

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-001576/25
to the Commission
Fredis Beleris (PPE)
(17 April 2025)

Subject: Urgent need to fight the organised crime of smugglers

On 12 April 2025, a Greek patrol vessel was informed that irregular migrants were being disembarked from a Turkish fishing boat near Agios Fokas, in the south of the island of Lesbos. Upon approaching the boat, the patrol vessel was shot at by one of the four smugglers on board. We are once again witnessing the aggression of the trafficking networks in the Aegean Sea. New EU actions are based on data from the EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (EU-SOCTA). It is therefore all the more evident that there is an urgent need, as reflected in the new European Internal Security Strategy, to strengthen the resources at the EU's disposal to guard European borders and combat organised crime.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Does it intend to further strengthen the relevant European agencies, especially Frontex and Europol, in the fight against organised crime of traffickers?
2. Does it intend to increase funding for protection and deterrence instruments at the external borders in the revision of the current MFF and the new (post-2027) MFF?

Submitted: 17.4.2025

Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(6 June 2025)

1. The political guidelines for the Commission 2024-2029 ⁽¹⁾ envisage strengthening Frontex, notably to equip it with state-of-the-art technology for surveillance and situational awareness, along with its own equipment and personnel to ensure it can protect EU borders in all circumstances with strong governance and the full respect of fundamental rights. The Commission has launched a feasibility study to support its upcoming impact assessment and legislative proposal. The Commission will reflect on the possibilities to reinforce the mandate of Frontex, also with regard to security aspects, as well as how to ensure that the inter-agency cooperation, particularly with Europol, will bring even more robust results in fighting cross-border crime.

In 2023 ⁽²⁾, the Commission tabled a targeted proposal to enhance Europol's support to preventing and combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings that would also strengthen the cooperation between Europol and Frontex. In addition, in line with the political guidelines, the Commission envisages to table a proposal in order to make Europol truly operational, by addressing any areas for improvement that will allow Europol to reach its full potential and to best meet the needs of national law enforcement authorities.

Strengthening the capacities of Europol and Frontex in countering migrant smuggling contributes to the implementation of the Global Alliance to counter migrant smuggling, with its call to strengthen international cooperation in preventing and responding to migrant smuggling and addressing alternatives to irregular migration ⁽³⁾.

2. The Commission intends to present its proposal on the next multiannual financial framework in July 2025. The underlying political orientations were presented in the Commission Communication 'The road to the next multiannual financial framework' adopted on 11 February 2025 ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en.

⁽²⁾ COM/2023/754 final.

⁽³⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/irregular-migration-and-return/international-conference-global-alliance-counter-migrant-smuggling_en#more-information.

⁽⁴⁾ COM(2025) 46 final.