

EN

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Answer given by Ms Johansson
on behalf of the European Commission
(25.5.2023)

1. In line with the February 2023 European Council conclusions¹, the Commission maintains that effective external border management is a priority for the EU as a whole and that an integrated approach must be taken. The focus should be on smart solutions that support the implementation of European integrated border management, such as integrated, interoperable and adaptable surveillance systems. In that respect, the Commission recently adopted a Communication establishing a dedicated multiannual strategic policy for European integrated border management². However, EU law does not preclude the construction of fences for border control purposes. Several Member States have decided to construct such fences themselves financing them at national level.

2. The Commission finances infrastructure, mobile and stationary units, border surveillance systems and equipment, refurbishment of border crossing points, new installations for IT systems, as well as the maintenance of equipment, using EU funds.

3. Member States retain primary responsibility for the management of their external borders in their interest and in the interest of all Member States. They are best placed to define how to do this in practice in a way that is fully in line with the EU acquis. Controlling the external borders by way of surveillance of the green and sea borders and checks at border crossing points is the fundamental component of European Integrated Border Management, requiring policy and organisational measures to enhance migration governance, crisis preparedness and contribute to ensuring the internal security in the EU. The European Border and Coast Guard, in which the competent Member States' authorities cooperate with Frontex, is the central tool to achieve this goal.

¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

² COM(2023) 146 final.