To: Mr. Magnus Brunner, Commissioner Internal Affairs and Migration

CC: Ms. Kaja Kallas, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Police

16 October 2025

Joint letter from the undersigned ministers on voluntary and forced return to Afghanistan

Dear Commissioner Brunner,

We would like to begin by commending the European Union for its continued engagement on Afghanistan, particularly in light of the recent discussions addressing political developments, humanitarian needs, and the provision of essential services.

At the same time, the situation of Afghan nationals residing irregularly within the European Union requires careful and coordinated attention. While the EU Member States remain committed to upholding international protection obligations and safeguarding those in need, it is equally important to address cases where individuals do not qualify for international protection or residence. The orderly, dignified, and safe return of persons without legal grounds to stay - in particular those who pose a threat to public order or national security - is a necessary component of a credible and sustainable migration policy. In 2024, 22.870 Afghans were issued a return decision in the EU, yet only 435 returned to their country of origin, - constituting a return rate of just 2%.

The organization of voluntary and forced return to Afghanistan is a shared European challenge that requires a coherent and collective response. It is therefore essential that the European Union addresses this matter at the EU level, treating return and reintegration to Afghanistan as a joint responsibility.

Concerning voluntary return, a strengthened role for Frontex could be envisaged in supporting coordinated return and reintegration efforts to Afghanistan through the EU Reintegration Programme. Currently, the financial burden of return and reintegration support rests entirely with the Member States, which often leads to fragmented approaches and reduced cost-effectiveness. A more centralized and coordinated mechanism would contribute to greater consistency and efficiency.

We also highly value the efforts made by the European Commission to explore further possibilities for forced return to Afghanistan and we encourage the Commission to proceed further while involving the Member States in its efforts. In many EU countries we have seen a rise in violent incidents by Afghan nationals. Priority should be given to the return of persons posing a threat to public order or national security. Coordination between the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States wishing to proceed in this way should be strengthened - for example, through a joint mission to Afghanistan.

We also welcome the debate on return to Afghanistan within the High-Level Network on Return and encourage discussions in other appropriate fora. We propose that we strive to achieve some concrete results by the end of this year.

We thank you in advance for your follow-up to this letter. We look forward to a strengthened cooperation with your services on this matter in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

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	neleen Van Bossuyt ister of Asylum and Migration of Belgium	Gerhard Karner Minister of Interior of the Republic of Austria
	niel Mitov ister of Interior of Bulgaria	Dr Nicholas A. Ioannides Deputy Minister of Migration and International Protection of Cyprus
Firs	Rakušan t Deputy Prime Minister and Minister ne Interior of the Czech Republic	Igor Taro Mini <mark>ster of</mark> the Interior of Estonia
	ri Rantanen ister of the Interior of Finland	Alexander Dobrindt Federal Minister of the Interior of Germany
	anasios Plevris ister of Migration and Asylum of G <mark>reece</mark>	Sándor Pintér Minister of Interior of Hungary
Min	O'Callaghan ister for Justice, H <mark>ome Affairs an</mark> d ration of Ireland	Matteo Piantedosi Minister of the Interior of Italy
Min	dislav Kondrat<mark>ovič</mark> ister of the In terio <mark>r of the Republic</mark> ithuani <mark>a</mark>	Léon Gloden Minister for Home Affairs of Luxemburg
Min	on Camil <mark>leri</mark> ister for Home Affairs, Security and oloyment of Malta	David van Weel Minister of Asylum and Migration of the Netherlands
Min	r <mark>i Aas-Hansen</mark> iste <mark>r of Justice</mark> and Public Security of way	Marcin Kierwiński Minister of the Interior and Administration of the Republic of Poland

Matúš Šutaj Eštok

Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic

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Johan Forssell

Minister for Migration of Sweden