

**Question for written answer E-001372/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Özlem Demirel (The Left)

Subject: Aircraft and drones chartered by Frontex in the Mediterranean

Frontex is using manned and unmanned aircraft to monitor the airspace over the Central Mediterranean and sharing its findings with the Libyan authorities – sometimes via WhatsApp messages, as media outlets have discovered. However, the Libyan authorities have also presented a hindrance. There have been at least six instances of Frontex's aircraft and drones being denied entry into Libya's Flight Information Region by the country's air traffic control. Private sea rescue planes have faced similar situations.

1. To what extent do Frontex, or the agency's contracted service providers for manned or unmanned flights in the Libyan SAR Zone, still communicate with the Libyan Coast Guard via WhatsApp or similar non-official channels?
2. To what extent are the aircraft chartered by Frontex subject to the Chicago Convention, according to which free passage through a Flight Information Region must be guaranteed, and what is the relevant passage of that convention?
3. In Frontex's view, what other options under international law allow Libyan air traffic control to deny private and government aircraft passage through a Flight Information Region, and to what extent have these already been applied in Frontex operations?

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