

**Question for written answer E-001640/2026
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Alice Kuhnke (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Recent investigations revealing coercive practices in EU-funded ‘voluntary return’ programmes

In April 2025, Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration Magnus Brunner, in a response to a question from Parliament, reiterated the position taken by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) against the promotion of large-scale voluntary repatriation to Syria¹.

In June 2025, the Council published its Conclusions on Syria², which reasserted the UNHCR’s position that the situation in Syria does not allow for large-scale repatriations.

Meanwhile, according to Eurostat³, Cyprus has conducted some 2 285 assisted voluntary returns to Syria. According to a media report⁴, Cyprus’s programme has received some EUR 17.7 million in funding from the Commission’s Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). According to the same report, the programme relies on coercion and deceit to pressure individuals into returning.

Given the above:

1. Does the Commission find that its funding of Cyprus’s assisted voluntary returns programme contradicts its position – and the position of the Council – on large-scale repatriations to Syria?
2. If yes, can the Commission explain what measures it plans to take to prevent the continued use of funding under AMIF to enable large-scale repatriations from Cyprus to Syria?

Submitted: 22.4.2026

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-10-2024-002899-ASW_EN.html.

² <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10688-2025-INIT/en/pdf>.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_EIRTN1__custom_18277491/default/table.

⁴ <https://www.newarab.com/investigations/eu-deports-syrians-under-guise-voluntary-returns>.