**Summary for teachers and students**

**FRONTEX**

1- FRONTEX: what you should know

* FRONTEX means: coordinating the protection of the EU’s external borders
* It directly concerns the **Schengen area**, which was created in 1985 (Schengen Agreement)  and **aimed to abolish national borders for countries signing the Schengen Agreement, allowing among other things freedom of movement of their citizens inside this new area.**

CAREFUL: at the time, it was considered as a parallel achievement to the EEC

* 2 dates that must be highlighted:
* 3 October 2005: establishment of FRONTEX
* **6 October 2016: becomes a fully-fledged agency→ increasing powers since then** (missions: risk analysis, but also border guard training, coordination of joint repatriation actions…)
* SIS is often used by FRONTEX. It is an information sharing system used in this area to compensate for border controls, as there are no internal borders. It is especially a tool of reference for security and immigration: indeed, for instance, it can launch an alert about an individual who committed a terrorist attack, sharing some of his information to this database… About immigration, the system spreads to countries return decisions made by another country for example.
* Why had FRONTEX got increasing powers? This is mostly due to the 2015 migrant crisis, when the EU showed itself unprepared to big humanitarian crisis (this year, illegal immigrants reached 1.82 millions). The EU Member states had different responses (welcoming views on that issue, while others closed their national borders) and the EU didn’t find a global solution until an agreement with Turkey in 2016

2-  Evolution of Frontex

* Frontex started its service in 2005 and was reformed a few times in the last years.
* Nowadays it has the right to buy its own equipment and to recruit its own police forces. However, due to sovereignty concerns, Frontex is still not allowed to conduct rescue operations, border controls, and surveillance missions without explicit authorization of an EU member state.
* By the end of 2027 Frontex should have 10000 employees
* Frontex has a growing role in the European migration strategy

3- Debate and criticisms

=> Several criticisms from civil society and certain political actors :

* The exclusively security and military approach of the agency :
* Ex : operations called "push back » ; 2011 mistreatment of migrants in Greece
* Lack of resources invested in rescuing migrants at sea
* Consequences : « Frontexit » operation launched in 2013
* Disrespect of the fundamental rights advocated by the EU

* Disclaiming responsibility :
* Externalization of risk and delegation of migrant management to third countries

* Efficiency and transparency :
* Meetings with organizations not included in the EU transparency registers
* Producing investigations which lack independence and impartiality
* Criticism from the European Court of Auditors (2021)

=> Evolutions ?

* 2011 : Fundamental rights officer was established in the agency
* 2016 : Increase in the budget
* Reaction of the European parliament
* Efficiency ? Not enough step back
* Bill Frelick : regarding the scale of the challenges and recent events : Frontex has to « gives priority to the protection of people and not to the application of measures at all costs » to respect the « EU-specific standards »