

Republic of the Congo

EU engagement to date

There has been to date no engagement on readmission with the Republic of the Congo, as specific issues have not been raised by Member States until now and the country has not been prioritised for EU level engagement due to a relatively low number of return decisions issued annually to its nationals. Article 13 of the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement, to which Congo is party, prescribes the commitment of the partner countries to cooperate with the EU in readmitting its own nationals.

Cooperation on readmission

In 2019, 1 785 Congolese nationals staying illegally in the Member States were issued return decisions and 95 effectively returned to Congo resulting in a **return rate** of 5%. Member States submitted 51 readmission requests to the Congolese authorities, who issued 21 travel documents, resulting in an **issuance rate** of 41%.

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

One Member State, representing more than 80% of all Congolese nationals ordered to leave, has a **bilateral agreement** in place with Congo, whose relevant provisions are often respected, and assesses the overall cooperation with Congo in the **identification procedures** as good.

Four other of the responding Member States assess the overall cooperation with Congo in the identification procedure as poor to very poor. Only four of the responding Member States have an established business routine for cooperation on identification which is for three of them often to always effectively implemented.

For four of the responding Member States consular interviews are often to always performed upon their request with, however, satisfactory outcomes only in the case of one of them.

Evidence accepted includes not only valid or expired passports but also, for two Member States, information extracted from the VIS and for half of the Member States any other type of documents that might be helpful.

The **issuance of travel documents** often or always takes place in a timely manner for two of the responding Member States representing close to 90% of Congolese nationals ordered to leave.

No Member States has attempted to return by **charter flights** to Congo. One Member State reports visa obligation for escorts for **scheduled return flights**. The Member State with the biggest case load reports no visa obligations but an obligation for the escorts to return the same day in case of return by scheduled flight.

In general, two of the responding Member States have assessed the **overall cooperation on return and readmission** as satisfactory, including the Member State with the biggest caseload.

With a total of 1 785 Congolese nationals ordered to leave in 2019, the Republic of the Congo ranks 33rd amongst visa-bound third countries whose nationals have been issued return decisions in the Member States. Overall, a fifth of the Member States engage with Congo on readmission. The Member State representing the vast majority of the caseload has a bilateral agreement, established practices with good results in identification and issuance of travel documents. To improve overall cooperation with the EU on readmission, the better practices on identification and on issuance of travel documents would need to be extended to the other requesting Member States.