



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

Directorate C: Migration and Protection  
Unit C.1: Irregular Migration and Return Policy

Brussels, 9 September 2019  
HOME.DDG1.C.1/FGM

MS. MARTINA TOMBINI  
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**Subject: Your application for access to documents – Ref GestDem No 2019/4840**  
Dear Madam,

We refer to your e-mail dated 16/08/2019 in which you make a request for access to documents, registered on 19/08/2019 under the above-mentioned reference number.

You request access to documents containing monthly and annual data on the number of return decisions issued by the Member States in 2017 and 2018, number of return operations organised by each Member State and the total number of third country nationals returned in the period; total cost of returning migrants to third countries in 2017 and 2018, as well as a list of EU readmission agreements concluded with third countries.

Furthermore, you requested access to the reports the Commission has to send every three years to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of Directive 2008/115/EC, as well as information on which sources the Commission has based these reports and whether Member States have an obligation to report to the European Commission or to other European bodies on the return operations they are conducting.

We provide below links to the documents requested.

Data on the annual numbers of return decisions issued by the Member States and third country nationals effectively returned are collected and published by Eurostat in the Enforcement of Immigration Legislation database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>. As of 2019 some Member States provide, on a voluntary basis, also quarterly data on both abovementioned indicators, however not all Member States provide these data. These data can also be consulted in the Enforcement of Immigration Legislation database under the above link. Neither the Commission nor Eurostat collect monthly return-related data.

Monthly operational data on return decisions and effective returns are collected by the European Border and Coast Guard in the framework of the Frontex Risk Analysis Network and published in quarterly reports which can be consulted: <https://frontex.europa.eu/publications/>. It has to be stressed, however, that the methodology of EBCGA's data collection and relevant stakeholders differ compared to the ones of Eurostat. Only Eurostat data can be considered as official statistics.

Member States do not have an obligation to report on return operations they conduct, nor to provide data on the number of return operations conducted. Consequently, no such data are collected by the Commission.

No data or information is collected by the European Commission on a regular basis on the cost of returning third country nationals illegally-staying in the territory of the Member States to third countries. An ad hoc query on the cost of forcible removal was conducted by the European Migration Network in 2017, whose results are public and can be consulted on the Europa website: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/2017.1133\\_hr\\_ad-hoc\\_query\\_on\\_the\\_cost\\_of\\_a\\_forcible\\_removal\\_of\\_the\\_irregular\\_tcns\\_wider.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/2017.1133_hr_ad-hoc_query_on_the_cost_of_a_forcible_removal_of_the_irregular_tcns_wider.pdf).

A complete list of EU readmission agreements concluded with third countries, together with links to the relevant documents, is available on the DG HOME website: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/irregular-migration-return-policy/return-readmission\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/irregular-migration-return-policy/return-readmission_en).

As regards reporting to the application of the Return Directive, to date the Commission published a report in 2014, namely the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on EU Return Policy COM/2014/0199 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1430836026754&uri=CELEX:52014DC0199>). This report was based on a study conducted by the external consultancy on behalf of the European Commission<sup>1</sup>, official Eurostat return data, data on joint return operations coordinated by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, obtained from the Agency, as well as information collected in the course of a study to analyse the conformity of national legislation with Directives in the sector of asylum and immigration conducted in the framework of a Framework Service Contract with TiPiK Communication Agency S.A. In September, the Commission tabled a legislative proposal to amend the Return Directive COM(2018) 634.

Extensive information and aggregate data on return can be found also in Progress Reports on the European Agenda on Migration, which can be consulted on the Europa website: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package_en).

Yours faithfully,

Francisco GAZTELU MEZQUIRIZ  
Head of Unit  
[e-signed]

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<sup>1</sup> *Evaluation on the application of the Return Directive (2008/115/EC) - Final Report*, 2013, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/search/download.do?documentId=10737855>