BORDER SECURITY REPORT

VOLUME 49
JULY/AUGUST 2026

THE JOURNAL OF BORDER SECURITY AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME FOR THE WORLD'S BORDER PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY INDUSTRY POLICY-MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

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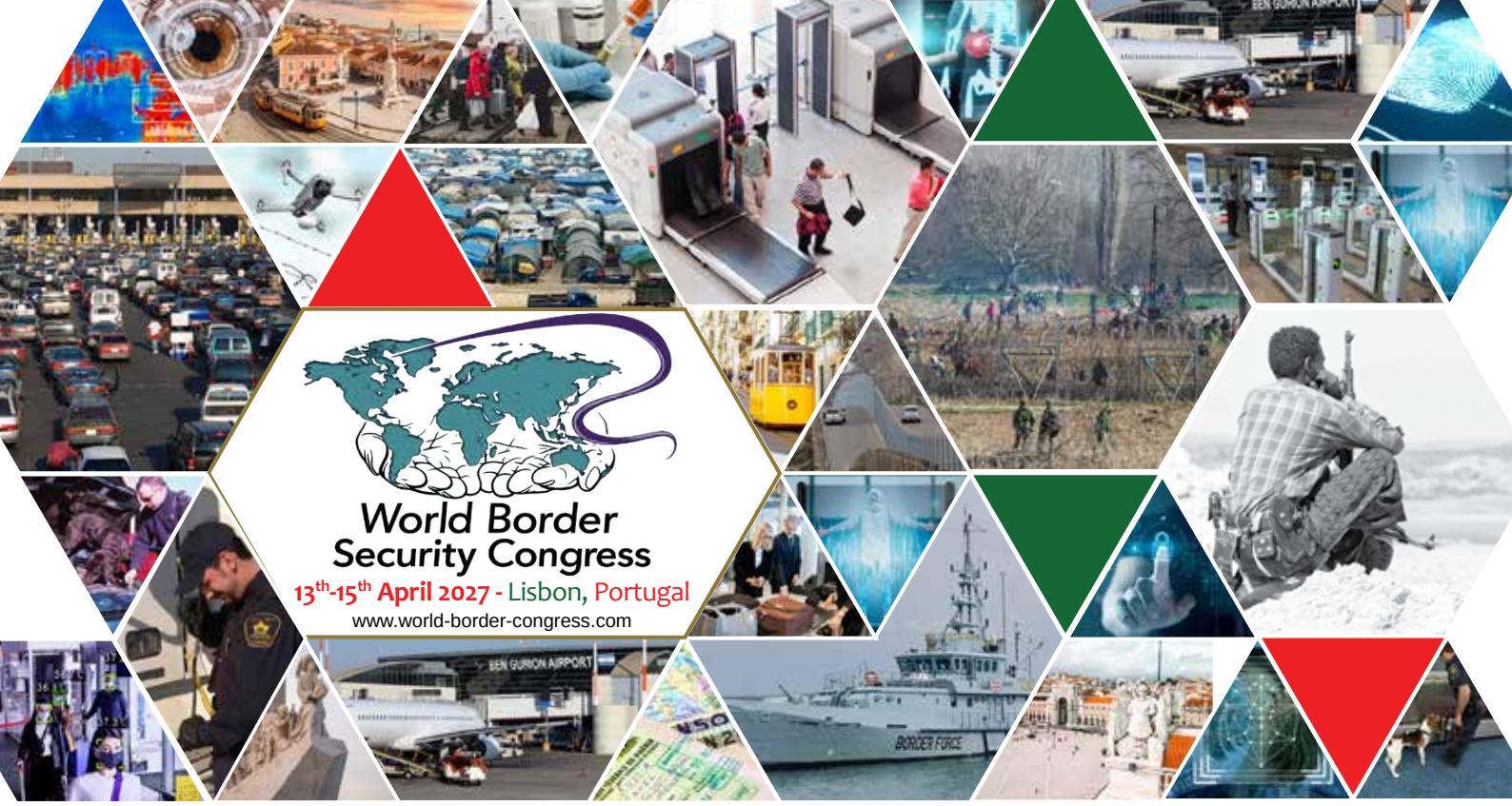

Transforming Border Management Strategies Through Co-operation and Technology

SAVE THE DATES

Portugal's border security is shaped by its geography and role within the Schengen Area, placing responsibility on protecting the EU's external frontier. Since the dissolution of the SEF, the border security function is coordinated by the Sistema de Seguranca Interna (Internal Security System) and implemented by the Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP) and Guarda Nacional Republicana (GNR).

Administrative overload and legal migration pressure remains Portugal's main challenges, but the country relies on maritime and airport surveillance rather than land borders. Its Atlantic coastline presents monitoring challenges, particularly for irregular migration routes and drug trafficking. The country faces growing inflows of irregular migrants from Africa, Brazil, and South Asia, creating administrative strain in processing visas, asylum claims, and residency permits, leading to backlogs and delays.

Migration has become more contentious recently, with pressure to tighten rules after years of relatively open policies. At the same time, labour shortages mean Portugal still depends heavily on migrant workers.

Portugal is not unique in its border management challenges and must strengthen surveillance, streamline bureaucracy, and enhance EU cooperation while maintaining its rights-based migration approach.

The World Border Security Congress is a high level 3 day event that will discuss and debate current and future policies, implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

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Border Security Report is a bi-monthly electronic magazine and is the border management industry magazine delivering agency and industry news and developments, as well as more in-depth features and analysis to over 30,000 border agencies, agencies at the borders and industry professionals, policymakers and practitioners, worldwide.

Stress Testing EU's Entry-Exit System

As Europe enjoys a sweltering summer travel season, the rollout of the EU's Entry/Exit System (EES) is experiencing its first major operational test. What was conceived as a transformative step forward in border management has encountered a series of practical challenges that have prompted several countries to slow, defer or temporarily suspend aspects of implementation while they assess the impact on passenger flows and border operations.

The timing could hardly be more demanding. Airports, ferry terminals and rail crossings across Europe are experiencing some of their highest passenger volumes of the year, placing additional pressure on border control resources already adapting to new biometric enrolment procedures. While major international hubs often have greater access to funding, technology and staffing, many regional airports and ferry ports are finding the transition particularly challenging.

Unlike larger facilities, smaller ports and airports frequently operate with limited space, fewer border control officers and infrastructure that was never designed for biometric processing. The introduction of fingerprint and facial image capture systems has, in some locations, created operational bottlenecks and concerns over passenger throughput during peak periods. Ferry operators, in particular, have stated that even modest increases in processing times can have a significant impact on schedules when large numbers of passengers and vehicles arrive within short windows.

These challenges do not diminish the long-term benefits that EES is expected to deliver. Enhanced security, more accurate traveller records and improved detection of overstayers remain important objectives. However, the experiences of recent months serve as a reminder that implementing large-scale border technology is as much an operational challenge as a technical one.

Next issue, we will examine the factors behind the difficulties experienced during the EES rollout and explore the lessons emerging from Europe's most significant border modernisation programme in decades.

Tony Kingham
Editor

Benin and Nigeria catch smugglers in first-of-its-kind geospatial intelligence-led Customs operation

The World Customs Organization (WCO), through the WCO–JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) Joint Project and in partnership with the Customs administrations of Benin and Nigeria, has successfully concluded Operation GEOCONTROL, the first-ever WCO-led operational deployment using Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT) as a core Customs enforcement capability. Conducted along the Benin–Nigeria border corridor, the operation combined geospatial analysis, risk profiling, and field intelligence to support coordinated Customs deployments between the two administrations. Leading officers participating in the operation had passed through a specific WCO-developed GEOINT training programme, namely the Master Trainer Programme on GEOINT.

Innovative technologies supporting Customs enforcement

Customs officers from Benin and Nigeria worked side by side to identify smuggling routes, map high-risk areas, and coordinate enforcement actions across strategic border locations, including official crossing points and vulnerable border zones.

Leveraging the WCO Geoportal, GEOINT and Geographic Information System (GIS) applications, drones, secure communication platforms through the WCO Customs Enforcement Network Communication Platform (CENcomm), and other advanced analytical tools, officers exchanged information in near real time and developed a shared operational picture of the border environment, strengthening their capacity to detect and disrupt illicit cross-border activities.

This enhanced situational awareness enabled targeted controls and interventions against a range of priority threats, including narcotics, arms and ammunition, petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, counterfeit goods, and environmentally sensitive products protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Operation GEOCONTROL demonstrated the significant value of integrating geospatial intelligence and innovative technologies into Customs enforcement. It also reinforced the importance of coordinated regional responses to increasingly complex security, trade, and border management challenges.

The WCO Secretary General, Ian Saunders, said: “Operation GEOCONTROL demonstrates how Customs administrations can strengthen border security through technological innovation, intelligence-led enforcement and enhanced cooperation. Benin and Nigeria have showcased the tangible benefits of integrating innovative technologies and WCO-developed tools into operational practice. The operation also highlights the importance of cross-border and inter-agency cooperation in addressing increasingly complex security challenges and disrupting illicit trade networks.”

Newly acquired skills to operational deployment

Operation GEOCONTROL was designed to translate newly acquired GEOINT knowledge and skills into operational practice. The initiative aimed to demonstrate the practical application of geospatial intelligence in identifying high-risk areas, detecting operational hotspots, and enhancing intelligence-led decision-making, while strengthening bilateral cooperation and developing sustainable GEOINT capabilities within the Customs administrations.

COCAINE CORRIDORS BEYOND BRAZIL: HOW TRANSNATIONAL ROUTES ARE RESHAPING BORDER SECURITY FRAMEWORKS

By Carlos Eduardo da Silva

A model built for maps, not institutions

For most of the modern interdiction era, the cocaine corridor has been understood as a line on a map: a sequence of departure ports, transit waters, and entry points along which a commodity travels and at which it can be intercepted. Border, customs, and port authorities organized their detection architecture accordingly: chokepoints, container scanners, canine units, profiling matrices, and controlled deliveries. That model produced the seizure statistics by which operational success is still measured.

It is now structurally inadequate.

The corridors that connect South American production to European and North American consumption are no longer geographic facts. They have become institutional

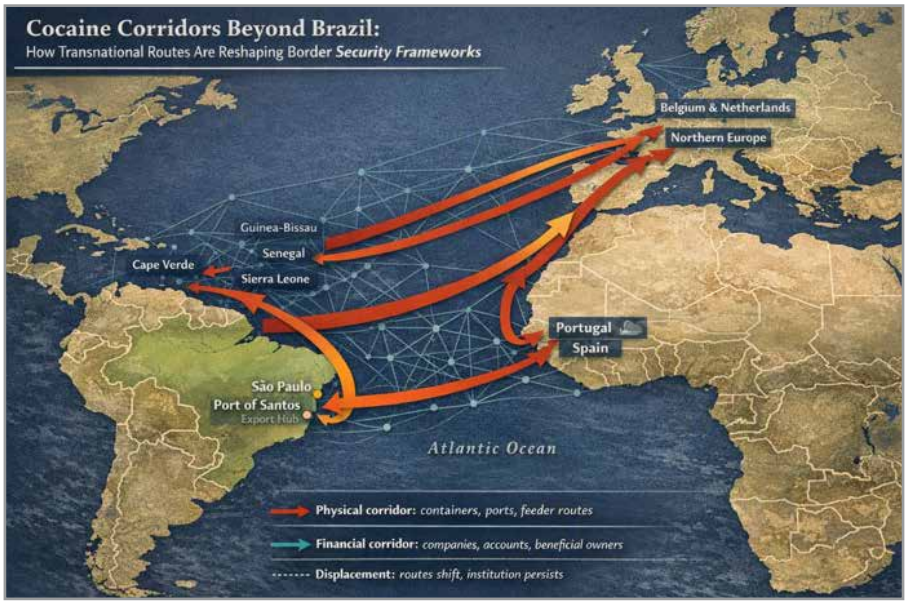
capabilities: reusable networks of companies, accounts, access points, and political relationships that can manufacture new routes faster than any single agency can close the old ones. A seizure degrades a shipment. Closing a chokepoint degrades a route. Neither degrades the corridor, because the corridor is the capacity to produce routes. Until that distinction enters operational doctrine, interdiction will keep winning engagements inside a contest whose terms it has not set.

The designations of the PCC and Comando Vermelho as terrorist organizations, effective 5 June 2026, do not settle that question. They sharpen it: are border services policing routes, or the institutions that generate them?

The corridor is an institution, not a route

The clearest evidence that corridors have become institutions did not surface at a border. It surfaced in São Paulo's financial district.

In August 2025, Operação Carbono Oculto exposed the architecture. The Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) had embedded itself across the legitimate fuel sector, from importation and distribution to retail, together with the investment funds and payment platforms that financed it, distributing illicit value through registered companies that presented to inspection as ordinary commerce. Read as a money-laundering case, that picture shows where criminal proceeds were hidden.



Map illustration: cocaine corridors extending from Brazil's Port of Santos through West African transit hubs toward European ports, with linked financial and institutional networks showing how routes can shift while the underlying corridor persists.

Read correctly, it shows corridor infrastructure: the same enterprise that imports and distributes cocaine owning the fuel logistics that fund and conceal movement, the trucking that distributes, the terminal through which goods transit, and the financial vehicles that settle the accounts. Physical corridor and financial corridor are not adjacent systems that occasionally intersect; in the integrated criminal enterprise the PCC exemplifies, they are a single corridor expressed in two registers.

This is why interdiction-only strategies plateau. The architecture being targeted is not a pipeline that breaks when a valve is closed; it is a holding company that reallocates capital when an asset is lost. Carbono Oculto demonstrated the holdings; its sequel demonstrated the reallocation. When the first operation blocked the PCC's payment platforms, the capability did not degrade; it regenerated. By May 2026, a second action, Operação Fluxo Oculto, had identified six new fintechs that replaced the institutions exposed nine months earlier, together moving more than R$26 billion (about US$5 bn) in atypical transactions between 2022 and 2025, with one platform alone taking in over R$1 billion (about US$190 million) in cash. Investigators found that the network had not contracted after the first operation but expanded, opening fresh shell companies to keep the same laundering pattern running. What changed the operating environment was not a seizure but a shift in visibility: the extension of bank-style reporting obligations to payment institutions, which began to

close the blind spot the model had depended on.

More than two decades reconstructing organized-crime and narcotics networks inside São Paulo's specialized units taught a lesson the seizure statistics obscure: the consignment is the disposable element, and the institution behind it is the durable one. For the border practitioner, the implication is uncomfortable but precise. The unit of analysis can no longer be the consignment. It must be the institutional substrate: the registered companies, freight forwarders, beneficial owners, and financial intermediaries that constitute the corridor's reusable machinery. Everything that crosses a frontier is the output of that machinery, not the machinery itself.

Displacement is a design feature, not a failure

If corridors are institutions, route displacement is not evidence of enforcement failure. It is evidence that the institution is working as designed.

The European picture illustrates this. Europol's 2025 Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment found that although maritime seizures fell at some major EU entry points during 2024, the volume of cocaine reaching the continent had almost certainly not declined; wastewater analysis across European cities pointed the other way. The flow had not contracted; it had redistributed. Traffickers diversified toward secondary ports in countries with lighter scrutiny and expanded their chemical impregnation and concealment methods. They also continued to exploit reference-code fraud, a single technique that Europol's assessments of port infiltration estimate has moved on the order of two hundred tonnes through two major northern European ports. With well over ninety million containers passing through Europe's major ports each year and only 2 to 10 percent physically inspected, the structural arithmetic favors the corridor, not the inspector.

The same redundancy logic now drives the West African resurgence. Through 2025, French at-sea cocaine seizures reached a record annual total of roughly fifty tonnes across all theatres, surpassing thirty-nine tonnes in 2024, with the Gulf of Guinea a rising component, including a single 9.6-tonne haul from an unflagged vessel in September 2025. Brazil's share of that transatlantic volume leaves South America containerized through the Port of Santos, Latin America's largest port complex and the country's principal cocaine export gateway, a fixed point the feeder routes reorganize around rather than replace. The traffic moving along the transatlantic "Highway 10" corridor is increasingly governed by a working partnership between Brazilian suppliers, above all the PCC, and Western Balkan networks that provide European distribution, while local brokers across Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Cape Verde furnish logistics, political cover, and in some cases purpose-built front companies.

Two operational facts deserve emphasis. First, the lusophone axis (Brazil to Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, onward to Portugal) is not incidental; shared language and commercial ties lower the transaction

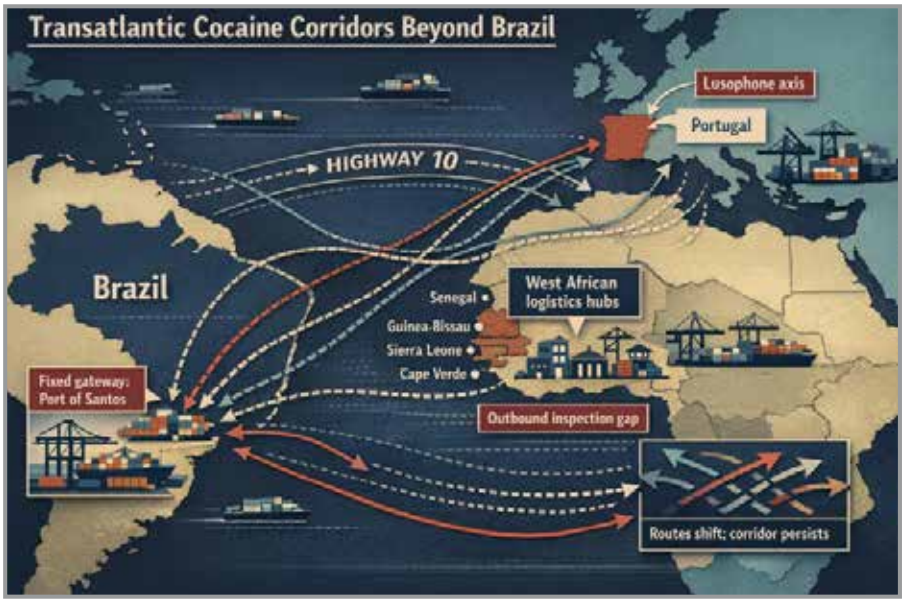
costs of building durable local infrastructure. Second, assessments of West African port screening indicate that inspection falls almost entirely on inbound cargo, leaving outbound containerized cocaine largely unexamined. That asymmetry is not a gap traffickers stumbled into. It is the route they engineered, and it will persist precisely because the intelligence burden of detecting export-stage concealment is one most transit states cannot yet carry.

Andean-Brazilian, Paraguayan, Bolivian, and Amazonian feeder routes behave the same way: each is a substitutable input to an institution that optimizes continuously across cost, risk, and enforcement pressure. Map any single route and the corridor reroutes. Map the institution and its capacity for rerouting becomes the target.

Where the physical corridor meets the financial corridor

The convergence of physical and financial flows is where contemporary corridor analysis either matures or fails.

Trade-based concealment is the connective tissue. The invoice that overstates the value of an ethanol shipment, the freight company that exists to consign one product and move another, the payment institution that nets distributor balances without ever identifying an end client: these are not laundering afterthoughts appended



Transatlantic cocaine routes increasingly operate as adaptive corridors: Santos remains a fixed export gateway while West African hubs provide logistical redundancy, political cover, and onward access to European markets.

to a drug business. They are the mechanism by which the drug business and the legal economy become indistinguishable. The PCC's "pocket accounts," payment-institution balances nested inside other payment institutions and opened in the operator's own name rather than the client's, were not a clever trick. They were a deliberate second layer of opacity engineered to defeat exactly the beneficial-ownership screening that compliance regimes rely upon.

This is the analytical terrain that beneficial-ownership network analysis was built to address. The methodology, associated with organizations such as the Center for Advanced Defense Studies (C4ADS) and increasingly mirrored in U.S. Treasury and Department of Justice casework, rests on a single premise: the durable vulnerability is not the shipment but the ownership chain, the natural persons who ultimately control the fund, the fintech, the terminal lease, the haulage fleet. Sever a shipment and you cost the organization a quarter's margin. Expose and freeze the beneficial owner and you cost it the corridor.

For border, customs, and port intelligence units, this requires an integration most agencies have not yet operationalized: the physical risk indicator and the financial risk indicator must be read on the same screen. A container anomaly and an adverse-media hit on the consignee's ultimate owner are not

two separate workflows owned by two separate directorates. They are two readings of one corridor, and treating them as separate is precisely the seam through which the corridor survives. In practice that means a single risk model scored across both data sets, in which the container's routing and the beneficial owner's financial profile are weighed as one judgment rather than as a customs alert and a financial-intelligence file that meet, if they meet at all, only after the container has already moved.

Operating in the post-designation environment

The United States designated the PCC and Comando Vermelho as Specially Designated Global Terrorists on 28 May 2026, with the Foreign Terrorist Organization designation following on 5 June 2026, the first Brazilian groups ever placed on those lists. Their operational significance exceeds their symbolism.

Whether the terrorism characterization fits an organization defined by economic integration rather than ideological violence is not a question this analysis needs to settle. The operational point is narrower and harder to dispute: the Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially Designated Global Terrorist framework is, at present, the U.S. legal instrument whose reach extends furthest past the trafficker and into the legal economy on which the corridor actually runs.

The framework sits atop existing counter-narcotics sanctions authority, used against the PCC since 2021. What the terrorism designation adds is precisely that reach. Material-support liability under 18 U.S.C. § 2339B does not stop at the trafficker; it extends to the fund manager who knowingly places cartel capital, the payment institution that settles it, the freight forwarder that moves it, and, where knowledge can be shown, the corporate counterparty that transacts with any of them, including conduct occurring entirely outside the United States. The U.S. Department of Justice has signaled that corporate material support to designated organizations is a white-collar enforcement priority, with whistleblower incentives attached.

For the practitioner, the effect is to convert functions once regarded as back-office compliance (sanctions screening, beneficial-ownership tracing, adverse-media monitoring, vendor cross-referencing) into instruments of corridor disruption that operate upstream of physical interdiction. The customs officer at the chokepoint and the compliance officer at the bank are now, whether either acknowledges it, working the same corridor at different points along its length.

The reframe carries genuine risk, and a serious analysis should name it. Aggressive material-support exposure can push facilitators deeper into opacity rather than out of business, accelerate jurisdictional arbitrage as financial structures relocate to lighter-touch regimes, and strain the public-private intelligence sharing on which detection now depends, if firms come to fear that cooperation invites liability. Designation is a powerful instrument precisely because it is

broad; it is a hazardous one for the same reason. The operational challenge of the coming cycle is not whether to integrate financial-intelligence screening with physical interdiction. It is how to do so without collapsing the information flows that make either function work.

Attacking the corridor as a system

Conventional corridor analysis asks where the product is crossing. The contemporary corridor requires a different question: what is the institutional capability, and where is it structurally vulnerable.

Chokepoint interdiction remains necessary. It removes product, generates intelligence, and imposes cost. But on its own it manages a symptom of a system it does not touch. The cocaine corridors now reaching from Brazilian production-adjacent territory through West African transit hubs into European ports and North American financial infrastructure are integrated enterprises whose real center of gravity is the ownership chain: the companies, accounts, and beneficial owners that let a disrupted route be replaced before the seizure has cleared the evidence locker.

If the corridor is an institution, the measure of success must change with it. Seizure tonnage records what the corridor shed, not what it lost; it captures friction, not attrition. A metric honest to the target would track different quantities: beneficial owners identified and frozen rather than shipments intercepted, front companies dissolved rather than merely flagged, the reporting blind spots that let financial platforms regenerate finally closed, logistics capacity (terminals, fleets, and freight forwarders) stripped from the network's reach, and facilitator relationships mapped and prosecuted. None of these is as photogenic as a pallet of seized kilos, and each is harder to produce. But they measure damage to the machinery rather than to its output, and the machinery is the only part the corridor cannot quickly rebuild.

The designations of 5 June 2026 hand border and financial-intelligence practitioners, for the first time, a common legal instrument aimed at that center of gravity. Whether it reshapes outcomes or merely generates paperwork will depend on a single discipline: the willingness to treat the corridor not as a place to be guarded, but as an institution to be dismantled. Until border strategy is measured by the institutions it disrupts rather than the routes it counts, the corridor will keep doing the one thing it was built to do: produce new routes faster than enforcement can close the old ones.

MOROCCO'S ATLANTIC STRATEGY AS A BORDER OPERATING SYSTEM

By Adnane Kaab, International strategy, geopolitics, and foresight analyst, with a background as a senior officer in the Royal Moroccan Air Forces

The Silence of Madrid, the Urgency of Rabat

Geopolitical shifts often reveal themselves through political tempo. While one state hesitates, another moves. While one administration debates, another begins to reshape the regional landscape.

That contrast is visible along Morocco's Atlantic frontier. In the north, Marsa Maroc International Logistics (MMIL) has proposed to acquire a 45% stake in Boluda Maritime Terminals (BMT), the largest container-terminal operator in Spain by number of facilities, with nine terminals across the Iberian Peninsula and the Canary Islands. Morocco approved the transaction, but the Spanish process remains politically unresolved. Antonio

Morales, President of the Cabildo de Gran Canaria, wrote to Spain's Minister of Industry in January 2026 asking that the investment be reviewed and, if necessary, blocked. Boluda's leadership has publicly rejected the concern, insisting that decision-making remains Spanish. Further south, Morocco is advancing Dakhla Atlantique, a deep-water port designed for an annual capacity of 35 million tonnes and due for delivery by the end of 2028, and promoting the Atlantic Initiative, which the landlocked Sahelian states of Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad have formally joined since December 2023.

The policy also has an institutional dimension. The Atlantic African States Process (AASP), launched in Rabat in 2022, is a forum in which Morocco and other coastal states discuss Atlantic cooperation. Its seventh ministerial meeting, held in Cotonou in July 2026, was co-hosted by Benin and Morocco. Its relevance here is not as a separate policy track, but as the institutional expression of the diplomatic effects created by an Atlantic strategy built around access, corridors and maritime gateways.

These developments are usually treated apart: a cross-border acquisition, a port project and a diplomatic process. Existing analyses generally examine these initiatives independently. Doing so obscures the possibility that they belong to a single mode of border governance.

This article argues that ports can function as Border Operating Systems when they simultaneously organize operators, access, corridors and diplomatic effects. Borders are increasingly shaped by the coordination of flows, operators and strategic access, not by territorial lines alone. Morocco's Atlantic strategy is read here through this lens, comparing two configurations: MMIL's proposed stake in BMT, and the southern configuration centered on Dakhla Atlantique, the Atlantic Initiative and the AASP. The comparison reveals a single architecture operating under sharply different political conditions.

The Four Functions of a Border Operating System

Ports were once treated mainly as logistical instruments: places where goods crossed a frontier under customs and maritime control. That account is now incomplete. Ports also affect who manages critical infrastructure, how regional access is organized, which corridors become viable and how states position themselves within larger networks.

This transformation requires a different analytical vocabulary.

A Border Operating System is an analytical lens for identifying the functions through which a port contributes to the practical exercise of border power. It is not a new category of infrastructure. It explains how sovereignty can be exercised through the organization of access, operators and connectivity rather than through territorial control alone. In effect, it describes a shift in where sovereignty is exercised: from the control of territory to the control of interfaces.

A Border Operating System is therefore not simply a well-managed or high-throughput port. What matters is not efficiency alone, but the capacity to organize access rather than merely facilitate movement. Existing scholarship has separately examined logistics as an instrument of security, infrastructure

as a vector of networked sovereignty, and the restructuring of territory by rescaled statehood. This framework focuses specifically on how ports integrate these dynamics into the practical exercise of border power. Its value lies less in proposing a new category than in integrating, within a single sequence, dimensions that existing literature generally analyses separately. Its originality lies in making that interaction itself the unit of analysis.

A border is no longer only a line that separates territories. It is increasingly a system that organizes access.

These four functions are not intended as an exhaustive typology. They represent the minimum sequence through which a port acquires border effects beyond its physical perimeter.

1. Governing Operators : operator governance is a sovereign question. Concessions, equity stakes and partnerships decide which actors gain a durable role at key maritime interfaces. Ownership matters, but so do the operating relationships that distribute knowledge, access and influence.
2. Organizing Strategic Access : ports organize access between maritime, continental and commercial spaces. Their political value lies in the connections they make possible and in the institutional arrangements through which those connections are managed.
3. Connecting Logistics Corridors : a port derives much of its value from the corridors it supports: roads, rail, industrial zones, maritime services and hinterland connections. Border control therefore extends beyond the quay to the networks through which goods and people circulate.
4. Generating Diplomatic Effects : ports also alter political relationships. They can strengthen partnerships and regional alignment. They can also generate scrutiny, contestation and friction. The effect is not symmetrical. The same function can create attraction in one setting and exposure in another.

The functions form a sequence, and the order is not arbitrary. Operators control access, because who controls the interface controls what passes through it. Access only acquires real value once connected to corridors, because uncontested access without onward circulation confers little power. Corridors, in turn, produce diplomatic effects, because a functioning corridor creates interdependence between the states and operators it connects. Each function conditions the one that follows, and Morocco's northern and southern policies mobilize this sequence differently.

The Northern Gateway and the Southern Anchor

Morocco's strategy has two configurations. In the north, MMIL seeks a position in an established foreign operator network. In the south, Dakhla Atlantique, the Atlantic Initiative and the AASP combine a future port, a corridor project and an institutional forum. The same analytical grid applies to both, but it

does not produce a false symmetry: the northern operator relationship is contractually defined, whereas the southern operator function remains prospective. That difference marks the distinct stage of each arrangement.

A. The Northern Gateway

In early 2026, the President of the Cabildo de Gran Canaria publicly called on Madrid to reconsider Morocco's proposed entry into Boluda Maritime Terminals. What had been announced as a straightforward equity transaction became, within weeks, a matter of regional political concern, with Spanish authorization still pending months later. That reaction, rather than the transaction itself, is the most useful starting point for understanding the northern gateway.

Governing operators

The conflict is rooted in a question of operator control. MMIL's proposed 45% stake in BMT places operator governance at the center of the northern configuration. The issue is not a Moroccan acquisition of Spanish port territory. It is the prospect of a Moroccan state-linked port group taking a durable position inside a Spanish terminal operator's network. The transaction makes the operating layer itself a strategic object.

Organizing strategic access

A minority stake does not confer territorial control and Boluda itself insists that management and

decision-making remain Spanish. It would, however, link MMIL to BMT's nine-terminal network, including the Canary Islands terminals at Las Palmas and Tenerife, and create commercial proximity, institutional contact and operational knowledge across the Strait. The northern gateway is an attempted position within a neighboring maritime operating space, not a territorial extension of Morocco.

Connecting logistics corridors

The transaction does not create a new corridor. It connects Morocco's port strategy to existing Iberian and Canary Island networks: Marsa Maroc's own network of 25 terminals across 11 African ports, handling over 60 million tonnes a year, would sit alongside BMT's 9 terminals, giving the combined group a footprint the two companies describe as 34 terminals across 20 ports. Its immediate significance is networked access: potential coordination of services, market intelligence and commercial relationships across the western Mediterranean–Atlantic interface.

Generating diplomatic effects

The northern diplomatic effect is exposure, not established leverage. In January 2026, Morales wrote to Spain's Minister of Industry asking that the investment be reviewed and, if necessary, blocked, citing Morocco's indirect state ownership of Marsa Maroc and the strategic character of the Port of La Luz and Las Palmas. Boluda's leadership rejected the concern, insisting the alliance changes neither control nor management. The unresolved Spanish process and this exchange show how an operator stake can become a question of regional and national interest. The

proposed gateway exposes a limit of port-based statecraft: cross-border arrangements in sensitive infrastructure stop being merely corporate when they touch a neighbor's sensitive geography.

The northern gateway is therefore an attempted institutional insertion. It creates opportunity through operator control, but also friction because it places that control inside a politically sensitive foreign network. The stake is small; the exposure is not.

B. The Southern Anchor

Governing operators

Unlike the northern gateway, where the operator relationship is already defined by a proposed equity transaction, the southern anchor's operator function is still prospective. The future choices of terminal, maritime, logistics and service operators at Dakhla Atlantique will determine whether the port becomes a strategic interface or remains primarily a national asset. This is not a gap in the framework; it identifies where the southern anchor currently stands.

Organizing strategic access

Dakhla Atlantique is the physical anchor of the southern arrangement. Moroccan authorities present it as part of a wider effort to connect the Atlantic coast to landlocked Sahelian states. Designed for an annual capacity of 35 million tonnes, including up to 1 million TEU in container traffic, the port is under construction roughly 40 km north of Dakhla at a reported cost of MAD 12.4 billion, and was reported by the Ministry of Equipment and Water at 62-65% completion in mid-2026, with delivery targeted for the end of 2028. Its value lies in the access it is designed to organize between southern Morocco, the Atlantic seaboard and a continental hinterland with constrained maritime options.

Connecting logistics corridors

The Atlantic Initiative is intended to supply the corridor logic. Announced in November 2023, it has been formally joined by Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad, whose adhesion is now coordinated through the newly formed Confederation of Sahel States rather than through separate bilateral arrangements with Rabat. It seeks to link port development to trade facilitation, investment, transport links and inter-state coordination, aiming to create the political and logistical conditions for an Atlantic opening. Its success still depends on implementation, partner participation and security along the relevant routes.

Generating diplomatic effects

The AASP belongs in this fourth function. Launched in Rabat in 2022 and now gathering coastal states from Cabo Verde to Angola, it gives institutional form to the diplomatic relationships on which port-centered access depends. By convening Atlantic African states around maritime cooperation, security, connectivity and development, it can create alignment and a common regional vocabulary. It cannot build infrastructure or secure corridors by itself, but it can make the southern access strategy politically legible and more attractive to potential partners.

The southern anchor works through attraction rather than insertion. Dakhla Atlantique is intended to provide a future maritime interface; the Atlantic Initiative aims to supply a corridor logic; and the AASP, already operating as a diplomatic forum, supplies an institutional setting. Together they show an effort to organize the conditions of access, connectivity and regional alignment around Morocco's southern coast. The port does not yet exist; the strategy already does.

Read together, the two arrangements reveal an inverted symmetry. In the north, Morocco reaches into an established foreign operating network and encounters friction. In the south, it seeks to build an access architecture in which port, corridor and diplomacy reinforce one another. Both mobilize the same functions. One converts operator control into exposure; the other seeks to convert infrastructure and access into regional attraction. The next question is whether those two fronts can endure when their political and geopolitical assumptions are tested.

Every Operating System Has Points of Failure

A Border Operating System does not remove vulnerability. It relocates it. The more a strategy depends on the coordination of operators, access and corridors, the more its resilience depends on political consent and geopolitical conditions beyond the port itself. These dependencies are not incidental flaws in the model.

They are the price of the shift described earlier. When sovereignty moves from the control of territory to the control of interfaces, the state also inherits the vulnerabilities of the actors and relationships those interfaces depend on.

The two configurations are politically independent but strategically coupled

The two dependencies are not the same in kind. The northern gateway depends on a single, identifiable institutional act: a regulatory approval that either arrives or does not. The southern anchor depends on something harder to pin down: the durable geopolitical alignment of several partner states over years, not a single decision at a single desk. An institutional dependency can, in principle, be resolved by one signature. A geopolitical dependency has to be maintained, continuously, against events Morocco does not control.

Political dependency: the northern approval problem

The northern gateway depends on a decision that Morocco cannot make alone. Rabat can approve MMIL's proposed stake in BMT, but the transaction cannot produce its intended effect without the relevant Spanish authorization. The delay is therefore not an administrative footnote. It reveals the political boundary of a strategy built on cross-border operator control.

Morales's intervention makes the point sharper. It shows that opposition can emerge not only from a central government, but from regional actors who read port infrastructure through local economic, territorial and security interests. The northern gateway is viable only if it can pass through that

political environment. Institutional insertion remains dependent on acceptance by the state and regions whose operating network it seeks to enter.

Geopolitical dependency : the southern access problem

The southern anchor depends on a different condition: that Sahelian partners continue to see an Atlantic opening through Morocco as credible, useful and secure. Dakhla Atlantique can provide a maritime anchor, the Atlantic Initiative can articulate a corridor logic and the AASP can provide an institutional setting. None of these instruments guarantees the political alignment, route security or implementation capacity required to turn access into sustained connectivity.

This is not a weakness unique to Morocco: every corridor strategy depends on actors and territories beyond the terminal. But the southern project makes that dependency especially visible because it seeks to connect a coastal state to landlocked partners across a volatile regional environment. Its success rests on a geopolitical proposition: that an Atlantic orientation can become more compelling than competing routes and partnerships.

A two-front exposure

A prolonged northern blockage would limit Morocco's effort to gain an operating position in a neighboring maritime network. A deterioration of the Sahelian environment would reduce the practical value of the southern access architecture. Neither dependency can resolve the other, yet if both materialized at once, the strategy would face a simultaneous constraint on projection in the north and attraction in the south.

Ports can reorganize the way borders function, but they cannot make political consent or geopolitical stability redundant. They concentrate capability, they also concentrate the consequences when a key relationship fails.

In conclusion, Morocco is not redrawing its Atlantic border. It is changing how that border works.

The northern gateway and the southern anchor are not two separate files. They are two expressions of the same architecture: a strategy that controls operators, organizes access and builds corridors in order to project influence beyond the limits of Moroccan territory. Where that architecture meets an established foreign network, as in the north, it produces friction. Where it seeks to build one, as in the south, it produces attraction. Both outcomes belong to the same logic. Neither was guaranteed by geography alone.

This is what a Border Operating System does, and what it does not do. It does not eliminate risk, it relocates it, from the border itself to the operators, corridors and institutions that now perform its functions. Morocco's Atlantic strategy makes that shift visible: political consent in Madrid, geopolitical alignment in the Sahel. Neither can be secured by port infrastructure alone.

Ports are becoming the software of maritime sovereignty, while territory remains its hardware.

If this shift continues, competition between states may increasingly be decided by who designs, operates and secures these systems, not simply by who holds the ground beneath them. Morocco's Atlantic strategy already poses that question in concrete form. The next frontier of border security may lie as much in the operating systems through which borders function as in the borders themselves.

NAPTIP, ECOWAS, ICMPD Unveil New Strategy to Fight Trafficking and Violence Against Persons

Efforts by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), with the support of Development Partners, Stakeholders, Members of the Civil Society Organizations, and others in enhancing the fight against human trafficking in the Country, have received regional support with the validation of the National Strategy for Trafficking in Persons and Violence Against Persons (TIPVAP 2025–2027).

The Nigerian National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Violence Against Persons [TIPVAP] presents a transformative roadmap addressing the systemic drivers of exploitation in a holistic, multi-sectoral response and coordinated action through the whole of government and whole of society approach. The Strategy, in direct alignment with the ECOWAS TIP+ approach, integrates with Nigeria's broader security, development, and human rights agendas, including links to counter-trafficking in migration governance, child protection, and anti-corruption.

The Direct Driven Facility (DDF) project is within the framework of the Support to the Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa – Phase II, is being funded by the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), the European Union and Denmark, and is implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in collaboration with NAPTIP

It aims to significantly reduce the incidence of human trafficking and associated violent crimes in Nigeria through a coordinated, rights-based, and multi-sectoral national response that prioritizes Policy, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnerships, in alignment with regional (ECOWAS) and international frameworks.

In his welcome address, the Director, Research and Programme Development, NAPTIP, Mr. Josiah Emerole, described the document as a landmark initiative in the fight against human trafficking in the Country.

He said, "This workshop marks an important milestone in our collective effort to domesticate and operationalise the ECOWAS TIP+ framework within the Nigerian context. With support from the ECOWAS FMM West Africa II Demand Driven Facility (DDF) Project, NAPTIP has led a comprehensive adaptation process that has resulted in the draft National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Violence Against Persons.

"The Strategy before us is more than just a policy document. It is a national framework meant to guide our collective response to the complex and changing realities of trafficking in persons and the various forms of violence that often go with it. It recognises that trafficking and violence are closely connected to vulnerability, exploitation, inequality, and weaknesses in our protection systems. For that reason, it proposes a coordinated response built around five strategic pillars: Policy Development, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnerships.

"The validation process is a very important stage in policy development. It gives us the opportunity to carefully examine the draft Strategy, test its practicality and relevance, and ensure that it truly reflects the realities, priorities, and capacities of institutions at both the federal and state levels", he said.

Drug traffickers brought down after shipping 1.4 tonnes of cannabis by parcel post

A criminal network suspected of smuggling large quantities of cannabis from Spain to France using parcel delivery services has been dismantled following a coordinated law enforcement operation supported by Europol and Eurojust.

Law enforcement authorities arrested 10 suspects –and carried out 24 searches across France and Spain. The searches led to the seizure of EUR 278 000 in cash, cannabis, and other drugs, firearms, phones, and cars.

The investigation uncovered an organised crime group that had exploited commercial parcel delivery networks to transport cannabis from the Barcelona area to the Rennes region of France. The network is believed to have been led by three key suspects: two based in Spain who coordinated the supply and shipment of the drugs, and one based in France who oversaw distribution upon arrival.

Investigators identified at least 114 parcels sent between September 2024 and the operation, containing an estimated 1.45 tonnes of cannabis.

Counter-terrorism operation disrupted Islamic State Khorasan Province activities

Europol, in coordination with eight European law enforcement agencies and the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), successfully concluded a week-long operational action targeting the so-called Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) and its support networks across Europe. The ISKP remains a significant threat in jihadi terrorism, with its networks in Europe posing a major concern.

The initiative, organised by Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC), brought together investigators to exchange real-time intelligence, disrupt terrorist networks, and reinforce cross-border cooperation. The operation focused on ISKP-affiliated individuals of Chechen and Central Asian origin, identified through shared investigative leads. The collaboration and cross-referencing of information across continents allowed for accelerated detailing of ISKP travel routes spanning Europe, South America, and the United States.

Ten arrested in crackdown on counterfeit firearms trafficking route from Türkiye to the EU

French authorities, supported by Europol and the Swiss Federal Police (Fedpol), have dismantled a criminal network trafficking counterfeit and converted firearms from Türkiye into the European Union. During coordinated action days, investigators arrested ten suspects and raided seven luxury properties in southern France.

The investigation was carried out by the French National Gendarmerie (Gendarmerie Nationale / Section de Recherche de Fréjus). It targeted a criminal network involved in firearms trafficking and money laundering. Investigators believe the group supplied criminal actors across several European countries through an established trafficking route linking Türkiye to the EU.

Over 3,300 illegal firearms, 56 tonnes of drugs seized in operation in the Americas

A coordinated police operation targeting illicit firearms trafficking and associated criminal activities has resulted in the seizure of 3,308 firearms and 56 tonnes of illegal drugs.

Operation Orca XI was conducted across 20 countries in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, with coordination and support from INTERPOL.

In preparation for the operation, INTERPOL assisted participating countries in analyzing firearms trafficking intelligence, developing national threat assessments and coordinating cross-border information exchange, with support from the Organization of American States (OAS) to facilitate regional collaboration.

In addition to firearms seizures, participating authorities reported 8,701 arrests related to firearm and drug possession or trafficking, as well as various other crimes and offences. Officers also seized nearly 200,000 rounds of ammunition, USD 256,025 in cash and 210 vehicles.

Over 1,000 arrested in global crackdown on human trafficking networks

A coordinated international crackdown on human trafficking has led to the identification of 2,070 victims, the arrest of 1,024 suspects and the launch of 465 investigations.

Operation Global Chain, brought together law enforcement from 59 countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe in a targeted effort against trafficking networks involved in sexual exploitation, forced labour and criminality, and coerced begging.

The operation, led by authorities in Austria and Romania and co-coordinated by INTERPOL, Europol, Frontex and Ameripol, resulted in 334 arrests for human trafficking offences and 690 for associated crimes.

Over 5,800 arrests, USD 293 million intercepted in global fraud bust

A global anti-fraud operation involving 97 countries and territories has led to the arrest of 5,811 individuals and the interception of USD 293 million in illicit assets.

Operation First Light 2026 focused on combatting social engineering scams and associated money laundering activities.

After an initial period of intelligence collection and exchange, participating countries took part in more than three months of operational activities. This included pro-active action against high-value targets, raiding identified premises, blocking or freezing bank accounts and virtual wallets, requesting INTERPOL Notices and Diffusions and proactively utilizing INTERPOL's Global Rapid Intervention of Payments (I-GRIP), a stop-payment mechanism that facilitates the swift blocking of illicit financial flows of both fiat and virtual assets.

Over 142,000 victims globally were identified during Operation First Light 2026, highlighting the extent to which social engineering scams and fraud have escalated into a major transnational threat, affecting individuals, businesses and governments.

Stronger action against trafficking for forced criminality and cyber scams needed, say OSCE leaders on World Anti-Trafficking Day

To mark World Day against Trafficking in Persons, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the OSCE Secretary General, the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings are calling for renewed efforts to combat trafficking for forced criminality.

"As Chair of the OSCE, Switzerland reaffirms its commitment to making the protection of victims the centre of our anti-trafficking efforts. Our shared security depends on defending human dignity, protecting victims, and holding perpetrators accountable. Strengthened public-private partnerships, enhanced digital awareness, and greater international co-operation are needed to prevent exploitation before it occurs," said OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Swiss Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis.

This year's World Day against Trafficking in Persons global theme, "Trapped behind the scam," highlights one of the fastest-growing manifestations of trafficking in human beings.

OSCE Secretary General emphasizes the importance of regional co-operation during Pristina visit

OSCE Secretary General Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu visited Pristina to lead the OSCE Regional Heads of Field Operations Meeting.

The meeting brought together Heads of OSCE Missions from South-Eastern Europe to discuss the Organization's work across the region in support of comprehensive security.

"Regional security and stability depend on continued co-operation to address shared transnational and transboundary challenges," said Secretary General Sinirlioğlu. "The OSCE's presence in South-Eastern Europe is an important investment in resilience, stability and co-operation. Our field operations are at the heart of this effort, helping to strengthen institutions, build capacities and reinforce the democratic foundations needed to sustain long-term security and stability across the region."

OSCE Asian Conference opens in Bangkok to address transnational threats in the digital era

Strengthening co-operation to counter transnational threats in the digital era is at the centre of the 2026 OSCE Asian Conference, which opened in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Conference underscores how intertwined the security of the OSCE region and Asia is. The OSCE Asian partnership represents a unique platform for both regions to foster regional and international security, stability and prosperity. The goal of the event is to address common transnational security threats exacerbated by the rapid evolution of digital technologies and exchange best practices in this area.

OSCE
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

3.9 Million People Displaced in Ukraine as Families Struggle to Cope, IOM Report Finds

An estimated 3.9 million people remained internally displaced in Ukraine as of June 2026, according to a new report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). While the number of internally displaced people has stayed at around 12 per cent of the population since 2023, the report shows that the longer displacement persists, the more families are struggling to meet their basic needs.

Nearly seven in ten internally displaced people have now been away from home for more than two years, underscoring the increasingly protracted nature of displacement in Ukraine. New displacement is also still happening: an estimated 132,000 people were forced to leave their homes between January and June this year alone.

The report found that 87 per cent of displaced households have had to take at least one difficult step to cope. The most common include using up savings (75%), cutting back on utilities (59%) and reducing health spending (53%). One in five households also reported moving to lower-quality housing, while 17 per cent have fallen behind on rent.

IOM Saddened by Deadliest Migrant Shipwreck on West African Atlantic Route in 2026

The IOM is deeply saddened by reports that dozens of migrants are dead or missing following a shipwreck off the coast of Mauritania, where 38 survivors were rescued by the Mauritanian Coast Guard near Nouadhibou.

According to survivors, the vessel departed from The Gambia carrying approximately 180 people and spent 25 days at sea before rescue efforts were launched by Mauritanian coast guards and local fishermen. The survivors include men, women and children from several West African countries. One deceased person was recovered; at least 143 people are missing and are feared to have perished during the journey. Among the survivors are two children who reportedly lost their parents and younger sibling during the tragic journey.

IOM extends its heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and expresses its gratitude to the Mauritanian authorities, local fishing communities and all first responders involved in the rescue operation.

Displacement Rising as Crisis Escalates in Kordofan, Sudan

The IOM is deeply alarmed by the rapidly worsening humanitarian situation in Sudan's Kordofan region, where escalating violence has driven a sharp surge in displacement. The number of newly displaced people since the start of the escalation in October 2025 has increased by 65 per cent, rising from over 132,000 in February 2026 to more than 219,000 by late June, underscoring the accelerating impact of the conflict on civilians.

Since conflict erupted in April 2023, Kordofan has remained one of Sudan's principal displacement epicentres. According to the latest available data, nearly one million IDPs, representing 11 per cent of Sudan's total displaced population, were living across the region.

The surge has been driven by escalating insecurity. More than 100 displacement-triggering incidents have been recorded in less than nine months, averaging one major incident every two to three days. The scale and frequency of these incidents highlight a rapidly deteriorating protection environment in which families are repeatedly forced to flee in search of safety. El Obeid has become a key refuge for people escaping violence in surrounding areas.

Frontex joins World Customs Organization to target cash and valuables smuggling in Southeast Europe

Cash in several currencies and silver jewellery were seized in a pilot operation in Southeast Europe, as Frontex and the World Customs Organization (WCO) joined forces against a lesser-known form of smuggling, the movement of cash and valuables across borders.

Frontex and the WCO organised the Balkans Action Days, a pilot operation targeting the smuggling of undeclared cash and other valuables. Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia took part.

The operation led to the detection of EUR 221 770 in cash; USD 20 000; TRY 100 000 and 2.02 kg of silver jewellery.

Frontex Standing Corps officers supported the national authorities on the ground, helping with searches of passenger baggage.

Frontex RFI launch: Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance integration solution

Frontex is considering the acquisition of an Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) platform to be deployed on the Frontex Azure Landing Zone, under Frontex governance. Frontex operates multiple assets contracted from various external contractors that use their own ISR software, and Frontex intends to consolidate all incoming data and video streams in one platform.

SDSS will be a data integration hub, an ISR integration platform that acts as a system of systems over the ISR systems operated by the many Frontex Surveillance Aircraft (FSA) contractors (with possible extension to land and maritime surveillance contractors in the future). It will collect the data delivered by those ISR systems at one architectural boundary, store it under Frontex policy, and expose it to authorised Frontex consumers and downstream systems. The ISR systems operated by the air surveillance contractors produce the data; SDSS integrates, stores, and serves it.

Irregular border crossings into the EU down 37% in the first half of 2026

The number of irregular border crossings into the European Union continued to fall in the first six months of 2026, with detections down by 37% compared with the same period last year. More than 49 000 crossings were recorded, according to preliminary data collected by Frontex. The decline reflects sustained cooperation with partner countries and preventive measures in key departure states, which continue to reduce the number of boats setting out towards Europe.

The first half of the year also saw the entry into effect of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, which introduces a single, standardised screening process at the EU's external borders. Frontex officers support member states in key steps of the new process, including establishing the nationality of arrivals, collecting biometric data and verifying documents.

"Fewer boats are setting out towards Europe, and that is the result of sustained cooperation with our partners in the region. But behind every number is a person, and people are still dying at sea. Our officers remain on the ground at the external borders, supporting member states and helping to save lives," said Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijtens.

Turning shared commitment into coordinated action, in response to evolving forms of human trafficking

CMPD commemorated the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons in Pakistan, joining national institutions, UN and international organisations, civil society, and the diplomatic community in committing to a victim-centred, whole-of-route response to the evolving forms of human trafficking.

Under this year's theme, "Trapped Behind the Scam," this year's theme drew attention to the growing threat of trafficking for forced criminality, including online scam operations and other cyber-enabled crimes.

At the event, partners reaffirmed the importance of coordinated action to strengthen criminal justice responses, advance prevention, and ensure victim-centred protection, assistance, and reintegration. Discussions also highlighted the importance of identifying victims of trafficking, applying the non-punishment principle for those forced into criminality, and strengthening protection-sensitive responses across institutions.

ICMPD, Sri Lanka commit to stronger focus on reducing vulnerabilities, increasing protection against trafficking, victim-centred referral pathways

ICMPD joined the Sri Lanka government in hosting the Conference on Combatting and Addressing Trafficking of Human Beings today, renewing commitment to prevention, victim protection, and coordinated action. To commemorate the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, more than 80 representatives of government, law enforcement and protection authorities, National Anti-Trafficking Task Force, and High Commissions and Embassies joined civil society, academia, development partners, international organisations, media, and survivor-support organisations.

Sri Lanka remains at Tier 2 under the recent TIP report for the past four years. Secretary Thuyacontha said "that trafficking in persons has evolved beyond its traditional manifestations and now increasingly involves sophisticated methods of recruitment and exploitation facilitated through digital technologies and cross-border criminal networks."

ICMPD, BRAC strengthen cooperation on safe migration, skilled labour mobility, sustainable reintegration; tackling irregular migration

ICMPD and Bangladeshi organisation BRAC have formalised long-term collaboration to promote safe and regular migration, mobility, return and reintegration, and tackle irregular migration. Signed through a Memorandum of Understanding on 29 June 2026 in Dhaka, both organisations will focus on facilitating legal and skilled labour mobility pathways for Bangladeshi workers to Europe, as well as supporting the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants.

ICMPD Deputy Director General and Director of Migration Dialogues and Cooperation Sedef Dearing, and BRAC Officer-in-Charge Arinjoy Dhar, signed the cooperation.

ICMPD
International Centre for Migration Policy Development

BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGIES FOR BORDER CONTROL

By Tony Kingham, Editor, Border Security Report

Biometric technologies are reshaping border control in ways that go far beyond the visible checkpoint. What is unfolding is a deeper transformation in how identity is established, trusted, and managed across the travel lifecycle. The familiar moment of presenting a passport—and increasingly stepping through an automated gate—is only the surface expression of systems built on advanced biometrics, data fusion, and real-time analytics. The real innovation lies in how these technologies operate behind the scenes, connecting identity, risk, and movement into a continuous digital process.

At its core, biometrics shifts border control from document validation to identity assurance. Instead of

relying on passports as the primary proof of identity, authorities now depend on unique physical traits—most commonly facial features but also fingerprints and iris patterns—to confirm who a traveller is. This approach provides a far higher level of certainty, particularly when linked to government databases and international watchlists. The process itself has become highly sophisticated, combining multiple sensors and verification steps: cameras capture facial images, document readers validate passports, and liveness detection prevents spoofing attempts using photos or masks.

Within this architecture, facial recognition has emerged as the dominant modality. Its ability to operate passively and at a distance makes it ideal for high-throughput environments such as airports, where speed and user experience are critical. Yet fingerprint biometrics remain indispensable, particularly in enrollment, visa processing, and secondary inspection. The coexistence of modalities reflects a broader trend toward multimodal systems, where different biometric traits complement each other depending on context and risk level.

The companies shaping this landscape reflect different layers of the technology stack. Large integrators such as IDEMIA, Thales and, increasingly, Amadeus build comprehensive systems

that combine biometric capture, verification algorithms, and identity management platforms. Their value lies in orchestrating complex national or international infrastructures where data flows securely between agencies, airports, and airlines.

Amadeus' evolution into this space is particularly illustrative of how biometrics is merging with the wider travel ecosystem. Its platforms connect passenger data, biometric identity, and operational workflows across the journey, allowing border control to become part of a continuous, interoperable system rather than a standalone process. Its development of biometric corridors capable of identifying passengers "on the move" signals a future in which identity checks are embedded seamlessly into the environment rather than concentrated at fixed checkpoints.

Alongside these integrators, specialist providers play a crucial role in advancing the underlying technologies. Cognitec, for example, focuses almost exclusively on facial recognition, supplying algorithms used in border control systems worldwide for identity verification and watchlist matching. Its long-standing focus has allowed it to refine biometric performance under real-world conditions, from variable lighting to high passenger volumes, making it a key component supplier within many larger systems.

US-based Integrated Biometrics highlights a different but equally important segment of the market:

fingerprint technology. The company designs lightweight, FBI-certified fingerprint scanners used globally in border control, law enforcement, and identity programs. Its patented light-emitting sensor technology enables devices that are portable, durable, and capable of capturing high-quality fingerprints even in challenging conditions such as dirt, moisture, or extreme temperatures. These characteristics make them particularly valuable at land borders, in mobile units, or in emerging markets where infrastructure may be limited. Integrated Biometrics' solutions are often embedded within larger systems, demonstrating how fingerprint capture remains a foundational layer even as facial recognition dominates the user interface.

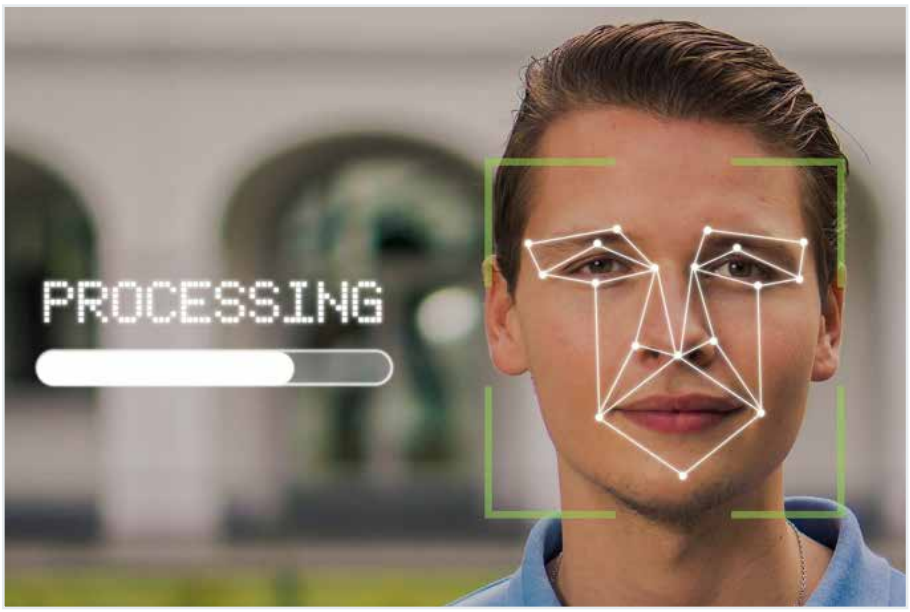
In Europe, secunet represents a different model again—one rooted in cybersecurity and regulatory compliance. The German company delivers holistic border control systems that integrate biometric capture, document authentication, and backend processing within a secure IT framework. Its technologies are widely deployed across European airports, where they must align with stringent requirements such as the EU Entry/Exit System (EES). secunet's emphasis on presentation attack detection and morphing attack detection illustrates the growing importance of defending against increasingly sophisticated identity fraud techniques.

If companies like secunet focus on secure infrastructure, firms such as Veridos extend the biometric system further upstream into identity issuance. By combining experience in passport production with biometric enrollment and verification technologies, Veridos operates across the entire identity

lifecycle—from the creation of secure documents to their use at the border. This vertical integration is particularly relevant for national identity programmes, where consistency and trust must be maintained across multiple stages.

At the same time, a newer generation of companies is redefining where border control begins. Travizory is a prominent example, focusing on pre-travel risk assessment and digital identity orchestration. Its systems integrate biometric data with passenger information, travel history, and visa records to create a comprehensive traveller profile before arrival. This allows authorities to assess risk in advance, accelerating processing for low-risk individuals while concentrating resources on higher-risk cases. Its FaceLane concept—where passengers are identified and cleared while walking—demonstrates how biometrics and analytics can combine to eliminate the need for traditional checkpoints altogether.

A similar philosophy underpins the approach of Ground Controls, a French-based company focusing on data-driven border intelligence. Rather than concentrating solely on biometric verification, it builds "360-degree" traveller profiles by combining biometric inputs with behavioural and travel data, providing real-time analysis and predictive threat detection. This emphasis on analytics reflects a broader shift toward using biometrics



not just to confirm identity, but to support decision-making and risk management at a systemic level.

Across all these players, the unifying theme is convergence. Biometrics is no longer a standalone capability but part of an integrated architecture that includes data platforms, AI-driven analytics, and digital identity frameworks. Artificial intelligence is enhancing every stage of the process, from improving facial recognition accuracy to detecting anomalies and predicting risk. At the same time, digital identity initiatives are enabling travellers to pre-enroll and store credentials electronically, reducing reliance on physical documents and enabling more seamless movement through borders.

The implementation of large-scale systems such as the European Entry/Exit System illustrates how these technologies are being institutionalised. By capturing both facial images and fingerprints for millions of travellers and storing them in a centralised database, EES represents a shift toward persistent, data-driven border management. This kind of infrastructure creates new opportunities for automation and efficiency, but also raises important questions about data protection, sovereignty, and interoperability.

Looking ahead, the trajectory is clear. Border control is moving toward a model in which identity is established once, verified continuously, and shared securely across systems. The physical checkpoint will not disappear, but it will become less central as biometric and digital identity technologies extend both upstream—into pre-travel authorisation—and downstream into the broader travel journey.

Travizory FaceLane™ Deployments in Seychelles and St. Kitts & Nevis

In this evolving ecosystem, different companies contribute different capabilities. Integrated Biometrics ensures that high-quality fingerprint data can be captured reliably in any environment. Cognitec and similar firms provide the algorithms that make facial recognition accurate and scalable. Secunet and Veridos deliver secure, compliant infrastructures for national deployments. Amadeus connects these elements into a seamless travel platform, while Travizory and Ground Controls push the boundaries of predictive, data-driven border management.

Taken together, they illustrate that the future of border control is not defined by any single technology, but by the integration of many. Biometrics provides the foundation, but it is the combination of identity, data, and intelligence that ultimately transforms how borders are managed—and how they are experienced by those who cross them.

"Trapped Behind the Scam": IOM Warns Trafficking Victims Are Being Forced into Scam Networks

Hundreds of thousands of people worldwide have been trafficked by criminal networks and forced to participate in online scams in a multibillion-dollar criminal industry, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) warns today, in advance of 30 July which marks World Day Against Trafficking in Persons under the theme "Trapped Behind the Scam."

Trafficked victims are often lured by fake job ads promising legitimate work abroad. Once they arrive, many are locked inside compounds, stripped of their documents, subjected to constant surveillance, and forced through violence, threats and debt bondage to carry out online scam operations targeting people worldwide. Survivors report enduring torture, sexual abuse, starvation and solitary confinement.

"People trapped in scam compounds are victims of trafficking, forced to commit crimes through violence, threats and coercion. They deserve protection, not punishment," said IOM Director General Amy Pope. "We must work together to support survivors, stop traffickers and close the gaps these criminal networks exploit. No country can tackle this alone."

The scale of the crime is staggering. New United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) data estimates combined annual losses from scam offences across East Asia, South-East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand are between USD 88.3 billion and USD 114.1 billion for 2025 alone, much of it tied to organized crime, and scam compounds across the region are believed to hold hundreds of thousands of trafficked workers.

As trafficking in persons for forced criminality continues to expand across Asia and increasingly beyond the region, IOM has launched its new Regional Strategy Response to Trafficking in Persons for Forced Criminality in Asia and the Pacific (2026–2030). The strategy outlines IOM's vision for addressing one of the fastest-growing forms of human trafficking, with a strong focus on victim protection, prevention, cross-border cooperation and stronger partnerships to disrupt trafficking networks.

Between 2022 and 2025, IOM assisted more than 3,500 victims of trafficking for forced criminality across South-East Asia, from 39 countries, with the largest numbers originating from Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Bangladesh.

The message at the heart of this year's campaign is clear: people forced to commit crimes inside scam centres are victims of trafficking, not criminals, and should be protected, not punished.

Rescue is only the first step. Survivors often face severe trauma, stigma, debt, missing identity documents and the fear of prosecution, requiring sustained support to return home safely and rebuild their lives. IOM's response includes identifying victims, referring them to protection services, providing direct assistance, coordinating with consular authorities, supporting safe return and reintegration, and working with governments and law enforcement partners to strengthen victim identification, cross-border cooperation and accountability for traffickers.

To strengthen its response, IOM calls for continued support to assist victims of trafficking through protection, safe return and reintegration, while scaling up efforts to raise awareness of traffickers' tactics so that people can recognize risks and know where to seek help.

BORDER SECURITY REPORT

FRONTEX TRIALS SHIPBORNE V-BAT DRONES TO EXTEND EUROPE'S MARITIME SURVEILLANCE REACH

By Tony Kingham, Editor, Border Security Report

Frontex has completed what is believed to be its most ambitious shipborne drone trial to date, successfully demonstrating how large vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) unmanned aircraft can dramatically extend the surveillance capability of patrol vessels operating in the Mediterranean.

Conducted in partnership with the Italian Coast Guard, the 19-day operational evaluation saw two Shield AI V-BAT unmanned aircraft deployed from the Italian offshore patrol vessel Luigi Dattilo. Rather than operating as stand-alone drones, the aircraft were fully integrated into the ship's command systems, providing commanders with a real-time operational picture extending up to 150 kilometres beyond the vessel's own radar and

optical sensors.

The trial marks the first time Frontex has operated two drones in the 50-100kg class simultaneously from a patrol ship. Over the course of the evaluation, the aircraft accumulated 150 flying hours, often remaining airborne together for up to 20 hours each day while conducting intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions across the central Mediterranean.

Unlike conventional multirotor drones, the V-BAT is a single-engine ducted-fan VTOL aircraft capable of taking off and landing vertically from the confined deck of a patrol vessel before transitioning into efficient forward flight. Its unique design eliminates the need for catapults, arrestor systems or large flight decks, making it particularly attractive for coast guard and naval operators wishing to add airborne surveillance without investing in helicopters.

Manufactured by California-based defence technology company Shield AI, the V-BAT has become one of the fastest-growing tactical ISR platforms in Western service. The aircraft can remain airborne for up to 12 hours, carries a range of electro-optical and infrared payloads, and is designed to operate in electronically contested environments. Its modular architecture also allows operators to integrate maritime surveillance sensors, communications relay payloads and other specialist equipment depending on mission

requirements.

However, the significance of the Frontex evaluation extends beyond the performance of a single drone platform. The trial reflects a broader trend across Europe and the maritime security community as agencies seek more affordable and flexible ways to extend surveillance coverage far beyond the horizon without relying solely on traditional crewed aircraft.

The maritime UAV sector has expanded rapidly during the past decade as coast guards, border agencies and naval forces increasingly recognise the value of persistent airborne surveillance. Advances in sensor technology, autonomous flight control systems and satellite communications have transformed unmanned aircraft from niche capabilities into mainstream operational tools capable of

supporting border security, search and rescue, fisheries protection, environmental monitoring and counter-smuggling operations.

Among the most established competitors in this market is the Austrian-built Schiebel CAMCOPTER S-100. The rotary-wing UAV has accumulated thousands of operational hours at sea and has become one of the most widely deployed maritime VTOL platforms worldwide. It has been used by numerous naval forces, coast guards and maritime security organisations, including missions supported through the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). Equipped with electro-optical and infrared sensors, maritime surveillance radar and Automatic Identification System (AIS) receivers, the S-100 offers many of the capabilities now being sought by European maritime authorities.

European manufacturers are also responding to growing demand for

Schiebel CAMCOPTER S-100

shipborne drones. French company Survey Copter is developing vertical take-off variants of its successful Aliaca platform to provide naval and coast guard operators with greater flexibility. The French Navy has openly expressed interest in VTOL solutions that eliminate the need for catapult launches and net recoveries, making drone operations simpler and safer aboard smaller patrol vessels that lack dedicated aviation facilities.

Nor is innovation limited to existing platforms. Schiebel has recently unveiled its next-generation CAMCOPTER S-101 and larger twin-engine S-301 systems, designed to carry heavier payloads, operate over greater ranges and integrate more closely with modern naval command-and-control networks. These developments illustrate how maritime drones are evolving from simple airborne cameras into sophisticated sensor nodes capable of supporting networked maritime operations.

Not all maritime UAV solutions follow the vertical take-off and landing approach. Fixed-wing systems such as Insitu's ScanEagle remain widely used across the naval sector because of their exceptional endurance and efficiency. Although they require launch and recovery equipment, fixed-wing platforms can typically remain airborne longer than VTOL systems and are particularly effective when monitoring large maritime areas. They have proven valuable for exclusive economic zone patrols, fisheries protection, anti-smuggling operations and long-range maritime domain awareness missions.

The choice between VTOL and fixed-wing systems often comes down to operational priorities. Fixed-wing aircraft generally offer greater endurance and wider surveillance coverage, while VTOL platforms provide unmatched flexibility for deployment from ships with limited deck space and minimal aviation infrastructure. Many maritime authorities are therefore exploring how different types of unmanned aircraft can complement one another within a wider surveillance architecture.

For Frontex, however, the importance of the V-BAT trial lies less in the aircraft itself than in the concept of operations that it helped validate.

Rather than treating drones as occasional force multipliers, the project sought to determine whether unmanned aircraft could become a permanent extension of a patrol vessel's sensor suite. During the evaluation, communication antennas, data terminals and control stations were installed directly into the ship's operations room, allowing the crew to task and monitor the aircraft as naturally as any other onboard system.

Live video feeds were simultaneously transmitted to the vessel and shore-based command centres through Frontex's Common Operational Picture network, giving commanders ashore immediate access to events unfolding at

sea. The exercise effectively demonstrated how shipborne drones can become an integral component of a broader maritime surveillance ecosystem rather than operating as isolated assets.

The operational value of the concept was demonstrated during a live search-and-rescue exercise on 8 July, when one of the drones detected a small inflatable boat well beyond the patrol vessel's visual horizon. The aircraft tracked the target and assisted the crew in coordinating the simulated rescue, highlighting how unmanned systems could reduce response times while allowing ships to cover significantly larger patrol areas.

The programme was delivered through Greek systems integrator Global SAT, which acted as Frontex's prime contractor, with Shield AI supplying the aircraft, technical expertise and operational support. As part of the project, the V-BAT also achieved SAIL III authorisation under the European Union Aviation Safety Agency's Specific Operations Risk Assessment (SORA) framework—currently among the highest operational approvals granted in Europe for this class of maritime unmanned aircraft.

The certification demonstrates that both the aircraft and its operating procedures satisfy the demanding requirements for beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations in

European airspace. Such approvals are increasingly important as agencies seek to integrate larger unmanned aircraft into regular operational service across national borders and within complex maritime environments.

The successful completion of the trial represents another step in Frontex's wider strategy to modernise Europe's border surveillance capabilities through the greater use of unmanned systems. As migration pressures, organised crime networks and maritime security challenges continue to evolve, the demand for persistent, cost-effective surveillance is likely to grow.

The agency will now conduct a full assessment of the exercise, and the lessons learned are expected to be shared with EU Member States as they evaluate their own future maritime drone requirements. Importantly, the trial was not simply a test of the V-BAT platform itself, but a demonstration of how drones can be embedded into everyday maritime operations.

As Europe continues to invest in maritime domain awareness, the question may no longer be whether patrol vessels should carry drones, but which type of drone is best suited to the mission. Whether the future lies with VTOL systems such as the V-BAT and CAMCOPTER, fixed-wing platforms like ScanEagle, or a combination of both, the direction of travel appears increasingly clear.

Tomorrow's coast guard patrol vessels may no longer rely solely on the view from the bridge. Instead, they could routinely operate with persistent aerial surveillance extending hundreds of kilometres beyond the horizon, providing commanders with a level of situational awareness that would have been unimaginable only a decade ago.

Europol and INTERPOL strengthen partnership against global criminal threats

1,765 stranded migrants have been assisted to return home safely, 903 vulnerable migrants have rebuilt their lives through sustainable reintegration support, and Nigeria has advanced migration governance through enhanced policy frameworks, improved protection mechanisms and strengthened institutional capacities under the Cooperation on Migration and Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Solutions (COMPASS) programme. Today, the Government of Nigeria, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Kingdom of the Netherlands marked five years of partnership through this initiative.

Since its launch in 2021, COMPASS has brought together government institutions, civil society organizations, communities and development partners to strengthen migration governance while protecting the rights and dignity of migrants. The programme has demonstrated that sustainable migration management requires not only humanitarian assistance, but also stronger institutions, better policies and communities that are equipped to support returning migrants.

“No single institution can effectively manage migration challenges. Success depends on strong partnerships between government, development partners, international organizations, civil society, communities and migrants themselves,” said Dr Bernard M. Doro, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction of Nigeria.

Over the past five years, the COMPASS programme has contributed to Nigeria’s migration governance landscape by supporting the review of the National Migration Policy, advancing national coordination on return and reintegration procedures, developing harmonized referral pathways for migrants in vulnerable situations, strengthening victim-centred criminal justice responses to trafficking in persons, supporting State Task Forces against human trafficking, establishing improved standards for survivor-centred shelters, and generating evidence and research to inform national migration policy and programming. The programme also delivered 48 capacity-building initiatives reaching more than 4,400 government officials and frontline responders, while six community-based reintegration projects created sustainable opportunities for returning migrants and host communities across Nigeria.

“This programme is about human dignity, about returning safely, about addressing the agony of victims of human trafficking, but also about preventing the agony of parents who do not know what happened to their children who left for that perilous journey through the desert and over the Mediterranean,” said Bengt van Loosdrecht, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Nigeria.

The COMPASS programme supports interventions at the individual, community and institutional levels. Beyond supporting assisted voluntary returns and sustainable reintegration, the programme has invested in national systems and partnerships to sustain positive outcomes beyond programme interventions.

Highlighting the programme’s long-term impact, IOM Nigeria Chief of Mission Ms. Sharon Dimanche said the true measure of success lies not only in the lives transformed today, but in the stronger systems being built for the future.

“ While hundreds of vulnerable migrants have rebuilt their lives through the programme, the most enduring legacy of COMPASS is that it has helped strengthen the institutions, partnerships and policies that will shape migration governance in Nigeria for years to come.”

As implementation of the COMPASS programme’s second phase (2024-2027) continues, partners reaffirmed their commitment to building on these achievements by strengthening migration governance, enhancing access to protection services, supporting evidence-based policymaking, increasing opportunities for sustainable reintegration and promoting safe, orderly and regular migration. While significant progress has been made over the past five years, continued collaboration and investment will be essential to address evolving migration dynamics and ensure that migrants and the communities that host them are not left behind.

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E-commerce becoming a primary conduit for global illicit trade: WCO's flagship Illicit Trade Report finds

The Illicit Trade Report (ITR) transforms front-line enforcement data into strategic intelligence – based on data from 163,850 cases from 170 reporting Customs administrations. The ITR 2025 highlights evolving dynamics, emerging trends and the wide-ranging impact of illicit trade observed through WCO Members' Customs enforcement activities. The data captured reflects seizures shared by WCO Members through the Customs Enforcement Network (CEN) as well as seizures reported during WCO operations. Key results for the 2025 edition, categorized by six strategic enforcement areas, include:

• Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing: 10,538 cases and 12,261 seizures from 87 reporting administrations. Cash smuggling dominated overwhelmingly with 95.5% of seizures, followed by trafficking in gold (4.2%) and gemstones (0.3%).

• Drugs: 67,757 cases across 146 administrations. Seizures included cannabis – 548.8 tonnes; psychotropic substances – 186.8 tonnes; cocaine – 400.1 tonnes; and opioids and opiates – 24.3 tonnes.

• Environmental Crime: 4,803 environmentally sensitive commodity seizures registered, including waste, ivory, wildlife and plants from 123 administrations.

• Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Health and Safety: 42,026 cases and 82,596 seizures from 110 administrations. IPR products dominated with 35,759 cases (85.1%) and 74,389 seizures, with medical products amounting to 6,267 cases (14.9%) and 8,207 seizures.

• Revenue:34,236 cases and 40,744 seizures reported by 120 administrations. Tobacco accounted for 92.2% of cases (31,571), along with 674 tonnes of e-cigarettes seized.

• Security: weapons trafficking made up 86.9% of security cases, alongside emerging streams covering explosives and unmanned aerial systems (UAS) making up 653 cases.

The WCO Secretary General, Ian Saunders, said: "Illicit trade is growing in scale, sophistication and reach, while also threatening economies, public safety and global supply chains. The WCO Illicit Trade Report for 2025 underscores the critical value of intelligence-sharing, data-driven analysis and risk profiling in identifying emerging threats. The growing misuse of e-commerce, postal and courier networks by criminal actors signals a fundamental shift in how illicit goods are distributed – one that demands agile, intelligence-led and forward-looking responses from Customs administrations."

Fentanyl and synthetic drugs are changing the seizure landscape

Fentanyl seizures accounted for 30.6% of opioid seizures (772) in 2025, with significant enforcement implications. Fentanyl shipments are smaller, more potent and harder to detect by weight alone. Fentanyl delivers lethal doses measurable in micrograms. Targeting, risk profiles and detection methods used for bulk drug shipments such as cocaine and heroin must be adapted for smaller seizure weights that have the potential for significant public harm.

Both fentanyl and NPS are increasingly being trafficked through e-commerce channels. Seizures of NPS doubled in comparison with 2024 to reach 7,721 cases, with the majority of these being shipped by mail or courier

given the size and weight of the packages. They made up 70.2% of regular mail conveyance (cases), 78.9% of in-mail concealment (seizures), 49.2% of mail centre location type (cases), and 81.9% of e-commerce (cases) – the highest among all drug categories. NPS enforcement requires postal risk profiling tools, postal operator partnerships, and advance electronic data from shippers, rather than airport narcotics interdiction teams alone.

E-commerce shipments require Customs focus

E-commerce now accounts for 44.8% of all ITR cases globally, establishing it as a significant logistics channel for all types of illicit trade. Parcel and postal delivery systems are being used for the shipment of counterfeit goods (68.2% of cases) and counterfeit medical products (65.1%). Reporting Customs administrations detected 62.6% of cannabis cases through these channels, 23.9% of environmental crime cases, and 23.6% of security cases, including guns, restricted drones and tactical equipment.

The emerging drone enforcement challenge

UAS accounted for 11.9% of security cases (653 cases) in 2025. The detection and seizure of drones have highlighted challenges that span regulatory compliance (frequency, altitude and range specifications) and security risks (modified or military-specification systems). UAS should be viewed by Customs and law enforcement as an emerging, product-specific area of security enforcement that requires technical awareness and specialized assessment to prevent the illegal distribution of these highly dangerous goods.

Risk-profiling and use of WCO tools pay off

Risk-profiling was the most effective detection tool with the ITR reporting 84% of IPR cases, 79.6% of weapons detections, and 65% of wildlife and timber cases as the result of proactive targeting and risk-profiling by Customs administrations. Intelligence- and information-sharing enables Customs administrations to adapt risk profiles to emerging trends rather than relying on routine inspections to intercept illicit trade. For drug enforcement detections, risk profiling is also the most successful marker. Using systematic targeting based on data-driven risk indicators is a key tool in the fight against organized crime.

The CEN allows WCO Members to exchange intelligence and information enabling Members to analyse data, produce precise risk indicators, identify significant trends and develop robust enforcement strategies. It is an indispensable tool for Customs cooperation and information-sharing.

Turning data into collective action

Every day, Customs administrations stand on the front line against illicit trade, intercepting protected, dangerous and illegal goods before they can cause harm to people, public health and the environment. The findings of the ITR 2025 underscore the critical role of Customs in safeguarding society and reveal the growing complexity of the threat landscape.

The ITR highlights not only the increasing complexity of the threat landscape, but also the tangible results that can be achieved through collective action. By strengthening partnerships, sharing intelligence through the CEN and coordinating enforcement efforts, Customs administrations around the world are enhancing their ability to protect communities and facilitate legitimate trade.

Looking forward, sustained collaboration will be essential to staying ahead of emerging threats. Through its continued support, capacity-building initiatives and global information-sharing platforms, the WCO remains committed to empowering its Members and fostering a united response to illicit trade. Together, Customs administrations, law enforcement agencies, international organizations and industry will continue to play an indispensable role in safeguarding society, strengthening global security and ensuring the integrity of international trade.

Data reported by Customs administrations

The 2025 edition draws on seizure data relating to offences recorded during the 2025 reporting year and describes the illicit trade patterns recorded by the CEN as at 31 March 2026. These figures are not a complete measurement of global illicit trade. A total of 163,850 cases were reported to the CEN in 2025, including 60 cases reported by non-Member administrations.

BORDER SECURITY REPORT

AGENCY NEWS AND UPDATES

More than one hundred thousand counterfeit luxury jewelry intervened in the Balearic Island

The Guardia Civil has intervened more than 115,000 counterfeit luxury jewelry in a commercial warehouse located in the industrial estate of Son Castelló, in Palma de Mallorca. In addition, an investigation has been opened against four persons, as alleged perpetrators of a crime against industrial property.

The investigation culminated with an operation carried out by the Fiscal and Border Patrols (PAFIF) of Porto Cristo in a ship from which a multitude of jewelry items were allegedly distributed, both wholesale and retail. These illegally reproduced designs and distinctive signs of renowned international luxury jewelry brands.

This action is the result of an investigation initiated months ago after the different inspections carried out by the Civil Guard in commercial establishments on the island. The documentation intervened during those actions allowed the researchers to locate the main logistics center from which it was supplied to numerous shops in the Balearic Islands.

As a result of the intervention, 115,535 pieces of counterfeit jewelry have been apprehended

Macao's 2026 cross-border passenger traffic hits 100 mln

Total cross-border passenger traffic through Macao's ports exceeded 100 million trips in 2026 by the end of Sunday, reaching the milestone 14 days earlier than last year, according to data released on Monday by the Public Security Police Force (CPSP) of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR).

Among Macao's checkpoints, the Border Gate checkpoint recorded more than 50 million passenger trips during the period. The Qingmao Port, Hengqin Port, and the Macao Port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge also presented growth momentum, each surpassing 10 million passenger trips.

The police authority said efforts will continue this year to improve customs clearance efficiency and the travel experience at border crossings.

Dismantled a criminal organization that laundered more than four million euros from scams by sending the money to Nigeria

The Guardia Civil has dismantled a criminal organization specialized in money laundering from scams committed both in Spain and in other countries. The operation has resulted in the arrest of 20 people and the

investigation of 11 others as alleged perpetrators of the crimes of fraud, money laundering, documentary falsification, usurpation of civil status and membership of a criminal organization.

During the records, forged identity documents and passports, mobile phones, SIM cards, cash, jewelry, bank documentation and abundant documentation related to money laundering activity were intervened. The researchers also located more than 400 documents used to make the money transfers.

So far, the investigation has identified more than 200 victims spread across different Spanish provinces.

14 nabbed in crackdown on illegal cross-border transport services

A total of 14 people have been caught in recent enforcement operations against illegal cross-border transport services, said Senior Minister of State for Transport Sun Xueling.

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) has been conducting the operations islandwide - including at Changi Airport and Gardens by the Bay - over the past few weeks, said Ms Sun.

LTA and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) also conducted a joint enforcement operation at Singapore's land checkpoints at Woodlands and Tuas.

This is "part of our continued efforts to safeguard commuter safety and protect the livelihoods of our local point-to-point drivers from illegal cross-border transport services", added Ms Sun.

Approximately 12,000 liters of fuel seized in two operations against fuel smuggling

Jerrycans of fuel were arrested. In Huelva, more than 300 jerrycans were seized, and five boats linked to fuel smuggling for drug trafficking were impounded.

The Guardia Civil has seized approximately 12,000 liters of fuel used to supply other vessels involved in drug trafficking in the provinces of Murcia and Huelva.

In Murcia, 136 jerrycans containing 3,400 liters of gasoline were seized, and the Civil Guard arrested the two crew members of the vessel for smuggling and crimes against public safety, as well as for transporting and storing explosive substances.

On the Huelva coast, a total of 347 jerrycans of fuel, equivalent to 8,675 liters, have been seized. Two people have been arrested and five boats linked to the transport of gasoline for supplying drug-running speedboats have been confiscated.

Indian national charged over alleged 166kg pseudoephedrine import

An Indian national is scheduled to appear in Parramatta District Court

charged with allegedly importing 166kg of pseudoephedrine into the country.

Australian Border Force (ABF) officers in Port Botany, NSW, targeted a sea cargo consignment arriving from India and identified anomalies in three pallets declared as a food product.

Upon further inspection, officers identified several pouches containing a white powder which allegedly tested positive for pseudoephedrine, a border-controlled precursor commonly used to manufacture methamphetamine.

ABF Investigators deconstructed the consignment and located approximately 166kg of pseudoephedrine, worth an estimated street value of $5,600,000.

ABF officers undertook a managed delivery of the consignment to a storage unit in Parramatta. Three days later, ABF officers arrested a man allegedly attempting to collect the consignment and charged him.

ABF sanctions NSW aged care provider for migrant worker exploitation

A New South Wales, South Coast, aged care provider has been sanctioned by the Australian Border Force (ABF) requiring them to repay nearly $120,000 to sponsored employees, following an investigation that found it

had unlawfully recovered sponsorship-related costs from migrant workers.

Acting on a Border Watch report, ABF officers from the Department of Home Affairs Sponsor Monitoring Unit launched an investigation into the company.

The investigation revealed the business had sponsored 19 workers under the Skills in Demand (Subclass 482) visa, with 13 workers affected by breaches totalling $118,197.

Officers conducted an unannounced site visit, interviewing sponsored workers and company representatives. The investigation revealed that sponsorship-related costs had been recovered from migrant workers, which is prohibited under Australia's migration laws.

Two workers told officers they had paid $17,449 and $19,847 respectively toward nomination and visa application costs and provided supporting evidence.

Philadelphia CBP officers intercept two Europe-bound marijuana loads, Troopers arrest two

Two women are facing felony drug possession charges after U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers intercepted 97 pounds of marijuana in smuggling attempts on consecutive days this week at Philadelphia International Airport.

CBP officers seized 41 pounds of marijuana on March 16 and another 56 pounds that were discovered in baggage being loaded onto flights bound for Europe. CBP narcotics detector dog Fredo, a 3-year-old male German shepherd, alerted officers to the marijuana.

Officers stopped Taveras at the departure gate to a London-bound flight and stopped Cromwell as she attempted to board a flight to Frankfurt, Germany. Officers identified both women based on the baggage tags on their checked baggage.

Four arrested in Germany as part of major international operation targeting Channel small boat people smuggling network

National Crime Agency officers have joined international partners in a major operation which has seen four people arrested in Germany, as part of an investigation targeting a network suspected of supplying equipment to cross-Channel small boat people smugglers.

The raids, which took place in the North Rhine-Westphalia region, also saw boats and engines seized, as well as petrol cans, pumps and life jackets, as officers raided a number of suspected storage warehouses linked to the gang. Residential properties were also searched.

Twelve locations in the western cities of Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Marl, Bottrop, Herdecke, and Lüdenscheid were targeted, with more than 450 police officers involved. A team of NCA officers deployed to Germany to assist.

Record seizures highlight intensified crackdown on illicit tobacco

New data shows the Australian Border Force (ABF) continues to deliver significant results in disrupting illicit tobacco supply chains, seizing over 2,300 tonnes of illicit tobacco and 13.2 million vapes last financial year, preventing them from entering the community and cutting off funds to criminal syndicates.

Along with record seizures, the ABF's ability to leverage a full end-to-end compliance model has targeted every stage of the criminal supply

chain, offshore, at the border and domestically - making it progressively difficult for organised crime to conduct their business.

The ABF's exceptional pre-border results demonstrate the critical role international partnerships, intelligence sharing and targeted disruption play in preventing illicit tobacco from entering the Australian community.

These illicit tobacco products represent estimated tobacco duty evasion in excess of $236.6 million (excl. GST)

CBP opens Global Entry Enrollment Center in Tampa

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has opened a new Global Entry Enrollment Center in Tampa, expanding access to the Trusted Traveler Program for residents and travelers across the Tampa Bay region.

The new enrollment center, located at the Area Port of Tampa Office, 5519 W. Hillsborough Ave., Tampa, Fla. 33634, provides conditionally approved Global Entry applicants with a convenient location to complete the in-person interview required to finalize enrollment.

"Expanding access to Global Entry enhances both security and the travel experience," said Daniel Alonso, director of Field Operations for CBP's Miami and Tampa Field Office. "This new enrollment center makes the interview process more accessible for travelers in the Tampa Bay region while supporting our mission to facilitate lawful travel and strengthen border security."

Portuguese Authorities Seize Over 2.6 Tonnes of Cocaine from Go-Fast Vessel in MAOC-N Supported Operation

A MAOC-N supported operation has resulted in the seizure of approximately 2627kg of cocaine and the arrest of four suspected drug traffickers off the Portuguese coast.

The operation, named BUONGIORNO, was conducted by the Portuguese Judicial Police, in close cooperation with the Portuguese Navy, the Maritime Police and the Portuguese Air Force.

Border Patrol arrests four after maritime smuggling attempt near La Jolla

San Diego Sector U.S. Border Patrol agents arrested four people after they illegally entered the United States aboard a maritime smuggling vessel that landed near the Scripps Pier in La Jolla.

Personnel at the Joint Harbor Operations Center detected a panga-style vessel traveling north from Mexico toward the United States. U.S. Border Patrol agents assigned to coastal enforcement operations responded to the area to intercept the suspected smuggling event.

Agents observed four individuals disembark from the vessel near the Scripps Pier before fleeing on foot. Responding agents quickly established containment and successfully apprehended all four.

Agents identified the individuals as one Guatemalan national and three Mexican nationals. They transported them to the Imperial Beach Border Patrol Station for processing and seized the boat. The investigation is ongoing.

Coast Guard interdicts 9 aliens near San Diego

The Coast Guard interdicted nine suspected aliens while conducting a boating safety patrol in Mission Bay.

A Coast Guard Station San Diego 45-foot Response Boat-Medium crew identified a 22-foot Seaswirl vessel entering Mission Bay and conducted a boarding of the vessel.

During the boarding, nine suspected aliens were identified and detained.

The vessel was escorted to a lifeguard dock in Mission Bay and the nine individuals were transferred to U.S. Border Patrol agents assigned to the Imperial Beach Border Patrol Station for further processing.

THE CHALLENGES BEHIND THE EU ENTRY/EXIT SYSTEM ROLLOUT

By: Tony Kingham, Editor, Border Security Report

The European Union's Entry/Exit System (EES) represents one of the most significant changes to European border management in decades. Designed to replace manual passport stamping with a digital process based on biometric identification, the system aims to strengthen security, improve the monitoring of visitor stays, and provide border authorities with more accurate information about the movement of travellers into and out of the Schengen Area.

While the strategic objectives of the programme have received broad support from policymakers and security professionals, the implementation of the system has proved considerably more challenging than originally anticipated. The rollout has highlighted the complexities associated with introducing large-scale technology across multiple countries, agencies and transport networks, while also exposing

practical operational issues at airports, ports and land borders.

An Ambitious Programme

The EES is intended to record the entry and exit of non-EU nationals travelling for short stays within the Schengen Area. Instead of receiving a passport stamp, travellers have key personal information recorded electronically, including biometric data such as fingerprints and facial images.

The programme is designed to improve the identification of overstayers, strengthen law-enforcement cooperation, and support border authorities in identifying potential security threats. However, achieving these objectives requires the integration of national border systems, biometric technologies and central European databases on an unprecedented scale.

The technical complexity alone would make the programme challenging. Combined with the operational realities of busy international border crossings, implementation has become a major undertaking.

Repeated Delays and Readiness Concerns

One of the most visible challenges has been the number of delays experienced before full deployment.

Several planned launch dates were postponed as authorities assessed the readiness of infrastructure,

software platforms and national border control systems. Concerns were raised about whether all participating countries could achieve operational readiness at the same time and whether the technology had been sufficiently tested under real-world conditions.

The decision to move towards a phased implementation reflected recognition that a simultaneous launch across the entire Schengen Area carried significant operational risks. Allowing countries additional time to complete preparations reduced the likelihood of widespread disruption but also highlighted the complexity of coordinating a multinational technology programme.

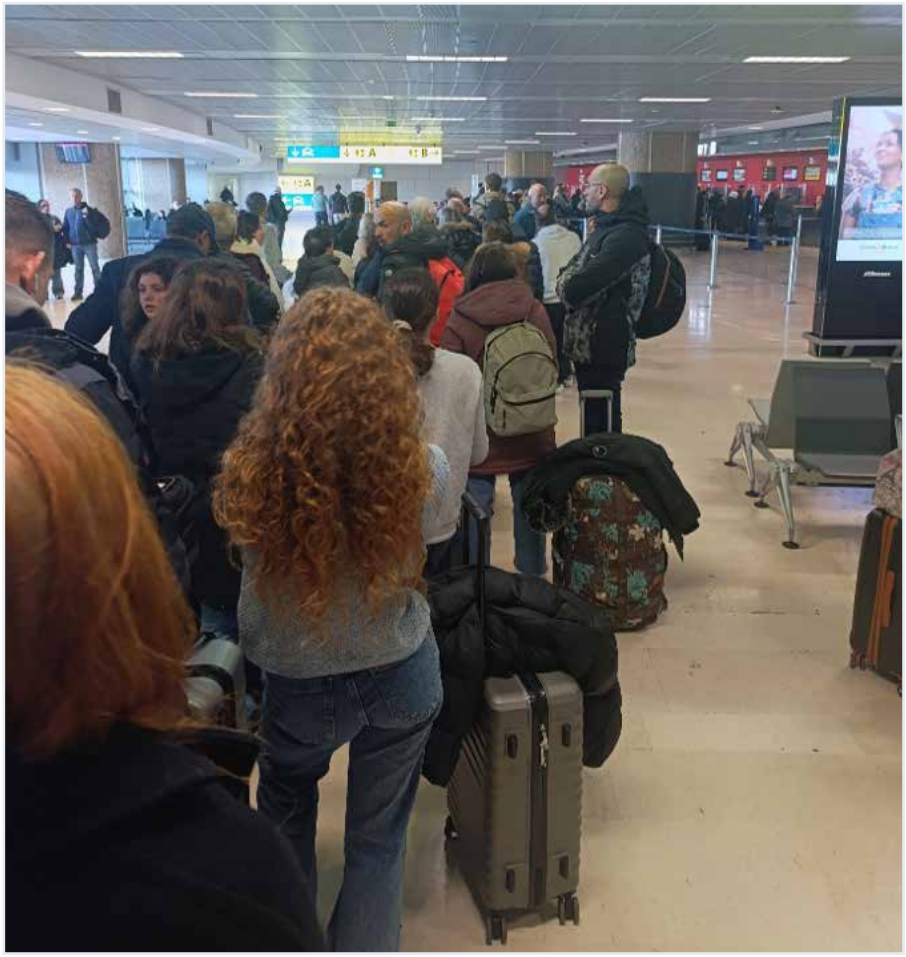
Technology Integration Challenges

The implementation of EES requires numerous systems to work together seamlessly.

National border control systems must communicate with central databases, biometric devices must accurately capture traveller information, and border officers must be able to access records quickly and reliably. Even minor technical problems can have significant operational consequences when thousands of passengers are being processed every hour.

Authorities have reported challenges relating to software integration, data synchronisation, biometric enrolment procedures and equipment reliability. While such issues are common during the introduction of new technologies, their impact is amplified in border environments where delays can quickly affect large numbers of travellers.

The need to maintain high levels of security while processing passengers



efficiently adds further complexity to system design and operation.

Airport Infrastructure Constraints

Many airports were designed around traditional document inspection processes rather than biometric registration.

The introduction of EES has required the installation of fingerprint scanners, facial image capture systems, self-service kiosks and additional processing areas. In some locations, available space has been limited, making it difficult to redesign passenger flows without affecting existing operations.

Airport operators have had to balance security requirements, passenger experience and physical infrastructure limitations. In older terminals, the challenge has been particularly acute, as expansion opportunities are often restricted.

As a result, some airports have invested significantly in facility modifications, while others continue to adapt their layouts to accommodate the new requirements.

Queue Management and Passenger Delays

Perhaps the most widely discussed consequence of the rollout has been the impact on passenger processing times.

The first registration of a traveller under EES requires biometric enrolment, which inevitably takes longer than a traditional passport stamp. While the additional time required for each individual traveller may appear relatively small, the cumulative effect can be substantial at busy border crossings.

Even modest increases in processing time can lead to significant queues when large volumes of passengers arrive simultaneously. This is particularly relevant at major international airports handling long-haul arrivals and large numbers of non-EU visitors.

Industry bodies representing airports and airlines have repeatedly warned that the introduction of biometric processing could increase waiting times, particularly during peak travel periods. Summer holiday traffic, major sporting events and periods of concentrated flight arrivals all place additional pressure on border control resources.

The challenge is not limited to airports. Ferry terminals and international rail hubs face similar concerns, particularly where large numbers of passengers must be

processed within short timeframes.

Staffing and Training Requirements

The successful operation of EES depends not only on technology but also on people.

Border officers must understand new procedures, assist travellers unfamiliar with the process, resolve technical issues and manage exceptions when biometric enrolment is unsuccessful. Comprehensive training programmes have therefore been essential.

At the same time, many border authorities continue to face recruitment and staffing challenges. Increased processing requirements can place additional pressure on existing resources, particularly during busy travel periods.

Where staffing levels do not match passenger demand, queues can grow rapidly regardless of the capability of the underlying technology.

Traveller Awareness and Public Communication

A further challenge has been ensuring that travellers understand the new procedures before arriving at the border.

Many passengers remain unfamiliar with biometric enrolment requirements and the reasons behind them. Border authorities and transport operators have therefore invested in public information campaigns designed to explain the system and reduce confusion.

Clear communication is particularly important during the early stages of implementation, when travellers may be encountering the system for the first time. Effective preparation can reduce processing times and improve the overall passenger experience.

Balancing Security and Efficiency

The difficulties experienced during the rollout highlight a broader challenge facing modern border management: balancing security requirements with the need for efficient passenger movement.

EES offers substantial benefits from a security perspective. Electronic records provide greater accuracy than manual passport stamping, improve visibility of traveller movements and support more effective immigration control.

However, these benefits must be achieved without creating unacceptable levels of disruption for legitimate travellers. Finding the right balance between security, operational efficiency and passenger convenience remains one of the central challenges facing border authorities across Europe.

In conclusion, the rollout of the EU Entry/Exit System demonstrates both the opportunities and challenges associated with large-scale digital transformation programmes. While the long-term objectives of improved security, better border management and enhanced traveller data remain widely supported, implementation has been complicated by technical integration challenges, infrastructure constraints, staffing requirements and concerns about passenger processing times.

Airport queues and border delays have become the most visible symptoms of these challenges, but they are only part of a much broader transformation effort involving governments, border agencies, transport operators and technology providers across Europe.

As experience grows and systems mature, many of the early operational difficulties are likely to be reduced. Nevertheless, the EES rollout provides a valuable lesson in the realities of implementing complex security technologies within high-volume operational environments where efficiency, security and public confidence must all be maintained simultaneously.

Woman guilty of £512,000 Thai cannabis plot

A 45-year-old woman has admitted smuggling 51.2kg of cannabis from Thailand on a flight to the United Kingdom, following a National Crime Agency investigation.

Amy Durban custody imageAmy Jayne Durban, of Cullompton, Devon, was arrested by Border Force officers Heathrow Airport having arrived from Bangkok.

Her two suitcases were stuffed with cannabis which had a street value of at least £512,000.

Durban was remanded to custody after appearing at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court at Isleworth Crown Court she pleaded guilty to smuggling Class B drugs.

Fuelled by demand in the UK, there has been an explosion in the number of drug couriers trying to smuggle cannabis into the country.

They are usually approached on social media by organised crime groups who offer a 'free' holiday and spending money in exchange for taking cannabis home where other criminals will take the drugs from the courier and move them on.

In 2023, 142 cannabis smugglers were caught arriving in the UK by plane.

In 2024 that number rocketed to 801 – a 464% increase. The figure rose again in 2025 to 976. And 2026 is on track to be even worse with 600 air passenger couriers arrested at UK airports in the first six months alone.

Durban's conviction comes after the NCA and partners in Thailand last month announced a new crackdown in the country.

Those caught trying to smuggle cannabis now face huge fines – around £680 per kg. The 'average' smuggler is caught in Thailand with 26kg – equalling a fine of £17,680. If it isn't paid, the smuggler will go to jail for up to two years in Thailand.

IOM assists 17.8 million people worldwide despite growing humanitarian funding gap

More than 300 million people needed humanitarian assistance by 2025, as conflict, disaster and displacement brought global needs to record levels, while funding for aid declined dramatically.

Despite increasing pressure across the humanitarian sector, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reached 17.8 million people in 170 countries and territories through US$1.7 billion in humanitarian and recovery programs, according to figures released recently.

From Sudan and Gaza to Haiti, Myanmar and the Sahel, crises intensified throughout the year, forcing aid agencies to make increasingly difficult decisions on how to deploy limited resources.

“2025 was a year of extraordinary pressure for the humanitarian system,” said Ugochi Daniels, IOM’s Deputy Director General of Operations. “Conflicts, disasters, disease outbreaks and displacement brought needs to unprecedented levels, even as resources contracted dramatically. Despite these challenges, IOM maintained its presence where the people needed us most.”

According to the IOM Report Acting in Crisis Situations 2025, the Organization provided emergency housing assistance to 7.3 million people, provided water, sanitation and hygiene support to 5.1 million people, conducted 4.2 million primary health care consultations and provided protection assistance to 1.5 million people. It also helped more than 760,000 people move to safe places through evacuations, relocations and other forms of transfer assistance.

Beyond direct assistance, IOM continued to play a key role in supporting the wider humanitarian community in responding to crises. Its Displacement Monitoring Matrix (DTM), the world’s largest source of operational displacement data, reported 21 of the 23 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans globally by 2025, helping governments and relief organizations to focus assistance where it was most needed.

The report also highlights IOM’s growing work along major migration routes, monitoring cross-border risks and needs to help governments and partners better understand how people move during crises and where more urgent support is required.

As humanitarian needs continue to exceed available funding, the report underlines the importance of making humanitarian action more efficient, coordinated and evidence-based, to ensure that limited resources reach those who need them most.

IOM and Mauritius Mark 20 Years of Partnership to Advance Migration and Development

The IOM has marked 20 years of partnership with the Government of Mauritius, celebrating two decades of collaboration to strengthen migration governance and support the country’s development.

The anniversary comes at a time when Mauritius faces significant demographic and economic changes. An ageing population, labour shortages and growing climate-related risks are increasing the importance of migration for the country’s future.

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New UNODC report reveals scale of South-East Asia's ever more interconnected criminal economy

South-East Asia's criminal ecosystem has undergone a fundamental restructuring, according to a new report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Once-fragmented, locally rooted syndicates have merged into a single transnational, tech-driven criminal economy sophisticated enough to outpace conventional law enforcement and threaten governance, economic stability, and development in the region and beyond.

"What we are seeing is a shift in which groups that stayed within their own geographic domain and criminal specialty are now operating across multiple illicit markets at once, relying on the same service streams," said Delphine Schantz, UNODC Regional Representative for South-East Asia and the Pacific, during the report launch today in Bangkok. "Their operating model looks like corporate franchising: imagine specialized departments for laundering money, trafficking people, smuggling migrants, and harvesting data, all plugged into the same, service-based interconnected network."

The report, titled An Interconnected Criminal Ecosystem: Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment for Southeast Asia 2026, reveals how criminals are weaving these different types of crime into a single, shared financial and operational infrastructure that is allowing for an increasingly thriving crime ecosystem.

From goods to services

Organized crime in the region is shifting from trafficking physical goods to selling services —cyber-enabled fraud, criminal infrastructure, and platform-based financial settlements— that leave little trace and are far harder to seize or attribute to any single actor.

UNODC's new report puts a figure on that shift: combined annual losses from scam offences across East Asia, South-East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand are estimated at between USD 88.3 billion and USD 114.1 billion for 2025 alone, a sum that, even at the low end, outstrips the GDP of several countries in the region.

The shift has led to a surge of trafficking in persons for forced criminality across the globe. Individuals from at least 80 countries and territories have been identified in scam compounds in the region, with recruitment networks documented as operating through multiple transit hubs in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Communication channels linked to South-East Asia's scam industry point to growing efforts to widen the recruitment pool toward Europe and North America, with advertisements targeting individuals with German, Polish, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, French, Swedish, Norwegian, and English language skills.

"The growth we are seeing has fueled an entire ecosystem of ancillary services, many of them operating under the appearance of legitimate commercial activity," said UNODC lead analyst Inshik Sim. "The scale and complexity of this expanding organized crime economy are outpacing existing responses, which were not structured to address such sophisticated criminal activity."

The other triangle: Sulu-Celebes

Drug trafficking remains a significant threat across South-East Asia, with the Golden Triangle still the region's main production hub. The combined annual retail value of the methamphetamine, ketamine, and heroin markets is estimated at between USD 75 billion and USD 109.7 billion, underscoring the resources available to organized crime groups to sustain and expand their operations. While links between this and other regions were traditionally perceived as marginal, evidence points to a strong expansion of synthetic drugs, heroin and cannabis from South-East Asia trafficked into other regions, including Africa, Europe and South Asia.

But beyond the Golden Triangle, the Sulu and Celebes Seas Triangle has emerged as an increasingly important smuggling corridor for transnational organized groups from within East and South-East Asia, and beyond. The maritime triangle connecting Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines is an area of growing strategic importance that has received comparatively limited analytical attention. The large volume of traffic through the region allows transnational organized crime groups to embed their illicit cargoes in legitimate trade flows to conceal their activity. This includes technology enablers of scam operations, such as low-earth orbit satellites, that can be moved undetected through the tri-border maritime region.

CLIMATE MIGRATION AND NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE: SECURING BORDERS WITHOUT CLOSING DOORS

A summary of the European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (EU-TE-SAT) 2026

The European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (EU-TE-SAT) 2026 presents Europol's latest assessment of the terrorism and violent extremism landscape across Europe. Although the number of terrorist attacks recorded across EU Member States declined during 2025, the report warns against interpreting this as a reduction in the overall threat. Instead, terrorism is evolving into a more fragmented, technologically enabled and unpredictable phenomenon that increasingly transcends traditional ideological boundaries. Europol argues that the threat facing Europe today is no longer defined solely by organised terrorist groups. It is increasingly shaped by decentralised online communities, self-radicalised individuals, emerging technologies and global geopolitical events.

While Europe experienced fewer attacks than in previous years, law enforcement agencies continued to identify and disrupt a significant number of terrorist plots and extremist activities. Hundreds of individuals were arrested for terrorism-related offences across the European Union during the reporting period. These figures reflect both the persistence of extremist activity and the effectiveness of intelligence and law enforcement agencies in identifying threats before they materialise. Europol emphasises, however, that attack statistics alone provide only a partial picture of the security environment. Increasingly, terrorist activity takes place within digital ecosystems where recruitment, radicalisation, financing and operational planning occur long before violence takes place.

Mapping the Threat Across Europe

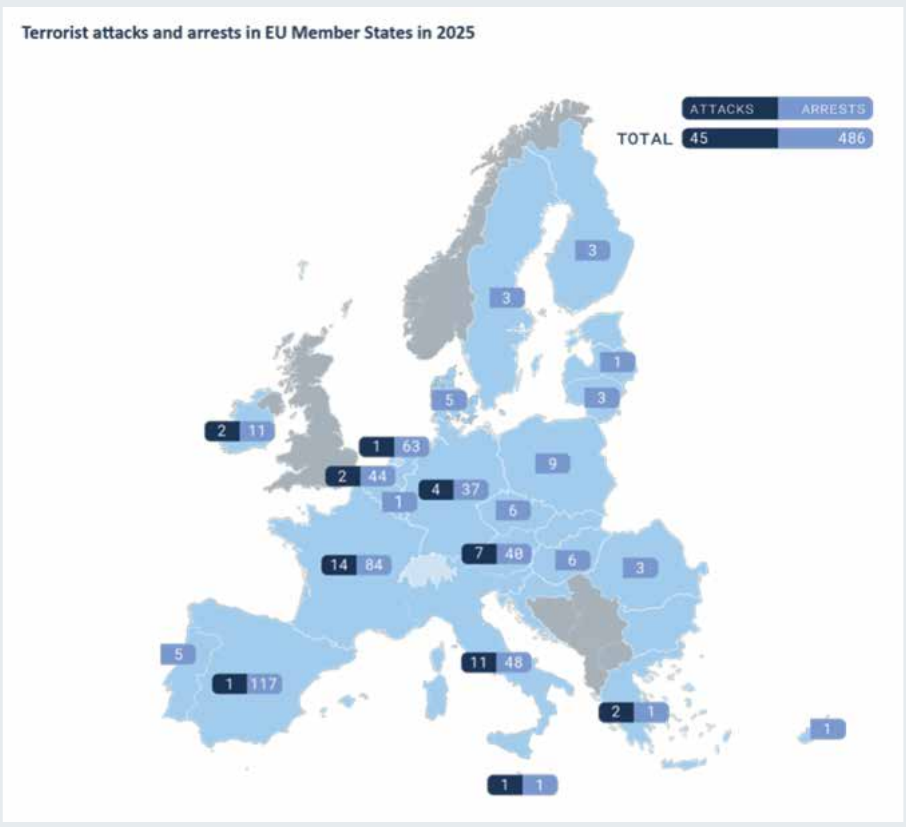
Jihadist terrorism remains the most significant threat to the European Union. Most attacks, fatalities and arrests recorded during 2025 were linked to jihadist-inspired actors. Yet Europol notes that modern jihadist threats are significantly different from those that dominated the previous decade. Rather than centrally directed operations organised by established terrorist groups, many recent plots have been carried out by individuals acting independently after consuming extremist content online. These actors frequently pledge allegiance to organisations such as Islamic State but have little or no direct contact with the groups themselves. The result is a threat environment that is increasingly difficult for security services to predict and disrupt.

At the same time, Europol highlights the growing influence of global events on radicalisation processes within Europe. Terrorist organisations and extremist movements continue to exploit geopolitical crises to reinforce grievances, recruit supporters and justify acts of violence. These narratives are rapidly disseminated through social media and encrypted messaging platforms, giving extremist groups unprecedented access to audiences across national borders.

The Digital Battlefield

One of the report's most important conclusions is that the internet has become the primary operating environment for contemporary extremist movements. Social media platforms, encrypted communications applications and online forums now perform virtually every stage of the terrorist cycle. Radicalisation, recruitment, financing, operational planning and propaganda dissemination increasingly occur online, often without any physical interaction between extremists.

Europol notes that extremist content has adapted to modern online culture. Traditional propaganda has been supplemented by memes, gaming content, video clips and influencer-style messaging designed specifically to engage younger audiences. Recommendation algorithms can inadvertently guide users from mainstream content towards increasingly extremist narratives. The agency warns that this process is contributing to the growing number of young people becoming involved in extremist activity across Europe. Many suspects arrested during 2025



were teenagers or young adults who had been radicalised almost entirely through online interactions.

The report suggests that future counter-terrorism strategies will need to place greater emphasis on understanding digital ecosystems and online behavioural trends, as traditional approaches aimed at disrupting established organisations may be less effective against decentralised online networks.

The Rise of Hybrid Extremism

Europol repeatedly highlights the growing blurring of ideological boundaries. Increasingly, individuals involved in extremist activity draw influence from multiple belief systems rather than adhering to a single ideological framework. Conspiracy theories, anti-government narratives, racist ideologies, violent misogyny and nihilistic worldviews may all coexist within the same online communities.

Particular attention is devoted to emerging decentralised networks collectively referred to as "The Com." These online ecosystems combine elements of cybercrime, extortion, harassment and real-world violence. Unlike traditional terrorist organisations, they often lack a coherent political objective. Instead, participants are motivated by notoriety, disruption and social destabilisation. Europol believes such networks represent a growing challenge because they blur the distinction between organised crime and violent extremism while operating across multiple digital platforms and jurisdictions.

This hybridisation of extremist activity means the future threat landscape may be defined less by identifiable organisations and more by loose affiliations of individuals connected through shared grievances and online interactions.

Technology as a Force Multiplier

Emerging technologies feature prominently throughout the report, particularly artificial intelligence. Europol identifies AI as a potential force multiplier capable of significantly enhancing extremist capabilities. Terrorist actors are already experimenting with AI-generated propaganda, synthetic audio and video content, multilingual messaging and new methods of engagement designed to increase audience reach.

Although safeguards exist within most commercial AI systems, Europol notes that extremists have demonstrated growing interest in bypassing such protections. The concern is not simply that AI can improve propaganda quality, but that it lowers the barriers to content creation, enabling individuals with limited technical expertise to produce increasingly sophisticated material.

Despite these developments, Europol notes that most terrorist attacks continue to rely on simple and readily available weapons. Knives, improvised explosive devices, arson attacks and vehicles remain the preferred methods of attack. Nevertheless, interest in drones, 3D-printed weapons and other advanced technologies is increasing.

As technology becomes more accessible, Europol warns that extremist groups may gain access to capabilities that were previously beyond their reach.

3D-printed derringer discovered in carry-on bag by the TSA team at the Reno–Tahoe International Airport

Global Events, Local Consequences

The report highlights the profound influence of international events on Europe's security environment. The conflict in Gaza is identified as one of the most significant drivers of extremist narratives during the reporting period. Various ideological movements have used the conflict to reinforce grievances, intensify polarisation and mobilise supporters. Jewish communities and institutions across Europe have experienced heightened threat levels as extremist groups exploit the conflict for recruitment and propaganda purposes.

Europol also points to instability in the Sahel region, ongoing conflicts involving Iran and its regional proxies, and the continuing impact of Russia's war against Ukraine as contributing factors shaping Europe's security environment. These conflicts provide extremist movements with narratives that can be adapted for local audiences, reinforcing existing grievances and helping to sustain recruitment efforts.

Alongside jihadist terrorism, the report notes continued activity among right-wing extremist groups, anarchist movements and separatist organisations. While these threats vary in scale and capability, Europol stresses that they collectively contribute to an increasingly diverse and complex threat environment that cannot be understood through a single ideological lens.

Looking Ahead

The central message of EU-TE-SAT 2026 is that Europe faces a terrorist threat that is evolving faster than traditional security models. Future attackers may have little or no connection to established organisations, may become radicalised entirely online, and may draw inspiration from multiple ideologies simultaneously. The convergence of terrorism, organised crime, digital technologies and geopolitical instability is creating a security environment that is increasingly fragmented and unpredictable.

Europol's assessment suggests that the challenge for European security agencies in the coming years will not simply be preventing attacks but understanding the rapidly changing ecosystems that generate them. As extremist networks continue to adapt, exploit technology and respond to global events, the threat landscape

is likely to become more diverse, more decentralised and more difficult to detect. The report ultimately concludes that while Europe has achieved significant successes in disrupting terrorist plots, maintaining security will require sustained cooperation, technological innovation and a deeper understanding of the online environments where contemporary extremism increasingly thrives.

Download the full report: www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU-TE-SAT-2026.pdf

UNODC World Drug Report 2026: Global drug markets transforming rapidly as technology, novel drug types and instability present traffickers with new opportunities

Drug traffickers are exploiting technologies and global instability to introduce novel drugs, experiment with different trade routes and methods, and aggressively push into new markets, said the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its World Drug Report 2026 released today.

"We have seen an unprecedented spike in new types of drugs on the market, and worryingly, some are more potent or dangerous than before," said Monica Juma, Executive Director of UNODC. "And, we are already suffering the impact: millions of premature deaths and healthy years of life needlessly lost; drug trafficking networks that are distorting economies; the destruction of lives, communities and livelihoods; and the compounding of insecurity and violence. The imperative to focus on stopping organized crime groups has never been greater. We must surge deterrence efforts, increase intelligence-sharing and coordinate joint operations, while investing more in prevention and treatment."

An estimated 331 million people used a drug in 2024, or 6.2 per cent of the global population aged between 15 and 64, compared to 5.2 per cent in 2014. Cannabis remains the most widely used drug by far, with 256 million users in 2024, followed by opioids (63 million), amphetamines (32 million), cocaine (25 million) and ecstasy (21 million).

Drug traffickers continue to innovate

Illicit drug manufacturers continue to invent new synthetic drugs in attempts to skirt regulations and avoid detection, with five times more drug types found in seizures in 2024 than before 2000. The number of new psychoactive substances (NPS) reported to have been circulating in drug markets, for example, reached 755 in 2024, with 118 of these substances reported for the first time.

A turning point in the global opioid market

The 2022 drug ban in Afghanistan has continued to

severely constrain the illicit production of opium and heroin. Although production in Myanmar rose from 420 tons in 2021 to over 1,000 in 2025, the increase in the country (together with quantities produced in other countries monitored by UNODC, i.e., Laos and Mexico) does not offset the declines in Afghanistan, which in 2022 produced more than 6,000 tons of opium.

The increasing availability of novel synthetic opioids such as fentanyls, nitazenes and orphines on the market suggests that traffickers are searching for alternatives to heroin. A turn away from plant-based opiates toward synthetics could cause a permanent shift in the global opioid market, with ramifications on how these drugs are used and the harms therein.

The methamphetamine market is now global

New trafficking routes and the gradual spread of methamphetamine production have created new markets for the drug, notably in the Near and Middle East, Africa and parts of Europe. Seizures grew 13 per cent per year on average, an increase largely driven by quantities in East and South-East Asia. Although Myanmar remains the predominant source country for methamphetamine, the high demand has also attracted suppliers from North America, West and Southern Africa and South-West Asia.

Methamphetamine from North America is also now crossing the Pacific Ocean to countries on the Western Pacific Rim, and in the process causing an increase in trafficking and use in Pacific Islands as well. In the Middle East, disruptions of the “captagon” market following the fall of the former Assad regime in the Syrian Arab Republic in December 2024 and the subsequent doubling in price of a captagon tablet in some places may cause a shift among users of captagon to methamphetamine, the use of which has increased in the region.

Shifting perceptions on cannabis drive user growth and new trafficking patterns

Cannabis production, trafficking and use are all evolving, likely in part due to the ongoing changes in perception towards the drug around the time when many jurisdictions, notably in North America, adopted legalization and/or decriminalization policies.

The number of people using cannabis has grown by 40 per cent over the past decade, while the prevalence of its use increased from 3.8 per cent of the population aged 15-64 in 2014 to 4.8 per cent in 2024. Cannabis seizures also reached historically high levels in 2024.

Historically, most cannabis trafficking has been within regions, largely because cannabis can be grown virtually anywhere. Yet inter-regional trade, with supply coming from North America, is growing: over 2015–2024, 57 countries or territories outside North America identified it as a source region for cannabis seizures, up from just 11 in the preceding decade.

Growth in cocaine supply may soon outstrip demand

Production of cocaine continued to grow in 2024, rising more than fourfold over the past ten years to an estimate of more than 4,000 tonnes (in pure form), driven largely by increases in productivity and the area under cultivation.

Organized crime groups continue to funnel increasingly large quantities of cocaine towards established and emerging destination markets, in an effort to maximize profit and expand the customer base beyond their largest, most established markets in Western and Central Europe, North America and Oceania.

Evidence of such continued expansion can be seen in Africa and Asia, where, despite relatively low seizure quantities, certain countries in these regions recorded the highest growth rates of cocaine seizures globally during 2020-24.

Impact of drug use on safety and security

Drug use can be associated with acquisitive crime, violence within families and social groups, and victimization of - and by - those who use drugs. But these outcomes are also influenced by wider factors such as the context of the drug use, the personal histories of the people involved, such as poverty, homelessness, poor mental health and contextual factors in the community such as a potential lack of access to drug treatment and social services. Such factors also represent entry points for intervention and prevention efforts.

BORDER SECURITY UNITED NATION PROGRAM OF ACTION AND THE WAY FORWARD

By Martin Igwe, Regional First Vice President (West Africa) West Africa Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) a member of International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)

Border security is a comprehensive framework of measures employed by a nation to protect it borders from illegal activities and external threats. It involves a combination of physical infrastructure, advanced surveillance technology intelligence sharing etc.

As part of United Nation mandate of enhancing Global Peace an international agreement to prevent combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, provide domestic legislation was reached by committee of Nations.

In this agreement, West Africa Action Network on Small Arms is proud to inform the global Community of the existing fact that United Nation, can liase with World Border Security congress which continues to play a critical role in eliminating Global Border Security threats which advances the United Nations Sustainable development goals

especially in the area of peace, security and strong Institutions.

As one of the organisations and participant at this years United National Biennial meeting of states to review the policy made to advance the program of Action on Small Arms. It is easier for elephant to go through the eye of the needle than discourse use and Illegal proliferation on Small Arms without addressing issues of Border Insecurity as it is driven by vast porous, sophisticated terrain national criminal syndicate with experiences gathered from the BMS9 from1st June to 6th June 2026, International co-operation is vital for tracking border insecurity because modern threats such as terrorism, cybersecurity are highly mobile.

No Nation acting in isolation possess the resources or intelligence to neutralize these cross-border networks, co-operations from borders allow countries to track terrorist movement and monitor transborder crimes.

United Nation program of Action recognised International collaboration to ensure that both origin, transit and destination countries collaborate to disrupt the cause rather than merely managing the symptoms.

With the experiences gained from the last United Nation Biennial Conferences the United Nation can liase with the World border Security Congress to address interventions support capable of providing technical and operational assistance to states heavily affected by the proliferation of illegal and border security especially those physically impossible to monitor with manpower alone.

The global cost of Border insecurity is challenges to aggregated precisely but economic losses range into billions starting from illicit trafficking network, regional conflict displacing millions.

Moving forward Relevant Global authorities must unite to standardize protocols to facilitate global best practises capable of securing Border liked addressing resources and infrastructural deficits, technological limitation, encouraging intelligence led operation and involving local host communities in early waving and conflict resolution system.
Let's transform our Borders to gate of National and international opportunities and route to Global Peace and Implementation of United Nation Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPoA) .

Mr. Johnson Asante, Managing Director, International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)

WCO builds freight forwarders capacity to manage rules of origin, ensuring enhanced compliance and increased preferential tariff treatment use

To ensure that the benefits of its training extend beyond participants, the WCO often equips Customs trainees to become tomorrow's trainers, and hence ensure that knowledge is spread across institutions, countries and generations of practitioners. The EU-WCO Rules of Origin Africa Programme has taken this approach even further by opening its comprehensive competency development cycle to staff from the private sector in East African Community (EAC) Partner States. The objective is to develop a pool of experts from various sectors who can independently transfer knowledge to their peers or clients long after international experts have left.

Return on investment

The EAC is a regional intergovernmental organization focused on economic, political and social integration. It is composed of Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

Some Customs officers from EAC Partner States have completed the EU-WCO Rules of Origin Africa Programme competency development cycle and have been delivering rules of origin training to exporters, manufacturers, chambers of commerce, freight forwarders and other economic operators. In so doing, they are enabling their administrations to build capacity using their own specialists rather than relying on external expertise.

The launch of the EAC Freight Forwarders Competency Development Programme on Rules of Origin, in March 2026, represents an important step in this multiplier approach designed to expand the number of individuals that the WCO reaches in the region. Relying on WCO accredited experts from the Community, this initiative was made possible thanks to a long-term investment by the WCO in developing sustainable training capacity across Africa.

The importance of competence development for freight forwarders in rules of origin

Under the EAC Freight Forwarders Competency Development Programme on Rules of Origin, which will end in September 2026, some 149 freight forwarders from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda are participating in a full training cycle comprising basic, intermediate and advanced technical training, followed by Training of Trainers (ToT).

A freight forwarder is the party who ensures that internationally traded goods move from point of origin to point of destination, serving as a trusted adviser on trade procedures and documentation, and sometimes as a Customs clearing agent.

The objective of the Programme is to enable freight forwarders to help businesses comply with origin requirements and fully benefit from preferential trade agreements. To date, the selected freight forwarders have already completed training up to advanced level and have gained the skills required to determine correctly the origin of goods, interpret origin provisions and fully comply with documentary requirements. They are also better equipped to support Customs administrations during origin verification processes.

Once their training cycle is successfully completed, the Federation of East Africa Freight Forwarders Associations (FEAFFA) will engage these freight forwarders to deliver Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses on rules of origin, ensuring that expertise continues to grow within the profession. This reflects the Programme's broader competency development approach across Africa, where national experts are progressively becoming trainers, creating sustainable capacity and multiplying knowledge long after the work of the Programme has concluded.

Leveraging African expertise

The training cycle was facilitated by three WCO-accredited origin experts from Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania, together with six origin trainers from Kenya, Malawi and Mauritius, under the technical supervision and mentoring of three WCO Secretariat origin experts. This approach not only ensures high-quality technical delivery but also strengthens national and regional expertise through practical mentoring, coaching and the exchange of experience among peers.

Today, the EU-WCO Rules of Origin Africa Programme has developed more than 40 WCO-accredited origin experts from Customs administrations across Africa, while the pool of trained origin trainers drawn from other government agencies and the private sector is growing. They can respond to emerging capacity-development needs at a significantly lower cost than the use of experts from the WCO Secretariat or from non-African administrations. In addition, their familiarity with national legislation, regional trade agreements and operational realities enables them to design and deliver training that is practical, relevant and tailored to the local environment.

Stakeholder engagement and partnership

For the delivery of this capacity-building initiative, the WCO is collaborating with the Federation of East African Freight Forwarders Associations (FEAFFA) and the national freight forwarding associations of Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. They have provided critical support in reaching out to their members and selecting participants, and will provide periodic feedback to the EU-WCO Rules of Origin Africa Programme on the use of experts. The respective EAC Customs administrations have been instrumental in planning the national workshops, providing logistical support to WCO experts, gracing the opening/closing ceremonies and releasing their origin experts to deliver training. Finally, the planning of this capacity-building initiative was greatly facilitated by the WCO Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB) for the ESA region and the WCO Regional Training Centre (RTC) in Kenya, which have established and will subsequently maintain a database of trained freight forwarding experts.

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Lisbon and Portugal's Atlantic Frontier: Confronting the Convergence of Migration, Human Trafficking and Transatlantic Drug Flows

Portugal occupies a unique position on Europe's security map. Situated on the western edge of the continent and facing directly onto the Atlantic Ocean, the country serves not only as one of the European Union's external maritime frontiers but also as a critical gateway between Europe, Africa and the Americas. Lisbon, located at the mouth of the River Tagus and home to one of Europe's most important Atlantic ports and airports, sits at the intersection of several strategic routes used by legitimate trade, migration, and increasingly, transnational criminal networks.

While Portugal is often perceived as being removed from the migration pressures facing the central Mediterranean, the realities of modern border security suggest otherwise. The country's extensive

Atlantic coastline, overseas maritime approaches, and historical connections with lusophone Africa and Latin America place Lisbon at the centre of some of the most significant border security challenges currently confronting Europe.

One of the most pressing concerns is the growing use of Atlantic migration routes connecting West Africa to the Iberian Peninsula. As enforcement activities have intensified in parts of the Mediterranean, migrant smuggling networks have demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt, shifting routes and identifying new entry points into Europe. Portuguese authorities have increasingly recognised the potential vulnerability of the country's coastline to irregular migration flows originating from Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and other West African states. Earlier World Border Security Congress assessments noted that the Algarve coast was increasingly viewed by migrants transiting through Morocco as an alternative gateway to Europe, a trend driven in part by pressure on Mediterranean routes.

The migration challenge extends far beyond border crossings themselves. Human trafficking networks continue to exploit instability, poverty and a lack of economic opportunity across parts of Africa. Organised criminal groups facilitate the movement of migrants through complex routes linking West Africa, North Africa and Europe, generating enormous profits while exposing vulnerable people to abuse, exploitation and forced labour. The World Border Security

Congress has consistently identified human trafficking, irregular migration and organised smuggling networks as among the most significant challenges facing border authorities worldwide.

For Portugal, the challenge is compounded by geography. The country's Atlantic position means threats often emerge far from its territorial waters. Criminal networks increasingly utilise motherships, fishing vessels and concealed maritime routes that stretch from the Gulf of Guinea and the West African coast towards the Iberian Peninsula. Surveillance of these vast maritime approaches requires extensive cooperation between the Portuguese Navy, Guarda Nacional Republicana, Polícia de Segurança Pública, Frontex and neighbouring European partners. Portugal's border security responsibilities are further shaped by its role within the Schengen Area, meaning that an individual or shipment successfully entering Portugal may subsequently move across much of Europe without additional border checks.

Drug trafficking presents an equally significant threat. Portugal lies directly on the principal Atlantic cocaine highways connecting South American production regions with European consumer markets. Recent analysis published in BSRJulAug2026.pdf highlights how cocaine trafficking networks increasingly rely on transatlantic routes extending from Brazil through West African transit hubs before entering Europe. These routes frequently involve criminal partnerships linking Brazilian organisations, West African logistical facilitators and European distribution networks. The report notes that the lusophone axis connecting Brazil with Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Portugal remains particularly attractive because common language, historic

ties and established commercial relationships reduce operational risks for traffickers.

The Port of Santos in Brazil remains one of the primary cocaine export gateways, while criminal organisations continue to exploit West African transit states as staging points before onward movement into Europe. Authorities have observed increasing use of container shipping, commercial transport networks, semi-submersible vessels and sophisticated concealment techniques designed to evade detection. Rather than relying on a single route, criminal groups now operate highly adaptable logistical systems capable of rapidly shifting trafficking corridors in response to law enforcement pressure.

Portugal's own border security community has long recognised this vulnerability. Previous World Border Security Congress materials highlighted warnings from the Portuguese Judicial Police that Portugal's maritime and air borders continue to serve as gateways into Europe for significant quantities of cocaine originating in Latin America. The seizure of transatlantic narco-submersibles operating in Atlantic waters further illustrated the attractiveness of the Portuguese and Spanish coastlines for major trafficking operations.

These threats rarely exist in isolation. Modern organised crime increasingly combines drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, financial crime and document fraud within the same criminal ecosystems. Networks facilitating the movement of cocaine can also provide logistics, corruption mechanisms, forged documents and maritime transportation for human trafficking operations. The result is a highly interconnected threat environment in which border agencies must simultaneously manage migration pressures, organised crime, terrorism concerns, customs enforcement and maritime security challenges. The 2027 World Border Security Congress prospectus specifically identifies irregular migration, organised crime, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, exploitation of migration systems and cross-border financial crime among the key challenges facing border authorities.

Technology and intelligence-sharing are becoming increasingly important in addressing these threats. Advanced maritime surveillance systems, unmanned aerial systems, biometric identity management, passenger data analytics and risk-assessment platforms now form

essential components of modern border management strategies. However, technology alone cannot solve the challenge. Effective border security in Lisbon and across Portugal requires close cooperation between European agencies, African partners, customs organisations, law enforcement services and international institutions.

For this reason, Lisbon represents an ideal venue for discussing the future of border security. The city stands at the crossroads of the Atlantic routes that connect South America, Africa and Europe. It faces many of the same challenges confronting border agencies across the world: organised crime, irregular migration, human trafficking, drug smuggling, identity fraud and increasing pressure on migration management systems. As criminal networks become more sophisticated and transnational routes become more interconnected, Portugal's experience demonstrates that border security is no longer simply about protecting a line on a map. It is about safeguarding a vast

network of maritime approaches, transport corridors and international partnerships that extend far beyond the physical frontier itself.

We look forward to welcoming the border security, protection and management community to the beautiful city of Lisbon from 13th–15th April 2027.

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3DX-Ray Expands Security Detection Capability Through Acquisition of ClanTect

Human presence detection technology strengthens portfolio and creates opportunities across border security, prisons and critical infrastructure protection

3DX-Ray has announced the acquisition of ClanTect, a specialist developer of human presence detection technology, marking a significant expansion of the company's security technology portfolio and creating new opportunities across global security and critical infrastructure markets.

The acquisition adds a highly complementary detection capability to 3DX-Ray's established range of X-ray screening and security inspection technologies. Together, the technologies provide security operators with additional tools to detect and identify threats across a wide range of operational environments.

ClanTect has developed proprietary technology capable of detecting concealed individuals hidden within vehicles, containers and other confined spaces. Using highly sensitive vibration sensors and advanced signal processing techniques, the system identifies minute human-induced movement while filtering out environmental disturbances such as wind, traffic vibration and background noise.

The technology has already been deployed in border security and custodial applications and is regarded as an innovative solution for combating illegal migration, people smuggling and unauthorised access to sensitive sites.

Czech Border Police: secunet technology significantly speeds up processes after EES introduction

Following more than ten years of preparation and a 180-day roll-out phase, the EU's Entry/Exit System (EES) went live in April 2026 in all 29 Schengen states.

A significant number of these countries, including Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Czech Republic, rely on border control technology from secunet. This technology ensures seamless integration with the EES, captures biometric facial images and automatically verifies travellers' identities. Experience gained by the Czech Border Police during live operations confirms that secunet's technology minimises waiting times for travellers despite the more complex EES processes. This is achieved through speedy automated border control systems and self-service kiosks where third-country nationals can enter their data in advance.

The Czech Republic is one of the few Schengen states to have opted for the immediate roll-out of full-scale operations. This roll-out took place as early as October 2025, meaning that reliable data on live operations is already available. With an average processing time of 24 seconds per person, the automated secunet easygate border control systems ensure a swift departure for third-country nationals. At the same time, the secunet easykiosk self-service kiosks are successfully fulfilling their role in speeding up the process.

SRC Receives Additional Orders for SR Hawk Radars to Support Expanded U.S. Border Surveillance Operations

SRC has announced that additional SR Hawk™ radar systems have been ordered to support autonomous surveillance operations along the southern border.

The radar systems are being procured by multiple prime contractors supporting advanced border surveillance technologies for both mobile and fixed-site operational deployments. The systems are designed to enhance situational awareness and support persistent monitoring operations across remote and complex terrain environments.

The deployments support ongoing efforts by the Trump administration to modernize border security infrastructure through the use of autonomous surveillance technologies, artificial intelligence-enabled systems and layered sensor networks.

"Securing the border requires advanced sensing technologies capable of delivering persistent situational awareness across large and often challenging operational environments," said Kevin Hair, president and CEO of SRC. "SR Hawk was designed to provide highly reliable detection and tracking capabilities in support of mobile and fixed surveillance missions where operators need actionable information in real time. These additional orders reflect the growing need for scalable surveillance technologies capable of supporting evolving homeland security missions."

Blighter To Supply 4D Multi-Mode Radars to Eastern European Army To Protect Borders From Low-Flying Drones

Blighter has won a follow-on contract from an undisclosed Eastern European Army to supply its Blighter A800 Mk 2 4D multi-mode radars. The systems will protect vulnerable borders from ground incursions and hard-to-detect low-flying and one-way attack drones.

Army officials selected the Blighter A800 Mk2 4D radar due to its multi-mode functionality allowing simultaneous detection, classification and tracking of ground, sea, and air targets at ranges up to 20km. As with the previous contract, the A800 radars will be deployed to fixed locations along the country's borders and integrated onto army reconnaissance vehicles.

According to Blighter, low-altitude drones present a major challenge for the military as their small size, low radar cross section (RCS), and ability to fly close to terrain make them difficult to detect with conventional air surveillance radars. Blighter radars overcome this using advanced Ku-Band sensing, ESA antennas, micro-Doppler signature analysis, and sophisticated clutter-suppression technologies.

Smiths Detection's HI-SCAN 10080 XCT achieves "qualified" status on TSA Air Cargo Screening Technology List

Smiths Detection has announced that its Explosives Detection System (EDS) HI-SCAN 10080 XCT advanced X-ray computed tomography system for hold baggage and air cargo has successfully progressed from the "Approved" section to the "Qualified" section of the U.S. Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Air Cargo Screening Technology List (ACSTL).

The ACSTL serves as TSA's official guide for regulated parties to use when procuring screening devices. While devices listed as Approved" have successfully completed formalised TSA-sponsored testing processes, inclusion in the "Qualified" section reflects proven operational performance under real-world conditions, meeting the highest standards for security and reliability in the aviation sector.

The HI-SCAN 10080 XCT is equipped with a dual-view dual-energy X-ray line scanner with full 3D volumetric computed tomography imaging and reconstruction, enhancing the speed, efficiency and safety of hold baggage and air cargo screening. The system delivers a belt speed of 0.5 m/sec (98.5 ft/min) and features a large 107 x 81 cm (42.1 x 31.9 in) rectangular tunnel, designed for seamless integration into fully automated and networked baggage and material handling systems. This enables operators to screen up to 2,500 parcels per hour while maintaining high detection performance.

In addition, it is TSA 7.2 certified for high-speed checked baggage screening and meets ECAC EDS Standard 3.1.

Philip Tackett, Ph.D., VP of Technology at Smiths Detection Inc, said: "Achieving 'Qualified' status on the TSA ACSTL is a significant milestone for the HI-SCAN 10080 XCT and a testament to its proven performance in operational environments."

Are you sure your national infrastructure is secure?

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The rapidly evolving threat environment—driven by climate change, geopolitical conflict, supply chain disruption, and increasingly sophisticated cyber and physical attacks—demands continuous modernization of policy, regulatory frameworks, operational practices, and protective technologies to address escalating and interconnected risks.

Invitation to Participate

The current Administration recently rolled out a new critical infrastructure memorandum, titled National Security Memorandum on Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience (NSM-22) which is intended to set forth the role of the federal government, including responsibilities for specific federal agencies, in protecting U.S. critical infrastructure.

NSM-22 serves to supplant PPD-21, formally known as the Presidential Policy Directive – Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience (pdf). PPD-21, a memorandum issued during the previous Administration, designated 16 critical infrastructure sectors that will be subject to additional oversight through the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act of 2022 (CIRCIA).

Are you prepared?

The Nation's critical infrastructure provides the essential services that underpin American society. Proactive and coordinated efforts are necessary to strengthen and maintain secure, functioning, and resilient critical infrastructure – including assets, networks, and systems – that are vital to public confidence and the Nation's safety, prosperity, and well-being.

Critical infrastructure must be secure and able to withstand and rapidly recover from all hazards. Achieving this will require integration with the national preparedness system across prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

Join us in Lake Charles, LA for the leading forum dedicated to operators and government bodies responsible for advancing Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience across the region.

For further details visit **www.ciprna-expo.com**

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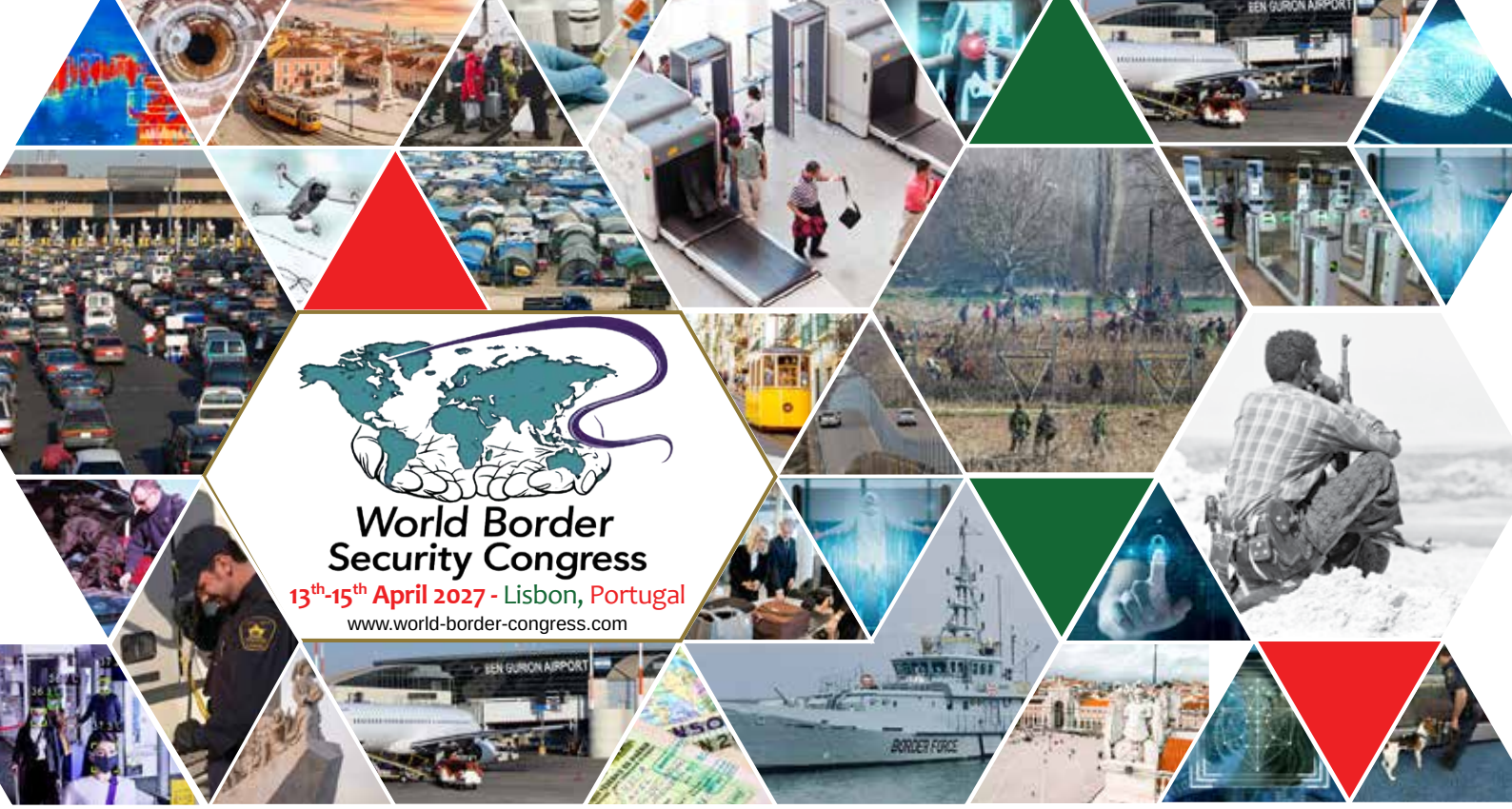

Transforming Border Management Strategies Through Co-operation and Technology

SAVE THE DATES

Portugal's border security is shaped by its geography and role within the Schengen Area, placing responsibility on protecting the EU's external frontier. Since the dissolution of the SEF, the border security function is coordinated by the Sistema de Seguranca Interna (Internal Security System) and implemented by the Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP) and Guarda Nacional Republicana (GNR).

Administrative overload and legal migration pressure remains Portugal's main challenges, but the country relies on maritime and airport surveillance rather than land borders. Its Atlantic coastline presents monitoring challenges, particularly for irregular migration routes and drug trafficking. The country faces growing inflows of irregular migrants from Africa, Brazil, and South Asia, creating administrative strain in processing visas, asylum claims, and residency permits, leading to backlogs and delays.

Migration has become more contentious recently, with pressure to tighten rules after years of relatively open policies. At the same time, labour shortages mean Portugal still depends heavily on migrant workers.

Portugal is not unique in its border management challenges and must strengthen surveillance, streamline bureaucracy, and enhance EU cooperation while maintaining its rights-based migration approach.

The World Border Security Congress is a high level 3 day event that will discuss and debate current and future policies, implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

Join us in Lisbon, Portugal on 13th-15th April 2027 for the next gathering of international border security, protection and migration management professionals.

www.world-border-congress.com

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