

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-004552/25
to the Commission
Mary Khan (ESN), Petra Steger (Pfe)
(14 November 2025)**

Subject: Discrepancy between statements on migration policy by Commissioner Brunner, responsible for migration, and implementation of the Return Regulation

In an interview with the *Kölnische Rundschau* dated 13 October 2025, Magnus Brunner, the Commissioner for Home Affairs and Migration, stated that the EU needed to make greater use of its political weight to put pressure on third countries which refuse to readmit their nationals who have entered the EU illegally or which prove uncooperative on migration issues. Mr Brunner explicitly referred to the three policy areas of trade, visa policy and development aid as levers that he would like to see coupled with EU migration policy ⁽¹⁾.

As welcome as Magnus Brunner's analysis is, the EU's failure to do this is cause for concern. Behind closed doors, the Commissioner is engaging in the opposite of what he has public committed to do. His draft return regulation limits sanctions against uncooperative states to visa-related measures. There is no mention of suspending development aid or trade policy consequences, even though these instruments would be the most effective. It is this clear that Mr Brunner's words are devoid of consequence and lay bare his migration policy as mere empty rhetoric.

1. How does the Commission explain the discrepancy between Mr Brunner's demands to couple migration policy with trade, visa policy and development aid and the fact that the draft return regulation limits sanctions exclusively to the field of visas?
2. Why does the current draft return regulation not contain any provisions concerning the suspension of development aid or trade sanctions against uncooperative states?
3. What specifically does the Commission plan to do to ensure that trade, visa policy and development aid are used as effective tools to enforce returns?

Submitted: 14.11.2025

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(27 January 2026)**

The Commission is continuously working on improving cooperation with third countries on readmission, with new tools and policies being progressively added to the toolbox, notably in the areas indicated by the Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration in line with European Council conclusions ⁽¹⁾.

In March 2025, the Commission put forward the proposal for a return Regulation, which aims at establishing a common EU return system ⁽²⁾. The proposal does not establish sanctions upon third countries because measures to promote readmission cooperation are developed and implemented under the relevant legal bases in accordance with the Treaties.

The possibility to impose visa measures when third countries do not cooperate sufficiently on readmission has been provided for by the EU Visa Code since 2020 ⁽³⁾. The Commission proposed visa measures in relation to seven countries, and measures are currently in force in relation to two. Furthermore, insufficient readmission cooperation is a ground for suspension of visa-free regimes under the revised visa suspension mechanism ⁽⁴⁾.

The Commission proposal for a generalised scheme of preferences Regulation includes lack of cooperation on readmission as one of the grounds for the temporary withdrawal of trade preferences ⁽⁵⁾. A provisional agreement, including on the provisions on readmission, was reached by the European Parliament and the Council on 1 December 2025 ⁽⁶⁾.

¹ <https://www.rundschau-online.de/debatte-kr/eu-kommissar-magnus-brunner-wollen-sie-mit-den-taliban-verhandeln-1127454>

⁽¹⁾ Conclusions of 17 October 2024, EUCO 25/24, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/10/17/european-council-conclusions-17-october-2024/>.

⁽²⁾ COM(2025) 101 final.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/810/2020-02-02>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02018R1806-20250203>.

⁽⁵⁾ COM(2021) 579 final.

⁽⁶⁾ https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-updates-sustainable-development-trade-tool-developing-countries-2025-12-02_en.

The Commission proposal for the Global Europe Regulation ⁽⁷⁾ under the future Multiannual Financial Framework foresees the possibility to suspend payments or actions to a third country in case of serious shortcomings related to the obligation to readmit own nationals.

⁽⁷⁾ COM(2025) 551 final.