

## *Spanish Readmission Policy*

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During the 1980s and 1990s, Spain shifted from being an emigration country to an immigration country, arriving people in the first phase from Latin America and then from Africa, Asia and East Europe. Beside Germany, Spain has been the country that has received more immigrants in the EU, but now, with nearly a quarter of its population unemployed (4 points ahead of Greece), immigrants are no longer welcome. The economic crises, was the reason given for definitely closing the door to immigration.

Reason joined other more covers up as the criminalization of immigration and increasing outbreaks of racism and xenophobia, encouraged from some political party and reinforced by the mass media. In addition to this, the police increased raids to arrest people solely for their skin color or their ethnic features. Add to this a further tightening of immigration rules with the last two amendments in 2009 and 2011.

Various measures have been taken by the government to close the circle around irregular immigrants, such as the recent move of not providing health coverage to those who are in Spanish territory without administrative permission. The slogan that the government reveals is "return at any cost" and therefore readmission agreements play a crucial role by facilitating the forced return of migrants to their countries of origin or to a transit country.

Spain is the country in the EU that has signed more agreements with many countries aimed at controlling irregular migration and ensuring on the readmission of irregular migrants. Making an inventory of all the bilateral readmission agreements concluded between Spain and as EU countries as third countries would not suffice to grasp the different mechanisms and cooperative instruments that have emerged, over the last two decades, to sustain the removal of illegally resident third-country nationals.

Actually, the parties may opt for alternative ways of dealing with the issue of readmission including additional forms of mutual assistance – e.g., police cooperation agreement, development cooperation agreements, commercial agreements – or by choosing to couch their cooperation in other types of deals, including exchanges of letters and memorandums of understanding.

These alternative ways do not constitute formal readmission agreements. However, as authors tell us, they are no less agreements for that, having various implications on state-to-state relations and other things besides.

In our talk we will address primarily the characteristics of bilateral readmission agreements signed by Spain and under which conditions are the readmission carry out?

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