

 EFCA

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European cooperation on coast guard functions

Working together at sea: European cooperation on coast guard functions



European cooperation on coast guard functions

describes the efforts of EFCA, EMSA and Frontex to **join forces and streamline activities** in order to support national authorities carrying out coast guard functions **at national and EU level**, and where appropriate, at international level.

What are the coast guard functions?

Coast guard functions are understood as those commonly referred to by the three agencies and outlined in the Commission Recommendation (EU) 2021/1222 of 20 July 2021 establishing a 'Practical Handbook' on European cooperation on coast guard functions:



Maritime safety, including vessel traffic management



Ship casualty and maritime assistance service



Fisheries inspection and control



Maritime border control



Maritime environmental protection and response



Maritime monitoring and surveillance



Maritime search and rescue



Maritime accident and disaster response



Maritime customs activities



Prevention and suppression of trafficking and smuggling and connected maritime law enforcement



Maritime, ship and port security

Who are the agencies involved in coast guard functions at European level?

Three European agencies support the national authorities in performing their coast guard tasks:

 **EFCA** European Fisheries Control Agency,

 **EMSA** European Maritime Safety Agency,

 **FRONTEX** European Border and Coast Guard Agency

EFCA focuses on operational coordination of fisheries control and inspection activities contributing to improved compliance and a level playing field for the fishing industry and ultimately to sustainable fisheries.

EMSA serves EU maritime interests for a safe, secure, green and competitive maritime sector. It acts as a reliable and respected point of reference in the maritime sector in Europe and worldwide.

Frontex aims at improving the management of the external borders to ensure a high level of internal security in the EU and to tackle cross-border crime.



Why do we cooperate?

The waters surrounding Europe are a busy place, accommodating a wide range of activities such as international and domestic freight and passenger transport, fishing, oil and gas production, as well as tourism and recreational activities. At the same time, the maritime domain is exposed to a number of risks such as accidents, marine pollution, illegal fishing, terrorism, piracy, people smuggling and other cross-border crimes.

In the European Union, there are numerous authorities responsible for different coast guard functions. More than 300 civilian and military authorities in the Member States work together around the clock to ensure that the activities taking place at sea are safe, secure, lawful and environmentally sustainable.

To achieve the task of monitoring maritime activities and support operational missions at sea, EFCA, EMSA and Frontex have enhanced their cooperation for the benefit of all the authorities involved.



How do we cooperate?

EFCA, EMSA and Frontex support **European cooperation on coast guard functions in a coordinated manner** with each agency working in the areas of its mandate and responsibilities.

These three European agencies cooperate together to support national authorities carrying out coast guard functions in sharing maritime information, providing surveillance and communication services, building capacity, analysing operational challenges and emerging risks in the maritime domain as well as sharing capacities by developing multipurpose maritime operations.



What is the legal basis?

EFCA, EMSA and Frontex have been working together for many years.

In 2016, their cooperation was formalised with a legislative proposal by the European Commission leading to the amendment of the three agencies' founding regulations with the insertion of a common article on "European cooperation on Coast Guard Functions".

In 2017, the agencies took a significant step in structuring their cooperation by signing a Tripartite Working Arrangement.

On 18 March 2021, the agencies further strengthened the European cooperation on coast guard functions, as the Tripartite Working Arrangement was renewed for an indefinite period.



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