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## **Council of Europe: call on Lithuania. “Do not push back people in need of international protection”. Human rights violations**

“I call on the Lithuanian Parliament to reject the draft amendments to the Law on the State Border and its Protection, which would legalise the current practices that put persons in need of international protection at risk of pushbacks”, said the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović. “Parliamentarians should ensure that the legislative process is guided by human rights standards and concludes with a robust, human rights compliant and protection-oriented legal framework in the area of migration and asylum”, she added. The Commissioner reiterated “the importance of strengthening safeguards to uphold the absolute prohibition of refoulement, as well as the prohibition of collective expulsions, and to guarantee effective access to asylum more broadly”. In her previous statements, the Commissioner recalled that “the national legislation should be brought fully into line with the standards set out in the European Convention on Human Rights, the 1951 Refugee Convention”, and other key legislation. “I have received consistent worrying reports of patterns of violence and other human rights violations committed against migrants, including in the context of pushbacks at Lithuania’s border with Belarus”. The Commissioner calls on the Lithuanian Parliament to guarantee “an independent and effective human rights monitoring at borders, removing access restrictions and ensuring the unhindered work of NGOs, as well as the availability of humanitarian assistance at the borders and beyond”.

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