

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002749/24
to the Commission
Evin Incir (S&D)
(4 December 2024)**

Subject: European evacuation preparedness for EU citizens in crisis and war zones

Given the increasing threat of crises and conflicts in our neighbourhood and worldwide, the protection and evacuation of EU citizens has become a matter of priority for many Member States. Current events in Lebanon and Sudan, where EU citizens are present, highlight the importance of responding effectively.

Despite existing EU mechanisms for crisis response, some Member States, such as Sweden, have chosen to withdraw from their responsibility to ensure the evacuation of their citizens, including children. We have to make the safety of EU citizens a common objective for all Member States.

1. How effective does the Commission view the current EU crisis mechanisms for the evacuation of EU citizens from war and conflict zones?
2. Can the Commission provide details on the current protocols and any potential improvements to strengthen these mechanisms in the light of the changing global security landscape?
3. In the Commission's view, what steps should Member States take in 2025 to enhance the coordination and implementation of joint European evacuation plans for EU citizens in crisis and war zones, and is the Commission prepared to present a new strategy to ensure the safety of all our citizens, even when Member States refuse or fail to act?

Submitted: 4.12.2024

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(12 March 2025)**

As noted in the Commission's report ⁽¹⁾ on the implementation and application of Directive (EU) 2015/637 ⁽²⁾, crises resulting in requests for consular protection have increased in frequency and scale.

The COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis in Afghanistan, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the conflict in Sudan, the Middle East crisis, and other similar crises demonstrated the capacity of the EU to coordinate Member States' efforts to provide consular assistance to unrepresented EU citizens.

This includes concrete logistical and financial support by the Commission to Member States in evacuation operations under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

The Strategic Compass for Security and Defence ⁽³⁾ adopted in March 2022 sets out how the European External Action Service's (EEAS) 'crisis response mechanisms, our consular support and field security will also be reviewed and strengthened to better assist Member States in their efforts to protect and rescue their citizens abroad'. The EEAS and the Commission continue to support EU consular crisis preparedness and response.

In December 2023, the Commission adopted a proposal ⁽⁴⁾ to amend Directive (EU) 2015/637 to facilitate consular protection of unrepresented EU citizens.

Taking into account the lessons learned from the recent crises, the proposal seeks to enhance the coordination of consular crisis preparedness and response mechanisms, including by making best use of the network of EU delegations, by setting out that joint consular contingency plans be drawn up for all third countries and by providing a legal basis for the possible deployment of joint consular teams.

At the same time, Member States remain competent to determine the scope of the protection to be provided to their own nationals.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2022) 437 final.

⁽²⁾ Council Directive (EU) 2015/637 of 20 April 2015 on the coordination and cooperation measures to facilitate consular protection for unrepresented citizens of the Union in third countries and repealing Decision 95/553/EC (OJ L 106, 24.4.2015).

⁽³⁾ A strategic Compass for Security and Defence for a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security (https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en).

⁽⁴⁾ COM(2023)930 final.