

Senegal

EU engagement to date

The EU has engaged in discussions on readmission in 2015, but attempts to build upon Senegal political openness at that time to formalise cooperation at EU level have not been successful, despite several high level contacts in 2017 and 2018. No further EU level engagement has been pursued since due to the expressed preference of Member States most concerned for a bilateral approach. An EMLO is present in the country and Frontex is negotiating a Working Arrangement. Article 13 of the partnership agreement between African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries and the EU (thereafter ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement), to which Senegal is party, prescribes the commitment of the partner countries to cooperate with the EU in readmitting its own nationals.

Cooperation on readmission

In 2019, 8 010 Senegalese nationals staying illegally in the Member States were issued return decisions and 585 effectively returned to Senegal resulting in a **return rate** of 7%. Member States submitted 843 readmission requests to Senegalese authorities, who issued 181 travel documents resulting in an **issuance rate** of 21%.

A total of 16 Member States reported having approached the authorities of Senegal for readmission matters related to its nationals in 2019.

Two Member States, accounting for three quarters of the return decisions issued report having **bilateral arrangement** in place with Senegal, whose relevant provisions are often respected.

Six of the responding Member States, representing 48% of return decisions issued assess the overall cooperation with Senegal in the **identification procedure** as very good and good. Four Member States, representing another 48% of the return decisions issued, assess it as average.. The remaining six Member States, accounting for 4% of the return decisions issued, consider it as poor and very poor.

This is reflected in nine Member States having an established routine for cooperation on identification with Senegalese diplomatic missions that is often or always effectively implemented in five of them, representing over 90% of the return decisions issued.

For six Member States, accounting for nearly half of all return decisions issued, consular interviews are often to always performed upon their request as necessary, with acceptable outcomes for one and very satisfactory outcomes for two. At the same time, interviews are rarely to never performed for another six accounting for nearly half of return decisions issued. The interviews outcomes are unsatisfactory, for the two Member States where they have taken place.

According to two Member States Senegalese authorities are often or always available to organise short or long-term identification missions, while, this is rarely to never the case in another six Member States. The outcomes of the identification missions, when they happen, are overall acceptable for four Member States (and poor for two others).

Interviews are also always requested by Senegalese authorities in cases where sufficient evidence to establish nationality are provided (e.g. valid or expired travel documents) in the case of five Member States (representing almost half of return decisions issued, including the one with most cases overall). It is rarely to never the case in another six Member States (representing almost the other half of all return decisions issued, including the ones with the second and third most return decisions issued).

Evidence accepted includes not only valid or expired passports, but also other identity documents – as confirmed by 10 Member States – including ID, consular ID, birth certificate and driving license. According to seven Member States information extracted from the VIS is accepted. It is possible for two Member State that interviews take place by phone or videoconference.

According to half of the responding Member States, where 95% of all Senegalese ordered to leave are to be found, the **issuance of travel documents** often to always takes place in a timely manner, once identification is performed, while the other half of Member States state that it is rarely to never the case.

Additional elements other than nationality, such as the family or health situations, are also taken into account by Senegal when deciding whether to issue travel documents or not, in the case of four Member States.

Returns by **charters flights** are accepted by Senegal from six Member States, with landing permission requested for two of them. Due to low caseload, the remaining Member States have not attempted to return by charters.

In general, Member States have assessed the **overall cooperation on return and readmission** as follows: five Member States consider it poor/insufficient or deteriorating (including the one with the second most cases overall), while six see it as stable (including the one with the third most cases overall) and four as improved (including the one with most cases).

With a total of 8 010 Senegalese nationals ordered to leave in 2019, Senegal ranks 16th amongst visa-bound third countries whose nationals have been issued return decisions in the Member States. Overall, half of Member States interact with Senegal on readmission on a relatively high number of readmission requests, though these represent only 10% of return decisions issued. No jointly agreed procedures are in place at EU level but half of those who engage have an established readmission routine. Two Member States, representing three-quarters of all return decisions issued, have a bilateral agreements/arrangements in place whose provisions are often respected. Identification practices differ greatly depending on the Member State and deliver satisfactory results for Member States representing half of the return decisions issued and average or poor for the rest. Once identification is completed, the issuance of travel documents is generally timely, but made dependent on other factors than the established nationality. For a more effective and predictable readmission cooperation, the good practices already established with some Member States would need to be built upon and consistency and predictability ensured for all. Identification processes could be expedited, by performing interviews as requested by all

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Member States, but concluding identification without interviews for well documented cases, and by availing itself of remote means of identification (videoconference), and be followed through swiftly with issuing travel documents. A consolidated procedure at EU level, potentially supported by a RCMS, in particular when the biometric data base will be completed, could support consistent practices. This should result in a better rate of issuance of travel documents, encourage more readmission requests from Member States and a higher return rate.