



## Commission proposes a new Common European System for Returns

Strasbourg, 11 March 2025

Today, the European Commission is proposing to establish a Common **European System for Returns** with swifter, simpler and more effective return procedures across the EU. Announced by President **von der Leyen** in the [political guidelines](#) and called for by the European Council in October 2024, the new legal framework for returns constitutes a key piece to complement the Pact on Migration and Asylum which was adopted last year setting out a comprehensive approach on migration.

With return rates across the EU currently standing at only 20 percent, and with a fragmentation of different systems lending themselves to abuse, a modern, simpler and more effective legal framework is needed. The new rules will give Member States the necessary tools to make return more efficient while fully respecting fundamental rights.

The new common rules include:

- **A truly European system** in the form of a **Regulation** with common procedures for the issuance of return decisions and a **European Return Order** to be issued by Member States. With currently 27 different systems, this will limit the fragmentation at Union level.
- **Mutual recognition of return decisions** will allow a Member State to recognise and directly enforce a return decision issued by another Member State without having to start a new process. By 1 July 2027, a year after the Pact on Migration and Asylum enters into application, the Commission will review whether Member States have established appropriate arrangements to effectively process European Return Orders and adopt an implementing decision that will make it mandatory to recognise and enforce a return decision issued by another Member State.
- **Clear rules on forced return, while incentivising voluntary return**: Forced returns will be mandatory when a person illegally staying in the EU does not cooperate, absconds to another Member State, does not leave the EU by the given deadline for voluntary departure or is a security risk. This approach incentivises voluntary return within the given deadlines for departure from the EU.
- Stronger **obligations for returnees balanced against clear safeguards: Explicit obligations to cooperate** with national authorities throughout the entire return procedure. These are complemented by **clear consequences in case of non-cooperation** such as the reduction or refusal of allowances or seizure of travel documents. At the same time, incentives to cooperate will be strengthened, including support for voluntary return.
- **Strong safeguards throughout the entire return process**: All measures related to return must be carried out in full respect of fundamental and international human rights standards. This is ensured through clear procedures such as the right to appeal, support for vulnerable persons, strong safeguards for minors and families and the adherence to the principle of non-refoulement.
- **Stricter rules to limit abuse and manage absconding**: Member States will be equipped with reinforced rules to locate returnees, with the possibility to request a financial guarantee, regular reporting or to reside in a place designated by national authorities. The new rules set out clear conditions for detention if there is a risk of absconding as well as alternatives to detention. Detention may go up to 24 months, compared to 18 months currently. In addition, the suspensive effect of return decisions will no longer be automatic, unless there are issues related to non-refoulement.
- **Specific rules for people posing security risks**: Member States will have to screen early-on whether a person presents a security risk. Once identified, such individuals become subject to

strict rules, including mandatory forced return, longer entry bans, separate detention grounds. Detention may be extended beyond the normal 24 months on order of a judge.

- **Readmission as part of the return process:** To close the gap between a return decision and the actual return to a third country, the new rules establish a common procedure to ensure that a return decision is systematically followed up with a readmission request. They also allow for data transfers to third countries for the purpose of readmission.
- **Return hubs:** Member States have called for innovative solutions for migration management. This proposal introduces the legal possibility to return individuals who are illegally staying in the EU and have received a final return decision, to a third country based on an agreement or arrangement concluded bilaterally or at EU level. Such an agreement or arrangement can be concluded with a third country that respects international human rights standards and principles in accordance with international law, including the principle of non-refoulement. Families with minors and unaccompanied minors are excluded and the implementation of such agreements or arrangements must be subject to monitoring.

## Next steps

It is now for the European Parliament and the Council to agree on the proposal. The Commission will support co-legislators to advance on negotiations for this draft Regulation A Staff Working Document detailing the evidence used to prepare the proposal will also be published by the Commission.

## Background

In the framework of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, which will enter into application mid-2026, asylum applications will be processed more quickly and more efficiently. For this to be sustainable, returns need to follow promptly. This proposal closes that gap.

The Regulation proposed today repeals the existing Return Directive from 2008. The Commission proposal for a recast Return Directive presented in 2018 will be repealed as announced in the 2025 Commission Work Programme.

## For More Information

- [Proposal](#) to establish a Common European System for Returns
- [MEMO](#)
- Factsheet - [A Comprehensive Migration Approach](#)
- Factsheet - [A New Common European System for Return](#)
- [European Commission – Migration and Home affairs](#)
- [Latest statistics on returns \(eurostat\)](#)

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## Quote(s):

*"Today only around 20% of those who have a return decision leave Europe. This number is by far too low. This is why we will put in place common rules for return decisions, with a European Return Order, and mutual recognition of return decisions by Member States. We will always fully respect fundamental rights and international law, but those with no right to stay must be swiftly removed, and there must be clear consequences for those who do not cooperate."*  
Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission - 11/03/2025

*"Return is a key pillar of the Pact on Migration and Asylum—without a credible, effective return policy, we cannot have a comprehensive and trustworthy migration system. With the new proposal, we are establishing a common EU return system, ensuring consistent rules across all Member States. We must be firm and assertive in our approach, while staying true to the European values of fairness and fundamental rights."*  
Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy - 11/03/2025

*"The Commission is proposing a set of effective, modern procedures for returns – rules that are fundamental to safeguard the EU's free movement space without internal borders. With the new European return system, we will ensure that those who have no right to stay in the EU are actually returned. This will significantly strengthen trust in our common European asylum and migration system."*  
Magnus Brunner, Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration - 11/03/2025

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[Press conference by Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, and Magnus Brunner, European Commissioner, on the new common approach to returns](#)