

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001425/24
to the Commission
Emmanouil Frangos (ECR)
(25 July 2024)**

Subject: Strategy of weaponising illegal migrants from Turkey

The EU-Turkey agreement is a monument to failure, as Turkey is acting completely without restraint. In addition to the organised weaponising of illegal migrants in February 2020, Turkey persistently attempts to smuggle them across Greece's borders. In a typical case, on 20 July 2024, a Greek soldier was shot from the Turkish side of the border, apparently in order to intimidate the Greek border guard service.

On 22 July, at their informal meeting in Budapest, Home Affairs Ministers agreed that they needed to work out new cooperation agreements with third countries, 'such as those concluded with Tunisia, Turkey and Egypt'. It is indisputable that the progress of the agreements with Tunisia and Egypt has nothing in common with the essentially circumvented agreement with Turkey, which weaponises illegal migrants in order to blackmail the EU to achieve its own ends.

In view of this:

1. Having observed that Turkey could not care less about what it has agreed to, by what effective economic means does the Commission consider that it can punish Turkey whenever Greek border security reports Turkish violations?
2. To distinguish between cooperative and uncooperative states when it comes to bilateral agreements, has it any plans to make a proposal for a point system for the qualitative evaluation and grading of the agreements concerned?
3. Has it any effective cooperation agreement with services inside and outside of Turkey that can gather effective evidence of the illegal strategy pursued by Turkey's political leaders in this sector?

Submitted: 25.7.2024

**Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission
(19 February 2025)**

The EU-Turkey statement ⁽¹⁾ remains valid and is the main framework of cooperation with Türkiye in the area of migration. The statement has produced tangible results leading to a significant decrease of loss of human lives, a reduction in irregular crossings and perilous migrant journeys via Türkiye to the EU and improving the situation of refugees and migrants in Türkiye.

The number of irregular border crossings between Türkiye and the EU has remained consistently and significantly lower than before the EU-Turkey statement. The Commission expects Türkiye to fulfil its commitments from the statement, including prevention of irregular arrivals to the EU.

Full implementation of all elements of the EU-Turkey statement and the EU-Turkey readmission agreement remains key. The Commission is pursuing all strands of this key relationship, in line with the 2024 Joint Communication and the extraordinary European Council in April 2024 ⁽²⁾, and one of the next steps should be the relaunch of the High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Security.

In December 2024, the Commission adopted a package of support worth EUR 1 billion to assist with Syrian refugees and vulnerable communities and to support Türkiye with border and migration management.

The EU Action Plan for the Eastern Mediterranean ⁽³⁾, contains targeted operational measures aiming at enhancing migration management along this route, including measures focused on strengthening cooperation with Türkiye regarding counter-smuggling and border management.

Among the operational measures, the action plan foresees:

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/>

⁽²⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/m5jlwe0p/euco-conclusions-20240417-18-en.pdf>

⁽³⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/eu-action-plan-eastern-mediterranean-route_en

- Strengthening cooperation with countries of origin and transit in Asia and Africa and Türkiye to counter migrant smuggling;
- Supporting border management capacities on Türkiye's eastern borders;
- Continuing to engage with Türkiye to promote the full and effective implementation of the EU-Turkey statement and the EU-Turkey readmission agreement;
- Continuing cooperation with Türkiye on strengthening its asylum and reception systems.

The EU expects that Türkiye would protect the human rights of all irregular migrants in line with its international obligations.
