

Ms Emily O'Reilly
European Ombudsman

Your ref: Complaint 1062/2021/ABZ
Our ref: ICO/MIJU/6524c/2021
Please quote when replying.

Warsaw, 20 September 2021

Subject: Frontex's reply as regards the proposal for a solution in relation to EO case 1062/2021/ABZ

Dear Ms O'Reilly,

With reference to your proposal of 21 July 2021, for a solution related to complaint 1062/2021/ABZ, I would like to provide you with information on the amounts spent on food and entertainment in relation to Frontex's annual events as below.

In addition to the costs disclosed to the complainant in our previous correspondence from 25 March 2021, I also add the table listing the amounts spent on entertainment and dinners separately.

Year	Meals	Entertainment	Total event cost
2016	€ 59,377.84	€ 9,708.29	€ 371,063.31
2017	€ 43,703.80	€ 13,051.92	€ 341,324.58
2018	€ 54,082.33	€ 42,081.12	€ 580,152.22
2019	€ 58,657.58	€ 30,105.90	€ 494,542.46

Please note that,

- 1) the calculation and figures (meals and entertainment) provided in the attached table do not include the fee charged by the event agency;
- 2) since the prices in the financial documentation are provided in PLN, the INFOREURO exchange rate from May from the relevant years was used for the calculation;
- 3) breakfasts were not considered in this calculation as they are included in the price for the hotel room and cannot be exacted as extra costs;
- 4) similarly to breakfasts, we did not include the costs of the 'VIP room with coffee break' in 2016 and 2017, also here the costs for the coffee breaks cannot be separated;
- 5) the 'entertainment part' of the calculation for 2018 and 2019 also includes the costs of the exercises performed by the Polish Border Guard.

Furthermore, please find below some background information on Frontex's annual events as follows:

2019 was the last year (even before the pandemic) when the agency organised the 'European Day for Border Guards' (ED4BG) and as later called the 'European Border and Coast Guard Day' (EBCG Day). We had decided to stop holding the event as Frontex focused on the implementation of its new mandate, i.e. the establishment of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps.

The core function of such gathering was to build and strengthen the European cooperation between various law enforcement authorities dealing with border control, related coast guard functions and similar activities in the Schengen Area.

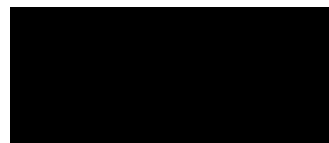
The idea behind was to present the European and international border guard community with an opportunity to share experiences and best practices. It provided a forum for topical discussion, exchange of views between key border-management players, Council and European Commission representatives, practitioners and academics. The first ED4BG was organised in May 2010 at the fifth anniversary of the agency and has provided since an opportunity to communicate about Frontex activities and bring border and coast guard officers together once a year.

Allow me to list some of the topics discussed in recent years:

- In 2016, the programme included panel discussions about the future of border management, a new mandate for Frontex, an inter-agency response to the unprecedented migratory pressure at the EU's external borders and Frontex's role in the returns of migrants.
- 2017 was the first event since Frontex became the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, gaining a wider set of tools and responsibilities to support member states at EU's external borders. The programme included four panels whose topics were related to Frontex's transformation, including a new way forward for border management, a new approach to European Integrated Border Management, European coast guard functions and border security as part of maintaining internal security within the EU.
- In 2018, the focus was safeguarding maritime borders, with presentations on security challenges at sea and how these can best be addressed.
- 2019 discussions centred around the implementation of the new regulation including the development of a standing corps up to challenges related to the Agency's role in the implementation of large-scale IT systems such as the EES and ETIAS in close cooperation with Member States.

Please note that each of these events lasted a full day, with discussions, exercises and presentations from industry and national authorities. A dinner for the participating border guards, coast guard and law enforcement authorities was organised after the event.

Yours sincerely,



Fabrice Leggeri
Executive Director