

PRESS RELEASE

When the European agency Frontex favours American drones for our border control...

Frontex's call for tenders for a drone service leads to the rejection of all European companies, and favours American technology. This is nonsense at a time of strategic autonomy for Europe, denounces MEP Christophe Grudler (Modem - Renew Europe).

MEP Christophe Grudler denounced a choice made by Frontex which he described as "unacceptable": *"By choosing to procure non-European technology drones to monitor our maritime borders, the Agency would pose a risk to our autonomy and security, while weakening our European industry."*

Frontex's call for tenders, launched at the end of 2019 for a contract estimated at 50 million euros, has selection criteria that prevent European companies from replying, *"although they would have had all the assets to effectively monitor our maritime borders, if they had not been excluded de facto by Frontex's technical criteria"*.

For example, the call for tenders calls for 20 hours of autonomous surveillance, which only Reaper is in a position to offer. European companies can do this by networking two UAVs at the same cost. But the specifications require that only one drone be used to achieve this...

The choice of American technology is even more explicit in Article II.2.14 (Additional information): *"Exceptionally in this procedure, bids from economic operators from third countries [not members of the European Union] will also be accepted. »*

"I don't understand how this Frontex tender could be validated. Especially since it is a service contract and not the choice of a specific material" the MEP protests, vice-coordinator for the ITRE Committee (Industry, Research and Energy) and member of the SEDE Committee (Security and Defence) of the European Parliament. He has alerted the Court of Justice of the European Union and questioned the European Commission on the matter.

In addition, the American company Ga-Asi, which produces the Reapers, also carried out demonstration flights in Greece last month for the countries of the European Union <https://www.uasvision.com/2019/11/13/ga-asi-to-conduct-series-of-capability-demonstrations-in-europe/>. Lobbying that seems to be working well...

"I do not understand the aim of this call for tenders by Frontex, which runs counter to all the ambitions of the European Union: we are seeking European strategic autonomy, security of our borders by autonomously strengthening their surveillance, a new industrial strategy to support our companies, particularly in the fields of security, aeronautics, space and defence... This decision is the opposite of all that.", denounces the MEP, who reiterates his attachment to *"European preference in our industrial choices in strategic sectors such as border surveillance."*

"If such a decision were to be confirmed, the European Union would once again choose to allow operators and technologies from outside Europe to take over the protection of its citizens, even though this is a matter of its sovereignty", concludes Christophe Grudler.