

Mr Margaritis Schinas
European Commission Vice-President for Promoting the European Way of Life

Ms Ylva Johansson
European Commissioner for Home Affairs

Warsaw, 28 April 2021

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Please quote when replying.

Dear Vice-President Schinas,
Dear Commissioner Johansson,

I would like to bring to your attention some of the recent developments in the Eastern Mediterranean which took place within the operational area covered by the Frontex Joint Operation Poseidon and involving, inter alia, assets deployed by EU Member States to the Frontex coordinated operational activity.

The Greek authorities reported to us - also confirmed by the Frontex Coordinating Officer - that on 26 and 27 April 2021, two incidents were recorded in the maritime external border area of Chios island, during which vessels of Turkish Coast Guard entered Greek territorial waters, and violated the international rules for safe navigation by performing dangerous manoeuvres towards the Finnish and Swedish Coastal Patrol Boats (CPB) patrolling within the above mentioned joint operation as part of the Frontex operation. The incident against the Finnish CPB has been also recorded by the crew, and there is a footage available for further assessment.

The actions of the Turkish Coast Guard do not respect any coast guard protocol, nor maritime behavioural standards. These incidents repeatedly raise safety and security concerns by vessels and crews deployed by EU Member States to the Frontex coordinated Joint Operation Poseidon. Frontex assets deployed in the area have to constantly assess the situational environment, as the Turkish Coast Guard still employs a mix of cooperative actions taking over migrants in the Turkish territorial waters and hostile behaviours in apparent attempts for pushing migrants from the Turkish waters to the Greek waters. The motivation of the Turkish Coast Guard during these incidents needs to be brought into question, considering the geopolitical sensitiveness of the operating area.

Let me once again underline how the above recorded actions by the Turkish Authorities, and in general the geopolitical tensions in the Aegean Sea blur the operational situation in the Frontex Joint Operation Poseidon area and further create operational and reputational risks

for the Agency and the supporting Member States' assets. Following the Frontex operational protocols, we have launched a Serious Incident Reporting procedure in the above-mentioned cases.

Yours sincerely,



Fabrice Leggeri
Executive Director

CC: Ms Monique Pariat, Director-General, DG Migration and Home Affairs
Mr Marko Gašperlin, Chair of Frontex Management Board
Ms Annegret Kohler, Fundamental Rights Officer a.i.
Mr Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut, Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey - via FLO to Turkey

Annex: Serious Incident Reports 11447/2021 and 11451/ 2021