

Guiding principles for the establishment of a Return Hub Model

Ministers of the Core Group Countries (Austria, Germany, Denmark, Greece and The Netherlands) met on 4 September 2026 to discuss the establishment of a Return Hub Model outside Europe. The European Commission also participated.

With the EU legal framework in place for the establishment of a Return Hub Model, the Core Group ministers are now leading the way to making it a reality.

The Core Group ministers have adopted the following guiding principles for the establishment of a return hub model:

- The Return Hub Model must have a measurable impact on reducing irregular migration and perilous journeys to Europe and should contribute to a more humane and safe migration system. It shall serve as a tool to truly break the business model of cynical migrant smugglers exploiting vulnerable people risking their lives on dangerous journeys towards the EU.
- The Model is a joint European project that we are building together and should be fully in accordance with obligations under EU and international law, particularly international human rights law. Europe's shared values and human rights must therefore be reflected in the way these arrangements are designed, even when they are established outside the EU.
- A Return Hub Model will be established through equal and mutually beneficial partnerships with countries outside the EU. The aim is to establish an enduring and long-term model that will serve as part of a broader effort to enhance the credibility, effectiveness, fairness and sustainability of the current global asylum and migration system.

