

1.4.2. Returns from Europe

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After the Taliban takeover, many Western states halted deportations to Afghanistan, and IOM [511](#) and Frontex suspended activities facilitating accompanied returns.[512](#) As reported by SEM, there have only been isolated cases of repatriations and voluntary returns from European countries and North America.[513](#) Initially, this included a few cases of people being forcibly returned from the US (two persons in 2022),[514](#) Belgium (February 2023),[515](#) Sweden (via Uzbekistan in 2023), and Switzerland (two persons in October 2024).[516](#) There have also been cases of voluntary returns from EU states,[517](#) and many Afghans residing abroad, including in Western countries, have been going on short-term visits to Afghanistan.[518](#)

Some EU states have sought to deport Afghans whose asylum applications have been rejected, with Germany and Austria resuming deportations in 2024[519](#) and 2025 respectively.[520](#) Germany deported 28 Afghans with criminal records on 30 August 2024.[521](#) According to Der Spiegel, these individuals were detained upon their return, but most were released about a week later, after their families assured the de facto authorities that they would not commit future crime. A handful of individuals were kept in house arrest-like conditions, while being interrogated.[522](#) One deported person was reportedly killed, although the perpetrating actor was not specified.[523](#) Germany conducted a second deportation on 18 July 2025, this time of 81 Afghans with criminal records.[524](#) The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan said that he had no information on the treatment of these individuals upon their return.[525](#) According to the German media outlet Tagesschau, the de facto authorities have used this opportunity to promote a positive image of themselves by publishing videos featuring these individuals being welcomed back to Afghanistan.[526](#) Austria deported one man convicted of crime on 21 October 2025.[527](#)

The de facto authorities reportedly see engagement over migration management as a way to build relations in the absence of diplomatic recognition.[528](#) An anonymous source interviewed by ACCORD noted that, unlike under the former government, European countries are no longer in position to push for a system supporting deported Afghans ‘to provide a landing’, such as mental health support, housing, job training, and more. This leaves returnees more vulnerable for re-traumatisation due to displacement.[529](#)

Being interviewed on the topic of ‘westernization’, Ruttig told ACCORD that individuals perceived as ‘infected’ by Western values have been met with suspicion, and the Taliban have been targeting such individuals, including urban residents, civil society activists, individuals having a Western education or who had adopted a lifestyle deviating from local customs.[530](#)

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