EN
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Answer given by Mr Brunner
on behalf of the European Commission
(30.7.2026)

1. The Commission was asked by 20 Member States and Schengen associated countries in a letter signed by their Ministers in October 2025, to coordinate contacts on returns with the *de facto* authorities, to ensure a coherent European approach. Their focus is on the return of persons posing a threat to public order or national security. Returns to Afghanistan need to be addressed in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, bearing in mind the challenges arising from the acute humanitarian and human rights situation in Afghanistan. The Commission and Sweden, on behalf of interested Member States, co-chaired a technical-level meeting with representatives of the *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan responsible for return and readmission, following technical-level discussions in Kabul, in January 2026. The technical-level meeting aimed to give Member States the opportunity to address practical aspects of the readmission process. Fifteen Member States participated in the meeting.

2. Operational engagement with the *de facto* authorities is in line with the Council conclusions of 15 September 2021[1] and 20 March 2023[2]. It does not constitute nor imply recognition, which remains conditioned upon progress on the EU's established benchmarks, especially counterterrorism, inclusive governance and human rights, with particular concern for the rights of women and girls.

3. The EU has strongly condemned the systemic violation of human rights. The Commission acts in full respect of the Council conclusions and of its international obligations and will continue its unwavering support to all persons concerned by those violations of human rights.

[1] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11713-2021-REV-2/en/pdf.
[2] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7264-2023-INIT/en/pdf.