

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-003344/26
to the Commission**

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(26 August 2026)

Subject: Spanish Government plans to transfer illegal immigrants to the mainland

A few days after more than 80 000 foreigners illegally crossed the border between Morocco and the Spanish city of Ceuta, Commissioner Brunner celebrated the fact that the EU had ‘passed the test’ of resilience and security of its external borders.

Speaking on 4 August 2026, the Commissioner said that ‘people were unable to enter the Schengen area and the situation at the border was handled quickly’. Two weeks later, the Commissioner’s claims stand in stark contrast with the unsafe, chaotic situation on the ground in Ceuta, where more than 16 sexual assaults on girls and teenagers have been reported, and crossings to the mainland have taken place on different vessels.

What is more, the Spanish Government plans to transfer hundreds of foreigners who crossed the border illegally to the Iberian Peninsula.

1. Does the Commission believe that transferring illegal immigrants from Ceuta to the mainland could pose an additional security problem?
2. Given that the EU has classified Morocco as a safe third country, does it envisage taking any action to urge the Spanish Government to do more than make political statements and immediately return all illegal immigrants remaining in Ceuta?
3. Does the Commission still believe the Union has ‘passed the test’ following the storming of Ceuta?

Submitted: 26.8.2026

Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(20 October 2026)

The Commission is in regular contact with the Spanish authorities and is providing support to help manage the situation in Ceuta, following the large-scale illegal border crossings on 30-31 July 2026.

The Commission has awarded EUR 114.7 million in emergency assistance ⁽¹⁾ notably to enhance border surveillance and protection, security-related infrastructure, deployment of staff and equipment, screening of migrants, and the return of those staying illegally in Ceuta. The Commission also facilitated the mobilisation of EU agencies’ operational assistance.

Member States have the responsibility to protect the integrity and security of the Schengen area. For this, illegal onward movements need to be prevented and security checks need to be carried out in accordance with the applicable legal framework, including during screening. It is a priority for the Commission to ensure the return from Ceuta of all people who are illegally staying in the city.

The Commission welcomes the close cooperation between Spain and Morocco in responding to the emergency situation and ensuring the swift return of those who do not have the right to stay.

It is the responsibility of Spain to carry out the relevant procedures under the applicable legal frameworks, including the new Pact on Migration and Asylum ⁽²⁾ and international obligations, notably the obligation to readmit own nationals and the principle of non-refoulement. The Commission is in regular contact with Spanish and Moroccan authorities for this purpose.

Drawing the lessons from the events in Ceuta, the Commission has presented a 5-point plan to prevent, anticipate and respond to sudden, mass illegal arrivals ⁽³⁾ with the aim of strengthening the resilience and security of EU external borders.

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_26_1799.

⁽²⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en?prefLang=it.

⁽³⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/5-point-plan-prevent-anticipate-and-respond-sudden-mass-illegal-arrivals_en.