

**Question for written answer E-003715/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Dominique Bilde (ID)

Subject: New agreement with Afghanistan on migration

On 26 April 2021, the European Union and Afghanistan signed a Joint Declaration on Migration Cooperation, replacing the October 2016 Joint Way Forward agreement.

According to Agence Europe¹, this version makes some 'improvements', such as the 'preference for voluntary return [...], better protection of children and a clearer definition of certain vulnerable groups'.

1. According to the European Asylum Support Office, Afghans formed the second largest national group of asylum seekers in 2020² and represented around two fifths of unaccompanied minors in April 2021³. What 'improvements' does the new agreement make regarding the 'protection of children'?
2. In its answer to my written question on 2 June 2021, the Commission states that between 2016 and 2019, '18 090 Afghan nationals returned to Afghanistan from the EU, including voluntary departures'⁴. However, there were only 11 forced expulsions of Afghan nationals in France in 2017 and 2018⁵ and Afghans were the third largest group of migrants in an irregular situation between 2016 and 2018⁶. How does the Commission explain this situation and does it intend to remedy it in the context of the new agreement?

¹ <https://agenceurope.eu/en/bulletin/article/12706/28>

² 'With 50 000 applications, citizens of Afghanistan were the second top citizenship seeking international protection in Europe', <https://www.easo.europa.eu/asylum-trends-easo-asylum-report-2021>

³ 'Afghans who accounted for two fifths of UAM applicants so far this year'.
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-001578_EN.html

⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-001578-ASW_EN.html

⁵ <https://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/des-ong-dennoncent-l-expulsion-de-deux-afghans-par-la-france-20190906>

⁶ <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/opendata/AVISANR5L15B1304-tVII.html>