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Brussels, 23. February 2021

To:

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission
Ylva Johansson, Commissioner for Home Affairs

Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear Commissioner Johansson,

We are writing to you in view of the new Frontex Regulation, which provides for the establishment of a "Standing Corps" consisting of 10,000 police officers for short- and long-term missions by 2027. About 3,000 of them report directly to the headquarters in Warsaw as "Category 1". Around 1,100 "Category 1" officers will wear EU uniforms for the first time and will receive equipment for the use of force, including a baton, handcuffs and irritants as well as a weapon.

As early as April 2020, the General Secretariat of the Council pointed out in Council document 7607/20 two expert opinions according to which the Frontex Regulation does not contain a legal basis for the acquisition, storage or transport of weapons. The Headquarters Agreement with the Polish Government also does not contain a provision to this effect. Nevertheless, in the same year Frontex held "industry days" with arms manufacturers and asked them to be ready for a tender for which the deadline might be tight.

In two questions (E-005132/2020 and E-006480/2020) to the Commission concerning equipping and arming Frontex, the Commission has repeatedly given evasive or no concrete answers, especially regarding the legal basis. However, as things stand, the procurement of weapons for Frontex is illegal.

It is not the only matter on which the Commission does not provide adequate information, but here it is particularly serious because MEPs have the right and the duty of scrutiny over the operations of the EU agencies, especially when it comes to arming officers.

In a period of five months, however, it was not possible to clarify the illegal practices of Frontex. In this way, the EP's right to ask questions is undermined and rendered useless, parliamentary control is reduced to absurdity.

- We hereby request full information on the status and interim results of the preparation of the legal basis for the arming of Frontex, including the options under consideration.
- We demand full transparency and involvement of the EU Parliament regarding the awarding of contracts and the procurement of the mentioned equipment for the "Category 1" officers.
- We demand again and emphatically that the EP questions to the Commission should be answered with the necessary seriousness by actually providing substantive information.
- We hope that in particular the President of the Commission will react appropriately to the many abuses and scandals around Frontex that have recently been uncovered by journalists and NGOs.

Sincerely

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