

**Question for written answer E-004149/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Özlem Demirel (The Left)

Subject: Incidents involving Frontex drones

Frontex has been operating a 'Heron 1' drone in Malta since May 2021. The drone was manufactured by the Israeli company IAI under a contract with a German subsidiary of the Europe-based defence division of Airbus.

After it had completed 1 500 flight hours (180 days), then came 'Hermes 900', a drone made by the Israeli company Elbit. Both drones have very high crash rates: the German Bundeswehr has had to write off every 'Heron 1' it has ever deployed, and the same fate befell the 'Hermes 900' operated by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).

1. How many flight hours has Frontex logged for the 'Heron 1' drone it operates in Malta, and is it likely to extend its contract with Airbus?
2. What in-flight incidents (e.g. engine, navigation and control system or transponder failures, or other technical problems on board) have occurred and how serious were they?
3. When and where did these incidents occur, what steps has Airbus since taken, and what do Frontex and the Commission make of these measures?