

Pakistan

EU engagement to date

The EU-Pakistan Readmission Agreement entered into force in December 2010 and its implementation is monitored through regular meetings of the Joint Readmission Committee. Eleven meetings of the JRC have taken place so far, the last one on 28 January 2020.

The implementation of the agreement is facilitated by a RCMS which became operational in 2017 in a first pilot phase with four Member States participating (DE, FR, BE and EL). Extension of the RCMS to all Member States can happen as soon as the Pakistani Government and the implementing partner IOM sign the required service agreement, however the discussions on this agreement have been prolonged by Pakistan for a year and a half already. A EURLO has been active in Pakistan since 2016.

Cooperation on readmission

In 2019, 22 135 Pakistani nationals staying illegally in the Member States were issued return decisions and 2 500 effectively returned to Pakistan resulting in a **return rate** of 11%. Member States submitted 3 883 readmission requests to Pakistani authorities, who issued 1 700 travel documents resulting in an **issuance rate** of 44%.

A total of 22 Member States reported having approached the authorities of Pakistan for readmission matters related to its nationals in 2019.

According to half of the Member States, representing more than three quarters of the return decisions issued to Pakistan nationals, the relevant provisions of the existing **EU Readmission agreement** are often to almost always respected by Pakistan.

Two Member States reported having **bilateral agreements/arrangements** in place with Pakistan, whose relevant provisions are respected often or always.

Half of the responding Member States representing three quarters of all Pakistani nationals issued a return decision, assess the **cooperation on the identification procedure** with Pakistan as good to very good. Six others qualify it as average and the remaining five, accounting for 17% of the return decisions, as poor to very poor.

Most responding Member States have an established business routine for cooperation on identification which is for most of them often to almost always effectively implemented with Pakistan's diplomatic missions.

As to consular interviews, the Member States that are using the RCMS do, in principle, not need to request interviews for identification purposes. For the remaining Member States consular interviews are often or always performed on their request, in the case of seven but rarely or never in the case of another seven. Outcomes are considered, on average, as acceptable to satisfactory for seven, but unsatisfactory for five.

Interviews are also very often to always requested by Pakistani authorities in cases where sufficient evidences to establish nationality was already provided (e.g. valid or expired travel documents), in the case of five Member States.

Evidence accepted includes not only valid or expired passports, but other identity documents and photocopies of documents are also always accepted for almost three quarters of responding Member States, including biometrics for 13 of the 15 who tried.

According to two thirds of the responding Member States, where three quarters of all Pakistani nationals ordered to leave are to be found, the **issuance of travel documents** often to always takes place in a timely manner. This is rarely to never the case in eight Member States, where the remaining quarter of all Pakistani nationals ordered to leave are present.

Returns by **charter flights** are accepted by Pakistan from more than half of the responding Member States (the remaining ones have not attempted return operations by charters). Certain restrictions are applied to some Member States in case of returns by **scheduled flights** which concern mainly visas for escorts.

In general, half of the responding Member States consider that the **overall cooperation on return and readmission** has improved since 2015. Only two Member States considered that cooperation deteriorated.

With a total of 22 135 Pakistani nationals ordered to leave in 2019, Pakistan ranks fourth amongst visa-bound third countries whose nationals have been issued return decisions in the Member States. Overall, almost three quarters of Member States interact with Pakistan on readmission and the provisions of the EU Readmission Agreement and the two bilateral agreements in place are generally respected. Identification processes are conducted successfully, including through interviews and biometrics for Member States issuing three quarters of return decisions, but are cumbersome and/or unsuccessful for the rest. The same proportion applies for timely issuance of travel document. For a more effective and predictable readmission cooperation, the provisions of the agreement would need to be implemented correctly towards all Member States, in particular regarding identification practices and deadlines on issuance of travel documents. The extension of the RCMS to all Member States could be particularly instrumental in addressing the consistency of practices and increasing efficiency, which should then result in a higher caseload handled timely and a higher return rate.