

Guinea-Bissau

EU engagement to date

The Commission has not engaged with Guinea-Bissau authorities on readmission cooperation as specific issues have so far not been raised by Member States and the relatively low number of return decisions issued to its nationals did not trigger prioritisation at EU level so far. Article 13 of the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement, to which Guinea-Bissau is party, prescribes the commitment of the partner countries to cooperate with the EU in readmitting its own nationals.

Cooperation on readmission

In 2019, 935 Guinea-Bissau nationals staying illegally in the Member States were issued return decisions and 50 effectively returned to Guinea Bissau resulting in a **return rate** of 5%. Member States submitted 51 readmission requests to Guinea-Bissau authorities, who issued 10 travel documents resulting in an **issuance rate** of 20%.

A total of nine Member States reported having approached the authorities of Guinea-Bissau for readmission matters related to its nationals in 2019.

One Member State reports having a **bilateral agreement/arrangement** in place with Guinea-Bissau, whose relevant provisions are never/almost never respected.

Half of the responding Member States, accounting for 68% of all irregularly staying Guinea-Bissau nationals ordered to leave, assess the overall cooperation with Guinea-Bissau in the **identification procedure** as good or very good, while a third rated it as very poor. Only a third of the reporting Member States have an established routine with diplomatic missions, which in two cases is often effectively implemented.

For half of the Member States accounting for 68% of all irregularly staying Guinea-Bissau nationals ordered to leave consular interviews are very often to always performed upon their request as necessary, with satisfactory results, while for three Member States covering 22% of the return decisions they are never/almost never organised upon request. Four Member States accounting for 71% of return decisions report that consular interviews are often to always requested by Guinea-Bissau even if sufficient evidence to establish nationality is provided.

According to two Member States, Guinea-Bissau authorities are often to always available to organise short or long-term identification missions, the outcomes of which are acceptable or very good. At the same time, two Member States report that this is never/almost never the case.

Evidence accepted includes in five Member States valid or expired passports, but also other ID documents and other relevant documents. At the same time three Member States report that no other evidence is accepted. Two Member States reported that information extracted from the VIS is accepted.

According to four of the responding Member States, accounting for 68% of the return decisions, the **issuance of travel documents** is often or very often timely. For the four

Member States where 22% return decisions are issued the travel documents are rarely or never issued in a timely manner, in some cases the issuance can take up to seven months. One Member State noted that Guinea-Bissau refuses to issue travel documents even for positively identified cases.

Only one Member State stated that additional elements other than nationality are often taken into account.

Most Member States did not attempt returns by **charters flights**. One Member State stated that charter flights are accepted by Guinea-Bissau without any limitations and two that charters are not accepted.

Certain restrictions are applied in case of returns by **scheduled flights**, namely visas for escorts.

Five of the reporting Member States, which account for less than a quarter of all Guinea-Bissau nationals ordered to leave, report that **overall cooperation on return and readmission** has either improved or remained stable since 2015. For two Member States, accounting for more than half of all Guinea-Bissau nationals ordered to leave, it has deteriorated. One Member State, where a fifth of all Guinea-Bissau nationals ordered to leave are to be found, noted that despite engagement no cooperation has been established.

With a total of 935 Guinea-Bissau nationals ordered to leave in 2019, Guinea-Bissau ranks 43rd amongst visa-bound third countries whose nationals have been issued return decisions in the Member States. Overall, less than a third of the Member States interact with Guinea-Bissau on readmission and submitted a small number of readmission requests. No jointly agreed procedures are in place at EU level, the provisions of the only bilateral readmission agreement are never or almost never respected. Member States representing two-thirds of return decisions issued are satisfied with Guinea-Bissau cooperation, on both identification and timely issuance of travel documents, even though they identify obstacles and delays. The remaining Member States are not satisfied. For an improved cooperation on readmission, the identification procedures would need to be improved, by including consular interviews and identification missions as necessary, and travel documents would need to be issued in a timely manner for all cases and towards all Member States. This should result in an increased caseload processed, a better issuance rate for travel documents and eventually a higher return rate.