

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001185/26
to the Commission
Mary Khan (ESN)
(23 March 2026)**

Subject: Long-overdue establishment of return hubs in non-EU countries

Following the meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Brussels on 5 March 2026, it was confirmed that Germany and Austria, jointly with three other Member States, are pressing ahead with the establishment of return hubs in non-EU countries. ⁽¹⁾ A long-standing political demand from right-wing European parties is finally being met — albeit much too late. Efforts must now be made to implement this plan with maximum efficiency, to ensure that nothing stands in the way of this large-scale deportation offensive.

The logistical challenges relating to choice of location must on no account be underestimated. In particular, the feasibility of central African states like Uganda, which is apparently on the shortlist, needs to be thoroughly assessed. After all, it is hard to imagine that migrants who have so far been deemed ineligible for deportation could in future be removed from Europe in large numbers, if they must first be flown thousands of kilometres to a return hub and then, in due course, escorted thousands of kilometres more back to their home countries. It is therefore clear that, strategically, preference should be given to North African countries close to the EU's external borders.

1. Is the Commission actively supporting the countries named above in establishing return hubs in non-EU countries, and what is its specific role in this context?
2. How is the Commission ensuring that return hubs can be run efficiently, and which non-EU countries does it consider suitable for this purpose?
3. How much progress has been made in negotiations with Uganda, and what clear advantages does this location offer over North African countries close to the EU's external borders?

Submitted: 23.3.2026

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(19 May 2026)**

The Commission proposal for a Return Regulation ⁽¹⁾ provides the legal framework setting out the minimum conditions for the establishment of return hubs.

Among these minimum conditions, an agreement or arrangement for return hubs may only be concluded with a third country where international human rights standards and principles in accordance with international law, including the principle of non-refoulement, are respected. The proposal is now subject to negotiations between the co-legislators, which will define the legal conditions for return hubs.

The Commission takes note of the discussions among Member States on return hubs. The Commission is not involved in bilateral talks between Member States and third countries on exploring possible future agreements or arrangements on the establishment of return hubs.

¹ <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article69a974d4edab88c6939664fe/migrationspolitik-deutschland-und-weitere-staaten-legen-plan-fuer-abschiebezentren-ausserhalb-der-eu-vor.html>

⁽¹⁾ 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.