

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003390/26
to the Commission
Özlem Demirel (The Left)
(31 August 2026)**

Subject: Classification of the maritime emergency observed by Frontex on 11 May 2026

On 11 May 2026, the crew of civilian sea-rescue vessel Sea-Watch 5 saved 90 people from an overcrowded double-deck wooden boat with no adequate life-saving equipment in international waters around 55 nautical miles north of Tripoli. Under the relevant maritime conventions (e.g. SOLAS, SAR), the circumstances constituted an acute maritime emergency. Frontex observed the boat at times using a long-range drone stationed in Malta, but did not take any further action.

1. What information did Frontex have about the situation on board — the condition people were in, the situation below deck or the availability of life-saving equipment before the Sea-Watch 5 arrived?
2. What criteria or conventions do Frontex and Frontex aerial surveillance pilots use when sighting a vessel and afterwards, to assess whether a maritime emergency is at hand, and what measures are then taken?
3. Did Frontex or the Airbus pilot of the long-distance drone classify the observed vessel as being in a maritime emergency, did it take measures, or not, and on what grounds?

Submitted: 31.8.2026

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(22 October 2026)**

As the questions fall under the responsibility of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), the Commission has asked the Agency to provide a response to the questions raised by the Honourable Member. The Commission will send the Agency's reply to the Honourable Member as soon as possible.
