



Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Visa Issuance Statistics

Schengen Visas Issued to Pakistanis



PRESS RELEASE

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Pakistan ranked second among the top 20 countries with the highest Schengen visa rejection rates, with an alarming rejection rate of 52% in 2023 – **Schengen Visa Issuance Statistics**

Islamabad, December 2nd, 2024

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, is looking at Schengen Visa Issuance Statistics, which can be found [HERE](#).

What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

Gallup Pakistan's Big Data series was started by Bilal I Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. Bilal explains the rationale of the series: *"The usual complaint from academics and policy makers is that Pakistan does not have data availability. Our experience negates that. Pakistan has lots of data, but it is not available in a usable form and not widely accessible. At Gallup we plan to bridge this gap in terms of accessibility and use of data. The Gallup Big Data series has earlier worked with data sets such as [PSLM](#), [Labour Force Survey](#), and [Economic Survey reports](#) as well as [National Census Reports](#) and [Election Commission Data sets](#). The current series is using the [Visa Issuance Statistics Dashboard](#), which provides a variety of visa-related statistics. We hope that these series are useful, and we welcome both feedback as well as possible collaborations as we create a public good in the form of useful data sets in Pakistan."*

For more reports and dashboards on Pakistan please visit our dedicated website:

<https://www.gallupakistandigitalanalytics.com/>

What data points this current edition covers:

This series aims to present the important learnings from the Visa Issuance Statistics Dashboard, for policy makers, the public, as well as for marketers in an easy and understandable way. This edition looks at Schengen Visa Issuance Statistics. The series' main aim is to provide data. Implications of these data points for development sector as well as wider socio-political ramifications is something we would like to trigger in relevant circles.

Schengen Visa Issuance Statistics

Pakistan ranked second among the top 20 countries with the highest Schengen visa rejection rates, with an alarming rejection rate of **52%** in 2023

SCHENGEN VISAS ISSUED TO PAKISTANIS, 2014-2023:

According to the European Commission, 86,698 applications for uniform visas were submitted in 2023, but only 40,843 were approved, reflecting a 47% acceptance rate.



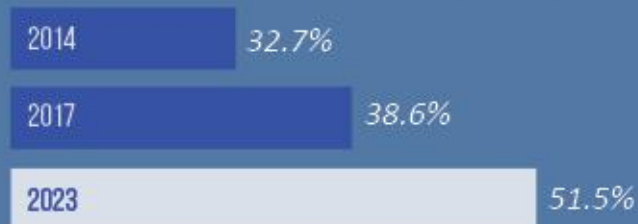
VISA ISSUANCE TO PAKISTANIS BY SCHENGEN STATE

Among all Schengen countries, Germany leads in issuing uniform visas to Pakistani applicants, having granted a total of 110,586 visas.



VISA REJECTION RATE, 2014-2023:

While the total number of visas issued by Schengen states to Pakistani applicants has increased over the past two years, 2023 marked a record-high visa rejection rate of 51.5%.



Source: European Commission, tabulation by Gallup Pakistan



PASSPORT

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Key Findings:

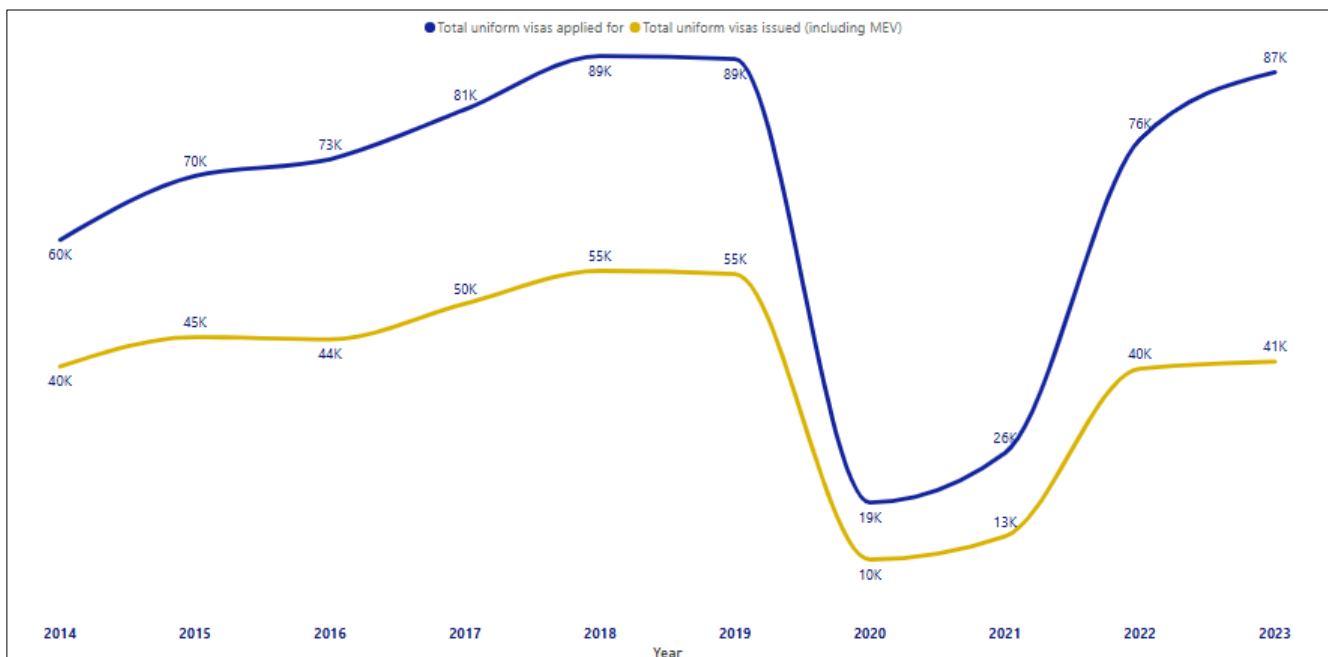
1. According to the European Commission, 86,698 applications for uniform visas were submitted in 2023, but only 40,843 were approved, reflecting a 47% acceptance rate.
2. Among all Schengen countries, Germany leads in issuing uniform visas to Pakistani applicants, having granted a total of 110,586 visas.
3. Between 2014 and 2023, Schengen states issued 10,059 Limited Territorial Validity (LTV) visas to Pakistani citizens, compared to 156,421 Multiple Entry Visas (MEVs). MEVs accounted for 39.8% of the total uniform visas issued during this period.
4. While the total number of visas issued by Schengen states to Pakistani applicants has increased over the past two years, 2023 marked a record-high visa rejection rate of 51.5%.
5. Pakistan ranked second among the top 20 countries with the highest Schengen visa rejection rates, with an alarming rejection rate of 52% in 2023.

1. According to the European Commission, 86,698 applications for uniform visas were submitted in 2023, but only 40,843 were approved, reflecting a 47% acceptance rate.

The uniform visa, also known as a Schengen visa (Type C), allows short stays within the Schengen Area for up to 90 days within a 180-day period. These visas can be issued for purposes such as tourism, business, visiting relatives or friends, academic activities, or official engagements. They are available as single-entry, double-entry, or multiple-entry visas (MEVs), with MEVs typically having a validity period of one, two, or five years.

The issuance and application of uniform visas reached their lowest point in 2020, with just 18,545 applications and 9,518 visas granted. This sharp decline compared to 2019—when 88,782 applications were filed and 54,728 visas issued—can be largely attributed to the global disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, including widespread lockdowns and travel restrictions. However, a notable recovery trend emerged post-2020, as the number of applications rose by 288% between 2021 (26,392 applications) and 2022 (76,080 applications).

Figure 1: Schengen Visas Issued to Pakistanis, 2014-2023



Source: European Commission, visualization by Gallup Pakistan¹

The data highlights significant fluctuations in Schengen visa activity over recent years, reflecting broader global trends. The low acceptance rate in 2023 could reflect either an increase in stricter screening measures or a higher volume of incomplete or ineligible applications. This might indicate that despite the rebound in application numbers, travelers are facing more challenges in meeting visa requirements.

The pandemic’s impact is evident in the sharp drop in applications and issuances in 2020. However, the rebound in subsequent years points to a gradual normalization of international

¹ <https://www.gallupakistandigitalanalytics.com/us-visa-issuance-statistics-dashboard/>

travel. The 288% surge in applications between 2021 and 2022 underscores a pent-up demand for travel after the pandemic restrictions eased. Yet, the acceptance rates remain relatively low, raising questions about whether the criteria for approval have tightened post-pandemic or if demand has outpaced the system's processing capacity.

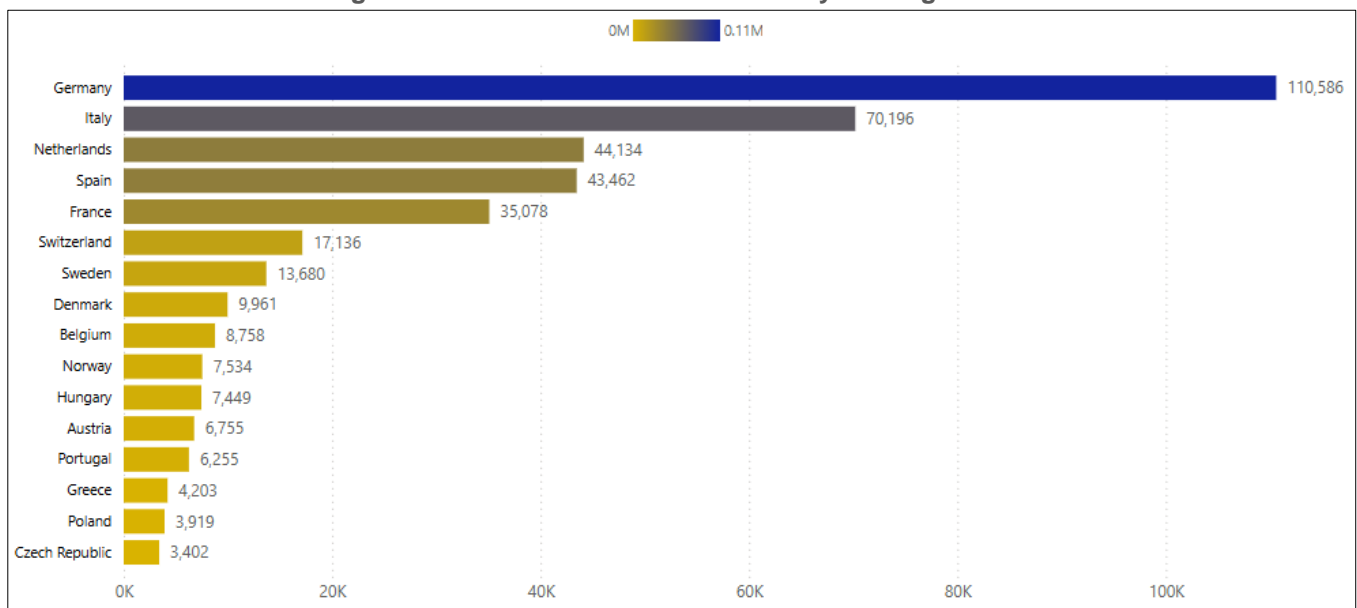
2. Among all Schengen countries, Germany leads in issuing uniform visas to Pakistani applicants, having granted a total of 110,586 visas. It is followed by Italy, which issued 70,196 visas, while the Netherlands and Spain come next with 44,134 and 43,462 visas respectively.

Germany's position as the top issuer of Schengen visas to Pakistani citizens reflects its role as a significant destination for Pakistani travelers, whether for tourism, business, education, or family visits. This could be attributed to Germany's economic prominence, its thriving Pakistani diaspora, and robust educational opportunities that attract students. Moreover, Germany's efficient visa processing systems and established connections with South Asia may also contribute to the high volume of issuances.

Italy, ranking second, suggests its appeal for Pakistani travelers, possibly due to its sizable Pakistani immigrant community, making it a popular choice for family visits and migration-related travel. Similarly, the Netherlands and Spain might serve as preferred destinations for their openness to international tourism and economic opportunities.

The distribution of visa issuances also reveals broader patterns of mobility and preference. Germany and Italy's prominence could reflect their perceived ease of access, stronger bilateral ties, or more favorable visa policies for Pakistanis. Conversely, the relatively lower figures for other Schengen countries might point to stricter visa regimes or less familiarity and connectivity between Pakistan and those nations.

Figure 2: Visa Issuance to Pakistanis by Schengen State



Source: European Commission, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

3. Between 2014 and 2023, Schengen states issued 10,059 Limited Territorial Validity (LTV) visas to Pakistani citizens, compared to 156,421 Multiple Entry Visas

(MEVs). MEVs accounted for 39.8% of the total uniform visas issued during this period.

LTV visas allow travel only within specified Schengen member states, making them restrictive in nature, whereas MEVs enable multiple entries and exits across the entire Schengen Area, providing greater flexibility and freedom of movement. The difference in functionality highlights the varied needs and profiles of visa applicants—LTVs are typically issued in exceptional circumstances, while MEVs cater to frequent travelers, such as business professionals and tourists with a broader European itinerary.

From 2014 to 2018, uniform visa issuances steadily increased from 40,080 to 54,728 annually, reflecting a growing demand for travel to Europe. However, this upward trend was abruptly disrupted in 2020, when the pandemic led to a dramatic drop, with only 9,518 visas issued that year, including a mere 206 LTVs. This decline underscores the extensive impact of global travel restrictions and lockdowns. Nonetheless, recovery was swift after the lifting of restrictions, with total issuances rebounding to 39,748 by 2022.

Figure 3: Breakdown of Visa Issuance, by type

Year	Total LTVs issued	Total MEVs issued	Total uniform visas issued (including MEV)
2014	536	11,992	40,080
2015	750	11,467	44,750
2016	1,219	18,505	44,383
2017	1,680	21,018	50,045
2018	1,402	24,585	55,239
2019	639	21,254	54,728
2020	206	4,207	9,518
2021	709	5,747	13,174
2022	1,216	17,835	39,748
2023	1,702	19,811	40,843
Total	10,059	156,421	392,508

Source: European Commission, tabulation by Gallup Pakistan

The predominance of MEVs over LTVs among Pakistani applicants illustrates the demand for flexible travel options, often necessary for those with complex travel plans or frequent business engagements in Europe. This aligns with the broader trend of globalization and interconnectedness, where more travelers require access to multiple countries within a single trip.

The low issuance of LTVs suggests their use is limited to specific cases, likely tied to humanitarian grounds, emergencies, or applicants who fail to meet full Schengen criteria. Their restrictive nature makes them less practical for the average traveler.

The significant rebound in visa issuances post-pandemic reflects pent-up demand for international mobility. However, the data reveals that issuances in 2022 had not yet fully returned to pre-pandemic levels, possibly due to lingering challenges such as backlogs in processing, stricter visa policies, or changes in travel behavior.

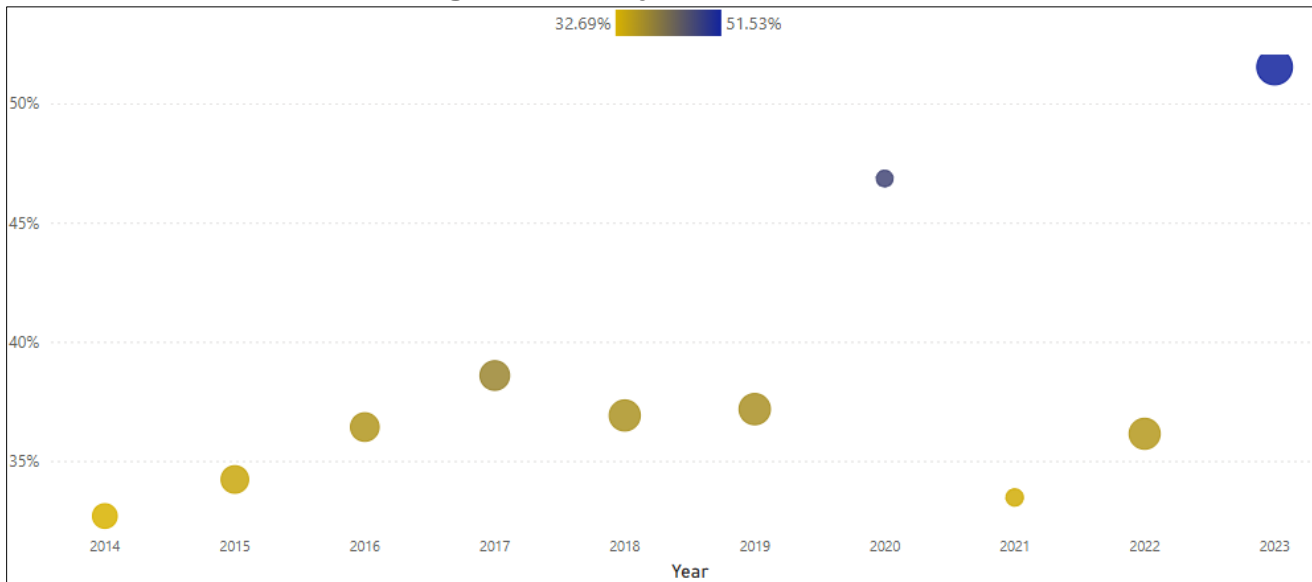
This recovery trend may continue as global mobility stabilizes, but the share of MEVs could grow further if economic ties between Pakistan and Schengen states deepen, or if travel

requirements evolve to favor multi-country trips. On the other hand, shifts in geopolitical relations or security concerns could influence the balance between LTV and MEV issuances in the future.

4. **While the total number of visas issued by Schengen states to Pakistani applicants has increased over the past two years, 2023 marked a record-high visa rejection rate of 51.5%.** This reflects a significant tightening of visa approval processes despite a rebound in application volumes.

Historically, visa rejection rates have fluctuated. In 2020, amidst pandemic-induced restrictions, the rejection rate climbed to its second-highest level at 46.9%. However, as international travel restrictions eased, the rate dropped to 33.5% in 2021. Interestingly, from 2014 to 2017, rejection rates exhibited a gradual increase, rising from 32.7% to 38.6%. Notably, years with an increase in uniform visa issuances have also shown a parallel rise in rejection rates, suggesting a complex interplay between demand, scrutiny, and policy enforcement.

Figure 4: Visa Rejection Rate, 2014-2023



Source: European Commission, tabulation by Gallup Pakistan

The high rejection rate in 2023 signals several potential factors at play. First, stricter screening measures or heightened scrutiny might have been introduced to ensure compliance with Schengen entry criteria. Second, the increase in applications could have overwhelmed processing systems, leading to more rejections due to incomplete or inaccurate submissions. Third, geopolitical concerns or shifting priorities within the Schengen states may also have influenced the tightening of approval rates.

The trend of rising rejection rates alongside increasing visa issuances suggests that while more applicants are pursuing travel to the Schengen Area, a significant portion may not fully meet the stringent requirements. This could be due to a lack of proper documentation, insufficient financial guarantees, or discrepancies in applications.

The sharp fluctuation in rejection rates during and after the pandemic further highlights the sensitivity of visa policies to external global events. In 2020, rejection rates spiked as

countries enforced strict travel restrictions, and only essential or highly justified travel was approved. The subsequent relaxation in 2021 aligns with the reopening of borders and a gradual return to normalcy in global mobility.

Looking ahead, the high rejection rate in 2023 may act as a deterrent for potential applicants, emphasizing the importance of meticulous application preparation. It also raises questions about the accessibility of Schengen visas for Pakistani travelers, especially those who lack resources or guidance in navigating the complex application process.

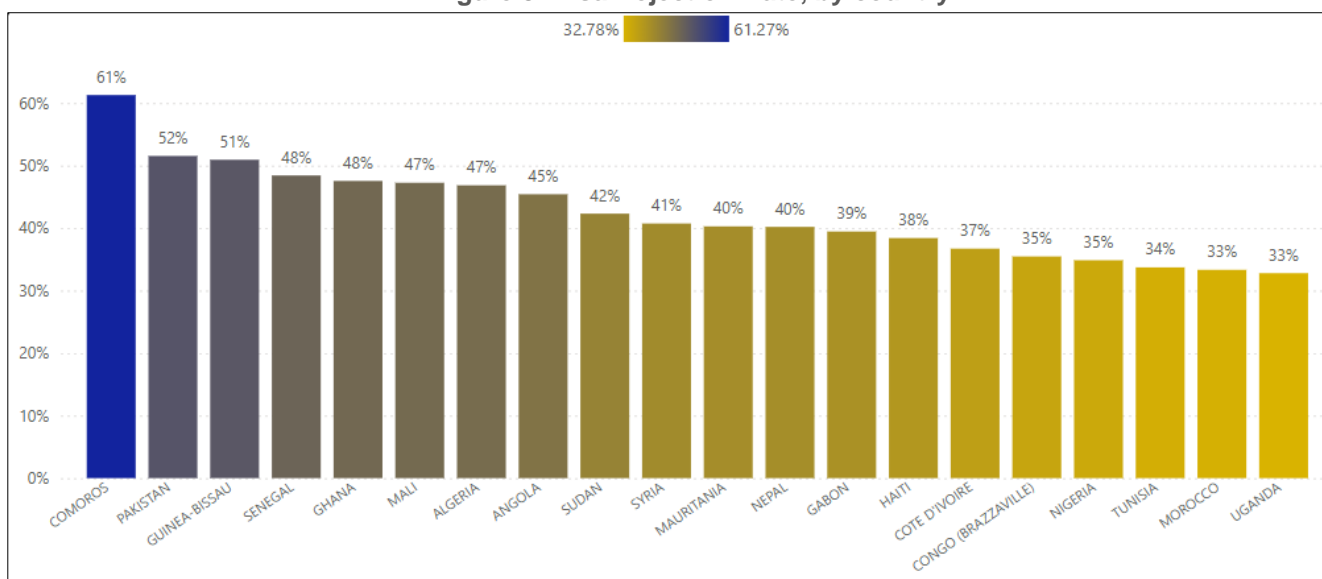
5. Pakistan ranked second among the top 20 countries with the highest Schengen visa rejection rates, with an alarming rejection rate of 52% in 2023. It was surpassed only by Comoros, which faced an even higher rejection rate of 61%.

The stark comparison with Comoros, a small island nation with limited international mobility infrastructure, raises questions about why a populous and globally connected country like Pakistan encounters similar difficulties. This may indicate systemic issues in the processing of Pakistani applications, such as heightened risk assessments or inconsistencies in meeting Schengen states' specific criteria.

Such a high rejection rate has broader implications. It could deter potential travelers from applying, thereby limiting opportunities for Pakistanis to engage in tourism, business, education, and cultural exchange within Europe. This trend might also strain diplomatic relations if perceived as discriminatory or overly restrictive.

To address this challenge, efforts could focus on better applicant education, enhancing transparency in visa rejection reasons, and fostering bilateral initiatives to improve travel facilitation. Strengthening ties between Pakistan and Schengen states, combined with a streamlined application process, could help reduce rejection rates and promote greater mobility for Pakistani travelers.

Figure 5: Visa Rejection Rate, by country



Source: European Commission, tabulation by Gallup Pakistan

In conclusion, the trends in Schengen visa applications and issuances for Pakistani travelers highlight the complexities of global mobility and the challenges posed by stringent visa regimes. While there has been a notable recovery in application volumes post-pandemic, the increasing rejection rates underscore a growing disconnect between demand for travel and access to opportunities. This calls for a multifaceted approach that balances security and immigration concerns with the need to foster international exchange. Strengthening collaboration between Pakistan and Schengen states, improving applicant guidance, and addressing systemic inefficiencies could pave the way for a more inclusive and efficient visa process, ensuring that genuine travelers are not left disadvantaged by procedural barriers.

Wish to Contribute to Gallup Big Data Analysis?

Gallup Pakistan is looking for collaboration with researchers to expand both the Big Data Analysis project as well as this study of Health in Pakistan. If you have any ideas, please write to Bilal I Gilani, Project Director, Big Data Analysis at Gallup Pakistan.

Wish to know more about the US Visa Statistics Dashboard?

The Schengen Visa Statistics Dashboard unravels the complexities of immigration through data-driven insights. Whether you are interested in immigrant or non-immigrant visas, our dashboard provides a comprehensive overview of issuances by types, passport analysis, embassy statistics, and emerging trends. The dashboard allows users to discover key trends in country of origin data and understand the evolving patterns of immigration to the United States.

You can find more information on Visa Issuances on <https://www.gallupakistandigitalanalytics.com/>

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