

**Question for written answer E-001757/2022/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Özlem Demirel (The Left)

Subject: Division of tasks for Frontex drone flights

Frontex has been deploying an Israeli 'Heron 1' long-range drone in Malta since May 2021. The operator is the German subsidiary of the defence group Airbus. The drone is licensed to the air force in Malta. In the coming weeks, Frontex will station a 'Heron 1' drone in Crete. So far, 300 Frontex drone flights have led to the detection of 13 000 refugees in the central Mediterranean. Many of these people were handed over to the Libyan Coast Guard for it to return them to prisons in Libya in which the conditions are unfit for humans. It is unclear whether the notification of such a sighting or of a maritime emergency is done directly by the Airbus pilot or by the Frontex Situation Centre in Warsaw.

1. What personnel or liaison staff has Frontex seconded to the ground station for control and operation of the 'Heron 1' sensor payload from the international airport in Malta, and how are the Airbus personnel there supported or supplemented by Frontex staff?
2. What other Frontex staff or personnel seconded to Frontex from individual Member States are involved in the command and supervision of these flights and in the processing and analysis of sensor data in Malta, Warsaw or elsewhere, and what are the specific job titles of the officers responsible for these tasks?
3. In the Commission's view, what personnel from Airbus (control), Frontex (image data evaluation) or the Maltese air force (official operator of the drone) are responsible, so as to comply with international conventions, for classifying maritime emergencies detected during missions and for notifying the competent control centres, and what tasks do Frontex Fusion Services staff in Warsaw carry out in that connection?