

Matthias Oel
Director
European Commission
Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
Directorate B: Borders, Interoperability and Innovation
Contact: Mr Istvan DOBO

04 May 2020

Our ref: ORD/FDU/DIJU/4066/2020
Please quote when replying.
Your reference: Ares (2020)2109496 - 17/04/2020

Subject: Question for written answer E-001650/2020: Frontex operations in Greece

Dear Mr Oel,

I would like to express my gratitude for your letter and would like to hereby provide you with the following information, which I hope will support the Commission's reply to the specific questions addressed by the honorable member of the European Parliament, Mr Özlem Demirel.

What rapid reaction interventions, joint operations, flexible operational activities and other operations is Frontex currently carrying out on the Greek-Turkish, Greek-Albanian and Greek-North Macedonian borders, and in which locations or districts are they taking place?

Rapid Border Interventions (RBI) taking place at the Greek-Turkish border:

- RBI Evros 2020 at the Greek-Turkish land border;
- RBI Aegean 2020 at the Greek- Turkish sea border.

Joint Operations (JO):

- JO Flexible Operational Activities 2020 Land implemented at the Greek-Turkish, Greek North Macedonian and Greek-Albanian land border;
- JO Poseidon 2020 implemented at the Greek-Turkish sea border.

Which governments of EU Member States are currently involved, with how many personnel, with which own equipment and in which of these Frontex missions on both sides of the Greek border? Do these figures include the crew of ships and planes or helicopters?

RBI Evros 2020: 104 Team Members (TM) and 46 patrol cars are deployed by the Members States, namely by: Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Croatia, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland.

RBI Aegean 2020: In total 74 personnel including 10 TM, 62 Crew Members (CM) and 2 National Officers (NO) along with 2 coastal patrol boats (CPB), 2 coastal patrol vessels (CPV), 1 helicopter and 3 thermal vision vehicles (TVV) are deployed by the Members States, namely by: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Croatia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania.

JO Flexible Operational Activities 2020 Land implemented at the Greek-Turkish, Greek North Macedonian and Greek-Albanian land border: 71 TM, 24 patrol cars and 3 TVVs are deployed by the Members States, namely by: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain.

Additionally, Frontex implements the JO Flexible Operational Activities Western Balkans 2020 in Albania, which aims at implementing coordinated operational activities at the land border between Albania and Greece, in the territory of Albania in order to control illegal immigration flows, to combat cross-border crime and to enhance the European cooperation.

JO Poseidon 2020: in total 185 personnel including 73 TM, 102 CM and 10 NO along with 1 off-shore patrol vessel (OPV), 8 CPB, 1 CPV, 4 TVV and 3 patrol cars are deployed by the Members States namely by Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

In which missions are Member State border guards coordinated by Frontex working together with the Greek military, as seen in press photos, for example, at the start of the rapid response intervention on 13 March 2020 at the Evros river border?

In the land domain, Frontex deployed TM are always working under the command and control of the Hellenic Police. Land borders in Greece are considered military protected zones under the supervision of the Greek Army, therefore the Greek Army is constantly present at the border and it may happen they meet with Hellenic Police and Frontex TM. However, Frontex is not performing any tasks together with the Greek Army and they are not part of any Frontex operational activities.

In the sea domain, the operational counterparts are the Hellenic Police and the Hellenic Coast Guard. The deployed Human Resources and Technical Equipment are not engaged in any operational cooperation with the Hellenic Military Forces.

Taking the opportunity I would like to wish you and all your staff to stay safe and healthy in these challenging and complex times.

Yours sincerely,


Fabrice Leggeri
Executive Director