

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001937/26
to the Commission
Jean-Paul Garraud (Pfe), Fabrice Leggeri (Pfe)
(11 May 2026)**

Subject: Increase in irregular crossings in the Western Mediterranean: what measures will be taken against smugglers and migratory pressure?

According to Frontex, illegal crossings detected at the EU's external borders decreased by around 40% in the first quarter of 2026. However, this overall decrease should not hide a worrying development: the Western Mediterranean route is the only major migratory route to record an increase, with around 4 400 crossings detected over the same period, a rise of 66% year-on-year ⁽¹⁾.

This route directly concerns the security of Southern Europe and, in turn, the security of the entire Schengen area. It shows how smuggling networks are quickly able to adapt to the controls and shift flows to points of vulnerability.

Can the Commission say:

1. what additional operational measures will be taken with Frontex to strengthen surveillance in the Western Mediterranean?
2. whether European resources will be mobilised specifically to combat the networks of smugglers active on this route?
3. whether it will propose making aid, visas and cooperation agreements with countries of origin and transit more strictly conditional on verifiable results in terms of both preventing departures and readmission?

Submitted: 11.5.2026

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(8 July 2026)**

Increased detections on the Western Mediterranean route are concerning. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency ('Frontex') is supporting Member States in the region through operational activities at sea, including maritime surveillance, and at key ports of entry.

Currently Frontex has around 200 standing corps officers deployed in support of Spanish authorities. Additional deployments are possible upon request of Member States.

The Multi-country Migration Package (2025-27) for the Southern Neighbourhood ⁽¹⁾, foresees EUR 160 million in budget support for Morocco to support the implementation of the Moroccan Migration and Asylum Strategy. The policy targets are currently under negotiation.

An EU-funded project aimed at strengthening Moroccan capacities to detect and investigate smuggling and trafficking cases, prosecute individuals and criminal networks involved and protect trafficking victims is currently being implemented.

The Visa Code ⁽²⁾ allows the Commission to propose restrictive visa measures if it considers that a third country is not cooperating sufficiently on readmission.

The revision of the Generalised Scheme of Preference Regulation will allow for trade preference to be temporarily withdrawn in case of a lack of cooperation on readmission ⁽³⁾.

The Commission's proposal for a new Global Europe Regulation for the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework ⁽⁴⁾ links economic cooperation with readmission cooperation.

¹ <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/frontex-irregular-border-crossings-down-40-in-q1-2026-agQvWE>.

⁽¹⁾ Commission Implementing Decision of 15.12.2025 on the financing of the multiannual action plan on migration for the Southern Neighbourhood for 2025-2027 — Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf: https://north-africa-middle-east-gulf.ec.europa.eu/commission-implementing-decision-15122025-financing-multiannual-action-plan-migration-southern_en.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code) (OJ L 243, 15.9.2009, pp. 1-58).

⁽³⁾ COM/2021/579 final.

⁽⁴⁾ COM (2025) 551 final.