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Answer given by Mr Brunner
on behalf of the European Commission
(10.4.2025)

The EU continues to work closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ensure that returns to Syria are voluntary, safe and dignified, and with other United Nations partners to help create the conditions inside Syria for people to return. The UNHCR latest position on returns to Syria stressed that 'in view of the many challenges facing Syria's population, including a large-scale humanitarian crisis, continued high levels of internal displacement and widespread destruction and damage of homes and critical infrastructure, […] for the time being UNHCR is not promoting large-scale voluntary repatriation to Syria'[1].

In accordance with EU law, beneficiaries of international protection have a right to stay and reside in the Member State that granted protection. For this reason, they are not subject to return in accordance with Directive 2008/115/EC[2].

[1] UNHCR position on returns to the Syrian Arab Republic, December 2024, https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/unhcr-position-returns-syrian-arab-republic-december-2024-enarrukobg

[2] Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals, OJ L 348, 24.12.2008, p. 98–107.