

**Question for written answer E-003632/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Özlem Demirel (The Left)

Subject: Non-disclosure by Frontex of the precise coordinates of vessels in distress at sea

Following detection of a refugee vessel by Frontex manned or unmanned aerial surveillance systems, the rescue coordination centres in Libya, Malta and/or Italy are alerted. Frontex also transmits the information on the Channel 16 international distress frequency. However, it withholds the full coordinates in order to prevent any private humanitarian rescue attempts. Instead, it provides information that can be understood only by the Libyan Coastguard, that is to say the precise bearing and distance of the stricken vessel from Libyan patrol boats. If this information were given to private rescue vessels also, fewer people would drown in the Mediterranean.

1. What information does the Frontex Aerial Surveillance Service (FASS) also known as the Multipurpose Aerial Surveillance Service (MAS or MASS) generally transmit over the Channel 16 distress frequency following the location of a stricken vessel in the central Mediterranean and what information may be withheld?
2. Under what circumstances are the full coordinates of a stricken vessel transmitted over the Channel 16 distress frequency?
3. In which instances has the withholding of full coordinates delayed attempts to assist a vessel, with occupants being drowned as a result?