

EN

P-002629/2025

Answer given by Mr Brunner
on behalf of the European Commission
(4.8.2025)

1. Search and Rescue (SAR) is regulated by international law¹ and its implementation is a primary responsibility of the Member States. In emergencies, the competent national authorities typically dispatch boats, including private vessels, that are either the closest or best equipped to engage in SAR. International law also applies to the maritime activities of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). Frontex's SAR responsibilities are moreover detailed in EU law, e.g. Regulation 656/2014², and in the operational plans for joint operations in which Frontex is involved.

2. Beyond publicly available information, the Commission is not aware of additional details pertaining to the case referred to by the Honourable Member and is therefore not in a position to confirm or deny the accuracy of information reported. The Commission has requested Frontex to provide additional information with respect to the facts of the case in question. The Agency's reply will be sent to the Honourable Member by the Commission as soon as possible.

3. The Commission calls on all actors involved in SAR operations, including Frontex, to prioritise saving lives at sea in accordance with their obligations under EU and international law. Moreover, in the Pact on Migration and Asylum³, the Commission also proposed a more coordinated and multi-pillar approach to SAR by reinforced information sharing, coordination and cooperation among all relevant stakeholders, including partner countries.

¹ Such as the International Convention on the Law of the Sea, the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, and the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue.

² Regulation 656/2014 on establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by Frontex.

³ Commission Recommendation 2020/1365 on cooperation among Member States concerning operations carried out by vessels owned or operated by private entities for the purpose of search and rescue activities.