

Chairman of the LIBE Committee

Our ref: CAB/ANRA/9262a/2020
Please quote when replying.

Warsaw, 27 October 2020

Dear Mr ,

I would like to notify you and the LIBE Committee that Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, has launched an internal inquiry into suspicious incidents recently reported by several news organisations related to our activities at Greece's external borders.

So far, no documents or other materials have been found to substantiate any accusations of violations of the law or the Frontex Code of Conduct by deployed officers.

This inquiry highlights the Agency's commitment to uphold the highest border guarding standards in all of its operations and the fact that I and the rest of Frontex do not tolerate any violations of the fundamental rights in any of our activities. We remain committed to providing support to Greece at its external borders in line with our mandate and in the spirit of EU solidarity, in full respect of fundamental rights and international law.

Earlier this year, as part of an operational dialogue with Greece, I had already asked its authorities to investigate two events near its islands in the eastern Aegean Sea. The Greek authorities found no proof of any illegal acts in one incident and are still looking into another one. As you are aware, under its mandate, the Agency does not have the power to investigate and must rely on Member States.

In my communication with the public, I noted that I also informed LIBE of an incident earlier this year when a crew of the Danish vessels deployed by the Agency was given incorrect instructions by the officers of the Hellenic Coast Guard. Following the incident Frontex, contacted the Greek authorities and the misunderstanding was clarified with the Hellenic Coast Guard.

At this point of time, the still ongoing inquiry has not identified any other suspicious cases than those already reported by the Executive Director to Greek authorities.

The situation in the eastern Aegean has been complicated for the vessels deployed by Frontex to patrol the external borders because of a disagreement between Greece and Turkey over their maritime borders. This has affected search and rescue activities in the area. Despite all these increasing difficulties Frontex continues to save lives and has rescued 2 700 people so far this year.

Yours sincerely,

Fabrice Leggeri
Executive Director