

Rwanda has held preliminary discussions with some European Union member states about potentially hosting migrants transferred from Europe, two European Parliament lawmakers said this week after meeting government officials in Kigali.

Tineke Strik and Anna Strolenberg of the Greens/European Free Alliance and Volt groups, said Rwanda officials told them Rwanda was open to the idea of hosting facilities for migrants transferred from European countries, although the discussions were still at an early stage and no agreement had been reached, according to Reuters.

Rwandan government officials were not immediately available for comment.

The lawmakers travelled to Rwanda and Uganda on a fact-finding mission to examine the possible impact of European migration arrangements involving countries outside the EU.

In a post on LinkedIn following the trip, Strolenberg said: **“Uganda and Rwanda have expressed interest in such a deal.”** She said the two lawmakers held 17 meetings, spent 17 hours travelling between the two countries and visited refugee settlements and camps.

Anna Strolenberg’s LinkedIn post

Strik also confirmed the mission, saying she and Strolenberg met NGOs, embassies and government officials in Rwanda and Uganda to examine the humanitarian and human-rights situation surrounding the proposed arrangements.

Earlier this month, five EU countries said they were working towards agreements to transfer migrants who have no legal right to stay in the bloc to countries outside the European Union.

The five countries have not publicly identified a host country. But an EU official told Reuters that **Rwanda was among the countries being considered.**

During their visit to Kigali, Strik and Strolenberg were shown two facilities that had been prepared under Britain’s abandoned Rwanda deportation scheme and could potentially be used to accommodate migrants transferred from Europe, Reuters reported. One of the facilities was a hotel.

Strolenberg did not identify the European countries involved in her LinkedIn post.

Nor did she say that a formal agreement had been signed.

The five countries are expected to meet again on Thursday on the sidelines of the EU justice and home affairs council.

Strolenberg said the trip changed some of her perspective on how Rwanda and Uganda receive refugees.

She wrote that refugees in both countries can receive accommodation or land, work and attend school, while some services are also available to surrounding communities.

But she said the systems were fragile and that she remained opposed to European countries transferring migrants to Rwanda or Uganda.

“I’m against buying off our responsibility,” Strolenberg wrote. She said European countries should instead provide development assistance and economic partnerships that would allow Rwanda and Uganda to continue supporting refugees from the region.

Strik has also criticised the proposed return-hub arrangements.

Speaking after the mission, she said Rwanda appeared particularly interested in the economic benefits of a possible agreement. She said a Rwandan official they met described the proposed arrangement as a **“migration and economic partnership”** rather than a return deal.

Strik said the lawmakers could not establish exactly what a return hub in Rwanda would look like. She also said officials described the possible facility as an open arrangement in which migrants could receive residence permits and potentially naturalise.

Those claims have not been independently confirmed by the Rwandan government.

The reported discussions come after Rwanda separately entered a migration arrangement with the United States under which it agreed to receive deportees. That US-Rwanda arrangement is separate from the reported discussions with European countries.

Rwanda also previously agreed to host asylum seekers under a UK plan, but

Britain's Supreme Court ruled in 2023 that the proposed removals were unlawful and the scheme was subsequently abandoned.

The available evidence establishes that EU lawmakers visited Kigali, met Rwandan officials and say they were told that discussions over a possible migration arrangement were taking place

This publication has sought clarification from the Rwandan government on the reported discussions.