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Answer given by Mr Brunner
on behalf of the European Commission
(1.10.2026)

The EU's new approach to migration and asylum is delivering results, leading to a sustained drop in illegal arrivals: illegal border crossings in 2025 were under half the total recorded in 2023 and at the lowest level since 2021.

The Commission is working with Spain on the effective use of the instruments of the Pact on Migration and Asylum¹ to ensure the swift return of those illegally staying, while strengthening the protection of the external borders. Spain has requested additional support to handle the situation in Ceuta from the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, the European Union Agency for Asylum. The agencies are working on the operational response.

The Commission welcomes the close cooperation between Spain and Morocco to respond to the situation in Ceuta and ensure the swift return of those who do not have the right to remain.

The Commission will step up efforts in five key areas, as outlined in the letter of 3 August 2026 from the Commission President to the Prime Minister of Spain, namely: preventing irregular immigration by strengthening cooperation with the EU's partners; further strengthening EU external borders; developing joint EU-partner early warning systems; dismantling smuggling networks; reinforcing returns.

Morocco is an important partner of the EU, including in managing migration. Cooperation and EU-funded programmes with Morocco are subject to robust accountability mechanisms, including regular reporting, periodic programme evaluations, on-the-spot verification missions and indicators tied to disbursement in the case of budget support. This cooperation has delivered results: irregular border crossings along the Western Mediterranean and Atlantic route combined decreased by 42% in 2025 compared to 2024. They further decreased by 34% in the first 6 months of 2026, compared to the same period in 2025.

¹ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en.