

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002653/26
to the Commission**

Raquel García Hermida-Van Der Walle (Renew), Hilde Vautmans (Renew), Joanna Scheuring-Wielgus (S&D), Saskia Bricmont (Verts/ALE), Catarina Martins (The Left), Alessandra Moretti (S&D), Oihane Agirregoitia Martínez (Renew), Danuše Nerudová (PPE), Pina Picierno (Renew), Jan Farský (PPE), Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D), Hana Jalloul Muro (S&D), Ana Miranda Paz (Verts/ALE), Erik Marquardt (Verts/ALE), Hannah Neumann (Verts/ALE), Anna-Maja Henriksson (Renew), Veronika Cifrová Ostrihoňová (Renew), Valérie Devaux (Renew), Abir Al-Sahlani (Renew), Fabienne Keller (Renew), Sebastian Everding (The Left), Estrella Galán (The Left)
(26 June 2026)

Subject: Commission meeting with Taliban representatives and reported discussion on consular services

The Commission confirmed that it held a meeting on Tuesday, 23 June 2026 with a delegation representing the Taliban regime, despite the European Parliament's position on engagement with that regime ⁽¹⁾. The Commission has indicated that the discussions were purely technical in nature. However, the head of the Afghan delegation, Abdul Qahar Balkhi, stated that the talks focused on restarting a broad range of consular services for Afghans within the EU ⁽²⁾.

1. What was the precise role and mandate of the Commission in its talks with the Taliban delegation?
2. Can the Commission confirm that the discussions were strictly technical in nature and did not include any consideration of restarting consular services within the EU by representatives of the Taliban regime?
3. If this is not the case, will the Commission explicitly distance itself from the statements made by Abdul Qahar Balkhi regarding the scope and objectives of the meeting?

Submitted: 26.6.2026

Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(26 August 2026)

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.

Principled operational technical-level engagement with the *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan is in line with the Council conclusions of September 2021 ⁽¹⁾ and March 2023 ⁽²⁾.

It does not constitute or imply legitimisation or 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.

The technical meeting that took place in Brussels falls within the parameters of the EU's policy of principled engagement with the *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan.

The discussions were strictly technical and focused on the procedural steps on readmission, in particular with regard to the identification of returnees, the issuance of travel documents and their return.

Consular services were mentioned in connection with readmission procedures. Any more specific conversation on those issues would fall under the competence of EU Member States.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2026-05-21-TOC_EN.html.

² <https://www.euractiv.com/news/taliban-use-brussels-visit-to-push-for-consular-access-in-europe/>.

⁽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>.