Rwanda is back at the center of Europe’s migration debate as several European Union countries consider sending migrants who have been ordered to leave the bloc to return centers in countries outside Europe.

Denmark, Germany, Austria, Greece and the Netherlands are working together on arrangements with non-EU countries, with the aim of establishing return hubs from 2027.

Rwanda and Uganda are among the countries identified as possible partners, although no agreement naming a host country has been announced.

The move marks a significant development in Europe’s search for ways to increase the number of rejected migrants who are returned after exhausting their legal options.

EU Migration Commissioner Magnus Brunner has said the bloc needs a stronger return system as it implements its new migration and asylum rules.

Denmark’s Immigration Minister Morten Bødskov said the five countries had agreed on steps toward negotiating arrangements with countries outside the EU.

The proposals have inevitably drawn comparisons with Britain’s agreement with Rwanda, which was designed to transfer some asylum-seekers arriving in Britain to Rwanda.

The British scheme was challenged in court and heavily criticized by human rights groups. It was ultimately abandoned by the Labour government after it came to power in 2024.

European officials stress that the proposed return hubs would have a different purpose. They would concern people whose asylum applications or other claims to remain in Europe had already been rejected.

The EU has also said any such arrangements must respect fundamental rights and international law, including safeguards against returning people to countries where they could face persecution or serious harm.

Rwanda has not been confirmed as a destination under the emerging EU plans.

Any future arrangement would depend on negotiations between European

governments and potential partner countries, with the legal conditions surrounding transfers likely to remain a key issue.