

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-004047/25
to the Commission
Matthieu Valet (PfE)
(15 October 2025)**

Subject: Inclusion of Afghanistan and Syria in the European list of safe countries of origin

On 11 October 2025, Germany announced an agreement with the Taliban to return Afghan asylum seekers to their country of origin. In parallel, a number of Member States are considering a similar approach with Syria, following the gradual return to normal diplomatic relations, so they can ramp up their repatriation policy, in view of migratory pressure. A number of Member States believe migratory flows need to be better controlled and people who have been denied the right to asylum deported more quickly. With Afghanistan and Syria absent from the European list of safe countries of origin, return procedures are more complicated and the right to asylum is applied differently in different countries.

1. To what extent are these decisions taken by Member States legally compatible with EU return legislation and the EU list of safe countries?
2. In any case, does the Commission intend to propose including Afghanistan and Syria in the common list of safe countries of origin and encourage diplomatic channels to be opened, in order to harmonise and strengthen EU migration policy, facilitate returns and support Member States that are under increasing migratory pressure?

Submitted: 15.10.2025

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(3 December 2025)**

EU law on returns (the Return Directive ⁽¹⁾) requires Member States to assess each return case individually, and decide if those with no right to stay in the EU can be returned safely and with dignity, in compliance with European and international law, especially the principle of non-refoulement.

On 16 April 2025, the Commission tabled a proposal for an EU list of safe countries of origin ⁽²⁾. The Commission proposed to designate as safe certain third countries where, in general, there is no persecution or real risk of serious harm in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 ⁽³⁾.

This assessment is based on the legal situation, the application of the law within a democratic system and the general political circumstances.

This proposal is currently being negotiated by the European Parliament and the Council. Once adopted, Member States will need to process applications for international protection from nationals of the third countries designated as safe through the accelerated examination procedure as specified in Article 42 of the Asylum Procedure Regulation ⁽⁴⁾. The proposal does not affect Member States' national agreements with third countries regarding return.

The Commission has not proposed to include Afghanistan or Syria in the EU list of safe countries of origin. The Commission is working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to facilitate voluntary returns of Syrians who wish to go back to Syria and support the country's early recovery.

The Commission is also working to ensure EU-level coordination, including with the Member States and international organisations, regarding the situation of Afghans illegally staying in the EU.

⁽¹⁾ 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 December 2008, p. 98.

⁽²⁾ COM(2025) 186 final, Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 as regards the establishment of a list of safe countries of origin at Union level.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L, 2024/1347, 22 May 2024.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU, OJ L, 2024/1348, 22 May 2024.