**Frontex honours the memory of its first Executive Director Ilkka Laitinen**

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Yesterday, the former Head of the Finnish Border Guard and first Frontex Executive Director, Lieutenant General Ilkka Laitinen, passed away.

Ilkka Laitinen became the Executive Director of Frontex in 2005, when the agency was established, and left Warsaw to return to his duties in the Finnish Border Guard in 2014.

“Together with Frontex staff who worked with Ilkka I am deeply saddened by his untimely death. He paved the way for Frontex to become the agency it is today. Everything achieved so far has been possible thanks to his legacy,” said Frontex Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri.

“Frontex has been established on a solid foundation; we are now able to overcome many challenges to build the future of the agency thanks to his sound management,” he added.

Ilkka Laitinen dealt with border-control at the national and European level for more than 30 years.

Today Frontex is flying its flags at half-mast to honor the memory of its former Director. The agency’s staff and management expressed their sincere condolences to the family of Mr Laitinen and his colleagues at the Finnish Border Guard.