

EN
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Answer given by Mr Brunner
on behalf of the European Commission
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Integration is both a right and a duty and ensuring integration is a fundamental component of building cohesive and resilient societies. Gaps persist between legal migrants and EU nationals in many areas. The migrant employment rate gradually increases over time¹, despite the employment rate of migrants being proportionally more impacted by economic recessions². Integration policies can have a positive impact on labour market outcomes³: migrants contribute to economic growth and workers born outside the EU are overrepresented in occupations facing persistent labour shortages⁴.

Return of third-country nationals with no right to stay in the EU is an essential part of a functioning system for migration management and remains a priority. To complement the reforms introduced by the Pact on Migration and Asylum⁵, on 11 March 2025, the Commission adopted a legislative proposal for a Regulation establishing a common system for the return of third-country nationals staying illegally in the EU⁶. In addition, alongside operational assistance provided through the European Border and Coast Guard Agency the Commission provides financial support to Member States through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund in implementing voluntary and forced returns, as well as national return procedures. The Commission is also working on a proposal on the digitalisation of the return process.

¹ International Migration Outlook 2024, https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/international-migration-outlook-2024_50b0353e-en.html

² Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) 2023: ESDE Review 2023, <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/esde-2023/chapters/chapter-2-6.html>

³ Bahar, D., Brough, R. J. and Peri, G. *Forced migration and refugees: Policies for successful economic and social integration*, Working Paper 32266, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2024, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w32266>; European Parliament study: *New approaches to labor market integration of migrants and refugees*, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2024/754232/IPOL_STU\(2024\)754232_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2024/754232/IPOL_STU(2024)754232_EN.pdf)

⁴ ESDE Review 2023, <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/esde-2023/executive-summary.html>

⁵ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en

⁶ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common system for the return of third-country nationals staying illegally in the Union, and repealing Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and the Council, Council Directive 2001/40/EC and Council Decision 2004/191/EC COM(2025) 101 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52025PC0101>