

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002048/21
to the Commission
Erik Marquardt (Verts/ALE)
(15 April 2021)**

Subject: Cases of Hellenic Coast Guard interceptions in the Aegean Sea

On 10 April 2021, Der Spiegel published an article ⁽¹⁾ stating that, according to figures provided by Frontex, since March 2020, 132 boats had been intercepted by the Hellenic Coast Guard in the Aegean Sea — where the EU agency is also present. This figure was not made public or available to Parliament, but as a Member of the European Parliament and of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs' Frontex Security Working Group, I would like to ask the following:

1. Why was this figure not made available to Parliament?
2. Was this information on the 132 intercepted boats made available to Frontex's Working Group on Fundamental Rights and Legal Operational Aspects of Operations in the Aegean Sea when examining alleged human rights violations and the involvement of the agency in such violations?
3. How was it proven that the safeguards of Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 were observed, that no boats were in distress and that no persons were in need of international protection?

**Answer given by Ms Johansson on behalf of the European Commission
(21 June 2021)**

1. and 2. As the questions raised by the Honourable Member regarding figures published in Der Spiegel and attributed to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) arise out of data apparently produced by Frontex, the Commission has asked the Agency to provide the details requested by the Honourable Member. The Agency's reply will be sent by the Commission to the Honourable Member as soon as possible.

3. Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 ⁽²⁾ is applicable in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by Frontex. Any violations of Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 by the assets/staff deployed in the context of such an operation would be reportable via the Serious Incident Reporting System of Frontex. Any reports made via the Serious Incident Reporting System would be in the possession of Frontex, as such the Commission has asked the Agency to provide the details requested by the Honourable Member. The Agency's reply will be sent by the Commission to the Honourable Member as soon as possible.

See annexes: Annex 1, Annex 2.

⁽¹⁾ Griechenland: Mehr als 100 Flüchtlingsboote bei Frontex-Einsätzen zurückgestoßen — Der Spiegel

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union OJ L 189 of 27.6.2014, p. 93.