

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

Our ref: CBD/PRU/GIFO/4972/2021
Please quote when replying.

Warsaw, 31 May 2021

Subject: Priority question for written answer P-002276/2021 to the Commission Rule 138 Özlem Demirel

Dear Mr Oel,

Please find below our reply to the Written Question **P-002276/2021** submitted by MEP Özlem Demirel, referring to the Long-range drones for Frontex.

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) intends to use long-range drones to monitor the Mediterranean area and with that aim in view awarded a contract worth more than EUR 50 million a year ago. One or more MALE-class drones (medium altitude and long flight duration) are to be deployed in Malta, Italy or Greece, but the system is not yet operational.

1. What companies (main contractor and subcontractors) have been awarded the Frontex contract to operate drones in the Mediterranean, and when does the contract start?

Frontex reported the main contractors here: <https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:473315-2020:TEXT:EN:HTML>. Frontex signed the framework contracts on 1 October 2020. Frontex signed the first specific order under this framework contract with Airbus DS on 11 December 2020.

Regarding the subcontractors:

The subcontracted entity to the cascade framework contract no.1 concluded with Airbus DS is the MALAT Division of the Israel Aerospace Industries Ltd (IAI) from Israel.

The subcontracted entity to the cascade framework contract no.2 concluded with Elbit Systems Ltd is the UAV Tactical Systems Ltd from UK.

2. As things stand, where will the drones be deployed and what is their range?

In line with the published tender documentation <https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-documents.html?cftId=5444>, the deployment of remotely piloted aircraft is expected to be at the airport(s) located in Greece and/or in Italy and/or in Malta. The remotely piloted aircraft deployed under the Specific Order 1 is based on Malta. In the Terms of Reference of the published tender, the

expected range was defined as a minimum of 20 hours endurance with a minimum acceptable payload and with reserve and contingency fuel.

3. What radar-based surveillance technology are the drones equipped with, and in what circumstances will the information collected also be shared with third countries such as Libya or Tunisia?

The radar-based surveillance technology required under the procedure in question for the MALE remotely piloted aircraft, as well as details of expectations related to their data gathering, are specified in the tender documentation - Annex I, Tender Specifications <https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-documents.html?cftId=5444>.

Frontex will not share this information with third countries, unless when foreseen by binding International Regulations (for instance, distress situation at sea according to the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue provisions).

I remain at your disposal for any further clarifications.


Fabrice Leggeri
Executive Director