

Kosovo*

EU engagement to date

Cooperation on readmission with Kosovo continues on bilateral tracks. Kosovo has concluded Readmission Agreements with a majority of EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries and sought to launch negotiations with others.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Kosovo (Article 88) also provides a basis for readmission.

Cooperation on readmission

In 2019, 5 745 Kosovo nationals staying illegally in the Member States were issued return decisions and 2 185 effectively returned to Kosovo resulting in a **return rate** of 38%. Member States submitted 591 readmission requests to Kosovo authorities, who issued 155 travel documents resulting in an **issuance rate** of 26%.

A total of 18 Member States reported having approached the authorities of Kosovo for readmission matters related to its nationals in 2019.

One Member State indicated that cooperation takes place on the basis of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Kosovo (Article 88). Fifteen Member States informed that they have a **bilateral agreement** with Kosovo, which is in all cases often to always respected.

Similarly, all responding Member States assessed the **cooperation on identification** procedures with Kosovo authorities as good or – in most cases – very good.

This is reflected in all reporting Member States, except three, having an established routine with Kosovo diplomatic missions for cooperation on identification that in all these cases is effectively implemented.

Valid and expired passports, as well as their photocopies are accepted, as well as information extracted from VIS (with the exception of one Member State), and other identity documents. Biometric evidence is used by seven Member States.

Consular interviews are always organised upon request, with their outcome assessed positively. All Member States, except one, reported that the **issuance of travel documents** takes place in a timely manner.

One Member State informed that elements other than nationality are taken into account when deciding whether to issue a travel document.

EU or national travel documents are in principle accepted in the case of nine Member States, while one indicated that they are never accepted.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

One Member State flagged that restrictions to readmission are often imposed by Kosovo upon arrival.

Twelve Member States informed that they used **charter flights** to Kosovo. Visas for escorts were not necessary. No restrictions on **scheduled flights** were reported.

The **overall cooperation on return and readmission** was assessed as good or stable, except by one Member State where it deteriorated.

With a total of 5 745 Kosovo nationals ordered to leave in 2019, Kosovo ranks 21st amongst visa-bound third countries whose nationals have been issued return decisions in the Member States. Overall, almost two-thirds of Member States interact with Kosovo – the others have few or no cases. Despite the absence of an EU readmission agreement, cooperation with Kosovo proceeds smoothly, based on a large number of bilateral agreements with the Member States. Identification processes are conducted successfully for all Member States, including through interviews, travel documents are issued timely or EU travel documents accepted and charter and scheduled flights operate as planned.