

EL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO

H.E. Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission
BRUSSELS

Madrid, 1 August 2026

Dear President Von der Leyen:

I am writing to express my serious concern regarding the recent reaction that some European governments have shown following the incident that took place at the external border of the European Union in Ceuta.

As you know, around 50,000 migrants entered this Spanish territory irregularly and unexpectedly earlier this week. In less than 48 hours, my Government has succeeded in fully restoring control over the border, in providing extensive humanitarian assistance, in returning virtually all of the migrants who crossed irregularly, and in preventing any unauthorized onward movement towards continental Europe.

This has been achieved in close coordination with the Moroccan authorities and with very little support from other European states, while pursuing the effective and solidarity-based migration policy that Spain has consistently implemented over recent years. A policy that has enabled us to reduce irregular arrivals through our territory dramatically, making Spain the second most secure external border in the EU, despite being the only Member State with a land border with Africa. This successful policy has also allowed us to assist other Member States when they faced similar crises, like when we hosted several of the migrants that arrived to Eastern Europe through Belarus in 2021 and to Lampedusa in 2023.

Despite these indisputable facts, the reaction of European governments over the past few hours has been rather asymmetric. Most have showed us their support and solidarity, and have offered their assistance. Others, however, have chosen to attack Spain and to call for its temporary exclusion from the Schengen Area.

Such an attitude –driven by prejudice, fake news, ignorance, or political interest– is not only contrary to European law, humanitarian law, and the principles of solidarity that bind us together. It is also contrary to Europe’s long-term interests and to the most basic common sense, because Ceuta is not part of the Schengen Area, because there are almost no irregular migrants left unreturned, and because Spain is, according to Frontex, one of the least porous external borders of the European Union, with a number of irregular entries that is half that recorded, for example, in Italy in recent years (2021–2026).

In the current international context, the European Union cannot afford this kind of selfish, polarising and unlawful reaction.

For this reason, in light of the seriousness of the situation, we would ask the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union to **convene, as a matter of urgency, an extraordinary videoconference of the Ministers of the Interior. This meeting should enable us to establish a common response to situations of this kind** and reaffirm that the security of our external borders is a shared responsibility of all Member States, and not only of those on the Union’s front line.

We count on your leadership to ensure that the European Union responds swiftly, effectively and in a coordinated manner.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Sánchez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pedro Sánchez

President of the Government of Spain