

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3968/09
by Athanasios Plevris (EFD)
to the Commission

Subject: Harassment of FRONTEX aircraft by Turkey

As the Commission is very well aware, the Mediterranean countries are faced with an enormous problem in the form of an uncontrolled flow of migrants from Asia and Africa (illegal immigrants). This problem is particularly acute in Greece for the additional reason that Turkey does not consent to the return of migrants and obstructs the operations of FRONTEX. A typical example is when Turkey impeded FRONTEX aircraft which were flying over Greek islands (Agathonisi and Farmakonisi). Turkish radar falsely reported Greek airspace as Turkish and essentially thwarted the entire operation. At the same time, every day from the shores of Asia Minor, the Turkish State allows, and frequently facilitates, the flow of migrants to Europe.

1. Is the Commission aware of Turkey's violations of Greek airspace, which forms part of European territory, and what view does it take of such violations?
2. What view does the Commission take of Turkish fighter aircraft impeding FRONTEX operations to tackle illegal immigration?
3. Does the Commission intend to exert pressure on Turkey - and in what manner - to agree to the return of illegal immigrants and not to facilitate the passage of migrants into Europe?
4. Does the Commission intend to assist Greece and the other Mediterranean countries to crack down on illegal immigration, and how?
5. Does the Commission believe that the EU's capacity to absorb potential immigrants has been exhausted and how will it deter new waves of immigration?