



## EU border surveillance: MEPs approve Eurosur operating rules

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**EU member states will be better equipped to prevent, detect and combat irregular migration, but also to save migrants' lives, thanks to the "Eurosur" border surveillance system, whose operating rules were approved by Parliament on Thursday. Eurosur will enable member states to share real-time images and data on developments at the EU's external borders.**

The Eurosur communication network is designed to improve the detection, prevention and combating of irregular immigration and cross-border crime. MEPs insisted that it must also be used to help save migrants' lives.

"Only by having a pan-European border surveillance system we can prevent the Mediterranean from becoming a graveyard for refugees trying to cross it in unseaworthy small boats in search of a better life in Europe. To prevent a tragedy like that off Lampedusa from happening again, rapid intervention is necessary" said rapporteur Jan Mulder (ALDE, NL) in the plenary debate on Wednesday.

EU countries using Eurosur will be required always to respect human rights, including the "non-refoulement" principle, which prohibits returning a person to a place where his or her life or freedoms could be threatened.

Eurosur rules will also require users to protect all EU fundamental rights, including personal data protection. Any exchange of personal data among EU member states or with third countries via Eurosur must remain an exception and comply with data protection laws.

Furthermore, member states must not use Eurosur to send third countries any information that could be used to identify a person whose request for international protection is being processed or whose life or physical integrity could be at risk.

### Background

Eurosur aims to improve the management of the EU's external land and sea borders by stepping up information exchange among member states and with the EU border management agency Frontex. This includes sharing real-time data and intelligence from various authorities and surveillance tools, such as satellites or ship reporting systems, via a protected communication network.

Frontex reports that more than 72,000 people crossed the EU's external borders illegally in 2012, about half the number in 2011.

### Next steps

Eurosur's operating rules have been agreed with national governments. Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland will start using Eurosur on 2 December

# Press release

2013. Other member states will follow suit on 1 December 2014.

The new Eurosur system was approved by 479 votes to 101, with 20 abstentions.

Procedure: Co-decision (Ordinary Legislative Procedure), 1st reading agreement

## Contact

**Natalia DASILVA**

BXL: (+32) 2 28 44301

STR: (+33) 3 881 73661

PORT: (+32) 498 98 39 85

EMAIL: [libe-press@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:libe-press@europarl.europa.eu)

TWITTER: EP\_Justice