

Mr Matthias OEL
Director of Directorate B - Schengen,
Borders & Visa
DG HOME, European Commission

Dear Mr Oel,

In reference to your inquiry please see below the necessary elements for a concise reply to the questions related to *“Frontex air surveillance hours of the ‘pre-frontier area’ in the central Mediterranean Sea”*:

1. *Which aircraft and drones have been deployed by Frontex since 2018 for aerial surveillance of the ‘pre-frontier area’ in the Central Mediterranean under the Eurosur border surveillance system, and which services have been involved?*

Since 2018, Frontex has deployed in the Central Mediterranean for the pre-frontier the following aircraft:

- DA-42,
- DA-62,
- King Air B200
- King Air B350.

The only MALE RPAS that has been deployed is an IAI Heron 1.

The only aerial surveillance service under EFS is S14 Multipurpose Aerial Surveillance (MAS).

2. *How many of these aircraft and drones used in Eurosur services were deployed in the Central Mediterranean in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively, and how many flight hours did these aircraft and drones log each year?*

According to the availability of aerial means and the operational needs, an average of 2 surveillance aircraft have been deployed in the Central Mediterranean almost continuously in the considered timeframe. These aircraft have delivered the following amount of flight hours:

2018 - 1396:35 FH
2019 - 1415:36 FH
2020 - 2436:59 FH
2021 - 2869:20 FH

3. Which countries or EU agencies have requested Eurosur services for aerial surveillance of the 'pre-frontier area' from Frontex for 2022, and which of these missions have been or are being carried out?

In 2022, Malta, Greece, Bulgaria, Belgium and Slovakia requested the MAS service for pre-frontier purposes. At present, the Maltese and the Belgian requests are still in the planning phase. In addition, an Italian service request received in late 2021 and with a delayed start, is under implementation as well.

Yours sincerely,

Electronically signed

Aija Kalnaja
Deputy Executive Director for Standing Corps Management
Deputising for the Executive Director