

**Question for written answer E-001078/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Özlem Demirel (The Left)

Subject: Operations by Frontex vessels in Senegal's territorial waters

In 2006, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) launched its first joint operation, HERA, along the coasts of Morocco, Western Sahara and Mauritania. The operation was extended in 2007 – HERA II and subsequently HERA III – to include Senegal's territorial waters. That makes HERA unprecedented: under no other Frontex mission have deployed units been allowed to enter or circulate within third countries' sovereign territory.

1. Under which operational plans for HERA (I, II or III) was provision made for Frontex vessels to navigate in Senegal's territorial waters, and when did vessels begin to do so?
2. Did the operational plans also allow for refugees taken on board to be disembarked in Senegal and, if so, to what extent did that actually take place with due regard for the ban on refoulement?
3. Why did Frontex terminate Operation HERA in 2019, and to what extent was disagreement with the host state, Spain, one of the main reasons for doing so?