

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000492/26
to the Commission
Kostas Papadakis (NI)
(6 February 2026)**

Subject: New tragedy — crime against refugees in Chios

The tragedy in Chios, with refugees missing, injured and 15 dead, bears the stamp of the criminal policy of the EU and governments on the immigration and refugee issue.

Alongside the unacceptable EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, with priority given to burying the Geneva Convention, a bidding war is underway between the bourgeois classes of European countries and the EU for more barbaric measures, such as deportations to countries ravaged by imperialist war.

New Democracy is putting to the vote a bill that is an adaptation of EU guidelines, with the false title ‘Promotion of legal immigration policies’, which gives a boost to the ‘official’ slave trade, with the bourgeois State acting as an intermediary through interstate agreements, with the aim of securing cheap labour for business groups.

What is the Commission’s position concerning the fact that:

1. the policy of the EU and governments, which prioritises pushing refugees and immigrants back into the sea through repression and refoulement instead of rescuing them, results in tragedies such as the one in Chios and previous ones in Pylos, Samos and southern Crete?
2. this is not an isolated incident, as, on the basis of official data, multiple fatal shipwrecks in the Mediterranean have already been recorded since the beginning of 2026, with hundreds dead and missing?
3. the presence of Frontex in the Aegean is a factor in intensifying repression against refugees, given its role and responsibilities in the crime of the Pylos shipwreck, which resulted in many deaths, and the imminent revision of its mandate with an upgrade of its responsibilities and an increase in its staff?

Submitted: 6.2.2026

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(14 April 2026)**

Rendering assistance to persons in distress at sea is a moral duty and a legal obligation under international law. Migrant deaths at sea are a tragic reminder of the need for a comprehensive approach to migration management and renewed efforts to combat migrant smuggling.

The Commission is committed to preventing dangerous journeys by tackling the root causes of illegal migration and strengthening measures against organised crime along migratory routes while promoting safe and legal pathways.

As regards search and rescue (SAR) ⁽¹⁾, the Commission has promoted reinforced information sharing, coordination and cooperation among all relevant stakeholders, including partner countries.

Upon requests by the Member States, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) provides technical and operational support to facilitate the safe and effective management of the external borders of the EU.

The Agency must act in full compliance with its EU and international law obligations in all its activities and engagements. SAR is a responsibility of national authorities, Frontex, through the provision of services such as aerial surveillance, can support SAR operations and help saving lives at sea, by enabling the Member States to identify situations of potential distress earlier and respond more quickly and effectively.

In 2025 alone, 24 877 people were rescued at sea with Frontex support ⁽²⁾. The Commission is working on the revision of the Frontex mandate, in line with the Commission’s political guidelines ⁽³⁾, including with the aim of increasing its surveillance capabilities, which are key also to prevent loss of lives at sea.

⁽¹⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migration-management/search-and-rescue_en.

⁽²⁾ Frontex, 2025 In Brief: <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/2025-in-brief/>.

⁽³⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf.