

## Algeria

### **EU engagement to date**

The Commission has a mandate to negotiate a Readmission Agreement since November 2002 (but not for a Visa Facilitation Agreement), however negotiations never started. An Informal Dialogue on Migration and Mobility has taken place regularly since 2016. The last meeting took place on 20 February 2019. Although, as part of that dialogue, Algeria committed to hold meetings at an appropriate level on readmission, in line with the agreed Partnership Priorities, no such meetings have taken place to date.

### **Cooperation on readmission**

In 2019, 28 185 Algerian nationals staying illegally in the Member States were issued return decisions and 5 440 effectively returned to Algeria resulting in a **return rate** of 19%. Member States submitted 4 403 readmission requests to Algerian authorities, who issued 1 905 travel documents, resulting in an **issuance rate** of 43%.

A total of 24 Member States reported having approached the authorities of Algeria for readmission matters related to its nationals in 2019.

Five Member States report having **bilateral agreements or arrangements** in place with Algeria, whose relevant provisions are generally well respected, but for one of them.

Eleven responding Member States, representing almost a third of Algerian nationals ordered to leave, assess the overall cooperation with Algeria in the **identification procedure** as good or very good, while six Member States assess it as poor or very poor. Seven Member States, standing for two-thirds of Algerian nationals ordered to leave, assess it as average. Some Member States report long delays for replies. Others also mention that Algeria has put a new procedure in place that cannot be yet assessed.

This results in 18 Member States having an established routine for cooperation on identification, which is most often effectively implemented with diplomatic missions (except for one Member State).

Evidence accepted includes not only valid or expired passports, but also almost always other identity documents, photocopies of documents, biometric evidence, and, more rarely, information extracted from the Visa Information System (VIS).

For 11 Member States, consular interviews are often to always performed upon their request as necessary, with, on average, acceptable or satisfactory outcomes.

However, interviews are often to always requested by Algerian authorities even if sufficient evidence to establish nationality is provided (e.g. valid or expired travel documents), in the case of 11 Member States. Also, according to the Member States, Algerian authorities are not available to organise short or long-term identification missions. Only in the case of a few Member States it is possible for interviews to take place by phone or videoconference.

According to slightly more than half of the responding Member States, where over 90% of Algerian nationals ordered to leave are to be found, the **issuance of travel documents** often to always takes place in a timely manner.

In the case of seven Member States, even if nationality is established, before issuing travel documents Algeria takes other elements into account when deciding whether to issue travel documents or not.

Returns by **charters flights** are not accepted by Algeria.

According to nine Member States, certain restrictions are applied in case of returns by **scheduled flights**, namely the requirement that the persons are returned by direct flights.

In general, 18 Member States have assessed the **overall cooperation on return and readmission** as stable or improved and four as poor or deteriorated.

*With a total of 28 185 Algerian nationals ordered to leave in 2019, Algeria ranks third amongst visa-bound third countries whose nationals have been issued return decisions in the Member States. Overall, more than two-thirds of Member States interact with Algeria and five have bilateral agreements. No jointly agreed procedures are in place at EU level, however a readmission routine is in place for most Member States who interact. With half of these Member States, identification processes are conducted successfully, including through interviews, however for those Member States that have the most cases, cooperation on identification is problematic and long delays hamper return. Once identification is performed, issuance of travel documents is timely. Charter flights are not accepted despite the large number of irregular migrants to be returned. For a more effective and predictable readmission cooperation, the good cooperation practices should be extended to all cases and to all Member States, with identification processes being further expedited and travel documents issued without interviews for documented cases. In addition, cooperation could be improved by accepting charter flights and not restricting scheduled flights to direct flights only. This should result in a better rate of issuance of travel documents and a higher return rate.*