

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002960/24
to the Commission**

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(16 December 2024)

Subject: Making EU development aid conditional on the repatriation of non-EU nationals

The EU is the world's largest donor of development aid, providing over EUR 50 billion in aid each year.

Meanwhile, the number of non-EU nationals present in the EU illegally has risen sharply in recent years. This highlights the need to speed up the return of illegal migrants.

Recently, Finland made a groundbreaking decision to suspend its development cooperation with Somalia due to the country's refusal to accept the repatriation of its citizens.

Will the Commission follow the example set by Finland and make all EU development aid conditional on the countries' agreement to allow the repatriation of their citizens? If not, why not?

Submitted: 16.12.2024

Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission

(11 March 2025)

It is an established norm of customary international law that countries must readmit their own nationals and have to cooperate in identifying their nationals and issuing travel documents for this purpose.

This duty was reaffirmed in the 2016 New York declaration for Refugees and Migrants ⁽¹⁾. It also stems from a number of multilateral instruments and bilateral readmission agreements and arrangements.

In the comprehensive partnerships established by the EU with third countries, migration is a core component. The Commission uses a wide range of policy tools like visa policy, diplomacy and development aid in support of national capacities, to enhance returns and readmission.

In this spirit, it should be noted that the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument — Global Europe (NDICI — Global Europe) ⁽²⁾ foresees a 'flexible incitative approach' to encourage cooperation on migration, including on returns, with 10% of funding earmarked for addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement and to supporting migration management and governance.

The Commission is rolling out this approach through the Flexible Mechanisms for Asia and the Pacific, and for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Actions under the Flexible Mechanisms, decided in close coordination with Member States, aim at encouraging relevant partner countries to manage migration and/or forced displacement and improve cooperation with the EU, offering incentives beyond classic bilateral cooperation.

⁽¹⁾ Resolution 71/1 of the United Nations General Assembly.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/947/oj/eng>