

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000601/26
to the Commission
Nikos Pappas (The Left)
(11 February 2026)**

Subject: Violations of EU asylum law and fundamental rights in the fatal maritime incident off Chios

The multi-fatality shipwreck off Chios, in which a migrant boat sank during a Hellenic Coast Guard operation, raises serious questions regarding the practical implementation and effective monitoring of Member States' compliance with EU asylum law and fundamental rights.

The Pact on Migration and Asylum provides for an obligation of unhindered access to the asylum procedure, a prohibition of practices leading to de facto collective removal or indirect refoulement in the context of border operations, as well as full respect for the right to life and the principle of non-refoulement.

The Commission is asked:

1. What specific control and monitoring mechanisms are activated to ensure that Member States' maritime surveillance operations comply in practice with Articles 4 and 6 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1348?
2. How does the Commission ensure that law enforcement practices at sea do not lead, directly or indirectly, to a breach of the principle of non-refoulement in violation of Articles 18 and 19 of the Charter and Articles 3 and 8 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1356?
3. Taking into account Article 2 of the Charter and the documentation obligations of maritime surveillance operations under Regulation (EU) 656/2014, how does the Commission assess the adequacy of the existing means of recording, preserving and checking evidence by national authorities to ensure effective accountability in cases of loss of life?

Submitted: 11.2.2026

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

In accordance with EU law, Member States must designate competent authorities, in particular to receive applications for international protection, and ensure the access of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to applicants, once disembarked.

All Member States involved in search and rescue operations must prioritise saving lives at sea, in accordance with their obligations under EU and international law. When applying EU law, Member States must comply with the principle of non-refoulement.

It is the responsibility of every Member State to correctly implement EU law, including in the context of maritime surveillance operations coordinated by Frontex and falling under the scope of Regulation (EU) 656/2014 ⁽¹⁾.

Alleged violations of fundamental rights and of the principle of non-refoulement, and incidents that result in loss of life at sea must be investigated promptly and thoroughly.

In doing so, Member States may also need to ensure that appropriate means are in place to record, preserve, and check evidence, to ensure effective accountability.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (OJ L 189, 27.6.2014: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/656/oj>).