Group of EU Member States, including Greece, agree on plan to create return hubs in third countries

A ministerial meeting took place on 4 September 2026 in Copenhagen, with the participation of Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands. Participating countries moved from political declarations to a concrete plan for the implementation of return hubs in third countries, especially in Africa.

Agreement was reached on a Framework of Principles for future cooperation with third countries, with full utilisation of the new Return Regulation, which is expected to enter into force in the autumn of 2026. This will ensure the absolute legality and the substantial effectiveness of the initiative, as well as its full compliance with international law.

In his statements following the meeting, the Greek Minister of Migration and Asylum highlighted that this initiative shows that Europe can design and implement "bold, innovative and effective solutions", adding that "for Greece — a country located on the external borders of the EU and bearing a disproportionate burden of managing flows— the implementation of Return Centres is not just a theoretical option, but an imperative national necessity".

More information is available here.

Source(s)

- Ministry of Migration and Asylum | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου (4 September, 2026), Συμφωνία για τη δημιουργία Κέντρων Επιστροφής (Return Hubs) σε τρίτες χώρες με ενεργό συμμετοχή της Ελλάδας [Agreement on the creation of Return Hubs in third countries with the active participation of Greece], https://migration.gov.gr/en/symfonia-gia-ti-dimioyrgia-kentron-epistrofis-return-hubs-se-trites-chores-me-energo-symmetochi-tis-elladas/

Related development(s)
Danish minister holds ministerial meeting with EU partners to discuss return hubs
Date of development
04.09.2026
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