At the JHA Council meeting, the Deputy Minister of Migration and International Protection stressed that the new legal framework for returns should provide Member States with a reliable and strong legal basis, while offering flexibility to adapt to developments and national specificities.

The Deputy Minister also argued that maintaining flexibility is particularly important for voluntary returns, so that Member States can develop and continue national voluntary return programmes according to their specific needs. For this reason, he stressed that the new proposal should be a Directive and not a Regulation. In relation to Syria, the Deputy Minister underlined that Cyprus has always supported developing appropriate conditions for the safe and dignified return of those who wish to do so. He stressed that Cyprus remains steadfast in its position to use all available tools, in order to facilitate returns to Syria, including the support of Frontex and reintegration with EU funding.

Furthermore, he noted that Cyprus supports the proposal to create a common EU framework to allow visits to Syria ("go and see visits"). This framework would include assistance from UNHCR and the IOM, as well as funding from the EU. To avoid abuse of this tool, the Deputy Minister pointed out that the concept of "visits", in order for interested parties to investigate the situation in Syria before returning permanently, should be limited in terms of the period within which they should take place, as well as the maximum total number of visits.

Source(s)

- Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus | Γραφείο Τύπου και Πληροφοριών της Κυπριακής (5 March, 2025), Συμμετοχή του Υφυπουργού Μετανάστευσης και Διεθνούς Προστασίας στο Συμβούλιο Δικαιοσύνης και Εσωτερικών Υποθέσεων της ΕΕ [[Participation of the Deputy Minister of Migration and International Protection in the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council], https://www.pio.gov.cy/ανακοινωθέντα-άρθρο.html?id=47172#flat

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