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Answer given by Mr Brunner
on behalf of the European Commission
(29.6.2026)

The Commission and the Member States have been working closely together and with key partner countries to reduce illegal migration to the EU, including by preventing dangerous journeys and loss of lives, improving migration management both in the EU and in partner countries, and promoting globally the respect of migrants and refugees' rights. The combination of the new rules of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, migration diplomacy, and operational cooperation within and outside the EU is showing results, notably with a significant reduction in illegal arrivals since 2023.

The Return Regulation, on which the EU legislators have reached a political agreement, will complement the Pact rules. It establishes a new legal framework with swifter, simpler and more effective return procedures across the EU that respect fundamental rights and international obligations, notably the principle of non-refoulement. The Regulation provides the legal framework to establish 'return hubs' outside the EU, subject to specific conditions and safeguards, including human rights guarantees.

The Commission recalls that Member States must implement asylum and migration rules in compliance with their obligations under EU law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. The Commission remains in close contact with the Greek authorities regarding the implementation of the relevant EU rules in this area.