked to cost for Emergency Assistance improved the efficiency of the granting process and minimised the administrative burden for beneficiaries. Increased integration with the *eGrants* management system, which should soon cover also audit and related result implementation workflows, continuously streamlines the efficiency of financial management, whereas the use of simplified cost options in grants will lead to less administrative burden and help further curb the error rate.

Linked to the **COVID-19 lockdown**, DG HOME continued **paperless workflows** for document management, including financial transactions that do not need blue ink as well as **videoconferencing** and other forms of online meetings. For files that needed blue ink signature; the DG HOME began to use extensively the **Qualified Electronic Signature (QES)** offered by the document management system in use. These measures have not only successfully enabled business continuity in confinement but will also, among other things, allow for monitoring of the funding implementation, without the need to travel so much. This will have an impact on efficiency and economy and will promote **new forms of cooperation also among the beneficiaries**, in turn increasing the contribution to the European Green Deal.