

**Question for written answer E-004816/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Systematic and coordinated push-backs by the Greek authorities

On 17 August 2020, the New York Times published an article entitled 'Taking Hard Line, Greece Turns Back Migrants by Abandoning Them at Sea'. It documents how migrants landing on Greek soil have been forced onto precarious life rafts by the Greek authorities on multiple occasions and dropped at the Turkish-Greek maritime border, leaving them to drift until they are rescued by the Turkish authorities. Others have been towed back to the Turkish maritime border and abandoned after the authorities disabled their engines, left on an uninhabited island or expelled across the Evros River without legal recourse.

Is the Commission aware of these events and can it confirm that they are taking place?

Given the reliability of the newspaper, we believe that the Greek authorities are engaging in unprecedented, extremely aggressive and systematic push-backs, and are thus contravening European Union law, namely Article 78(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Articles 3 and 4 of the EU Schengen Borders Code, Article 9 of the Asylum Procedures Directive, Article 5 of the Return Directive, Articles 18, 19(2) and 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and the 1951 Refugee Convention. Asylum and migration are a shared EU responsibility. Is the Commission therefore considering opening an infringement procedure against the Greek Government?