

To: Mr. Magnus Brunner, Commissioner Internal Affairs and Migration
CC: Ms. Kaja Kallas, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Police

16 October 2025

Joint letter from the undersigned ministers on voluntary and forced return to Afghanistan

Dear Commissioner Brunner,

We would like to begin by commending the European Union for its continued engagement on Afghanistan, particularly in light of the recent discussions addressing political developments, humanitarian needs, and the provision of essential services.

At the same time, the situation of Afghan nationals residing irregularly within the European Union requires careful and coordinated attention. While the EU Member States remain committed to upholding international protection obligations and safeguarding those in need, it is equally important to address cases where individuals do not qualify for international protection or residence. The orderly, dignified, and safe return of persons without legal grounds to stay - in particular those who pose a threat to public order or national security - is a necessary component of a credible and sustainable migration policy. In 2024, 22.870 Afghans were issued a return decision in the EU, yet only 435 returned to their country of origin, - constituting a return rate of just 2%.

The organization of voluntary and forced return to Afghanistan is a shared European challenge that requires a coherent and collective response. It is therefore essential that the European Union addresses this matter at the EU level, treating return and reintegration to Afghanistan as a joint responsibility.

Concerning voluntary return, a strengthened role for Frontex could be envisaged in supporting coordinated return and reintegration efforts to Afghanistan through the EU Reintegration Programme. Currently, the financial burden of return and reintegration support rests entirely with the Member States, which often leads to fragmented approaches and reduced cost-effectiveness. A more centralized and coordinated mechanism would contribute to greater consistency and efficiency.

We also highly value the efforts made by the European Commission to explore further possibilities for forced return to Afghanistan and we encourage the Commission to proceed further while involving the Member States in its efforts. In many EU countries we have seen a rise in violent incidents by Afghan nationals. Priority should be given to the return of persons posing a threat to public order or national security. Coordination between the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States wishing to proceed in this way should be strengthened - for example, through a joint mission to Afghanistan.

We also welcome the debate on return to Afghanistan within the High-Level Network on Return and encourage discussions in other appropriate fora. We propose that we strive to achieve some concrete results by the end of this year.

We thank you in advance for your follow-up to this letter. We look forward to a strengthened cooperation with your services on this matter in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Anneleen Van Bossuyt

Minister of Asylum and Migration of Belgium

Gerhard Karner

Minister of Interior of the Republic of Austria

Daniel Mitov

Minister of Interior of Bulgaria

Dr Nicholas A. Ioannides

Deputy Minister of Migration and International Protection of Cyprus

Vít Rakušan

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior of the Czech Republic

Igor Taro

Minister of the Interior of Estonia

Mari Rantanen

Minister of the Interior of Finland

Alexander Dobrindt

Federal Minister of the Interior of Germany

Athanasios Plevris

Minister of Migration and Asylum of Greece

Sándor Pintér

Minister of Interior of Hungary

Jim O'Callaghan

Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration of Ireland

Matteo Piantedosi

Minister of the Interior of Italy

Vladislav Kondratovič

Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania

Léon Gloden

Minister for Home Affairs of Luxemburg

Byron Camilleri

Minister for Home Affairs, Security and Employment of Malta

David van Weel

Minister of Asylum and Migration of the Netherlands

Astri Aas-Hansen

Minister of Justice and Public Security of Norway

Marcin Kierwiński

Minister of the Interior and Administration of the Republic of Poland

Matúš Šutaj Eštok

Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic

Johan Forssell

Minister for Migration of Sweden