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2025.53 European travel document for return of illegally staying TCNs

**European Migration Network
Ad-hoc query**

October, 2025

AD-HOC QUERY ON 2025.53 EUROPEAN TRAVEL DOCUMENT FOR RETURN OF ILLEGALLY STAYING TCNS

REQUESTED BY EMN NCP ITALY ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

Exported for: Unrestricted Dissemination

Responses from: EMN NCP Estonia, EMN NCP Ireland, EMN NCP Italy, EMN NCP Latvia, EMN NCP Malta **(5 in total)**

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 26 October 2016, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted Regulation (EU) 2016/1953, establishing a European travel document for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals. At the European level, it was considered essential to introduce an instrument that could meet the growing operational needs of Member States in the return procedures, by creating a uniform and more secure European travel document, with internationally recognized technical specifications.

The Regulation lays down the format and technical requirements of the document, while leaving it to the Member States to designate the competent authorities and define the procedures for its issuance.

Within this European framework, Italy has adopted its own legislative measure^[1], introducing provisions on the European travel document for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals.

In particular, the Italian legislation designates the Questore (Chief of Police at provincial level) as the competent authority for issuing the European travel document: "The European travel document for the return of third-country nationals residing irregularly, as provided for by Regulation (EU) 2016/1953 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016, shall

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be issued by the Chief of Police at provincial level (Questori), on the basis of the standard model approved by decree of the Minister of the Interior, in agreement with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, to be adopted within six months of the entry into force of this provision”.[2]

By introducing this instrument into the Italian legal system, the provision assigns competence for issuing the document to the Chief of Police at provincial level (Questori), while leaving the definition of the related process to secondary legislation – specifically, an interministerial decree led by the Ministry of the Interior, in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

This ministerial decree[3] approved the official model of the European travel document. Attached to it is the specimen of the document, which includes technical and security specifications defined at the EU level.

From an operational perspective, EU readmission agreements – as well as lower-level technical arrangements – with the following third countries provide for the possible use of the European travel document: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Georgia, Hong Kong, Macao, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Ukraine and Afghanistan (Joint Declaration on Migration Cooperation).

This Ad Hoc Query therefore aims to collect updated information on the use of the European travel document by EU Member States in the context of return procedures.

Please note that this query will update and integrate some information collected by the EMN Ad Hoc Query 2022.42 on the Use of the European Travel Document (EUTD) in return and readmission procedures launched by the European Commission.

[1] In the Official Gazette n. 12 of 17 January 2022, Law n. 238 of 23 December 2021 was published, entering into force on 21 February 2022.

[2] Article 1, paragraph 6-bis of Legislative Decree n. 286/1998 (Consolidated Immigration Act), introduced by article 17 of Law n. 238 of 23 December 2021.

[3] Decree of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of 29 March 2023, published in the Official Gazette on 25 September 2023.


WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

We would very much appreciate your responses by **21 October 2025**.


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1. Is the EU travel document for return of illegally staying third-country nationals regularly used in your Member State? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which third countries accept it.
2. If you answer YES to Q1, are there already established procedures with the third countries mentioned in your answer above? YES/NO. If yes, please specify the procedures.
3. Has any third country of return accepted this document even in the absence of both European or bilateral agreement/arrangement? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which third countries accept the EU travel document in such cases.
4. Is the EU travel document for return regularly accepted for transit in third countries (e.g. Turkey, Morocco, UAE, etc)? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which transit third countries accept it.

RESPONSES

		Unrestricted Dissemination ?	
	EMN NCP Estonia	Yes	1. Is the EU travel document for return of illegally staying third-country nationals regularly used in your Member State? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which third countries accept it. No. Estonia has 't issued any the EUTD during the period 2023-2025.


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			<p>2. If you answer YES to Q1, are there already established procedures with the third countries mentioned in your answer above? YES/NO. If yes, please specify the procedures.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>3. Has any third country of return accepted this document even in the absence of both European or bilateral agreement/arrangement? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which third countries accept the EU travel document in such cases.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>4. Is the EU travel document for return regularly accepted for transit in third countries (e.g. Turkey, Morocco, UAE, etc)? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which transit third countries accept it.</p> <p>N/A</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Ireland</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Is the EU travel document for return of illegally staying third-country nationals regularly used in your Member State? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which third countries accept it.</p>


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			<p>No, Regulation (EU) 2016/1953 does not apply to Ireland because Ireland does not participate in the provisions of the Schengen acquis related to travel documents for returnees. Ireland is not bound by this Regulation and is not subject to its application.[1]</p> <p>[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016R1953</p> <p>2. If you answer YES to Q1, are there already established procedures with the third countries mentioned in your answer above? YES/NO. If yes, please specify the procedures.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>3. Has any third country of return accepted this document even in the absence of both European or bilateral agreement/arrangement? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which third countries accept the EU travel document in such cases.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>4. Is the EU travel document for return regularly accepted for transit in third countries (e.g. Turkey, Morocco, UAE, etc)? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which transit third countries accept it.</p>
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			N/A
	EMN NCP Italy	Yes	<p>1. Is the EU travel document for return of illegally staying third-country nationals regularly used in your Member State? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which third countries accept it.</p> <p>Recently, Italy has completed the approval and printing process of the first documents.</p> <p>2. If you answer YES to Q1, are there already established procedures with the third countries mentioned in your answer above? YES/NO. If yes, please specify the procedures.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>3. Has any third country of return accepted this document even in the absence of both European or bilateral agreement/arrangement? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which third countries accept the EU travel document in such cases.</p> <p>N/A</p>

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			<p>4. Is the EU travel document for return regularly accepted for transit in third countries (e.g. Turkey, Morocco, UAE, etc)? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which transit third countries accept it.</p> <p>N/A</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Latvia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Is the EU travel document for return of illegally staying third-country nationals regularly used in your Member State? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which third countries accept it.</p> <p>No.</p> <p>2. If you answer YES to Q1, are there already established procedures with the third countries mentioned in your answer above? YES/NO. If yes, please specify the procedures.</p> <p>-</p> <p>3. Has any third country of return accepted this document even in the absence of both European or bilateral agreement/arrangement? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which third countries accept the EU travel document in such cases.</p> <p>No.</p>

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			<p>4. Is the EU travel document for return regularly accepted for transit in third countries (e.g. Turkey, Morocco, UAE, etc)? YES/NO. If yes, please specify which transit third countries accept it.</p> <p>Irregularly. In practice, there was one case where an Azerbaijani citizen (a child without a birth certificate) traveled to Azerbaijan with an EU travel document in transit through Turkey.</p>
♦	<p>EMN NCP Malta</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Response is marked as EMN Sensitive</p>
