<https://eucrim.eu/news/second-schengen-forum/>

##### **Second Schengen Forum**

*28 June 2021 (updated 3 years ago)*  
Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

After the first Schengen Forum meeting in November 2020 (→ [eucrim 4/2020, 272-273](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2020-04.pdf)), the political dialogue on strengthening the Schengen rules has continued. The Schengen Forum convenes members of parliament and home affairs ministers with the aim of fostering cooperation and political dialogue as well as of building up stronger confidence in the Schengen rules.

The second Schengen Forum was opened on 17 May 2021 with a [keynote speech by *Ylva Johansson*](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/johansson/announcements/commissioner-johanssons-keynote-speech-second-schengen-forum_en), Commissioner for Home Affairs. *Johansson* stressed that, with the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns, the EU and the Schengen area were under a lot of pressure and strain. She pointed out, however, that these challenging times can also be seen as an opportunity for the Schengen community to be reminded of how important Schengen is for the mobility of EU citizens and for the EU economy. The challenges have also shown that there is a need for more cooperation and coordination as well as for better use of new technology in external border management and by European police forces in order to reinforce the Schengen area. According to *Johansson*, the pandemic has shown that proportionate and coordinated border control measures are usually more effective than unilateral and uncoordinated action taken by individual Member States. Even if rigid controls at internal borders can be justified in acute emergencies, they should be seen as an exception, as they are neither proportionate nor effective. In order to build a more secure Schengen area, the Commissioner also stressed the importance of the launch of the European Travel Authorisation System (ETIAS, → [eucrim 2/2018, 82, 84](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2018-02.pdf)). She announced that the Commission intends to present an Annual State of Schengen Report, which will serve as a basis for a better Schengen evaluation.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/cjeu-rules-on-reintroduction-of-internal-border-checks-for-longer-than-six-months/>

##### CJEU Rules on Reintroduction of Internal Border Checks for Longer than Six Months

*21 June 2022*  
Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

The CJEU, sitting as the Grand Chamber, rendered a [judgement](https://curia.europa.eu/juris/documents.jsf?num=C-368/20) on 26 April 2022 regarding the temporary reintroduction of internal borders because of serious threats to public policy/internal security, including a time limit for the reintroduction. The judges only partially followed the [opinion](https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2021-10/cp210177en.pdf) of Advocate General (AG) Saugmandsgaard Øe (→ [related link](https://eucrim.eu/news/ag-reintroduction-of-internal-border-checks-for-longer-than-six-months/)).

##### **Background of the case:**

In the wake of the migration crisis, Austria reintroduced controls at the borders it shares with Hungary and Slovenia. They were reintroduced several times from the middle of September 2015 on for successive six-month periods each. *NW* was ordered to pay a fine of €36 in Austria for having crossed the Slovenian-Austrian border in August 2019 without being in possession of a valid travel document. He was controlled again when he attempted to enter Austria by car from Slovenia in November 2019. The defendant challenged these two controls as well as the imposed fine before the Landesverwaltungsgericht Steiermark (Regional Administrative Court, Styria, Austria). The referring court questioned whether the checks to which NW was subject and the penalty that was imposed upon him were compatible with EU law.

##### **Decision of the CJEU:**

The CJEU first proceeded to stress that the Schengen Borders Code permits a Member State to reintroduce border controls temporarily at its borders with other Member States if there is a serious threat to its public policy or internal security. However, such a measure cannot exceed a maximum total duration of six months. A Member State can only reintroduce such measures afresh, immediately after the six-month period has ended, if it is faced with a new serious threat affecting its public policy or internal security. The new threat must be distinct from the threat initially identified, as the EU legislature considered a period of six months to be sufficient for the Member State to adopt measures disabling such a threat. This marks a clear difference to the AG's Opinion, who stated that the Member States’ powers and responsibilities in the area of public policy and internal security could not be framed by absolute periods.

In the present case, the CJEU concluded that Austria did not demonstrate the existence of a new threat, with the result that the two border control measures to which NW had been subjected were incompatible with the Schengen Borders Code. In accordance with the AG’s Opinion, the CJEU also stated that a person cannot be obliged, on pain of a penalty, to present a passport or identity card upon entry from another Member State if the reintroduction of border controls is contrary to the Schengen Borders Code.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/ag-reintroduction-of-internal-border-checks-for-longer-than-six-months/>

##### AG: Reintroduction of Internal Border Checks for Longer than Six Months

*17 November 2021 (updated 1 year, 11 months ago)* // Published in printed  [Issue 3/2021](https://eucrim.eu/issues/2021-03/)  [pp 139 – 140](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2021-03.pdf#page=9)Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

On 6 October 2021, Advocate General (AG) *Saugmandsgaard Øe* presented his [opinion](https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2021-10/cp210177en.pdf) in [Joined Cases C-368/20 and C-369/20](https://curia.europa.eu/juris/fiche.jsf;jsessionid=16D08296A6F9FFADD0D793D2C482AFB8?id=C%3B368%3B20%3BRP%3B1%3BP%3B1%3BC2020%2F0368%2FP&oqp=&for=&mat=or&lgrec=en&jge=&td=%3BALL&jur=C%2CT%2CF&num=c-368%252F20&dates=&pcs=Oor&lg=&pro=&nat=or&cit=none%252CC%252CCJ%252CR%252C2008E%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252Ctrue%252Cfalse%252Cfalse&language=en&avg=&cid=25263723). According to the AG, “a Member State faced with persistent serious threats to public policy or internal security may reintroduce controls at its internal borders for longer than only six months.”

##### Background of the cases:

Austria reintroduced controls at the Slovenian border in conjunction with the migration crisis in September 2015. Those controls were continued on the basis of various exceptions provided for in the Schengen Borders Code. In 2018/2019, Austria made use of the legitimate exception in the Schengen Borders Code that allows Member States to temporarily reintroduce internal border controls in exceptional circumstances and when faced with a serious threat to public policy or internal security. This happened twice in a row, each time for a period of six months.

*NW* was ordered to pay a fine of €36 in Austria for having crossed the Slovenian-Austrian border in August 2019 without being in possession of a valid travel document. He was controlled again trying to enter Austria by car from Slovenia in November 2019. The defendant challenged these two controls as well as the imposed fine before the Landesverwaltungsgericht Steiermark (Regional Administrative Court, Styria, Austria).

The Landesverwaltungsgericht Steiermark had doubts as to the lawfulness of the seamless juxtaposition of the exemption regulations, since such a cumulation is not provided for in the Schengen Borders Code. In essence, the referring court wished to know whether the Schengen Borders Code precludes the reapplication of the exception in the event that a Member State is still faced with a serious threat to public policy or internal security after expiry of the six-month period.

##### The AG’s opinion:

First, the AG takes the view that serious threats to public policy or internal security are not necessarily limited in time. This means that the Member States’ powers and responsibilities in this area cannot be framed by absolute periods, as the Schengen Borders Code aims not only to ensure the absence of any internal border controls but also to maintain public policy and to combat all threats to public policy. Thus, reapplication of the exception several times in a row is to be admitted.

Second, the AG argues that, if the reapplication took place several times in a row and on the basis that the “renewed threat” was similar to the preceding serious threat, the “enhanced proportionality condition” becomes stricter each time the exception is reapplied. The Member State concerned must clarify why the renewal of controls would be appropriate as a necessary measure by explaining why another, less coercive measure would not be sufficient. The AG also stresses that the reapplication decision must be notified to the Commission before its adoption, and the Commission must critically examine the proportionality of the measure.

Third, the AG points out that checks on persons at internal borders must be consistent with the right to free movement of EU citizens. The AG concludes that the possible imposition of a penalty for a breach of the obligation to present a passport or an identity card is not contrary to EU law under these circumstances.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/eca-internal-border-control-during-pandemic-largely-unjustified/>

##### ECA: Internal Border Control during Pandemic Largely Unjustified

*2 August 2022*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

In its [Special Report 13/2022](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR22_13/SR_free-movement-phase-I_EN.pdf) (published on 13 June 2022), the European Court of Auditors (ECA) assessed whether the Commission had taken effective action to protect the right of free movement of persons during the COVID-19 pandemic. It came to the overall conclusion that the Commission has not scrutinised enough the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic posed to the right of free movement of people. The main reason for this are limitations of the legal framework, which hampered the Commission to exercise its supervisory role.

However, the Commission did also not exercise proper scrutiny to ensure that internal border controls complied with the Schengen legislation. The auditors reviewed all 150 Member State notifications of internal border controls that were submitted to the European Commission between March 2020 and June 2021, of which 135 related exclusively to COVID-19. None provided sufficient evidence that the controls were a measure of last resort, proportionate and of limited duration.

The report acknowledged that the Commission launched important initiatives to coordinate measures affecting freedom of movement, but Member States’ responses had been uncoordinated and often inconsistent with guidance by the EU institutions.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/third-schengen-forum/>

##### Third Schengen Forum

*27 July 2022*  
Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

The [third Schengen Forum](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/third-schengen-forum-setting-way-forward-2022-06-02_en) convened on 2 June 2022, following the publication of the New State of Schengen Report 2022 (→ separate news item). The Commission, Members of the European Parliament, Home Affairs Ministers, and other stakeholders, such as EU agencies and non-governmental organisations discussed the state of the Schengen area and the new priorities for 2022-2023 on the basis of the report. Discussions in the Forum focused on:

* The management of EU’s external borders and the means to strengthen the European integrated border management;
* The need for internal border controls to remain an exceptional measure of last resort in light of recent CJEU rulings;
* The reinforcement of police cooperation in order to ensure internal security.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/second-schengen-forum/>

##### Second Schengen Forum

*28 June 2021 (updated 3 years ago)*  
Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

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Obsah obrázku text, snímek obrazovky, Písmo, číslo

Popis byl vytvořen automaticky

A key feature of ETIAS is the possibility to cross-check data provided by the traveller against other large-scale EU systems for borders, security, and migration, such as the Schengen Information System (SIS), the Visa Information System (VIS), the Entry/Exit System (EES), and Eurodac as well as Europol and Interpol databases. Furthermore, ETIAS will feature a dedicated watchlist and specific risk indicators. In this way, ETIAS is expected to close information gaps and enhance the internal security of the EU. Ideally, automated approval of the application will be granted within a few minutes. If, however, data matches the above-mentioned databases or the outcome of the automated process is undecided, the ETIAS Central Unit will manually handle the application process. This unit will be managed by the Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). If the central unit has further doubts, the national ETIAS unit of the responsible Member States will take over the case and proceed manually. The ETIAS legal framework contains clear rules and procedures in case of a refusal. Applicants retain the right to lodge an appeal, which must be done in the Member State that has taken the decision on the application and in accordance with the national law of that Member State. Applicants will also have the right to redress if they consider themselves to have been treated unfairly. It is expected that travel authorisations will be issued automatically and quickly in more than 95% of the cases. It is worth mentioning, however, that the ETIAS authorisation is not a document that grants rights of entry or stay. This further decision is taken by the border guards. ETIAS will be set up by the EU Agency for the operational management of large-scale information systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (eu-LISA). The development costs are estimated at €212.1 million. The system is expected to be ready in 2021. Frontex will then be responsible for the continued management of ETIAS. (TW)

EP Sees Functioning of Schengen Area Critically On 30 May 2018, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the first annual report on the functioning of the Schengen area. The resolution first points out the progresses made in strengthening the Schengen area over the last several years: The creation of the European Border and Coast Guard; The introduction of mandatory, systematic checks against relevant databases at the external borders on entry and exit for third-country nationals and for EU nationals; The new entry and exit registration system. However, MEPs also identified a series of critical shortcomings and deficiencies. In particular, they criticize the continued reintroduction of internal border checks, as this undermines the basic principles of the Schengen area. They hold that the prolongation of internal border controls is not in line with existing rules, deeming it unnecessary and disproportional. The construction of physical barriers, including fences, between Member States is also considered incompatible with fundamental Schengen principles. MEPs, inter alia, call for the following actions to be taken: Addressing the identified, critical shortcomings without delay in order to return to the normal functioning of Schengen without internal border controls; Reforming the Schengen Information System on the following issues: protection of children who are at risk or missing; the immediate, obligatory exchange of information on terrorism; and the mandatory exchange of information on return decisions; Allocating sufficient resources to the external borders through staffing, equipment, and expertise in order to ensure a high level of control while fully respecting fundamental rights – including matters relating to international protection and non-refoulement; Developing a permanent, robust, and effective Union response in search and rescue operations at sea to prevent the loss of life; Collecting information and statistical data more efficiently by EU member state authorities on how resources are managed at the national level and on capabilities related to border control; Ensuring swift and effective return procedures in Member States, with full respect for fundamental rights under humane and dignified conditions; Ensuring adequate infrastructure, accommodation, and living conditions for all asylum seekers. The resolution also reiterates that Bulgaria and Romania are ready to join the Schengen area. The Council is now called on to approve their accession. (TW)

<https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2018-02.pdf>

<https://eucrim.eu/news/croatia-joins-schengen-area/>

##### Croatia Joins Schengen Area

*14 December 2022 (updated 11 months, 3 weeks ago)* // Published in printed  [Issue 4/2022](https://eucrim.eu/issues/2022-04/)  [pp 224 – 225](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2022-04.pdf#page=6)Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

On 8 December 2022, the Council adopted a [decision on full application of the Schengen acquis in Croatia](https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14239-2022-INIT/en/pdf). After verification and in accordance with the applicable Schengen evaluation procedures, [the Council found](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/08/schengen-area-council-decides-to-lift-border-controls-with-croatia/) that the necessary conditions for application of all parts of the relevant *acquis* have been met in Croatia, including the effective application of all Schengen rules in accordance with the agreed common standards and fundamental principles.

This decision was made, after the European Parliament (EP) had endorsed the full application of the [Schengen acquis in Croatia](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20221107IPR49610/meps-back-croatia-s-schengen-accession) in a resolution of 10 November 2022. In another resolution of 18 October 2022, the EP invited the Council to [allow Romania and Bulgaria to join the Schengen area](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20221014IPR43207/end-discrimination-and-admit-bulgaria-and-romania-to-schengen-meps-demand). On 16 November 2022, the Commission [adopted a Communication on full application of the Schengen acquis in Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0636&qid=1669020880751), calling upon the Council to take the necessary decisions without any further delay, thus allowing these three countries to join the area without internal border controls.

While the Council decided in its December meeting on full application of the Schengen acquis for Croatia, a small minority of states blocked the accession of Romania and Bulgaria into Schengen; thus the required unanimity for Schengen accession on the part of the EU Member States could not be reached for these two countries which joined the EU in 2007.

As a consequence of the accession of Croatia to the Schengen area, persons will no longer be subject to border inspections at internal land and sea borders between Croatia and the other members of the Schengen area starting on 1 January 2023. As a result of the necessity to align the lifting of border checks with the dates of the IATA summer/winter time schedule, checks at internal air borders will also be eliminated starting on 26 March 2023. Beginning on 1 January 2023, Croatia will also be able to issue Schengen visas and fully utilize the Schengen Information System (SIS). In accordance with Decision No. 565/2014/EU, national short-stay visas issued by Croatia before 1 January 2023 will continue to be valid for the duration of their validity for transit through the territory of other Member States or for intended stays on their territories that do not exceed 90 days in any 180-day period.

##### 2023 State of Schengen Report

*9 June 2023*  
Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

On 16 May 2023, the European Commission presented the second [State of Schengen Report](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52023DC0274) as part of its initiative to strengthen Schengen governance (for the first report → [eucrim 2/2022, 88-89](https://eucrim.eu/news/state-of-schengen-report-2022/)) The report assesses the state of the Schengen area and acknowledges the need for continued efforts to enhance external border management, increase effectiveness of returns, and boost police cooperation.

Schengen was the most attractive and frequently visited area in the world in 2022, with 65% of the world's international tourists travelling to Europe. While additional efforts are needed to further strengthen management of the external borders, Schengen is functioning well and is overall robust as a single jurisdiction for international travel purposes. Notable achievements include the following:

* Schengen's enlargement through the recent inclusion of Croatia;
* The establishment of a new Schengen Council for strategic guidance (since March 2022);
* The introduction of tools like the European border management strategy and the operational start of the renewed Schengen Information System (SIS) in March 2023.

Key priorities outlined in the State of Schengen Report are as follows:

* Consolidating Schengen governance: Implementing a new evaluation framework with targeted country recommendations to strengthen Member States' operational capacity;
* Enhancing internal security: Operationalization of the Council recommendation on police cooperation (→ [eucrim 2/2022, 120](https://eucrim.eu/news/recommendations-on-operational-law-enforcement-cooperation/)) to improve intelligence sharing and common risk analysis;
* Enhancing the effectiveness of the return system: Utilizing the SIS and maximizing the possibilities outlined in the Commission Recommendation for mutual recognition of return decisions and expedited returns;
* Schengen enlargement: Urging the Council to support the inclusion of Romania and Bulgaria in Schengen to strengthen European unity;
* Phasing out lengthy internal border controls: Replacing them with alternative police cooperation measures, with border controls being reintroduced only as an exception and strictly time-limited measure of last resort;
* Improving the use of EU visa policy tools: Addressing irregular migration and security risks by monitoring the functioning of visa-free regimes, aligning third partners' visa policies with those of the EU, and abolishing risky investor citizenship and residence schemes.

The 2023 State of Schengen Report marks the beginning of the second annual Schengen cycle. It feeds into the discussions in the Council on the policy priorities for Schengen. The Commission urges the current and incoming Council Presidencies to take these priorities forward in the Schengen Council.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/2023-state-of-schengen-report/>

##### State of Schengen Report 2022

*28 July 2022 (updated 8 months, 1 week ago)* // Published in printed  [Issue 2/2022](https://eucrim.eu/issues/2022-02/)  [pp 88 – 89](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2022-02.pdf#page=18)Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

On 24 May 2022, the Commission presented the [first State of Schengen Report](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/schengen-package_en), which assesses the management of internal and external borders by Schengen countries. The report also includes a new proposal on how Schengen countries can improve the management of their external borders - the [European Integrated Border Management](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/effective-management-external-borders_en).

The Schengen area as an area that depends on mutual trust among Member States requires a strong and structured governance. As a result, the Commission established in November 2020 the annual Schengen Forum as the first step towards fostering an inclusive political debate dedicated to building a stronger Schengen area; the Commission also developed a new governance model in the form of a "Schengen cycle" ensuring a regular "health-check" on the state of Schengen.

On the one hand, the annual State of Schengen Report serves to identify current challenges with a view to recommend priority actions for the way forward and, on the other hand, it is a starting point for the Schengen cycle representing the basis for discussions of MEPs and Home Affairs Ministers at the Schengen Forum that convened on 2 June 2022, and in the Schengen Council that took place on 3 June 2022.

The Schengen Report highlighted the following main priority actions for the Schengen area:

* Strengthening the management of the external borders;
* Ensuring that internal border controls are measures of last resort maintained for a limited period and accompanied by mitigating measures, where necessary;
* Establishing internal security through reinforced police cooperation within the EU.

In order to achieve these objectives, swift implementation of some priority actions should be addressed both at EU and national level, such as ensuring orderly checks at external borders for all travelers, making full use of available IT architecture and cross-border cooperation tools, and lifting all long-lasting internal border controls.

The report observed that the Schengen area is in excellent shape as more than 90% of the Schengen acquis is implemented in a compliant manner. The Commission again calls on the Council to take the necessary steps to consolidate the Schengen area by adopting the decision for enabling Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania to become formally part of it.

The report stressed that given the enhanced mandate and significantly reinforced resources, Frontex should ensure its full accountability towards the EU institutions. The Commission will also launch a dialogue with the European Parliament and the Council in relation to the governance of the Agency. Given that the report is to mark the beginning of a new Schengen cycle, the Commission is calling for a stronger cooperation between the Commission, national governments, Frontex and others in the maintaining and monitoring of the Schengen area in this new cycle.

In addition to the State of Schengen Report, the Commission published two documents on external borders checks on 24 May 2022:

* A [report on systematic border checks](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/schengen-package_en) at the EU external borders, which have been reinforced by Regulation 2017/458;
* A [Policy Document](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/schengen-package_en), the Commission is starting a consultation of the European Parliament and of the Council, that aims to achieve a common understanding between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission with a view to adopt the Multi-annual Strategic Policy for European Integrated Border Management by the end of 2022.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/state-of-schengen-report-2022/>

##### Commission: Croatia Ready for Schengen

*11 January 2020*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

On 22 October 2019, the [Commission issued a Communication](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20191022_com-2019-497-communication_en.pdf) in which it confirmed that Croatia meets all necessary conditions for accession to the Schengen area. The Commission also confirmed that Croatia fulfilled commitments undertaken within the framework of the accession negotiations that are also relevant for the Schengen *acquis*. These areas mainly include the good functioning of the judiciary and the respect for fundamental rights.

Croatia declared that it wants to be part of the Schengen regime in March 2015, which triggered a long evaluation and monitoring process whether the country fulfils all parts of the Schengen *acquis*.

Since 2013, this process has been jointly carried out by the Member States and the Commission. They are supported by EU bodies, offices, and agencies; the Commission has an overall coordination role. The Commission prepares and plans the evaluation and adopts evaluation reports, while the Council has the responsibility to adopt recommendations for remedial actions. This is the first time that the new Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism has been applied.

A country that wishes to accede must show compliance in a number of policy fields, e.g.:

¡ In its capacity to take responsibility for controlling the external borders on behalf of the other Schengen States and for issuing uniform Schengen visas;

¡ In its capacity to efficiently cooperate with law enforcement agencies in other Schengen States, in order to maintain a high level of security once internal border controls are lifted.

The Communication confirmed that Croatia has successfully implemented the Schengen rules in the areas of data protection, police cooperation, common visa policy, return, the Schengen Information System (SIS), firearms, and judicial cooperation in criminal matters. It also affirmed that Croatia meets the Schengen rules on external border management; however, Croatia must work continuously to keep the standard, especially in this field.

It is now up to the Council to verify the evaluation results. The Schengen *acquis* is only applicable after the Council takes a decision giving green light.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/commission-croatia-ready-schengen/>

##### Enhancing Schengen Security: Commission's Recommendation

*27 March 2024* // Published in printed  [Issue 4/2023](https://eucrim.eu/issues/2023-04/)Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

On 17 January 2024, [Commission Recommendation (EU) 2024/268](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2024/268) on cooperation between the Member States with regard to serious threats to internal security and public policy in the area without internal border controls was published in the Official Journal (2024/268). The recommendation advocates for a collaborative approach at all political, administrative, and operational levels in order to combat threats effectively in the Schengen area. It builds on existing legal frameworks that facilitate operational cooperation and information exchange among police and judicial authorities. Measures in visa and return policy areas are also being developed to compensate for the absence of internal border controls.

Key aspects include:

* Encouraging Member States to establish permanent contact points to ensure a swift response to serious threats against public policy or internal security and to enhance law enforcement cooperation and information sharing;
* Recommending the continued development of capacities for joint measures, including bilateral agreements for cross-border law enforcement cooperation and joint risk analyses in order to address threats effectively;
* Highlighting the importance of giving effect to Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/915 on operational law enforcement cooperation (→ [eucrim 2/2022, 120](https://eucrim.eu/news/recommendations-on-operational-law-enforcement-cooperation/)), thus improving operational cooperation in combating threats, with a focus on joint patrols, hot pursuits, and the pivotal role of police and customs cooperation centres;
* Underlining the need for joint actions against migrant smuggling and irregular migration, emphasizing the significance of shared information and coordinated actions to manage migratory pressures and unauthorised movements;
* Advocating for measures to address unauthorized movements of third-country nationals, such as intensified police controls in internal border areas;
* Applying mitigating measures to limit the impact of any measures adopted to address the serious threats to public policy or internal security. Such measures include the limited use of systematic checks, preference to mobile checks in the territory of the Member States over static checks at fixed locations, and the use of modern technologies and passenger information for a risk-based data-driven approach on better targeting the checks.

The recommendation also underscores the ongoing dialogue between the Schengen Coordinator and Member States, aiming for a structured, coordinated, and common European response to shared challenges: fighting terrorism and cross-border organized crime and effectively managing migration.U Schengen Commission Law Enforcement Cooperation

### Related links

* [2023 State of Schengen Report](https://eucrim.eu/news/2023-state-of-schengen-report/) News
* [Recommendations on Operational Law Enforcement Cooperation](https://eucrim.eu/news/recommendations-on-operational-law-enforcement-cooperation/) News
* <https://eucrim.eu/news/enhancing-schengen-security-commissions-recommendation/>

##### Bulgaria and Romania Join Schengen Area

*20 March 2024* // Published in printed  [Issue 4/2023](https://eucrim.eu/issues/2023-04/)Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

On 30 December 2023, the Council reached a unanimous [decision](https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-17132-2023-INIT/en/pdf) with Bulgaria and Romania to eliminate air and maritime internal border controls as of 31 March 2024, marking their partial integration into the Schengen area. This measure means that travelers will no longer face checks when crossing internal air and sea borders between these countries and the rest of the Schengen zone, aligning this change with the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) seasonal schedule adjustment. A decision on the removal of checks at internal land borders is still pending and expected to be made by the Council in 2024.

Since their accession to the EU, Bulgaria and Romania have been progressively implementing the Schengen legal framework, with a particular focus on managing external borders, enhancing police cooperation, and utilizing the Schengen Information System (SIS). In 2011, the European [Commission deemed both countries ready](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6861) to join the Schengen area, based on their compliance with the necessary conditions for membership:

* Adhering to the Schengen acquis;
* Managing external borders on behalf of the Schengen zone;
* Issuing uniform Schengen visas;
* Effectively participating in law enforcement cooperation and the SIS.

National short-stay visas issued by Bulgaria and Romania before the integration date will retain their validity. These visas will allow for transit or stays in other Member States for up to 90 days within any 180-day period, as per Decision No 565/2014/EU, provided that these states have agreed to recognize such visas for these purposes.

Bulgaria's and Romania's full entry into the Schengen zone had been blocked particularly by Austria fearing an increase of illegal immigration. In early December 2023, Austria agreed to the lifting of air and maritime borders as a precursor to the opening of land borders.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/bulgaria-and-romania-join-schengen-area/>

##### Commission Strategy for a Stronger and More Resilient Schengen Area

*25 June 2021 (updated 2 years, 6 months ago)* // Published in printed  [Issue 2/2021](https://eucrim.eu/issues/2021-02/)  [p 76](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2021-02.pdf#page=10)Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

On 2 June 2021, the Commission presented its new [strategy for a fully functioning and resilient Schengen area](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/pdf/02062021_strategy_towards_fully_functioning_and_resilient_schengen_area_com-2021-277_en.pdf). With this strategy, the Commission is aiming to make the Schengen area – the largest visa-free zone in the world – stronger and more resilient, accentuating that the free flow of people, goods, and services is at the heart of the European Union. The Commission acknowledged that the Schengen area has been under a lot of pressure in recent years, facing new challenges stemming from the 2015 refugee crisis, persistent terrorist threats and terrorist attacks on European soil, and the Covid-19 pandemic. These new challenges have led some Member States to reinstate internal border controls.

In order to successfully face these challenges and continue reaping the benefits that the Schengen area provides, the strategy aims to achieve the following goals:

*(1)* *Improve the EU’s external border management*

The Commission will present:

* A proposal for a Regulation on digitalisation of the visa procedure;
* A proposal for a Regulation on digitalisation of travel documents and facilitation of travel by 2023;
* A recommendation to Member States on the exchange of information/on situational awareness to be used in bilateral and multilateral agreements with third countries (model provisions).

*(2)* *Reinforce the Schengen area internally*

The Commission will:

* Improve police cooperation with an EU Police Cooperation Code that will provide a coherent EU legal framework to ensure that law enforcement authorities have equal access to information held by other Member States;
* Reinforce the automated exchange of important data categories relating to Prüm Council Decisions;
* Expand the use of advance passenger information (API) to also cover intra-Schengen flights;
* Update the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) Handbook.

*(3)* *Increase preparedness and enhance governance*

The Commission will:

* Continue to organise regular Schengen Forums in order to discuss the situation of Schengen at the political level and to foster continued reflection and cooperation;
* Relaunch the adoption of the “State of Schengen Report”;
* Propose an amendment to the Schengen Borders Code by the end of 2021 in order to address the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis (e.g., the reintroduction of internal border controls) and to deal with any future Schengen-wide challenges.
* Codify the guidelines and recommendations developed in relation to COVID-19 in the Practical Handbook for Border Guards.

The Commission calls upon the Council:

* To take the necessary steps for Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia to become part of the Schengen area without controls at the internal borders of Member States.

On the same day the new strategy was presented, the Commission also [proposed a regulation on the establishment and operation of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify application of the Schengen *acquis* and repealing Regulation (EU)](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/pdf/02062021_proposal_council_regulation_to_reform_the_schengen_evaluation_and_monitoring_mechanism_com-2021-278_en.pdf) No 1053/2013, in order to foster common trust in implementation of the Schengen rules.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/commission-strategy-for-a-stronger-and-more-resilient-schengen-area/>

##### Upgraded Schengen Information System Went Live

*23 March 2023 (updated 6 months, 2 weeks ago)* // Published in printed  [Issue 1/2023](https://eucrim.eu/issues/2023-01/)  [pp 11 – 12](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2023-01.pdf#page=13)2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

On 7 March 2023, the [renewed Schengen Information System (SIS) was launched](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1505) and became fully operational. Law enforcement authorities in 30 European countries are now able to enter and see new categories of alerts and share more data. The legal bases for the upgraded SIS was already laid in 2018 (→ [eucrim 4/2018, 192-193](https://eucrim.eu/news/new-legal-framework-schengen-information-system/)), but it took until now to put the legal provisions into operation (“SIS 3.0“). The main new features of the SIS include:

* In addition to photographs and fingerprints, the SIS will contain new types of biometrics, e.g., palm prints, fingermarks and palmmarks, as well as DNA records (but only in relation to missing persons), so that persons sought can be more easily located and identified;
* New inquiry check alerts will allow to collect targeted information on suspects of serious crime or terrorism. There will be alerts on “unknown wanted persons” containing only the prints of unknown perpetrators that are discovered at the scenes of terrorist offences or serious crime;
* In addition to existing alerts on missing persons, national authorities will be able to issue preventive alerts in the system to protect people in need (children at risk of abduction or potential victims of terrorism, trafficking in human beings, gender-based violence, or armed conflict/hostilities);
* With a view to better prevent and deter irregular migration, a new alert on return decisions allows national authorities to verify if third-country nationals have the legal right to stay in the EU. SIS will also contain data on falsified documents, including travel documents and visa stickers;
* Access rights are expanded, i.e. Europol and national immigration authorities now have access to all alert categories in SIS.

The SIS is the most widely used security database in Europe. It contains more than 90 million data sets. An alert entered in SIS by one country becomes available in real time in all other countries that use SIS, so that competent authorities across the EU can find the alert.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/upgraded-schengen-information-system-went-live/>

##### New Legal Framework for Schengen Evaluation

*23 June 2022*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

On 15 June 2022, Council Regulation (EU) 2022/922 of 9 June 2022 on the establishment and operation of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013 was [published in the Official Journal (L 160,1)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/922).

The Regulation establishes an evaluation and monitoring mechanisms for the purpose of ensuring that participating Member States apply the *Schengen acquis* effectively, efficiently and correctly. It replaces the former specific mechanism as laid down in the 2013 Regulation. The new legal framework reacts to shortcomings which were identified in several assessments of the Schengen evaluation since November 2020 (→ [eucrim 2/2021, 76](https://eucrim.eu/news/commission-strategy-for-a-stronger-and-more-resilient-schengen-area/)). Enhancements include, *inter alia*:

* Establishment of multiannual evaluation programmes covering a period of seven years in order to identify, where relevant, specific priority areas to be covered by the periodic evaluations;
* Better targeted unannounced and thematic evaluations;
* Evaluation of activities of EU agencies and private parties which perform functions under the Schengen legislation;
* Streamlined evaluation procedures and fast-track mechanism to identify/respond to serious deficiencies;
* Strengthened cooperation with national experts and EU agencies (in particular Frontex and Europol) in evaluation and monitoring activities;
* Enhanced political role of the Council, having, *inter alia*, the possibility to adopt recommendations in cases of serious deficiencies, for first-time evaluations and thematic evaluations, and where the evaluated member state substantially contests the report.

The European Parliament was consulted in the legislative procedure and adopted its resolution on 7 April 2022. The draft Act was formally endorsed by the Council on 9 June 2022.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/new-legal-framework-for-schengen-evaluation/>

##### Updated Rules Reinforcing Governance of Schengen Area

*29 January 2022 (updated 2 years ago)* // Published in printed  [Issue 4/2021](https://eucrim.eu/issues/2021-04/)  [p 203](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2021-04.pdf#page=9)Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

On 14 December 2021, the Commission [proposed updated rules](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2021%3A891%3AFIN&qid=1639757139340) to reinforce the governance of the Schengen area. The Commission stressed that the Schengen area is one of the biggest achievements of European integration. It has been repeatedly put to the test in recent years by a series of crises and challenges (e.g. the refugee crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic). While the already existing framework provides tools to tackle such challenges, there is room for improvement of certain aspects (e.g. dealing with major public health threats and the instrumentalisation of migrants). Therefore, the Commission sees the need to stock up the range of tools available to ensure the proper functioning of the Schengen area in order to restore and reinforce mutual trust between Member States. The main aims of the proposal are:

* Uniform application of measures at the external borders in case of a threat to public health: in such cases, the Council should be allowed to quickly adopt binding rules on temporary travel restrictions.
* Response to instrumentalisation of migrants at external borders to address the situation where a third-country actor uses human beings to destabilise the Union or its Member States: The proposal suggests provisions that will allow Member States to take the measures needed to manage the arrival of persons being instrumentalised by a third country. The measures will respond to the situation in a humane, orderly, and dignified manner that is fully respectful of fundamental rights and humanitarian principles.
* Contingency planning for Schengen in a threat situation affecting a majority of Member States at the same time: The proposal clarified and expanded the list of elements that must be assessed by a Member State when reintroducing temporary border controls. The Member State must review the appropriateness of the measure and its likely impact on the movement of persons within the Schengen area (without internal border control) and on the cross-border regions. The possibility to extend border controls up to a total maximum period of two years if certain threats persist for a considerable amount of time has also been added.
* Increased use of alternative measures to address the identified threats instead of internal border controls.

The Commission’s proposal to revise the Schengen Borders Code is part of other measures that aim to improve Schengen’s overall functioning and governance under the new Schengen Strategy “Towards a stronger and more resilient Schengen area” (→ [eucrim 2/2021, 76](https://eucrim.eu/news/commission-strategy-for-a-stronger-and-more-resilient-schengen-area/)).

<https://eucrim.eu/news/updated-rules-reinforcing-governance-of-schengen-area/>

##### Ireland Now Connected to Schengen Information System

*9 April 2021*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

On 15 March 2021, [Ireland joined the Schengen Information System (SIS).](https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/5dc00-minister-mcentee-and-commissioner-harris-welcome-irelands-connection-to-schengen-information-system-sis-ii/) The SIS is the largest and most widely used IT system for law enforcement cooperation and external border management in Europe. Irish authorities are now able to receive real-time information, e.g., on persons wanted for arrest and extradition, missing persons, and objects sought for seizure or use as evidence in criminal proceedings. Ireland has set up a new national [SIRENE bureau](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen-information-system/sirene-cooperation_en) (Supplementary Information Request at the National Entries), which is connected to other Member States’ bureaux, is operational 24/7, and is in charge of coordinating additional information exchange in relation to alerts.

Ireland is not a full member of the Schengen area but participates in the Schengen’s police and judicial cooperation arrangements. Next to Ireland, 26 EU Member States and four Schengen-associated countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland) are connected to the SIS. At the end of 2020, the Schengen Information System contained approximately 93 million alerts. It was accessed 3.7 billion times in 2020 and consisted of 209,178 hits (when a search leads to an alert and the authorities confirm it).

<https://eucrim.eu/news/ireland-now-connected-to-schengen-information-system/>

##### New Legal Framework for Schengen Information System

*18 February 2019 (updated 1 year ago)* // Published in printed  [Issue 4/2018](https://eucrim.eu/issues/2018-04/)  [pp 192 – 193](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2018-04.pdf#page=6)2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

New alerts on criminals and return decisions; greater vigilance for terrorist offences; better protection for children at risk of abduction; and enhanced data protection. These are the main features of the new legal framework for the EU’s largest security database, the Schengen Information System (SIS). The new rules aim at better effectiveness and efficiency of the system’s second generation (SIS II), whose legal bases stem from 2006/2007 and which became fully operational in 2013.

The reform proposal presented by the Commission on 21 December 2016 (see eucrim 1/2017, p. 7) was [adopted in November 2018 by the Council](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/11/19/schengen-information-system-council-adopts-new-rules-to-strengthen-security-in-the-eu/pdf). The European Parliament had already agreed to the political compromise found during the trilogue negotiations [in October 2018](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20181018IPR16534/strengthening-security-through-an-eu-wide-information-system).

The new legal framework was published on 7 December 2018 in the Official Journal ([O.J. L 312](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:L:2018:312:FULL&from=DE)). It consists of three regulations:

* [Regulation (EU) 2018/1860](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.312.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:L:2018:312:FULL) on the use of the Schengen Information System for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals;
* [Regulation (EU) 2018/1861](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.312.01.0014.01.ENG&toc=OJ:L:2018:312:FULL) on the establishment, operation and use of the SIS in the field of border checks;
* [Regulation (EU) 2018/1862](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.312.01.0056.01.ENG&toc=OJ:L:2018:312:FULL) on the establishment, operation and use of the SIS in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU.

The three legal instruments were considered necessary because of the distinct EU Member States’ participation in EU policies in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. The regulations emphasise, however, that this separation does not affect the principle that SIS constitutes one single information system that should operate as such.

In general, the new rules pursue the following objectives:

* Ensuring a high level of security;
* Increasing the efficiency of the SIS;
* Protecting the free movement of persons from abuse;
* Improving the exchange of information;
* Making the SIS a central tool for fighting terrorism and serious crime;
* Supporting border and migration management;
* Preparing the SIS for its interoperability with other large-scale EU information systems, such as the VIS, Eurodac, ETIAS, and EES.

The SIS continues to cover three areas of competence:

* Security cooperation, allowing police and judicial authorities to establish and consult alerts on persons or stolen objects in relation to criminal offences;
* Border and migration management, enabling border and migration authorities to control the legality of third-country nationals’ stays in the Schengen area;
* Vehicle control, granting vehicle registration authorities access to information about vehicles, number plates, or vehicle registration documents in order to check the legal status of vehicles.

The following gives an overview of the new features of the legislation, in particular as regards Regulation 2018/1862 on the operation and use of the SIS for police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters:

***New Alerts:***

* Introduction of a new alert category of “unknown wanted persons” connected to a serious crime, e.g., persons whose fingerprints are found on a weapon used in a crime;
* Extension of the existing category of “missing persons” to “vulnerable persons who need to be prevented from travelling,” e.g., children at high risk of parental abduction, children at risk of becoming victims of trafficking in human beings, and children at risk of being recruited as foreign terrorist fighters;
* Creation of the new category “inquiry check” allowing national law enforcement authorities to stop and interview a person in order for the issuing Member State to obtain detailed information;
* Introduction of the category of “objects of high value,” e.g., items of information technology, which can be identified and searched with a unique identification number.

***Greater Vigilance over Terrorist Offences:***

* Obligation for Member States to create SIS alerts for cases related to terrorist offences;
* Obligation to inform Europol of hits alerts linked to terrorism in order to help to “connect the dots” of terrorism at the European level.

***Types of Data – Use of Biometrics:***

* New rules on more effective use of existing biometric identifiers, i.e., facial images, fingerprints, palm prints, and DNA profiles;
* Use of facial images for biometric identification;
* Use of DNA profiles when searching for missing persons who need to be placed under protection;

***Law Enforcement Access:***

* Immigration authorities allowed to consult SIS in relation to irregular migrants who were not checked at a regular border control;
* SIS granted access to boat and aircraft registration authorities;
* SIS granted access to services responsible for registering firearms in order to allow them to verify whether the firearm is being sought for seizure in Member States or whether there is an alert on the person requesting the registration;
* Europol’s access rights extended to give it full access to the system, including missing persons, return alerts, and alerts in relation to third-country nationals;
* European Borders and Coast Guard Agency and its teams granted access to all SIS categories, insofar as it is necessary for the performance of their tasks and as required by the operational plan for a specific border guard operation.

***Enhanced Data Protection and Data Security:***

* Introduction of additional safeguards to ensure that the collection and processing of, and access to, data is limited to what is strictly necessary and operationally required;
* Applicability of and adaptation to the new EU data protection framework, in particular Directive 2016/680 and the GDPR;
* Coordination and end-to-end supervision by the national data protection authorities and the European Data Protection Supervisor.

Regulation 2018/1860 establishes an effective system, so that return decisions issued in respect of third-country nationals staying illegally on the territory of the Member States can be better enforced and third-country nationals subject to those decisions can be monitored.

Regulation 2018/1861 establishes the conditions and procedures for the entry and processing of SIS alerts on third-country nationals and for the exchange of supplementary information/additional data for the purpose of refusing entry into/stay on the territory of the Member States. Member States will, *inter alia*, be obliged to insert into the SIS any entry bans issued to third-country nationals preventing them from entering into the Schengen area.

The regulations contain specific rules as regards the EU Member States having a special status with Schengen and measures in the area of freedom, security and justice of the TFEU, e.g., Denmark, Ireland, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Cyprus.

As regards the entry into force of the new SIS rules, the regulations follow a step-by-step approach: Several improvements to the system apply immediately upon entry into force of Regulations 2018/1861 and 2018/1862 (i.e., 27 December 2018), whereas others will apply either one or two years after entry into force. The said regulations should apply in their entirety within three years after entry into force − and by 28 December 2021 at the latest. Regulation 2018/1860 will apply from the date set by the Commission.

The SIS is the most widely used security database in Europe, with over 5 billion consultations in 2017 and currently contains around 79 million records. It is estimated that further enhancement of the SIS by the new legal framework will cost the EU around €65 million by 2020. Each EU Member State will reportedly receive a lump sum of €1.2 million to upgrade its national system. The EU agency eu-LISA will be responsible for technical improvements and operation of the system.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/new-legal-framework-schengen-information-system/>

##### EP Sees Functioning of Schengen Area Critically

*20 October 2018*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

On 30 May 2018, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution on the first annual report on the functioning of the Schengen area.](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2018-0228+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN)

The resolution first points out the progresses made in strengthening the Schengen area over the last several years:

* The creation of the European Border and Coast Guard;
* The introductionof mandatory, systematic checks against relevant databases at the external borders on entry and exit for third-country nationals and for EU nationals;
* The new entry and exit registration system.

However, MEPs also identified a series of critical shortcomings and deficiencies. In particular, they criticize the continued reintroduction of internal border checks, as this undermines the basic principles of the Schengen area. They hold that the prolongation of internal border controls is not in line with existing rules, deeming it unnecessary and disproportional. The construction of physical barriers, including fences, between Member States is also considered incompatible with fundamental Schengen principles.

MEPs, *inter alia*, call for the following actions to be taken:

* Addressing the identified, critical shortcomings without delay in order to return to the normal functioning of Schengen without internal border controls;
* Reforming the Schengen Information System on the following issues: protection of children who are at risk or missing; the immediate, obligatory exchange of information on terrorism; and the mandatory exchange of information on return decisions;
* Allocating sufficient resources to the external borders through staffing, equipment, and expertise in order to ensure a high level of control while fully respecting fundamental rights – including matters relating to international protection and non-refoulement;
* Developing a permanent, robust, and effective Union response in search and rescue operations at sea to prevent the loss of life;
* Collecting information and statistical data more efficiently by EU member state authorities on how resources are managed at the national level and on capabilities related to border control;
* Ensuring swift and effective return procedures in Member States, with full respect for fundamental rights under humane and dignified conditions;
* Ensuring adequate infrastructure, accommodation, and living conditions for all asylum seekers.

The resolution also reiterates that Bulgaria and Romania are ready to join the Schengen area. The Council is now called on to approve their accession.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/ep-sees-functioning-schengen-area-critically/>

##### Strengthening the Schengen Area: Schengen Forum Meets for the First Time

*19 January 2021*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

35 years ago, on 14 June 1985, France, Germany and the three Benelux States signed the Schengen Agreement that removed internal border controls between those Member States. Today, the Schengen area encompasses 26 European states with over 400 million citizens. Since several years, the area has become under pressure (e.g. migrant crises, terrorist attacks and the corona pandemic, which all led to the reintroduction of internal border checks). Today, the Schengen model is confronted with a different reality than at the time of the creation of the area. Against this background, the EU takes steps to make the Schengen area stronger and more resilient. On 30 November 2020, the Commission convened the [first ever Schengen Forum](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2232). A videoconference gathered Members of the European Parliament and Home Affairs Ministers with the aim of fostering cooperation and political dialogue as well as of building up stronger confidence in the Schengen rules.

The main topics of discussion were:

* Improving the mechanism to evaluate the implementation of Schengen rules;
* Finding a way forward on the revision of the Schengen Borders Code;
* Better managing of EU’s external borders;
* Enhancing police cooperation and information exchange;
* Strengthening the governance of the Schengen area.

In the field of police cooperation, participants discussed, for instance, better use of new technologies to ensure security within the Schengen area. Police checks were considered as an effective alternative to the reintroduction of border controls. Measures such as joint patrols, joint investigation teams, cross-border hot pursuits or joint threat analysis were discussed as being alternatives to effectively address threats to security.

Ahead of the meeting, the Commission presented a report that outlined the main findings and shortcomings over the past five years in light of the Schengen evaluation programme carried out (--> related link). The Schengen Forum is to support the Commission in drafting its new Schengen Strategy, which the Commission intends to present in mid-2021. The Schengen Forum will continue to meet regularly both at political or technical levels. Targeted consultations at technical level will take place with representatives from the European Parliament and national authorities over the next months. The next meeting at political level will take place in spring 2021.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/strengthening-schengen-area-schengen-forum-meets-first-time/>

##### EP: Bulgaria and Romania Must Accede Schengen Area

*26 July 2023*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

In a [resolution adopted on 12 July 2023](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230707IPR02431/bulgaria-and-romania-should-be-in-schengen-by-end-of-2023-says-parliament), the European Parliament (EP) reiterated its call on the Council to approve Romania’s and Bulgaria’s accession to the Schengen area. MEPs regret that the Council rejected the countries’ accession in a decision of 8 December 2022 (→ [eucrim 4/2023, 224-225](https://eucrim.eu/news/croatia-joins-schengen-area/)). According to the resolution, this decision was without any legal justification related to accession criteria and motivated by national domestic political campaigns. In addition, the resolution stresses that the fact that Romania and Bulgaria are still outside the free-travel area burdens the businesses and populations of the two countries socially and economically. Considering the still existing border controls, the exclusion also results in damages to the environment and health. The EP shares the Commission’s position that Romania and Bulgaria have fulfilled all criteria to join the Schengen area. The current Spanish Council Presidency is called to prioritise the topic and deliberate Romania’s and Bulgaria’s accession by the end of 2023.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/ep-bulgaria-and-romania-must-accede-schengen-area/>

##### Croatia Joins Schengen Area

*14 December 2022 (updated 11 months, 3 weeks ago)* // Published in printed  [Issue 4/2022](https://eucrim.eu/issues/2022-04/)  [pp 224 – 225](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2022-04.pdf#page=6)Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

On 8 December 2022, the Council adopted a [decision on full application of the Schengen acquis in Croatia](https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14239-2022-INIT/en/pdf). After verification and in accordance with the applicable Schengen evaluation procedures, [the Council found](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/08/schengen-area-council-decides-to-lift-border-controls-with-croatia/) that the necessary conditions for application of all parts of the relevant *acquis* have been met in Croatia, including the effective application of all Schengen rules in accordance with the agreed common standards and fundamental principles.

This decision was made, after the European Parliament (EP) had endorsed the full application of the [Schengen acquis in Croatia](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20221107IPR49610/meps-back-croatia-s-schengen-accession) in a resolution of 10 November 2022. In another resolution of 18 October 2022, the EP invited the Council to [allow Romania and Bulgaria to join the Schengen area](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20221014IPR43207/end-discrimination-and-admit-bulgaria-and-romania-to-schengen-meps-demand). On 16 November 2022, the Commission [adopted a Communication on full application of the Schengen acquis in Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0636&qid=1669020880751), calling upon the Council to take the necessary decisions without any further delay, thus allowing these three countries to join the area without internal border controls.

While the Council decided in its December meeting on full application of the Schengen acquis for Croatia, a small minority of states blocked the accession of Romania and Bulgaria into Schengen; thus the required unanimity for Schengen accession on the part of the EU Member States could not be reached for these two countries which joined the EU in 2007.

As a consequence of the accession of Croatia to the Schengen area, persons will no longer be subject to border inspections at internal land and sea borders between Croatia and the other members of the Schengen area starting on 1 January 2023. As a result of the necessity to align the lifting of border checks with the dates of the IATA summer/winter time schedule, checks at internal air borders will also be eliminated starting on 26 March 2023. Beginning on 1 January 2023, Croatia will also be able to issue Schengen visas and fully utilize the Schengen Information System (SIS). In accordance with Decision No. 565/2014/EU, national short-stay visas issued by Croatia before 1 January 2023 will continue to be valid for the duration of their validity for transit through the territory of other Member States or for intended stays on their territories that do not exceed 90 days in any 180-day period.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/croatia-joins-schengen-area/>

##### Council Adopts General Approach on New Schengen Evaluation Procedure

*7 April 2022*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

On 3 March 2022, the Justice and Home Affairs Council [agreed on a general approach](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/03/schengen-area-council-adopts-general-approach-on-an-enhanced-evaluation-mechanism/) regarding the reform of the specific Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism (for the Commission proposal → [eucrim 2/2021, 76](https://eucrim.eu/news/commission-strategy-for-a-stronger-and-more-resilient-schengen-area/)). The new rules will speed up and simplify the evaluation procedures, and strengthen the political and operational steering. The new Regulation will repeal the legal framework of 2013. Enhancements will particularly be done in the following areas:

* New strategic focus of the mechanism, which will include multiannual evaluation programmes and better targeted unannounced and thematic evaluations;
* Simpler and faster evaluation and monitoring procedures – here, the new Regulation will streamline the evaluation documents, provide an escalation mechanism in the event of lack of progress, and introduce a fast-track procedure for the identification of and response to serious deficiencies;
* Improved pooling of expertise, including the involvement of EU agencies, such as Frontex and Europol;
* Enhanced role of the Council.

The Council decided to consult the European Parliament for an opinion on the proposed new Regulation. The Regulation itself will then only be adopted by the Council.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/council-adopts-general-approach-on-new-schengen-evaluation-procedure/>

##### EP Requests Swift Return to Fully Functioning Schengen Area

*3 August 2020*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

Reopening borders, a Schengen recovery plan, and a revision of the Schengen rules to ensure a truly European governance – these are the three main demands in a [European Parliament resolution on the situation in the Schengen area](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0175_EN.html) following the COVID‑19 outbreak.

In the resolution adopted on 19 June 2020, the EP calls to mind that the Schengen area is a tangible and cherished achievement at the very heart of the EU project, allowing unrestricted travel for more than 400 million people and having immeasurable value for citizens and businesses alike. It expresses concern over how Member States handled the Schengen Borders Code and the Free Movement Directive when they reintroduced internal border controls to curb the COVID-19 pandemic. The EP calls for a swift return to a fully functional Schengen area, while the Commission should take the lead in coordinating the actions at the European level. Any uncoordinated, bilateral action by individual EU countries and non-respect for the non-discrimination principle in the reopening of borders is rejected. Member States should reduce restrictions on the freedom of movement to the same extent that COVID-19 containment measures are relaxed. MEPs advocate a more regional approach instead of national border controls.

They also urgently call for a discussion on a recovery plan for Schengen in order to prevent any temporary internal border controls from becoming semi-permanent. In the medium term, reflection is necessary on how to enhance mutual trust between Member States and how to ensure that the Union’s legislative tools provide for a truly European governance of the Schengen area. This would allow for an effective European coordinated response to challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission is called on to table legislative proposals to this end.

In their resolution, MEPs ultimately ask for the Council and Member States to increase their efforts in Schengen integration and to take the necessary steps to admit Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia into Schengen.

After introducing [internal border checks](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/reintroduction-border-control_en) to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, EU countries have started to lift controls and associated travel restrictions. On 11 June 2020, [the Commission recommended](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1035) to Schengen countries that they should lift internal border controls by 15 June 2020; temporary restrictions on non-essential travel into the EU can be prolonged until 30 June 2020. In turn, the Commission set up an [online platform](https://reopen.europa.eu/en) (called Re-open EU) with up-to-date information for travellers.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/ep-requests-swift-return-fully-functioning-schengen-area/>

##### Group of Schengen States Discusses Challenges for External Land Border Management

*10 September 2019*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

At the JHA Council meeting of 7 June 2019, Norway provided information on the [joint statement](https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9761-2019-INIT/en/pdf) by “the Ministerial Forum for Member States of the Schengen Area with External Land Borders.” The Forum met in Kirkenes, Norway on 20-22 May 2019.

The Forum was established and had its first meeting in 2013 at Finland’s initiative. It is currently comprised of nine Schengen Member States – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, and Hungary. Ministerial meetings are organised once a year by a different Member State. The aim is to discuss common challenges that the countries are facing as Schengen members responsible for securing and managing the external land border of the entire Schengen area.

The ministers concluded in the joint statement, *inter alia*, that “[f]urther strengthened cooperation among national authorities carrying out tasks related to freedom, security and justice, and between the relevant EU Agencies, is of decisive importance. This will enhance returns, prevention of illegal immigration and cross border crime, improve third country cooperation and will further develop a comprehensive and cost-efficient European Integrated Border Management.”

Implementation of the new European Border and Coast Guard regulation will be challenging for the Member States and Frontex, which is why realistic priorities and coordinated timelines must be set. The increased capacities of the European Border and Coast Guard raises challenges for coordination, i.e., the proper balance between use of the capacities at the national level and those required by Frontex.

Common standards for external border surveillance must be developed in an effective and cost-efficient way and in close cooperation between the Member States, the European Commission, and Frontex.

Next year’s group ministerial meeting will be held in Romania.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/group-schengen-states-discusses-challenges-external-land-border-management/>

##### Commission Report on the Functioning of the Schengen Area over the Past 5 Years

*19 January 2021*  
2018-Max_Planck_Herr_Wahl_1355_black white_Zuschnitt.jpg [*Thomas Wahl*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/wahl-thomas/)

Ahead of the newly created Schengen Forum (--> separate news item), the Commission published a report on 25.11.2020 on the [implementation of the Schengen acquis rules and the functioning of the Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/pdf/report_schengen_evaluation_and_monitoring_mechanism_com-2020-779_0.pdf) between 2015 and 2019. The current Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism is operational since 2015; as a peer review tool, it aims to ensure an effective, consistent and transparent application of the Schengen rules.

The Commission report includes the following:

* An outline of the Schengen evaluation process and the actions taken within the First Multiannual Evaluation Programme (2015-2019);
* The main findings and progress made during the First Multiannual Evaluation Programme;
* Specific finding in the various policy fields of the Schengen regulations, e.g. external border management, police cooperation, the Schengen Information System (SIS), and data protection;
* Shortcomings identified when having carried out the multiannual evaluation programme.

The report also proposed a number of operational measures to improve the Schengen evaluation mechanism, *inter alia*:

* Simplifying internal workflows and set benchmarks to reduce the length;
* Developing new trainings in the area of visa policy;
* Updating checklists to focus on the main elements that may affect the Schengen area as a whole;
* Making more strategic use of unannounced evaluations and thematic evaluations;
* Improving synergies and cooperation with EU agencies and national quality control mechanisms;
* Elaborating and up-dating catalogues with best practices;
* Adopting the annual report to facilitate political discussion.

Based on the results of more than 200 evaluations carried out between 2015 and 2019, the report finds that Schengen states implemented the Schengen rules adequately overall, with serious deficiencies identified only in a limited number of countries and promptly corrected. However, recurring deficiencies (e.g. insufficient number of staff, technological and regulatory barriers) and diverging practices remained and could ultimately affect the integrity and functioning of the Schengen area.

According to the Commission, a higher level of harmonisation should be ensured in the coming years. The effectiveness of the evaluation mechanism must be enhanced while some shortcomings could be solved by operational measures, others need legislative changes. The Commission finally stresses that it will establish a more regular and structured political dialogue among the actors involved in the functioning of the Schengen area, which is considered a key factor to make the Schengen area stronger and more resilient.

The tabled report will feed into the discussion of the Schengen Forum that aims to discuss the future Schengen Strategy. The Commission has announced that it will present the new strategy for a stronger Schengen area in mid-2021.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/commission-report-functioning-schengen-area-over-past-5-years/>

##### EDPS Opinion on the Commission’s Proposed Regulation for a Stronger and More Resilient Schengen Area

*17 November 2021*  
Pingen Kopie [*Dr. Anna Pingen*](https://eucrim.eu/authors/pingen-anna/)

On 27 July 2021, the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) published his [Opinion](https://edps.europa.eu/data-protection/our-work/publications/opinions/proposal-council-regulation-establishment-and_en) on the European Commission’s proposal for a “Council regulation on the establishment and operation of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013. The proposal was launched together with the new Commission strategy for a fully functioning and resilient Schengen area (à [eucrim 2/2021, 76](https://eucrim.eu/media/issue/pdf/eucrim_issue_2021-02.pdf)).

The EDPS welcomed the fact that the proposal acknowledged the protection of fundamental rights, including the protection of personal data, as one of the key building blocks of the Schengen area. The EDPS supports the objective to strengthen the implementation of fundamental rights safeguards under the Schengen acquis. The EDPS also appreciates the reinforcement regarding the cooperation with relevant Union bodies, offices and agencies that are involved in the implementation of the Schengen acquis.

The EDPS recommends, however, the establishment of a non-exhaustive list of relevant policy fields that would be subject to evaluation in order to clearly define the scope of the Schengen evaluations. In addition, the EDPS calls on to further clarify the proposed extension of the scope of the evaluation and monitoring mechanism, which should clearly distinguish the competencies of different Union bodies, agencies and offices involved in the Schengen evaluation. In this sense, the new legislation must guarantee the EDPS’ independence when he performs his supervisory tasks.

<https://eucrim.eu/news/edps-opinion-on-the-commissions-proposed-regulation-for-a-stronger-and-more-resilient-schengen-area/>

**SCHENGEN NEWS**

# 3rd Schengen Forum: Internal Border Controls Should Remain an Exceptional Measure of Last Resort



By[Shkurta Januzi](https://schengen.news/author/shkurta/)

June 7, 2022

Participants at the third Schengen Forum held on June 2 have agreed that the internal security of the Schengen Area should be reinforced through police cooperation, while the reintroduction of internal border controls should remain an exceptional measure taken as a last resort.

The forum enabled Members of the EU Parliament and Home Affairs Ministers of the current and future Council presidencies, representatives of the Member States, as well as EU agencies and non-governmental organizations to discuss the Schengen priorities for 2022-2023.

The discussions were focused on the Management of the external borders, the reintroduction of internal border checks, internal security, and the accession of Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria to the border-free zone.

“*Participants took stock of the state of play of internal border checks in light of the recent ruling in Joined Cases C-368/20 and C-369/2026 the Court of Justice, stressing that internal border checks should remain as an exceptional measure of last resort*,” the EU Commission notes in a press release, referring to a judgement of the Court published on April 26, which noted that internal border controls extended beyond six months for the same reasons are against the Schengen Borders Code.

The Court had issued its judgement after a traveller was fined for refusing to present a passport at the Spielfeld border crossing point when travelling to Austria from Slovenia in November 2019, telling the border guards that the Schengen Borders Code did not oblige him to present a passport at an internal border.

The judgement had pointed out that the Member States cannot oblige travellers to present a passport or any other identity document in order to be able to cross the borders in cases when the border checks have been reintroduced against the Borders Code of the Schengen Area.

As a result, it had also highlighted that though the Member States are allowed to reintroduce border checks in cases when there is a serious threat to their internal security, the same cannot exceed a maximum period of six months.

>> [*EU’s Highest Court Says Prolonged Border Controls Are Against Schengen Code*](https://schengen.news/eus-highest-court-says-prolonged-border-controls-are-against-schengen-code/)

Commenting on the third Schengen Forum, the EU Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life Margaritis Schinas called it a third successful event, asserting that the Member States and other actors would continue cooperating in a bid to make Schengen stronger.

“*Schengen needs commitment and mutual trust. The Commission established the Schengen Forum to promote a regular and structured political dialogue among all the actors involved in ensuring the proper functioning of the Schengen area. With this third successful event, we continue our cooperation to make Schengen stronger and to respond to the current and future challenges*,” he said.

The topic of internal border controls will be discussed at the upcoming Council meeting set to be held on June 10, alongside the other topics discussed at the forum on June 2.

[The first-ever Schengen Forum was held on November 30, 2020](https://schengen.news/eu-officials-agree-to-work-for-a-stronger-more-resilient-schengen-area-at-first-ever-schengen-forum/), online, and was attended by Members of the Parliament and Home Affairs Ministers discussed several areas where there’s room for improvement and actions that should be undertaken in order to strengthen the Schengen Area.

<https://schengen.news/croatia-italy-slovenia-agree-to-maintain-internal-schengen-border-controls/>

# Croatia, Italy & Slovenia Agree to Maintain Internal Schengen Border Controls



By[Bleona Restelica](https://schengen.news/author/bleona/)

June 20, 2024

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

Interior ministers of Croatia, Italy, and Slovenia have decided to maintain border controls.

The minister said that internal border controls are crucial in preventing irregular migration and smuggling.

The official stressed that the controls will not interfere with the freedom of movement within the Schengen Area.

Croatia, Italy, and Slovenia have agreed to continue keeping in place internal Schengen border controls with one another.

The interior ministers of Croatia, Italy, and Slovenia had a trilateral meeting yesterday. During this meeting, the officials agreed that border controls are necessary to fight irregular migration and people smuggling to the bloc, Schengen.News reports.

According to the ministers, internal border controls are only a temporary measure that can not be extended indefinitely.

For this reason, the three countries’ authorities are now working on finding a solution to replace the internal border controls, and they have already agreed to strengthen police cooperation.

As the Minister of Interior of Slovenia, Boštjan Poklukar, explained, an alternative to the internal border controls could be joint police patrols on the external Schengen border.

*I believe that the three of us will soon come to a common solution that will replace internal border controls.*

*Minister of Interior of Slovenia, Boštjan Poklukar*

Minister Poklukar further emphasised that Slovenia is ready to participate in such patrols and, at the same time, said that they do not aim to keep the border controls beyond the end of this year.

Speaking on the large number of tourists entering Slovenia from Croatia during the summer season, Minister Poklukar said that controls will not be “a big problem”.

## Border Controls Will Not Interfere With Free Movement, Italian Interior Minister Said

While border controls are currently necessary to prevent irregular migration and people smuggling, the Minister of Interior of Italy, Matteo Piantedosi, said that they will not interfere with the freedom of movement.

Minister Piantedosi also disclosed that the measures have proven to be effective so far, with the country arresting 190 people, among which 90 for being involved in people smuggling activities, and refusing entry to around 1,800 people who did not meet the entry rules, among others.

The Minister of Interior of Croatia, Davor Božinović, also commented on the matter. He said that despite the measures, Croatian, Slovenian, and Italian citizens have not experienced any inconvenience in their daily activities when crossing the border.

Minister Božinović also said that police cooperation between the three countries is already established.

*A quick and effective exchange of information between the police means greater security in our three countries as well as in the European Union itself. As for our cooperation with three states in police formats, I must say that it is already established.*

*Minister of Interior of Croatia, Davor Božinović*

During the time that Croatia has had internal border controls with these two countries, the authorities arrested a total of 1,002 people smugglers. Moreover, the Croatian police contributed by providing data on migrants and smugglers to Europol. The Croatian police provided around 63 per cent of data on migrants and smugglers.

[Borders & Security](https://schengen.news/borders-security/)[EU/Schengen Area](https://schengen.news/schengen/)[Slovenia](https://schengen.news/schengen/slovenia/)[Migration](https://schengen.news/migration/)

# Slovenia Extends Border Controls With Croatia & Hungary Until December 21



By[Arta Desku](https://schengen.news/author/arta/)

June 20, 2024

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Slovenia has extended internal border controls with Croatia and Hungary until December 21, 2024.

Announcing the new decision, the Minister of Interior of Slovenia, Boštjan Poklukar, said that such measures will not have a negative impact on citizens.

Slovenia reintroduced border controls with Croatia and Hungary for the first time on October 21, 2023, since then, such a measure has been extended several times.

Arguing that the security situation in the world has deteriorated, Slovenia has once again extended border controls with Croatia and Hungary for an additional six months, until December 21, 2024.

The decision has been confirmed by the Minister of Interior of Slovenia, Boštjan Poklukar, stressing that the government adopted the decree based on Article 25 of the Schengen Code, Schengen.News reports.

The Minister ensured that such a measure would not have a negative impact on passengers, residents, the environment and the economy, of Schengen.News reports.

*The reasons stemmed from the security situation in the world. Recently, there have been threats that have a serious effect on security. This stems from the war in the Middle East, especially between Israel and Iran. The security situation has not improved, so we continue monitoring.*

*Minister of Interior of Slovenia, Boštjan Poklukar*

The Interior Minister of Slovenia warned about new security risks that have also emerged with Russian aggression against Ukraine, emphasizing that security services have arrested several people who came from third countries and may pose a security risk.

*That is why we are particularly careful with our operations at the former crossings and check the entry of illegal aliens all the more.*

*Minister of Interior of Slovenia, Boštjan Poklukar*

Mentioning concerns related to the situation in the Middle East and Ukraine, Ljubljana informed the European Commission regarding the temporary reintroduction of border controls for the first time on October 21, 2023. Since then, controls at the common borders between Slovenia Croatia and Hungary have been extended several times.

## Slovenia, Italy & Croatia to Find Alternative Measures to Temporary Border Controls

Interior Minister of Slovenia, Boštjan Poklukar recently held a meeting with his counterparts from Italy, Matteo Piantedosi and Croatia, Davor Božinović, during which they discussed finding alternative measures to border controls, hoping that internal border controls between these territories could be lifted as soon as possible.

While frontier checks between these three countries will remain in place throughout the summer season, in a trilateral meeting held on June 18, Poklukar said he will strive to ensure that such controls are not extended beyond December 2024.

An alternative measure to border controls is joint police patrols on Schengen’s external borders, according to the Minister. Poklukar expressed Slovenia’s readiness to participate in such patrols.

Italian Minister of Interior, Matteo Piantedosi, said that since October 21, 2023, the Italian police had controlled over 422 people and 224,400 vehicles, and 1,800 foreign citizens were caught crossing the border irregularly, and therefore were returned.

He noted that it was primarily about citizens of Morocco, Syria, Turkey, Kosovo Afghanistan, and North Macedonia. Minister Piantedosi noted that during the same period, 190 people were arrested, taking into account 90 people who organized people smuggling across the border.

Croatian Minister of the Interior Davor Božinović said that border controls didn’t impede daily activities for citizens of Croatia, Slovenia and Italy.

<https://schengen.news/slovenia-extends-border-controls-with-croatia-hungary-until-december-21/>

# Germany Extends Border Controls With Czechia, Poland & Switzerland Until End of 2024



By[Bleona Restelica](https://schengen.news/author/bleona/)

May 30, 2024

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Germany will keep its border controls with Czechia, Poland, and Switzerland in place for another six months.

The measure has been extended to combat people smuggling and limit irregular migration.

Germany currently has border controls in place with Austria, too.

Germany has decided to extend its internal border controls with Czechia, Poland, and Switzerland for another six months, until December 15, 2024.

The current border measure, introduced in line with the Schengen Borders Code, was set to expire on June 15.

However, taking into account the current situation and in an attempt to combat people smuggling and limit irregular migration to the country, Germany has decided to prolong the measure until the end of the year, SchengenNews reports.

*We are continuing controls at our land borders with Poland, the Czech Republic, and Switzerland for a further six months until mid-December 2024.*

*German Minister of Interior Nancy Faeser*

## Border Controls Will Not Impact Commuters & Everyday Life, Minister Faeser Assures

Commenting on the extension of the border controls, Minister Faeser said that the measure has proven to be effective so far.

She further assured that commuters who cross the border regularly would not be impacted by the extension of the measure as the authorities would continue to coordinate the measures with the neighbouring countries.

*It is still particularly important to us to keep the impact on commuters and everyday life in the border regions as low as possible.*

*German Minister of Interior Nancy Faeser*

Minister Faeser also revealed that since mid-October of last year, the Federal Police had arrested 920 people smugglers as part of the border controls with Czechia, Poland, and Switzerland as well as Austria.

In addition to the above-mentioned countries, Germany currently has internal border controls in place with Austria, too.

The land border controls with Austria will continue to apply until November 11, 2024. Nonetheless, if the situation continues to remain the same or worsens, the country might decide also to extend border controls with Austria.

## Germany Detected 37,600 Irregular Entries Since Mid-October 2023

The extension of the current measure comes after it was proven that border controls help detect people who are not authorised to enter the country.

Data show that Germany detected around 37,600 irregular entries since October 16, 2023. In the same period, the country also denied entry or terminated the stay of around 23,000 people.

In addition, the number of irregular entries detected in the entire territory of Germany has dropped from 21,000 in September 2023 to 7,500 in April of this year.

During the time that the internal border controls are in place, German authorities will forward those seeking protection to their initial reception centre until their request is examined.

<https://schengen.news/germany-extends-border-controls-with-czechia-poland-switzerland-until-end-of-2024/>

# EU Reforms Schengen Borders Code to Reduce Amount of Temporarily Reinstated Border Controls



By[Bleona Restelica](https://schengen.news/author/bleona/)

April 24, 2024

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

EU Parliament has adopted a reformed Schengen Border Code.

The aim of this reform is to to reduce the amount of internal border controls introduced temporarily within the Schengen Area.

The reformed Schengen Border Code also aim to strengthen free movement.

The Members of the European Union Parliament (MEPs) have approved new rules for the reinstatement and prolongation of internal Schengen border controls under the Schengen Borders Code.

The new rules come in an attempt to reduce the amount of internal border controls introduced temporarily within the Schengen Area, .

In line with the adopted reform, the Schengen member states are empowered to introduce temporary internal border controls as a last resort for a maximum period of two years for the purpose of responding to public policy or internal security threats, .

Moreover, member states are also allowed to extend this two-year measure for another year, provided that they have done rigorous assessments.

MEPs have also approved the possibility for the Commission to authorise border controls in several member states for a period of six months in cases of a public health emergency that concerns multiple Schengen countries at the same time.

*In the case of a public health emergency that concerns several members at a time and puts at risk the functioning of the entire Schengen area, the Commission can authorise border controls in several states for periods of six months.*

*European Union Parliament*

However, before being able to reintroduce or extend the border measures, the member states will have to do a thorough assessment of the situation, draw up a risk assessment, and then undergo consultations.

## New Law Promotes Police Cooperation Over Border Controls When Addressing Health Emergencies

In addition to the above-mentioned, the reform of the Schengen Borders Code also highlights a targeted approach to tackle health crises by introducing harmonised rules for the entry of third-country nationals during emergencies.

EU citizens and those who benefit from free movement would be exempt from these travel restrictions.

As an alternative to border controls in cases of health emergencies, it has been proposed that police cooperation be promoted in border areas.

## Reform of Schengen Border Code Supported by 311 MEPs

The reform of the Schengen Border Code was adopted with 311 votes in favour, 267 votes against, and 53 abstentions.

According to the EU Parliament, the aim of the reform is to strengthen the free movement in the Schengen Area, clarify the introduced rules and reduce the frequent reinforcement of border controls within the area.

Commenting on the adopted reform, rapporteur Sylvie Guillaume said that this new law will protect the free movement of people within the Schengen Area.

She further said that the MEPs are responding to the challenges that the member states have been facing in the last decade.

*We have insisted on clear and limited timelines for internal border controls, criteria for Member States to reintroduce them, and we have laid down harmonised procedures for the external borders in cases of future pandemics.*

*Rapporteur Sylvie Guillaume*

Guillaume also emphasised that this new law will provide predictability and certainty on both internal and external borders.

<https://schengen.news/eu-reforms-schengen-borders-code-to-reduce-amount-of-temporarily-reinstated-border-controls/>

<https://schengen.news/abolition-of-schengen-land-border-controls-for-bulgaria-romania-main-priority-of-hungarian-eu-presidency/>

# Bulgaria & Romania Main Priority of Hungarian EU Presidency



By[Arta Desku](https://schengen.news/author/arta/)

June 19, 2024

### EY TAKEAWAYS

Hungarian Ambassador to the EU Balint Odor said his country’s priority during its presidency of the EU Council will be the land border accession of Bulgaria and Romania.

Odor said that the EU’s expansion to the Western Balkans and other candidate states from the eastern part of Europe is also among the priorities of Hungary.

Hungary also aims to start substantive talks with Albania while moving forward with North Macedonia.

The abolishment of Schengen land borders for Bulgaria and Romania will be among the main priorities of Hungary starting next month, the Hungarian Ambassador to the EU, Balint Odor, has said.

Ambassador Odor added that among main tasks is also reducing the number of migrants arriving illegally in these territories, Schengen.News reports.

From July 1, Hungary will hold the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, which will run until December 2024.

[Bulgaria and Romania partially entered the Schengen Zone by air and sea on March 31,](https://schengen.news/bulgaria-romania-join-schengen-remove-internal-air-sea-border-checks/) becoming the newest members of the EU passport-free travel zone.

The Schengen accession of these two Member States will make the common area more attractive by significantly expanding the world’s largest common area without internal border controls.

*European Commission*

However, land border controls continue to remain effective.

In April this year, the European Parliament urged for the abolishment of land border controls as well for these two Balkan countries.

MEPs said that as a result of land border controls, hundreds of goods vehicles are detained every day at the European Union’s land borders.

## Hungary Vows for Enlargement of Western Balkans

The Hungarian Ambassador to the EU, Balint Odor, has said that among other priorities of his country’s Presidency is also the EU’s expansion to the Western Balkans and other candidate states from the eastern part of Europe.

Odor said that Hungary wants to make as much progress as possible with the Western Balkan countries and start substantive talks with Albania while moving forward with North Macedonia.

In order to achieve such a goal, Odor said that Hungary is ready to initiate an EU-Western Balkans meeting.

In addition, he said that his country would do everything possible for a smooth transition.

In February this year, Hungary’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Péter Szijjártó, said in Brussels that [Hungary will be the most pro-enlargement European Union Presidency of all time,](https://schengen.news/hungary-pledges-to-become-the-most-pro-enlargement-eu-presidency-of-all-time/) emphasizing that the focus during the accession talks would be on the “actual performance” of candidates instead of “bowing to political pressure.”

*We will put the focus on actual performance during the accession talks, rather than bowing to some kind of political pressure which, in fact, comes from outside players, non-EU countries and NGOs.*

*Hungary’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Péter Szijjártó*

Back then, the Minister said that Hungary aimed to help Serbia open new accession chapters while helping Montenegro close multiple chapters and start substantive negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova.

<https://schengen.news/fence-constructions-along-latvia-belarus-border-near-end-latvian-president-reveals/>

# Fence Constructions Along Latvia-Belarus Border Near End, Latvian President Reveals



By[Arbërie Shabani](https://schengen.news/author/arberie/)

June 19, 2024

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Latvia-Belarus border barrier is 90 per cent constructed.

Latvian President says half of the fence along the Russian border has been constructed.

New security measures such as sensors and camera surveillance are to be deployed at Latvian external borders.

The Latvian President, Edgars Rinkēvičs, has revealed that nearly half of the fence that separates the EU country from Russia has been constructed, while the barrier with Belarus is 90 per cent done.

President Rinkēvičs made these remarks following a visit to the eastern border of Latvia, including the border guard departments of Grebņeva and Škaune, Schengen.News reports.

He applauded the determination of state border guards but noted that there are still many other measures to be deployed at the border.

*It’s just the beginning, it’s the fence, then there are the sensors, then there’s the video, you know right now a lot of countries, the countries bordering Russia, are talking about the so-called drone board, it’s just in the beginning, but actually I see the determination.*

*Edgars Rinkēvičs, President of Latvia*

## Time & Practical Solutions Required to Improve Security Along Latvia & Russia Border

The President told retv.lv that there has been progress in fence construction since last August. This fence will protect the EU’s external borders as well as improve national security.

*As I said half-jokingly, the main thing is not to have a 101 controller with very smart advice after everything is done. At the moment, however, I can see that the determination is there. It must be said that the border will never be ready, because all the time new things appear, new challenges appear.*

*President Rinkēvičs*

Simultaneously, work is being done at six parts of the border, with six construction companies being involved in the project.

## Latvia Allocated €90 Million in Funds to Build Barrier Along Belarus Border

According to the State Border Guard, General Guntis Pujāts, around €90 million have been dedicated to equipment to build the fence at the Belarusian border. He says that the state border guards have received €76 million so far.

*The implementation of the projects has started, and the actual construction is planned to start in July of this year, as very significant funding has been directly allocated to the capacity of the technical system so that every violator is fixed on the Latvia-Belarus border.*

*Guntis Pujāts, General State Border Guard*

He also said that the guards will soon be looking at how to implement this project on the Russian border. The Latvian President gave the heads up to the border guards by saying that a stable salary increase for the employees of the internal affairs sector is under discussion.

<https://schengen.news/schengen-states-are-rejecting-each-year-more-visa-applications-data-show/>

# Schengen States Are Rejecting Each Year More Visa Applications, Data Show



By[Arbërie Shabani](https://schengen.news/author/arberie/)

July 11, 2024

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

The rejection rates of Schengen visa applications are on the rise, meaning that more visas are being denied every year.

On average Schengen states rejected 16.96 per cent more visas in 2023.

Estonia had the highest increase in rejection rates in 2023, while Sweden started issuing more visas than in it did one year earlier.

The average number of rejected visa applications in 2023 has been the highest recorded since there is available data for Schengen visas (2014).

According to the [Schengen Statistics Portal](https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/statistics/), Schengen states rejected an average of 16.96 per cent of visa requests in 2023, up from 16.01 per cent recorded in the previous year, Schengen.News reports.

Rejection rates started at 5.11 per cent in 2014, to increase to 11.76 per cent in 2020 while they peaked at 16 per cent in the last two years.

In total, Schengen states have rejected a total of 1.6 million visa applications in 2023. The main nationalities that were denied visas were Turks, Algerians and Indians.

## Estonia Had the Highest Difference in Visa Rejection Rates in 2023

Estonia has rejected 32.96 per cent of visa applications that were received by this country in 2023. It is the second highest, after Malta (36.81 per cent) and it also has the highest difference compared to 2022.

Last year Estonia rejected 4,533 visa applications, which is 19.58 per cent of all visa applications recorded. In 2023, Estonia rejected 4,347 out of 13,190 visa requests, accounting for 32.96 per cent of visas being denied.

Malta rejected 12,261 visas in 2023, accounting for 36.81 per cent of all visa requests. These figures make Malta the country with the highest rejection rates among Schengen states.

In terms of numbers, France and Spain have rejected the highest number of visas – 436,893 and 251,470. However, their rejection rates are not as high – 16.7 and 18.5 per cent, respectively.

## Top Countries That Are Approving More Visas Despite the Trend

Although the average rejection rate for the EU is increasing, many countries have approved more visas in 2023. Sweden tops this list, with the lowest change in rejection rates compared to 2022. This means that Sweden has approved more visas in 2023 than it did in 2022.

A total of 38,652 visa applications filed to Sweden were rejected, accounting for a 29 per cent rejection rate in 2022. In the following year, rejection rates were 23.1 per cent, representing 38,680 denied visas.

France was the second country that issued more visas last year than in 2022 – the rejection rates dropped from 21.31 per cent in 2022 to 16.64 in 2023. Norway follows next with a rejection rate of 16.08 per cent, from 20.31 per cent in 2022.

**Schengen proves hard to reboot after system meltdown**

The zone is now a tangle of unilateral border closures, bilateral tourism agreements and free movement bubbles.

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**The European free travel area has suffered a near-death experience | Christopher Furlong/Getty Images**

May 12, 2020 7:02 pm CET

By [Paola Tamma](https://www.politico.eu/author/paola-tamma/) and [Hanne Cokelaere](https://www.politico.eu/author/hanne-cokelaere/)

Forget Schengen. Welcome back to the 1980s.

The European free-travel area, made up of 22 EU countries plus Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, suffered a near-death experience when the [majority of member countries](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/reintroduction-border-control_en) reinstated border checks in a bid to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

That’s allowed under [Schengen rules](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32016R0399) if countries come under a “serious threat to public policy or internal security,” but there’s no indication of how to bring it back to life. That’s what the Commission is seeking to address in a [package it adopted](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_870) Wednesday, issuing guidelines to EU countries on how to lift internal borders and travel restrictions.

It's a [deeply sensitive issue](https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/27/europes-canceled-summer-holiday-214063) for countries such as Greece, Italy and Spain, which are relying on a revival of tourism to help save their economies.

“It’s like traveling in a time machine to a dark and distant past. We now need to get back to the future. Back to normality, and we need to do so as soon as the health situation allows it,” Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson [told](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/johansson/announcements/opening-statement-commissioner-johansson-schengen-migration-and-asylum-policy-and-eu-security_en) the Parliament last week.

*For now, the travel area is a tangle of unilateral border closures, bilateral tourism agreements and free movement bubbles.*

The Commission presented a two-step approach. First, countries with a comparable epidemiological situation [as assessed by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](https://qap.ecdc.europa.eu/public/extensions/COVID-19/COVID-19.html) should lift travel restrictions between themselves provided they still respect social distancing. This would, for example, appear to cause problems for Greece bringing in British tourists, because the coronavirus has been far more severe in the U.K.

Only in a second phase would travel be restored throughout the whole Schengen area and beyond.

For now, the travel area is a tangle of unilateral border closures, bilateral tourism agreements and free-movement bubbles.

“There is a lot of fragmentation in the single market on the free movement of persons and goods,” said Petra De Sutter, chair of the internal market committee of the European Parliament. Restoring a functioning Schengen won’t be easy because “We’re really on the edge of the tension between competence of the EU and member states.”

**Travel bubbles**

Some countries are creating free-movement clusters. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia last week [agreed](http://lrv.lt/en/news/prime-minister-skvernelis-borders-between-the-baltic-states-will-be-opened-for-the-baltic-citizens) to lift travel restrictions and the obligation to undergo two weeks of quarantine on their citizens as of this Friday. People returning from other countries will still be required to self-isolate.

“We agreed that all three Baltic countries have adequately curbed the spread of the coronavirus. We also trust each other’s health care systems,” Lithuanian Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis explained the decision on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1942889599177713&id=814777171988967).

The Baltic bubble could expand as the countries [look to add](https://news.err.ee/1086519/latvian-president-poland-finland-could-join-baltic-free-movement-area) Poland and Finland to their free-travel zone.

France and the U.K. have agreed to allow travelers from France a quarantine-free trip across the Channel, U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron said in a [joint statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-between-the-uk-and-france-10-may-2020) Sunday. However, this wasn’t confirmed by the [U.K.’s exit strategy](https://www.politico.eu/article/confusion-as-uk-boris-johnson-britain-publishes-coronavirus-covid19-lockdown-exit-plan/) published Monday.

The European Commission expects the U.K. “would apply the same kind of exemptions to arrivals from other member states which are in a similar epidemiological situation as France,” a Commission spokesperson said Tuesday, as it would be unlawful under EU law to discriminate on the basis of nationality. It would however be possible to discriminate based on residence, if that's based on an epidemiological assessment.

On the Continent, Belgium’s [restrictions on “non-essential” cross-border travel](https://www.politico.eu/article/belgium-closes-borders-for-non-essential-travel/) have become an irritant. The Benelux parliament, made up of designated lawmakers from Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, [is working](https://www.beneluxparl.eu/fr/2020/05/11/le-parlement-benelux-veut-offrir-une-perspective-sur-louverture-des-frontieres/) on proposals to “offer the population a perspective of the opening of borders between the three countries,” it said last week.

Belgian Minister of Interior Affairs and Foreign Trade Pieter De Crem | Thierry Roge/AFP via Getty Images

Belgian Interior Minister Pieter De Crem keeps in touch with his counterparts from neighboring countries about the borders, a spokesperson confirmed, but it’s not clear when free movement will be possible again. “This depends on many factors, including the spread of the virus and the way it’s tackled,” he said.

**Immunity passport, air corridors and 'smart solutions'**

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said back in April that Europeans will find “[smart solutions](https://www.politico.eu/article/smart-solutions-will-enable-summer-vacations-says-ursula-von-der-leyen-coronavirus-covid19/)” to go on holiday this year, and EU governments followed suit with a plethora of announcements.

Greece is working on the idea of allowing in tourists who would take a test before travel. “They can only get on the plane with a negative test, or with a positive antibody test," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis [told CNN](https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/greece-tourists-july-covid-19/index.html) last week.

However there is no scientific clarity on the reliability of such tests or indeed on whether contracting the virus leads to immunity, and both the World Health Organization and ECDC are currently [advising against](https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/immunity-passports-in-the-context-of-covid-19) such an approach.

*Popular tourist destinations are hoping to strike deals with countries they consider at low risk of importing the virus.*

Greek government spokesperson Stelios Petsas said on Monday that “the government is working to gradually restart domestic and foreign tourism … freedom of movement is one of the four fundamental freedoms on which the European edifice is based and cannot be ignored.”

Popular tourist destinations are hoping to strike deals with countries they consider at low risk of importing the virus.

Croatian Tourism Minister Gari Cappelli [told local media](https://www.euronews.com/2020/04/25/coronavirus-there-s-no-hardship-in-croatia-says-prime-minister-plenkovic) Zagreb was in talks with the Czech Republic on the possibility of creating an air corridor to allow Czechs to holiday in Croatia.

Croatia wants to introduce an EU-wide travel protocol “with mutually harmonized regulations, while at the same time allowing each country to adapt to all this depending on the development of the situation within its borders … which is currently being discussed,” said a spokesperson for the current Croatian presidency of the Council, adding, “Croatia will discuss bilateral border opening possibilities during this month and in the coming period depending on the interests of individual countries.”

Austrian Tourism Minister Elisabeth Köstinger, who in April [said](https://www.diepresse.com/5802055/bald-offene-grenze-fur-deutsche-urlauber) Austria would be happy to welcome Germans for holidays, told POLITICO in a statement she feels "reassured in the position Austria has been taking since the past weeks that have enabled us to confidently move towards a gradual and measured opening of our borders.”

Austria has managed to keep the death toll below 700 and “with constant observation of the number of infections — we should gradually come back to open borders," said Köstinger.

In Portugal, Prime Minister António Costa said national and international tourism should resume from July. But as of now, the border with Spain, where the epidemic has [claimed](https://www.politico.eu/coronavirus-in-europe/) over 26,000 lives, is still closed.

“We’re working on this balance, returning to a possible normality and complying with rules on people’s movements in tourism, be it national or international, and this is looked at very carefully to maintain safety and prevent new infections,” [said](https://www.jornaldenegocios.pt/economia/detalhe/covid-19-portugal-prepara-regras-para-turismo-a-pensar-em-fluxo-controlado) Graça Freitas, head of Portugal’s Directorate-General of Health, a health ministry agency.

*Restoring a full Schengen will be a question of months, not weeks, an EU official said.*

The complexity of the situation from a health, legal and political point of view isn’t going to be cleared up any time soon. “This is a very difficult task. Member states introduced different measures in an uncoordinated manner. Unwinding these different national restrictions will take some time,” Home Affairs Commissioner Johansson [said last week.](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/johansson/announcements/opening-statement-commissioner-johansson-schengen-migration-and-asylum-policy-and-eu-security_en)

Restoring a full Schengen will be a question of months, not weeks, an EU official said.

“We still have a lot of political work to do to convince people of the advantages of open borders and a single market that functions fully rather than fragmenting it,” said De Sutter, the MEP.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/schengen-proves-hard-to-reboot-after-system-meltdown/>

# The end of Schengen? Restrictions by Denmark and Sweden are 'threatening Europe's passport-free zone'

As Sweden and Denmark demand ID to travel between their nations for the first time in 50 years and four other passport-free countries reintroduce checks, the EU’s open border faces its biggest threat yet

* [Leo Cendrowicz](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/leo-cendrowicz) Brussels
* Monday 4 January 2016 21:42 GMT
* [31 comments](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-end-of-schengen-restrictions-by-denmark-and-sweden-are-threatening-europes-passport-free-zone-a6796696.html#commentsDiv)

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The Independent Online

Security staff check passengers’ documents at Kastrups railway station outside Copenhagen. Some 17,000 commuters cross between Malmo in Sweden and the Danish capital every day *AP*

Europe’s passport-free Schengen zone is facing the biggest test of its two-decade existence after Sweden  re-imposed controls on visitors crossing from Denmark across what had been one of most open borders in the world.

Hours after the measures came into effect, Denmark announced it would slap new controls on its own border with Germany, while Berlin warned that the 26-nation zone of passport-free travel was now “in danger”.

Six Schengen countries – Austria, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark and non-EU member Norway – have now reintroduced border checks as Europe struggles to cope with an unprecedented influx of refugees and migrants from conflict zones including Syria and Afghanistan.

## [Six countries in Schengen now have border checks in place](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-six-countries-in-schengen-now-have-border-checks-in-place-a6796296.html)

Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen blamed Sweden for his own country’s introduction of random border checks. “We are simply reacting to a decision made in Sweden. This is not a happy moment at all,” he said. Without action, he said, the checks in Sweden could “increase the risk of a large number of illegal immigrants accumulating in and around Copenhagen”.

Sweden’s new identity-controls target travellers crossing by train or bus from Denmark over the five-mile Öresund Bridge, or using ferry services. Some 17,000 commuters cross the Öresund between Danish capital Copenhagen and Malmo in Sweden daily.

The rules, enforcing an identity check for travellers between the two nations for the first time in half a century, meant rail passengers had to exit their trains and show photo identification at checkpoints in Copenhagen before reboarding to cross the bridge. Direct journeys from Copenhagen’s main station to Sweden were cancelled, with the changes doubling the usual 40-minute commute time.

Denmark’s rail company, DSB, along with ferry and bus companies, conducted the checks. Sweden’s state-owned train operator, SJ, said last month it would stop its services to and from Denmark if such a measure were introduced, as it would not have time to conduct the checks.

Danish Transport Minister Hans Christian Schmidt described the new measures as “extremely annoying” and suggested Sweden should pay for the checks, which DSB estimates will cost around £100,000 a day.

Sweden’s new controls represent a turnaround for the Nordic nation which has taken in more asylum seekers per capita than any other European country. Although the left-leaning government initially welcomed the Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan refugees who swept across Europe last summer, it only expected about 100,000 to make it to Sweden, many of them through Denmark. The final figure was more than 160,000 and strained local essential services. Such scenes have been replicated across the continent, with more than one million refugees and migrants having arrived in Europe during 2015, and nations such as Hungary and Slovenia reinforcing the exterior borders of the Schengen zone.

The new controls are not just a reverse of the 1995 Schengen accord, but also a setback to the post-1945 Nordic Council tradition of open borders that includes the five-nation Nordic Passport Union, which came into force in 1957. It was “a dark day for our Nordic region”, said former Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel responded by calling for a “joint European solution”, on the issue of refugees and migrants, her spokesman Steffen Seibert said. “The solution won’t take place on national borders between country A and country B,” he added. German foreign ministry spokesman Martin Schaefer said: “Schengen is very important but it is in danger.”

However, Germany itself imposed controls at its Austrian border last September, just days after offering refuge to all Syrian nationals. Under Schengen rules, members can ask for a six-month exemption from the agreement on free circulation in exceptional circumstances.

Norway said last week it would tighten its rules and turn back asylum seekers without visas. Its right-leaning government said the draft law would create one of Europe’s toughest immigration systems, making it more difficult to claim welfare benefits, and only allowing family reunifications after four years of work or education in the country. Around 30,000 people sought asylum in Norway last year, most crossing the border from Sweden.

The UN’s special representative for migration, Peter Sutherland, said Europe should improve its external border controls and speed up asylum processing rather than retreating from Schengen. “Recreating borders across the EU will not answer anything, least of all, the humanitarian crisis we face,” he said.

Elizabeth Collett, director of Migration Policy Institute Europe, warned that the new border measures would do little to stop refugees. “The political message to neighbours is, ‘It’s your turn, you deal with it.’ But that just passes the problem along,” she said. “None of the drivers that have led people to migrate have changed, given the conflict in Syria and instability elsewhere.”

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-end-of-schengen-restrictions-by-denmark-and-sweden-are-threatening-europes-passport-free-zone-a6796696.html>

# Germany says Schengen 'in danger' after Denmark and Sweden impose new border controls

Danish prime minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen told reporters in Copenhagen that police were conducting spot checks on travellers crossing the border from Germany

* [Ashley Cowburn](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/ashley-cowburn)
* [@ashcowburn](https://twitter.com/ashcowburn)
* Monday 4 January 2016 14:43 GMT

Germany has said the passport-free Schengen zone is “in danger” after both Denmark and Sweden introduced border controls to stem the flow of migrants.

Responding to the new border controls in the Nordic countries, German foreign ministry spokesman Martin Schaefer told reporters: "Freedom of movement is an important principle - one of the biggest achievements [in the European Union] in recent years….Schengen is very important but it is in danger.”

The concerns raised over the passport-free zone came as Denmark announced it would introduce controls at its border with Germany just hours after neighbouring Sweden introduced similar measures.

Danish prime minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen told reporters in Copenhagen that police were conducting spot checks on travellers crossing the border from Germany. Hours earlier Sweden imposed border controls on the Oresund bridge – which connects Malmo in southern Sweden and Copenhagen in Demark – making it harder for bother migrants and commuters to travel.

Mr Rasmussen, referring to the Swedish measure, said: “When other Nordic countries seal their borders it can have major consequences for Denmark… It can lead to more asylum seekers.” The Danish prime minister insisted, however, there would be no issues for “ordinary” Danes and Germans who wished to cross the border.

He added: "If the European Union cannot protect the external border you will see more and more countries forced to introduce temporary border controls," the prime minister said.

The Swedish government decided to tighten border controls after 160,000 people applied for asylum in Sweden last year — the highest number in Europe except for Germany. Most of them were from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-says-schengen-in-danger-after-denmark-and-sweden-impose-new-border-controls-a6795956.html>

# Refugee crisis: Sweden imposes border controls on bridge connecting Malmo and Copenhagen in Denmark to restrict migrants

The Oresund Bridge is used predominantly by commuters and the new rules are expected to add an extra half an hour to the 40-minute commute

* [Caroline Mortimer](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/caroline-mortimer)
* [@cjmortimer](https://twitter.com/cjmortimer)
* Monday 4 January 2016 08:26 GMT
* [35 comments](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-sweden-imposes-border-controls-on-bridge-connecting-malmo-and-copenhagen-to-reduce-a6795251.html#commentsDiv)

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Sweden has imposed border controls on the bridge connecting it with Denmark in an effort to reduce the number of migrants entering the country.

Identity checks have been introduced on the Oresund bridge, which links Malmo in southern Sweden and Copenhagen in Denmark.

The new restrictions are expected to add an extra 30 minutes to the 40-minute commute and rail operators have also reduced the daily number of trips between the two countries.

The checks the bridge - which is described as being part of a wider metropolitan area straddling the border - will make it harder for ordinary Danes and Swedes to get to work and goes against an open-border policy that dates back to the 1950s.

[Speaking to the BBC Radio 4’s Today programme](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35218921), Dr Per Tryding from the Swedish Chamber of Commerce said: “This border is literally through a big city area - a big metropolitan area which is split by the border and we have a lot of commuters - many more than go over the actual bridge that will be affected.

“We’ve had a nordic Schengen agreement since the fifties so this is a real shock for that reason for people here - sort of a version of the Berlin Wall.”

He said the move was designed to provoke the Danish government and make them shut their own borders - which would potentially move the refugee flows further south.

But Dr Tryding said the originally architects of the “mini Nordic Schengen” had foreseen future problems and had designed measures to deal with temporary problems such as refugees or terrorism which he said should be used.

He said this could potentially lead to the end of the Schengen agreement and that the government was “playing with fire”.

Sweden has secured a temporary exemption from the Europe wide agreement to impose the border controls after it had 150,000 border applications in 2015.

Over one million refugees have crossed in Europe over land and by sea over the past year as they flee conflict and oppression in the Middle East and Africa.

Sweden is the second most popular destination after Germany, in contrast with Denmark - which expects to see 20,000 asylum seekers in 2016.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-sweden-imposes-border-controls-on-bridge-connecting-malmo-and-copenhagen-to-reduce-a6795251.html>

Swedish Migration Minister Morgan Johansson

# Refugee crisis: Sweden considering new law allowing 'emergency' closure of Øresund Bridge to Denmark

Ministers have not yet finalised the proposal, which they say would only be implemented in an "emergency"

* [Lizzie Dearden](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/lizzie-dearden)
* [@lizziedearden](https://twitter.com/lizziedearden)
* Thursday 3 December 2015 23:55 GMT

The Swedish government is drawing up a law that would allow it to stop traffic across the famous Øresund Bridge connecting it to Denmark as the refugee crisis continues.

A proposal, which has not yet been finalised, would be part of new legislation bringing in compulsory identity checks on all public transport entering Sweden as part of efforts to reduce the number of asylum seekers arriving.

A spokesperson for Sweden’s infrastructure minister said the plan would allow the government to stop road traffic over the bridge and along other roads into Sweden, but not trains.

Around 20,000 vehicles cross Øresund Bridge every day, going to and fro between the Danish capital of Copenhagen and Sweden's third largest city Malmo for work and freight.

Anna Johansson, the infrastructure minister, told local news agency TT that closing the bridge would be a “very dramatic measure” only to be used in an emergency.

"Our intent and our hope is that we will not have to use this legal possibility," she said.

Sweden, which has a population of around 9.6 million people, has proposed a number of changes to tighten migration with up to 190,000 asylum seekers expected to arrive this year.

Thousands of refugees continue to risk their lives crossing to Italy and Greece and continue their journey to western Europe, even as political will to welcome them wanes and winter makes conditions ever more treacherous.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-sweden-considering-new-law-allowing-emergency-closure-of-resund-bridge-to-denmark-a6759716.html>

 interior minister Anders Ygeman

# Refugee crisis: Sweden introducing border checks to 'bring order' to country's asylum system

The country is expected to have taken in 190,000 refugees in 2015

* [Olivia Blair](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/olivia-blair)
* [@livblair](https://twitter.com/livblair)
* Thursday 12 November 2015 09:40 GMT

Sweden will introduce temporary border checks to "bring order" to the country’s asylum system, according to its interior minister.

The checks will start at noon and are initially expected to last for about ten days.

At present, it is not clear whether the move will mean Sweden can turn refugees away at the border, but it will prevent people using the country as a route to reach countries such as Finland and Norway.

Once at the border, refugees will have to decide whether to apply for asylum in Sweden or turn around.

The interior minister Anders Ygeman said the move will “bring order” to Sweden’s system while sending a signal to the EU.

He said: “Sweden is the country that has taken the greatest responsibility for the refugee crisis,” and claimed “other countries have to take their responsibility”.

It is believed Sweden, which has a population of 9.7 million, will have taken in 190,000 asylum seekers this year.

In comparison, the UK Government have a target to take in [20,000 Syrian refugees](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/britain-could-take-20000-refugees-this-year-and-children-will-not-be-deported-at-18-david-cameron-10493033.html)over the next five years.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-sweden-introducing-border-checks-to-bring-order-to-countrys-asylum-system-a6731286.html>

# Paris attacks: EU ministers agree on tougher border security around passport-free Schengen zone

Move to ensure 'systematic controls' in area come after revelation Paris mastermind slipped back into Europe undetected

* [Leo Cendrowicz](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/leo-cendrowicz) Brussels
* Friday 20 November 2015 20:33 GMT

Tough new border security measures have been agreed by European Union ministers in Brussels to ensure “systematic controls” on all travellers entering the passport-free Schengen zone.

The move follows the revelation that Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the Belgian terrorist said to have planned the Paris attacks, slipped back into Europe undetected after first fleeing to join foreign jihadi fighters in Syria.

## [These are the most expensive passports in the world](http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/these-are-the-most-expensive-passports-in-the-world-a6742496.html)

The French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said that the measures represented a “crucial” change. “We can’t take more time. This is urgent,” he said. “Terrorists are crossing the borders of the European Union.”

Britain’s Home Secretary, Theresa May, said the Paris attacks, which left 130 dead, showed the need for improved security across the EU. “There was a clear link between security of the EU’s external borders and security within the EU,” she said.

Citizens of the 26-member Schengen zone – which does not include Britain – have their documents visually checked by security officials whenever they leave or enter the area. The new proposals would upgrade the controls so that documents are systematically checked against criminal and security databases. “A Europe with no internal borders is only possible when external borders are controlled,” said the Austrian Interior Minister, Johanna Mikl-Leitner.

The checks will be bolstered by new technologies: the meeting’s conclusions called for “systematic registration, including fingerprinting, of all migrants entering into the Schengen area, and systematic security checks using relevant databases”. These include a watchlist with the details of 4,000 foreign fighters, a database of stolen documents and the Visa Information System.

The ministers also pushed for more co-ordination between Frontex, the EU border agency, and Europol, its joint police agency. Frontex will be asked to “assist the member states to tighten controls of external borders to detect suspicious travels of foreign terrorist fighters and smuggling of firearms, in co-operation with Europol”.

However, the EU was warned by three United Nations agencies that a sudden tightening of controls along the refugee route through the Balkans would worsen an increasingly untenable situation, stranding many people outdoors amid plunging temperatures. In a joint statement, the UN refugee and children’s agencies – UNHCR and Unicef – along with the International Organisation for Migration said that the restrictions would mean “people being profiled on the basis of nationality”.

Ministers also agreed to speed up efforts to collect and store data on air travellers within Europe, through the long-delayed passenger names’ records system. This has been blocked for several years by the European Parliament on data privacy grounds

Ms May said there needed to be “immediate progress” on obtaining access to passenger name records, and said Britain would press ahead with its own checks. “The negotiation has taken too long. That must be concluded,” she said.

She was echoed by Mr Cazeneuve, who urged MEPs to waive their objections. “Not a single EU citizen will understand why the parliament continues blocking this essential tool,” he said.

A call by the EU Home Affairs Commissioner, Dimitris Avramopoulos, for the creation of a new EU intelligence service was dismissed by the ministers, however.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/paris-attacks-eu-ministers-agree-on-tougher-border-security-around-schengen-zone-a6742781.html>

**The end of Schengen? Restrictions by Denmark and Sweden are 'threatening Europe's passport-free zone'**

As Sweden and Denmark demand ID to travel between their nations for the first time in 50 years and four other passport-free countries reintroduce checks, the EU’s open border faces its biggest threat yet

* [Leo Cendrowicz](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/leo-cendrowicz) Brussels
* Monday 4 January 2016 21:42 GMT

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-end-of-schengen-restrictions-by-denmark-and-sweden-are-threatening-europes-passport-free-zone-a6796696.html>

problém jsou internal reimpositions – nejen proti schengenu, ale proti nordic union, nic o external, nej problém za 20 let schengenu

# Schengen in crisis as Belgium reintroduces border controls

[EURACTIV.com with agencies](https://www.euractiv.com/content_providers/euractiv-com-with-agencies/)

 23. 2. 2016

**Border controls continue to be tightened across the EU as member states scramble to react to a refugee crisis that continues to escalate.**

belgie kvůli calais, problémy řecka, německo kritizuje rakousko kvůli caps, skepse V4

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/schengen-in-crisis-as-belgium-reintroduces-border-controls/>

# EU border controls: Schengen scheme on the brink after Amsterdam talks

Passport-free area faces being suspended for two years, as senior diplomat says of refugee influx: ‘This cannot continue’

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/25/refugee-crisis-schengen-area-scheme-brink-amsterdam-talks>

# The EU's €110bn problem: slow death of Schengen risks new crisis for Europe's battered economies

## One of EU's harshest critics calls on Brussels to preserve passport-free travel at all costs to stop the continent from descending into economic turmoil

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/12143376/EUs-110bn-problem-save-Schengen-economic-crisis.html>

## Coalition of the UnwillingMerkel's Plan B Could Mean End of Schengen

**Chancellor Angela Merkel's plan to find a resolution to the refugee crisis with the help of Turkey is encountering significant resistance. Berlin and Brussels are already considering alternatives, but it could mean the end of border-free travel in large parts of Europe.**

**December 10, 2015**

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/merkel-s-back-up-refugee-crisis-solution-could-end-schengen-a-1066895.html>

# SCHENGEN OVER: Europe STOPS free movement to tackle migrant crisis

### SCHENGEN area countries will keep border controls for another three months in reaction to the migrant crisis, as the free movement dream is shattered.

By [VICKIIE OLIPHANT](http://www.express.co.uk/search?s=%20Vickiie%20Oliphant&b=1)

PUBLISHED: 08:23, Thu, Jan 26, 2017

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/759059/Schengen-free-movement-border-controls-extended-migrant-crisis>

titulky bulváru: např. express

* [French immigration expert says EU must ‘reform not scrap’ Schengen](http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/753943/French-immigration-expert-EU-must-reform-Schengen-zone)
* [Pressure mounts on May to SCRAP freedom of movement now](http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/754513/brexit-plan-theresa-may-end-free-movement-scrap-schengen-immediately)
* [Security flaw means terrorists could travel from Europe to Britain](http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/757636/Europe-to-Britain-PASSPORT-FREE-Eurostar-Schengen-zone-travel)
* SCHENGEN HAMMERBLOW: Presidential hopeful Fillon urges France to introduce REAL borders

# Angela Merkel aims to strengthen Schengen

## Preserving and expanding Schengen Jan 07, 2016

Other items on the agenda included securing the EU’s external borders and the question of the equitable sharing of responsibilities by EU member states, as well as Romania’s moves to join the Schengen Area. The Schengen project is "extremely topical", said Angela Merkel. Everything should be done "to ensure that we can genuinely retain the freedom of movement within the borders of the Schengen Area".

Angela Merkel described the Schengen Area as a factor that enables Europe to come together and as a factor in Europe’s economic growth. "That is why I believe that everything must be done to preserve Schengen." The countries that are not yet part of the Schengen Area must be given the opportunity to join, she said.

Prime Minister Dacian Cioloş stressed that Romania is the second largest contributor to Frontex, the European border management agency, after Germany, and that it already acts like a Schengen member state in securing the EU’s external borders.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2016/01_en/2016-01-07-besuch-rumaenischer-ministerpraesident_en.html>

# We must return to Schengen, says Chancellor

**Chancellor Angela Merkel and Croatia’s Prime Minister Tihomir Orešković have discussed ending the policy of waving through refugees and re-establishing the Schengen Area at a meeting in Berlin.**

Mar 01, 2016

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2016/03_en/2016-03-01-antrittsbesuch-premier-kroatien_en.html>

# Effective steps needed to protect Europe's external borders

Mar 14, 2016

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2016/03_en/2016-03-14-fluechtlinge-europa_en.html>

In the conclusions in the field of external relations and migration, the EU heads of state and government describe the new European Border and Coast Guard as an important step towards effectively protecting Europe’s external borders. They called on the European Commission to swiftly produce revised Schengen provisions.

Angela Merkel reported, "We have made it very clear that as regards the protection of the external border, we wish to return to Schengen, but that we nevertheless need temporary controls at internal borders – because this protection is not yet fully effective - so as to take account of current needs. Naturally, though, we wish to try to return to Schengen, step by step." The new European Border and Coast Guard is "a success", declared the Chancellor.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/EN/Reiseberichte/2016/2016-10-20-europaeischer-rat_eng.html>

Ich will das hier im Einzelnen nicht alles aufzählen, sondern nur sagen: Wir haben uns einen Raum der Freiheit geschaffen, den sogenannten Schengen-Raum. Darin können wir uns frei bewegen; Waren, Dienstleistungen und Kapital können frei fließen. Wir wollen einen digitalen Binnenmarkt. Alles richtig, aber: Ein Raum der Freiheit und Sicherheit hat Grenzen. Und wenn diese Grenzen nicht mehr die nationalen Binnengrenzen sind, dann müssen wir die Außengrenzen schützen können.

Wir haben in den letzten Monaten eine doch elementare Erfahrung gemacht – ganz besonders im Jahr 2015 –, nämlich, dass der praktizierte Schutz der Außengrenzen den Anforderungen überhaupt nicht standhielt. Wir haben jetzt aber glücklicherweise – sehr stark auch durch deutsche und französische Maßnahmen –einiges erreicht, das wichtig ist: zum Beispiel eine gemeinsame Grenzschutzpolizei. Aber wir haben noch nicht all das erreicht, das wir brauchen. Daran wird mit Hochdruck gearbeitet – zum Beispiel an einem einheitlichen Einreise- und Ausreiseregister. Wir haben dies jahrelang laufen lassen, muss man sagen, weshalb nicht klar nachvollziehbar war, wer in den Schengen-Raum einreist und auch wieder ausreist. So, wie es in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika zum Beispiel ganz normal ist, müssen wir auch für unseren gemeinsamen Raum der Freizügigkeit Grenzschutzmaßnahmen und Transparenzmaßnahmen durchsetzen, damit man weiß, wer bei uns ist. Das wird der nächste große wichtige Schritt sein.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2017/04/2017-04-27-rede-merkel-innere-sicherheit.html>

Wir haben heute auch über die Beziehungen zu Bulgarien und Rumänien gesprochen. Ich kann nur wiederholen, was ich auch bei dem Treffen schon gesagt habe, nämlich dass ich es für unfair halte, wenn beide Länder die technischen Kriterien schon erfüllt haben und noch immer nicht Bestandteil des Schengenraums sind.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2017/04/2017-04-03-pk-merkel-fico-sobotka.html>

Wir mussten erst einmal Mechanismen einbauen, um Krisen bewältigen zu können. Wir haben auch erlebt, dass der Erhalt des Schengen-Raums – des Raums der Freizügigkeit, den wir alle gern nutzen, weil wir zum Beispiel keine Pässe vorzeigen müssen, um von einem Land ins andere zu fahren – voraussetzt, dass man seine Außengrenzen schützen kann. Als plötzlich Druck auf die Außengrenzen entstand, haben wir festgestellt, dass wir dafür noch gar nicht gewappnet waren – auch nicht in Form einer gemeinsamen Grenzschutzpolizei, wie wir sie inzwischen mit Frontex haben.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2017/02/2017-02-16-rede-bk-merkel-netzwerker-treffen.html>

Das führt uns zurück zu einem Grundpfeiler der Europäischen Union - deshalb ist es so wichtig, wie wir diese Frage lösen und dass wir sie lösen -, nämlich der Freizügigkeit, der Bewegung der Menschen im Schengen-Raum. Das bedeutet, dass wir lernen müssen, unsere Außengrenzen so zu schützen, dass nicht die Schlepper und Schmuggler das Sagen haben, sondern dass Absprachen zwischen den Staaten zu einer vernünftigen Grenzkontrolle führen.

Hier sollten wir als Staats- und Regierungschefs - darüber sind wir uns einig - darauf drängen, dass ein Ein- und Ausreiseregister für den Schengen-Raum möglichst schnell zustande kommt, dass Frontex, die Grenzschutzagentur, natürlich funktionsfähig ist - da haben wir im letzten Jahr viel erreicht -, dass wir den Austausch der verschiedenen Datenbanken, die wir in Europa haben, zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten zuverlässig organisieren und dass der Austausch zwischen den einzelnen Datenbanken - EURODAC, Schengen-Datei, Europol - auch so funktioniert, dass diejenigen, die unsere Art zu leben zerstören wollen, auch wirklich bestraft werden und unseren Raum auch wieder verlassen müssen.

CHYBÍ ODKAZ

Einer war die Frage des Schutzes der Außengrenzen. Hier ist zu vermerken, dass die Verordnung über die europäische Grenz- und Küstenwache, die am 6. Oktober in Kraft getreten ist, eine riesige Erfolgsgeschichte der europäischen Bemühungen ist. Wir haben deutlich gemacht, dass wir bezüglich des Schutzes der Außengrenzen zurück zu Schengen wollen, dass wir aber dennoch – weil dieser Schutz noch nicht ausreichend funktioniert – eine temporäre Kontrolle an den Binnengrenzen brauchen, um den gegenwärtigen Bedürfnissen Rechnung zu tragen –, aber dass wir natürlich versuchen wollen, Schritt für Schritt zurück zu Schengen zu kommen.

Und hier sagen wir: Wir wollen zurück zu Schengen, wie es eigentlich funktionieren soll. Aber das impliziert natürlich auch, dass wir Veränderungen an Schengen vornehmen müssen, weil das heutige System natürlich nicht sehr gut funktioniert.

Freitag, 21. Oktober 2016

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2016/10/2016-10-21-pk-europaeischer-rat.html>

Zum anderen haben wir gemerkt, dass die Freizügigkeit der Waren, Güter, Dienstleistungen und Personen auf eine harte Probe gestellt wurde. Wir haben zwar das Schengen-Abkommen, wonach wir alle uns frei bewegen können. Alle finden das auch toll. Aber als es plötzlich um den Schutz der Außengrenzen ging, hat man gemerkt, dass wir da nicht so gut sind, wie die Bürgerinnen und Bürger es eigentlich erwarten.

Vieles von dem, was wir im letzten Jahr erlebt haben, hing damit zusammen, dass wir keine ausreichenden Vorkehrungen für einen Schutz der Außengrenzen getroffen hatten. Der Schutz der Außengrenzen, wenn es Seegrenzen sind, ist besonders schwierig. Jeder kennt zwar die Landesgrenzen seines Mitgliedstaates. Wenn man aber einmal die Grenzen des Schengen-Raums aufmalen müsste, wäre das schon etwas komplizierter. Sie können das natürlich, weil Sie ja Exporteure sind. Die Grenzen verlaufen vom Nordpol über Russland, Türkei, entlang den Ländern des Nahen Ostens, Syrien, dem Nachbarn Zyperns, Libanon, Israel sowie von Ägypten, Libyen, Tunesien und Algerien bis Marokko. Vom Nordpol bis Marokko liegen unsere Außengrenzen mit all den Problemen, die damit verbunden sind und die uns mit Sicherheit dazu zwingen werden, eine Balance zu suchen, wenn wir nicht in einer Abschottung die Lösung suchen wollen. Eine Abschottung wird nach meiner Überzeugung nicht klappen.

Wir müssen daher Vorkehrungen treffen – das ist ähnlich wie beim Euro –, die wir beim Inkrafttreten des Schengen-Abkommens nicht getroffen haben und bei denen Deutschland auch nicht Vorreiter war. Wir wollten keine Verteilungsquote von Flüchtlingen in der Europäischen Union, weil wir schon viele Flüchtlinge aus dem westlichen Balkan hatten. Nach der Osterweiterung beispielsweise haben wir gesagt: Jetzt liegen wir in der Mitte der Europäischen Union; warum sollen wir uns jetzt für eine Quote einsetzen? Wir haben Spanien und Portugal im Jahr 2005 alleingelassen, als sie sehr viele Flüchtlinge hatten. Wir haben davon gelebt, dass Herr Gaddafi zusammen mit Herrn Berlusconi die italienisch-libysche Grenze kontrolliert hat. Auch waren wir immer gegen einen europäischen Küstenschutz, weil wir gesagt haben, dies könne national besser gemacht werden. In beiden Feldern haben wir uns korrigiert. Aber nicht alle haben unsere Ideen sofort übernommen. Deshalb müssen wir weiter dafür eintreten.

Wir werden über den reinen Schutz der Außengrenzen hinweg Partnerschaften entwickeln müssen – wir haben dies mit der Türkei gemacht –, um Flüchtlingen besser als bisher zu helfen, sich in der Nähe ihrer Heimat aufhalten zu können: sowohl im Libanon als auch in Jordanien und in der Türkei. In Syrien tobt ein schrecklicher Bürgerkrieg. Wir sehen jeden Tag die Bilder aus Aleppo. Auch im Irak wütet der IS.

05. Oktober 2016

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2016/10/2016-10-06-rege-bga-unternehmertag.html>

Das Wir geht aber über Deutschland hinaus: Wir Europäer müssen es schaffen, die EU-Außengrenzen zu sichern und gleichzeitig die Freizügigkeit im Inneren des Schengenraums zu erhalten. Und wenn Sie es noch weiter denken wollen, sind auch all die in das Wir einbezogen, aus deren Regionen die Flüchtlinge kommen. Also all jene, die mit dazu beitragen können und müssen, wenn es um die Bewältigung von Flüchtlingskrisen geht.

Wir brauchen die Zusammenarbeit mit der Türkei. Und wir müssen alles daransetzen, die Versprechen des Schengen-Raums zu erhalten. Die Freizügigkeit zwischen den meisten Staaten der EU beruht ja auf der Annahme und Notwendigkeit geordneter Verfahren an den Außengrenzen, damit wir selber bestimmen können, wer zu uns kommt. Und dann müssen wir die Fluchtursachen bekämpfen, mit sehr viel mehr Geld für die Entwicklungspolitik, mit sehr viel mehr Partnerschaft mit unseren Nachbarn. Das wird unsere Prioritäten verändern. 60 Millionen Flüchtlinge weltweit, die meisten in der Nähe ihrer Heimat, sind ein globales Problem. Es kann niemand mehr sagen: Wer zufällig am nächsten dran liegt, muss das lösen. Wir müssen umdenken. Was auf der Welt los ist, geht alle an. Das ist der Kontext, der sich in den letzten zwölf Monaten für uns mit Wucht entfaltet hat. Es gibt ein ‚Schaffen' im Land; und es gibt eines, das die ganze Welt betrifft.

Wir haben uns des Themas lange nicht angemessen angenommen. Das gilt auch für den Schutz der Außengrenzen des Schengenraums. Auch Deutschland war nicht immer Anhänger von Modellen, die wie etwa durch Frontex die Souveränität der Mitgliedstaaten eingeschränkt hätten. Stattdessen haben wir gesagt, dass wir das schon an unseren Flughäfen regeln, weil Deutschland sonst keine EU-Außengrenzen hat, uns also das Problem schon nicht erreichen wird. So geht es aber nicht.

 31. August 2016

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Interview/2016/08/2016-08-31-merkel-sz.html>

Es ist eine Schlüsselfrage, dass wir die Außengrenzen stärken, dass wir die Integrität des Schengenraums, einen europäischen Grenzschutz aufrechterhalten. Das ist die richtige Richtung, die zur Sicherheit beitragen wird. Die EU hat diese Diskussion aufzunehmen und nach solchen Kompromissen zu suchen.

Ein besserer Schutz der Außengrenzen von Schengen dient nicht nur dem Kampf gegen den Terrorismus, sondern auch der Öffnung einer Diskussion über die Entstehung einer gemeinsamen europäischen Armee. Ich glaube, dieser Prozess wird nicht einfach sein. Ich bin aber überzeugt, dass Europa eine bessere Zusammenarbeit in Sachen Verteidigung und Sicherheit braucht, insbesondere in Bezug auf die Sicherung der Außengrenzen von Schengen.

CHYBÍ

Zuerst einmal unternehme ich einen weiteren Versuch, darauf hinzuweisen, dass keine Grenze geöffnet werden musste, weil die Grenzen ja in dem Sinne sowieso offen waren. Es sind am Tag vorher viele Züge aus Budapest gekommen, und jetzt war die Frage: Was sagt man den Menschen, die plötzlich nicht mehr mit dem Zug kommen durften, teilweise Fahrkarten hatten und jetzt zu Fuß zur ungarisch-österreichischen Grenze kamen? Damals sind die Entscheidungen dann ja so getroffen worden, wie sie getroffen wurden.

Ansonsten gibt es eine lange rechtliche Diskussion darüber, was eine Außengrenze ist. Die Außengrenze im Sinne der europäischen Rechtsetzung und der europäischen Richtlinien ist die Schengen-Außengrenze. Wir haben jetzt vorübergehend, was ich auch absolut unterstütze, Grenzkontrollen an den Binnengrenzen eingeführt. Aber damit ist ja die europäische Rechtsetzung nicht außer Kraft gesetzt.

Was wir erleben und was die Kommission Ende des Jahres beurteilen wird, ist: Ist der Schutz der Außengrenzen wieder so gewährleistet, dass die Binnengrenzen nicht mehr kontrolliert werden müssen? Nach unserer Auffassung - nach meiner Auffassung, aber auch nach Auffassung der Kommission - ist eine Zurückweisung eines Asylsuchenden nicht möglich. Dafür gibt es das Dublin-Verfahren, und das Dublin-Verfahren wird ja von der Bundesregierung auch wieder sehr viel stärker angewandt, als es der Fall war. Es gibt neue Rechtsetzungsvorschläge innerhalb der Europäischen Union, die das ganze Dublin-Verfahren auch sehr viel praktikabler machen, was, glaube ich, dringend erforderlich ist, weil - ich könnte jetzt eine lange Liste von Maßnahmen nennen, „innerhalb von sechs Monaten“ usw. - dieses Dublin-Verfahren in vielen Fällen nicht funktioniert hat.

28. Juli 2016

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2016/07/2016-07-28-bpk-merkel.html>

Der Schengen-Raum ist ein von uns allen geschätzter Raum, der uns Niederlassungsfreiheit, Bewegungsfreiheit und Reisefreiheit zwischen den allermeisten Mitgliedstaaten der Europäischen Union und ein paar anderen Staaten ermöglicht. Die Grenze dieses Schengen-Raums beginnt quasi am Nordpol und führt zunächst an Russland und Weißrussland vorbei zur Ukraine. Gegenüber Bulgarien am Schwarzen Meer liegt Georgien. Dann kommen wir zur Türkei. Nach der Türkei kommt Syrien; Syrien wiederum ist Nachbar von Zypern. Dann geht es weiter über Libanon, Israel, Ägypten, Libyen, Tunesien und Algerien bis nach Marokko. Die Außengrenze des Schengen-Raums verläuft also von Norwegen bis nach Marokko. Damit haben wir sozusagen eine ziemlich geballte Ladung von nicht unkomplizierten Nachbarschaften. Das zeigt, wie sehr es auch im Interesse Europas ist, all die Konflikte, die im mediterranen Raum bestehen, zu lösen und uns einfach auch aktiv – und wahrscheinlich in Zukunft noch aktiver – einzumischen. Denn dadurch, dass keine große Abhängigkeit von Erdöl und Erdgas aus diesem Raum mehr besteht, wird das Interesse der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika an diesem Raum auch nicht gerade zunehmen.

Auch wenn wir nach Italien blicken, stellt sich wieder die Frage: Ist eine europäische Lösung eine Lösung am Brenner? Ich würde sagen: Nein. Wir müssen also versuchen, eine Lösung an den Außengrenzen des Schengen-Raums zu bekommen und nicht an irgendeinem Ort innerhalb des Schengen-Raums, sonst ist es keine europäische Lösung. Meine These ist – und deshalb war es richtig, zu warten und trotzdem daran zu arbeiten, die Zahl der Flüchtlinge zu reduzieren –, dass eine gemeinsame Währung und ein gemeinsamer Binnenmarkt nur dann funktionieren können, wenn wir auch wirklich die Außengrenzen schützen und im Inneren Freizügigkeit lassen. Das ist in unserem tiefsten wirtschaftlichen Interesse; und darum ging und geht es. Gleichzeitig müssen wir die Fluchtursachen bekämpfen und legale Wege finden, wie Menschen zu uns kommen können – aber über von Staaten bestimmte, und nicht von Schleppern determinierte Wege.

10. Juni 2016

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2016/06/2016-06-10-bkin-familienunternehmen.html>

De Maizière hatte zuvor eine gemeinsame Initiative mit weiteren Mitgliedstaaten gegenüber der Europäischen Kommission auf den Weg gebracht. [Die hatte daraufhin vorgeschlagen](http://ec.europa.eu/germany/news/kommission-empfiehlt-verl%C3%A4ngerung-der-grenzkontrollen-deutschland_de), dass Kontrollen an bestimmten Binnengrenzen weiter aufrechterhalten werden sollten. Damit solle solle der Schengenraum, der durch bestehende Mängel beim Grenzmanagement weiterhin gefährdet sei, bewahrt werden können.

Darüber hatte nun der Rat der Europäischen Union zu entscheiden - und ist der Empfehlung der EU-Kommission gefolgt.

12. Mai 2016

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2016/05/2016-05-02-grenzkontrollen.html>

Am Donnerstag war Merkel in Rom zu einem Gespräch mit dem italienischen Ministerpräsidenten Renzi zusammengekommen. Die EU müsse ihre Außengrenzen gemeinsam schützen und das Schengenabkommen für visafreien Grenzverkehr verteidigen, sonst drohe ein Rückfall in den Nationalismus, sagte [Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel in Rom](https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2016/05/2016-05-06-bkin-renzi.html?nn=1914560). Europa sei in einer sehr fragilen Phase, mahnte Merkel. "Aber Europa ist unsere Zukunft." In Grenzschließungen innerhalb Europas sieht sie keine Lösung für die Flüchtlingskrise.

So Merkel. "Entweder wir verteidigen die Außengrenze und lernen, sie gemeinsam zu schützen, oder wir werden in Nationalismus zurückfallen."

06. Mai 2016

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Reiseberichte/2016-05-04-reise-merkel-rom.html>

Im Augenblick gebe es eine Diskussion: "Wie weit muss ich mich erst mal um mein eigenes Land kümmern? Wie weit kann ich europäische Solidarität üben?" Merkel nennt die Stichworte Euro, Schutz der Außengrenzen und "Teilung der humanitären Verpflichtungen". Die Frage sei, ob sich die EU entscheide, Europa zu verfestigen und den Schengen-Raum zu schützen. "Oder aber", so Merkel, "fallen wir zurück, und jeder macht wieder seine Grenzkontrollen", mit vielen Folgen für Wirtschaft und Reisefreiheit.

30. April 2016

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Pressemitteilungen/BPA/2016/04/2016-04-30-podcast.html>

Worum ging es? Das will ich noch einmal deutlich machen. Es ging letztendlich um die Frage: Wie gehen wir damit um und wie gehen wir vor, wenn an unserer Außengrenze – das ist die gedachte Grenze des Schengen-Raums – eine solch geballte illegale Migration auftritt? Wie versucht man, mit diesem Problem umzugehen? Im Wesentlichen standen zwei Antworten im Raum. Die eine Antwort war: Wir sind die Bundesrepublik Deutschland; wir müssen Antworten an der deutsch-österreichischen Grenze geben. Die andere Antwort bezog sich auf die Frage: Schaffen wir es, den gesamten Raum der Reisefreiheit, den sogenannten Schengen-Raum, zu verteidigen, und lernen wir, unsere Außenhülle zu schützen?

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2016/04/2016-04-19-rede-merkel-thw.html>

Wir haben die Feststellung getroffen, dass wir so schnell wie möglich zu den Verfahren von Schengen zurückkommen müssen, also dass wir unsere Außengrenzen beherrschen, indem wir aber gleichzeitig einen würdevollen Umgang mit denjenigen finden, die kein Asylrecht in Europa haben und die zurückgeführt werden müssen, und dann aber auch dafür sorgen, dass diejenigen, die ein Asylrecht in Anspruch nehmen können, aufgenommen werden können. Darin liegt der Sinn der Vereinbarung, die wir gefunden haben, eine Vereinbarung, die wir mit der Türkei und auch mit Griechenland abgeschlossen haben.

Was wir beim Europäischen Rat beschlossen haben, ist eine globale Antwort, eine umfassende Antwort mit Verpflichtungen seitens der Türkei ‑ Verpflichtungen, die jetzt nachprüfbar sein müssen ‑ und andererseits aber auch unserer Solidarität. Ich möchte daran erinnern, dass die Türkei 2,5 Millionen Flüchtlinge aufgenommen hat und dass Libanon und Jordanien ebenfalls Hunderttausende Flüchtlinge aufgenommen haben. Dann haben wir auch unsere Hilfe für Griechenland festgelegt, damit Griechenland in der Lage sein kann, die Grenzen zu sichern.

In den letzten Tagen haben Deutschland und Frankreich entsprechend der Vereinbarung, die getroffen worden ist, und entsprechend der Antwort des Europäischen Rates Hunderte von Beamte vor Ort geschickt, um dafür zu sorgen, dass unsere Regeln eingehalten werden.

Die Rückkehr zu den Grundsätzen von Schengen, die Rückkehr zu unserem Schutz der Außengrenzen ist essenziell. Damit können wir eine Einzelfallbehandlung sicherstellen. Damit können wir auch die Mechanismen der Neuansiedlungen und der Umsiedlungen sicherstellen.

Diese Position haben wir sehr früh geäußert. Dann ist das passiert, was die Kanzlerin beschrieben hat, nämlich eine Fluchtbewegung. Das hat Emotionen ausgelöst und die Aufgabe dieser Regeln. Seit ein paar Monaten arbeiten wir nun an diesen Mechanismen, die wir akzeptiert haben, und den Regeln, die den Grenzschutz für den Schengen-Raum sicherstellen. Wir tun dies in Achtung unserer Regeln und unserer Werte.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2016/04/2016-04-07-dt-franz-ministerrat.html>

**Europa muss sich für die Zukunft auch durch die Stärkung von Schengen und des EU-Außengrenzschutzes auf die globale Migrationslage vorbereiten und das gemeinsame europäische Asylsystem anpassen:**  
  
**Schutz der Schengen-Außengrenzen**  
Ein umfassenderer und wirksamerer Schutz der Außengrenzen des Schengen-Raums – insbesondere durch systematische Kontrollen der Ein- und Ausreise – ist zur Gewährleistung der Sicherheit und Bewahrung der Freizügigkeit innerhalb des Schengen-Raums unerlässlich.

**Systematische Kontrollen an den Außengrenzen**  
Die Änderung des Schengener Grenzkodex dahingehend, dass systematische Kontrollen aller Personen bei der Ein- und Ausreise in den Schengen-Raum eingeführt werden können, muss bis zum Ende dieses Halbjahres verabschiedet und unverzüglich umgesetzt werden; dies gilt auch für Personen, die nach Unionsrecht Anspruch auf freien Personenverkehr haben.   
Um – unter anderem auch an den Flughäfen – einen reibungslosen Verkehrsfluss sicherzustellen, können entsprechende technologische Mittel eingesetzt werden.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Pressemitteilungen/BPA/2016/04/2016-04-07-deutsch-franz%C3%B6sischer-ministerrat.html>

Deshalb ist es wichtig, dass wir den Schengen-Raum erhalten. Das heißt, die Außengrenzen müssen geschützt werden. Und das wiederum heißt: Wir müssen auch da, wo es sich um Seegrenzen handelt, Wege finden, um mit unseren Nachbarn zu annehmbaren Ergebnissen zu kommen.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2016/03/2016-03-17-bkin-dihk.html>

 Ich sage ganz klar: Nur mit einer Reform von Dublin werden wir Schengen langfristig aufrechterhalten können. Denn zu einer gesamteuropäischen Lösung gehört nicht zuletzt auch, dass wir schrittweise zu den offenen Binnengrenzen zurückkehren können, von denen wir im Schengen-Raum so sehr profitieren.  
  
Neun Schengen-Staaten, unter anderem Deutschland, sahen sich in den vergangenen Monaten gezwungen, temporäre Binnengrenzkontrollen einzuführen. Ich begrüße daher, dass die Kommission einen sehr ehrgeizigen Fahrplan vorgelegt hat, der das Ziel enthält, bis Ende des Jahres alle temporären Kontrollen wieder aufzuheben. Aber auch dafür müssen natürlich die Bedingungen erfüllt sein. Sonst können wir das nicht machen. Das heißt, wir müssen bis dahin die Situation an den europäischen Außengrenzen in den Griff bekommen, und alle Mitgliedstaaten müssen wieder ihre Verpflichtungen aus dem Schengener Grenzkodex einhalten.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Regierungserklaerung/2016/2016-03-17-regierungserklaerung.html>

## Schengenraum erhalten, Dublin-Verträge reformieren

"Zu einer gesamteuropäischen Lösung gehört außerdem langfristig auch, das Dublin-System zu reformieren." Die Kanzlerin wies darauf hin, dass die EU-Kommission demnächst Vorschläge vorlegen werde. "Denn wir müssen wissen, wie wir das Dublin-System an die veränderten Gegebenheiten anpassen und zukunftsfest machen können. Ich sage ganz klar: Nur mit einer Reform von Dublin werden wir Schengen langfristig aufrechterhalten können. Denn zu einer gesamteuropäischen Lösung gehört nicht zuletzt auch, dass wir schrittweise zu den offenen Binnengrenzen zurückkehren können, von denen wir im Schengenraum so sehr profitieren."

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2016/03/2016-03-16-regierungserklaerung.html>

Die Bundesregierung unterstützt die [Vorschläge der EU-Kommission](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-585_de.htm), schrittweise zu einer Situation zurückzukehren, in der alle Staaten die Schengen-Regeln voll anwenden. Es geht darum, die temporären Grenzkontrollen bis Ende des Jahres aufzuheben.

"Hier müssen wir schauen, wie wir das wahrmachen, was die Kommission von uns verlangt, nämlich die Politik des Durchwinkens zu beenden und wieder weitest möglich zu der Anwendung von Schengen zurückzukehren. Das wird am Montagabend sicherlich noch nicht abschließend geregelt sein, aber es muss einen Schritt in die Richtung geben", hatte Merkel bereits am 2. März erklärt.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2016/03/2016-03-04-europaeischer-rat-tuerkei.html>

Nach dem Treffen mit dem kroatischen Ministerpräsidenten Tihomir Orešković (1. März) hatte die Kanzlerin betont, dass man wieder zum Schengen-Verfahren zurückkehren und eine "Politik des Durchwinkens" beenden wolle. Die EU-Staaten hätten sich beim jüngsten Europäischen Rat Mitte Februar verpflichtet, schrittweise wieder zum Schengen-System zurückzukehren, sagte Merkel.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2016/03/2016-03-01-fluechtinge-mazedonien-griechenland.html>

Was die Frage des Transports anbelangt: Ehrlich gesagt, ist das jetzt aus meiner Sicht nicht das zentrale Thema. Das zentrale Thema ist, wir müssen - da stimme ich der Kommission auch zu, die auch diese Vorschläge gemacht (hat) - wieder die Schengen-Systeme einführen. Und in diese Richtung arbeiten wir. Das heißt, das ist ja klar, dass wir in Richtung der wieder vollen Geltung von Schengen arbeiten müssen. Und da sind die notwendigen Maßnahmen zu treffen. Und das bedeutet eben Hotspots - da sind wir vorangekommen aber noch nicht am Ziel -, das bedeutet Umsiedlungsmöglichkeiten von den Hotspots aus - das gilt für Italien, aber das gilt vor allen Dingen für Griechenland.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2016/02/2016-02-19-pk-bruessel.html>

## chengen-System erhalten

Merkel warnte die EU-Staaten davor, zur Abschottung der Balkan-Route die Grenze zwischen Mazedonien und Griechenland zu schließen. Die für die Flüchtlingsbewegung entscheidende Schengen-Außengrenze liege zwischen der Türkei und Griechenland. "Einfach in Mazedonien, das gar kein EU-Mitglied ist, einen Schutzzaun zu bauen, ohne uns darum zu kümmern, in welche Notlage das Griechenland brächte, das wäre nicht nur kein europäisches Verhalten, sondern löste auch unsere Probleme nicht."

Merkel räumte ein, dass Griechenland bisher seinen Verpflichtungen beim Schutz der EU-Außengrenze nicht ausreichend nachkomme. "Wir wollen Griechenland helfen, das zu verbessern." Die Idee, sich auf eine kleinere Schengen-Gemeinschaft zurückzuziehen, lehnte sie ab. "Das wäre eine schwerwiegende Rückentwicklung der Europäischen Union."

Die deutsche Grenze zeitweise zu schließen, kommt für Merkel nicht in Frage. "Ich will das Schengen-System erhalten, von dem Deutschland wie kein zweites europäisches Land profitiert." Es lohne sich definitiv, alle Anstrengungen auf die Sicherung der EU-Außengrenzen zu lenken.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2016/02/2016-02-16-merkel-interview.html>

Viele sagen mir in diesen Tagen: Es gab auch ein Leben vor Schengen. Ich antworte dann: Ich weiß; es gab auch ein Leben vor der Deutschen Einheit – da waren die Grenzen noch besser geschützt. Aber ob uns so etwas heute im weltweiten Wettbewerb stärken würde und ob wir unsere Vorteile einer Europäischen Union und eines Binnenmarktes kräftigen könnten, diese Frage steht im Raum. Ich beantworte sie ganz klar mit Nein.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2016/02/2016-02-14-rede-merkel-hamburg.html>

Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel hat dazu aufgerufen, eine Gefährdung des Schengen-Raumes zu verhindern. "Wir müssen unsere Außengrenze schützen, weil wir Schengen erhalten wollen", sagt Merkel in ihrem neuen Video-Podcast. Könne man die Außengrenze nicht schützen, gerate "der freie Bewegungsraum im Binnenmarkt, der auch Grundlage unseres Wohlstands ist, in Gefahr". Und das, so die Bundeskanzlerin, müsse verhindert werden. Sie glaube, da seien sich alle Mitgliedstaaten der Europäischen Union einig.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Pressemitteilungen/BPA/2016/02/2016-02-06-podcast-schengen.html>

# Merkel will Schengen stärken

**Deutschland unterstützt die Bemühungen Rumäniens, Mitglied des Schengen-Raums zu werden. Das erklärte die Kanzlerin nach ihrem Treffen mit Ministerpräsident Cioloş. Kritisch äußerte sich Merkel zu Sozialleistungen für Zuwanderer, sofern sie nicht auf "Arbeit beruhen".**

## Schengen erhalten und erweitern

Weitere Themen waren die Sicherung der EU-Außengrenzen und die Frage der gerechten Aufgabenverteilung innerhalb der Mitgliedsstaaten der EU sowie die Anstrengungen Rumäniens, Mitglied des Schengen-Raums zu werden. Das Schengen-Projekt sei "von größter Aktualität", sagte Merkel. Es sei alles zu tun, "damit wir die Freizügigkeit innerhalb der Schengen-Grenzen auch weiterhin wirklich leben können."

Merkel bezeichnete Schengen als ein Faktor für das Zusammenwachsen Europas und für das Wirtschaftswachstum Europas. "Deshalb muss aus meiner Sicht alles daran gesetzt werden, Schengen zu erhalten". Den Ländern, die noch nicht zu Schengen gehören, müsse die Möglichkeit gegeben werden, Teil dieses Schengen-Systems zu werden.

Ministerpräsident Cioloş betonte, dass Rumänien nach Deutschland der größte Unterstützer der europäischen Grenzagentur Frontex sei und bei der Sicherung der EU-Außengrenzen sich bereits wie ein Schengen-Land verhalte.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2016/01/2016-01-07-besuch-rumaenischer-ministerpraesident.html>

Ich kann darüber nicht mehr sagen, da müssen Sie die Türkei fragen. Ich sage mal: Das Thema Schengen und Dublin ist halt nicht bis zu Ende durchformuliert worden. Das kann man ähnlich bei der Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion sehen. Man hat sich um einige existentielle Fragen gedrückt. Man hat nicht die Frage gestellt: Wie sieht denn der Schutz der Außengrenzen aus, wenn jetzt mal wirklich ein Ansturm von Menschen kommt? Das konnte man sich vielleicht damals auch nicht vorstellen. Und man hat sich deshalb auch nicht damit beschäftigt, wie man jetzt Hotspots macht und man hat sich vor allen Dingen um die Frage gedrückt - und Deutschland war da auch nicht produktiv in der Zeit -, man hat sich vor allen Dingen um die Frage gedrückt: Was machen wir denn, wenn mal zu viele Asylbewerber kommen, die ein Land, ein Außenland, gar nicht mehr verkraften kann? Wie gehen wir denn dann vor?

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2015/12/2015-12-18-bk-eurorat.html>

Jetzt ist sozusagen der zweite Pfeiler der europäischen Integration in einer sehr schwierigen Situation. Es geht um die Frage, wie wir mit den innereuropäischen Freiheiten umgehen. Dafür steht der Schengen-Raum, dafür steht, dass wir vor Jahren im Vertrauen aufeinander die eigentlichen Grenzkontrollen an die Außengrenzen der Europäischen Union abgegeben haben. Ähnlich wie bei der Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion ist man auch bei diesem Schritt, der Schaffung des Schengen-Raums, im Grunde nicht ganz bis zum Ende dessen gegangen, was man hätte politisch lösen müssen.

Bei der Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion hat man zwar den Stabilitäts- und Wachstumspakt gemacht, aber wir haben uns nicht ausreichend darüber verständigt, in welche Richtung sich unsere Volkswirtschaften wirklich entwickeln wollen und welche Befugnisse die Europäische Kommission hat, wenn das in die falsche Richtung läuft.

Bei der Schaffung des Schengen-Raums und der Verlagerung der Kontrollen auf die Außengrenzen hat man den letzten Schritt, nämlich sich darüber Gedanken zu machen, wie denn bei einem Bewährungsdruck, einem großen Druck auf die Außengrenzen, die Solidarität innerhalb der Europäischen Union aussieht, wie denn die Mandate aussehen, wie denn die Verteilung aussieht, nicht getan. Darüber hat man sich nicht geeinigt.

Genauso wie wir für die nachhaltige Erhaltung des Euros die letzten Schritte gehen müssen, müssen wir jetzt auch hier die nächsten Schritte gehen, weil sich erwiesen hat, dass das derzeitige System allein nicht ausreicht. Deshalb ist eine solidarische Verteilung von Flüchtlingen je nach Wirtschaftskraft und Gegebenheiten, wobei die Bereitschaft zu einem permanenten Verteilungsmechanismus gegeben sein muss, nicht irgendeine Petitesse, sondern sie berührt die Frage, ob der Schengen-Raum auf Dauer aufrechterhalten werden kann.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2015/11/2015-11-26-rede-merkel-haushalt.html>

Frage: Frau Bundeskanzlerin, nach dem Abschluss des Afrika-Gipfels hat Herr Tusk relativ drastische Worte gefunden und gesagt: Wir befinden uns nach den schwedischen Grenzkontrollen, die wieder eingeführt wurden, bei Schengen in einem Wettlauf mit der Zeit. – War das ein Thema?

Wie besorgt sind Sie zweitens, dass dieser Wettlauf gegen die Zeit bei Schengen nicht gewonnen werden kann, weil jetzt immer mehr Länder Grenzkontrollen einführen?

BK’in Merkel: Ja, natürlich war das heute auch bei dem Gipfel ein Thema, weil wir ja verschiedene Maßnahmen haben. Ich bin deshalb doch relativ zufrieden, weil der Wert von Schengen doch sehr von allen Beteiligten betont wurde. Es wurde gesagt: Wenn wir Schengen uneingeschränkt erhalten wollen, dann brauchen wir aber einen verbesserten Schutz der Außengrenzen. Hier haben wir bezüglich der Mitarbeiter von Frontex einen Fortschritt erzielt, aber wir haben vor allen Dingen, und das ist mir besonders wichtig, eben auch hinsichtlich der Verhandlungen mit der Türkei durchaus positive Ergebnisse von Herrn Timmermans zu hören bekommen, der ja jetzt gerade zwei Tage lang dort war. Insofern das zeigt sich auch an der Tatsache, dass wir gesagt haben, baldmöglichst einen solchen EU-Türkei-Gipfel mit dem Ziel machen zu wollen, den Aktionsplan dann zu verabschieden ist hier etwas in Gang gekommen, und das bewerte ich positiv. Das ist auch der Dringlichkeit dessen geschuldet, dass immer mehr Länder sagen: Es muss zu einer faireren Verteilung kommen siehe auch Hotspots , und es muss zu einer besseren Ordnung kommen. - Insofern haben wir hier durchaus Fortschritte erzielt, ohne dass der Aktionsplan nun schon verabschiedet worden wäre; das ist dann der nächste Schritt.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2015/11/2015-11-12-merkel-valletta-eu-sonderrat.html>

**Rheinische Post: Sonst drohen Sie damit, dass Schengen-Abkommen außer Kraft zu setzen?**  
  
Jeder weiß, dass Schengen nur funktionieren kann, wenn die Außengrenzen der EU gesichert sind. Doch ich gehe nun wirklich nicht mit Drohungen in die Gespräche, sondern mit guten europäischen Argumenten.

<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Interview/2015/09/2015-09-11-merkel-rp.html>

# Brussels Briefing: Greece and Schengen

[Brussels blog](https://www.ft.com/stream/6773e864-78ab-4051-abc2-f4e9ab423ebb)

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Konec formuláře

JANUARY 26, 2016

by: Peter Spiegel

**This is the Tuesday edition of our new Brussels Briefing. To receive it every morning in your email in-box,**[***sign up here***](http://nbe.ft.com/nbe/profile.cfm?brussels=Y)**.**

In many ways, it is a threat that has more bark than bite. Although Greece has been part of Europe’s Schengen bloc since 2000, it has the almost unique status of sharing no land border with another member of the passport-free travel zone (Iceland doesn’t, either). For that reason, [suspending Greece from Schengen](http://click.link.ft.com/e/5cNtQsI3UVmm_li1l-e5xg~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC80NjNkYzdhMC05ODJiLTExZTUtOTIyOC04N2U2MDNkNDdiZGMuaHRtbCNheHp6M3lHZUwwTjl0R_Z7InVzZXJVdWlkIjoiYTI4YTcxYTgtMmYyOC00MmEwLWI0YTMtZTgxZWUyMjUwZjU1IiwicmVxdWVzdGVkU2VuZFRpbWUiOiIxNDUzNzk1Njk5IiwiZW1haWxJZCI6IjU2YTZhNTgyNGZlNjRiMDMwMGMyZTNlYyIsInRyYW5zYWN0aW9uSWQiOiIweDU0OWYzZTdhYjY4MDAwMDAiLCJwcm9kdWN0IjoiRW1FIiwidGVtcGxhdGVJZCI6IjU2NTVkMDA4Y2I1NmU2MGZjNjQ0N2UyMiIsInNvdXJjZSI6InNpbXBsZS1lbWFpbC1zZXJ2aWNlIn0~) would probably have no direct effect on the unrelenting influx of refugees from Turkey’s shores into Germany and points north. Although [the noise surrounding such a suspension](http://click.link.ft.com/e/NDHQBAVEXh04rfGTqxnf8g~~/AAAFwAA~) has risen in recent days, only those who fly from Athens into the rest of Europe would find their travel disrupted, and there are not many migrants who have been lining up at the Aegean Airlines ticket desk to book an aisle seat to Munich. (The price of a plane ticket may actually be cheaper, but [this video](http://click.link.ft.com/e/LNpjStKslXLVhWlKtN8xaA~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEK2h0dHBzOi8vd3d3LnlvdXR1YmUuY29tL3dhdGNoP3Y9WU8wSVJzZnJQUTRH9nsicmVxdWVzdGVkU2VuZFRpbWUiOiIxNDUzNzk1Njk5IiwidHJhbnNhY3Rpb25JZCI6IjB4NTQ5ZjNlN2FiNjgwMDAwMCIsInNvdXJjZSI6InNpbXBsZS1lbWFpbC1zZXJ2aWNlIiwidGVtcGxhdGVJZCI6IjU2NTVkMDA4Y2I1NmU2MGZjNjQ0N2UyMiIsImVtYWlsSWQiOiI1NmE2YTU4MjRmZTY0YjAzMDBjMmUzZWMiLCJ1c2VyVXVpZCI6ImEyOGE3MWE4LTJmMjgtNDJhMC1iNGEzLWU4MWVlMjI1MGY1NSIsInByb2R1Y3QiOiJFbUUifQ~~) explains why refugees can’t fly commercial.)

That’s why newfound support for EU aid to Macedonia [so it can beef up its border defences](http://click.link.ft.com/e/7lIj8FMer9xJ34qaf6PrQQ~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC9jNDA1MDRjYy1jMTJiLTExZTUtOWZkYi04N2I4ZDE1YmFlYzIuaHRtbCNheHp6M3lHZUwwTjl0R_Z7InNvdXJjZSI6InNpbXBsZS1lbWFpbC1zZXJ2aWNlIiwidXNlclV1aWQiOiJhMjhhNzFhOC0yZjI4LTQyYTAtYjRhMy1lODFlZTIyNTBmNTUiLCJ0ZW1wbGF0ZUlkIjoiNTY1NWQwMDhjYjU2ZTYwZmM2NDQ3ZTIyIiwidHJhbnNhY3Rpb25JZCI6IjB4NTQ5ZjNlN2FiNjgwMDAwMCIsInByb2R1Y3QiOiJFbUUiLCJlbWFpbElkIjoiNTZhNmE1ODI0ZmU2NGIwMzAwYzJlM2VjIiwicmVxdWVzdGVkU2VuZFRpbWUiOiIxNDUzNzk1Njk5In0~) with Greece has suddenly become the hot topic within many interior ministries and the European Commission. It would achieve what governments up north have long wanted – to [keep refugees inside Greece](http://click.link.ft.com/e/7vvDYC447ikFjjvqCK5trQ~~/AAAFwAA~), where they can be processed and, if they qualify, relocated across the EU – while not broaching the politically toxic topic of Schengen expulsion.

In a letter sent yesterday, Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission president, gave his full-throated support to the Macedonia plan: “I welcome your suggestion,” Mr Juncker wrote to Miro Cerar, the Slovenian prime minister who has been driving the concept. Although legally, Brussels itself cannot currently send such aid to a non-EU member, Mr Juncker said individual member states should “support controls on the border with Greece through the secondment of police/law enforcement officers, and the provision of equipment.”

The Greek government has not reacted well to the idea. Alexis Tsipras, the prime minister, has long worried about his country [becoming a “black box” for migrants](http://click.link.ft.com/e/C3gcVbcnyDU1HZGQBuHelg~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC82NGIzMGY1ZS1hM2VhLTExZTUtODczZi02ODQxMWE4NGYzNDYuaHRtbCNheHp6M3lHZUwwTjl0R_Z7InByb2R1Y3QiOiJFbUUiLCJyZXF1ZXN0ZWRTZW5kVGltZSI6IjE0NTM3OTU2OTkiLCJlbWFpbElkIjoiNTZhNmE1ODI0ZmU2NGIwMzAwYzJlM2VjIiwidXNlclV1aWQiOiJhMjhhNzFhOC0yZjI4LTQyYTAtYjRhMy1lODFlZTIyNTBmNTUiLCJzb3VyY2UiOiJzaW1wbGUtZW1haWwtc2VydmljZSIsInRyYW5zYWN0aW9uSWQiOiIweDU0OWYzZTdhYjY4MDAwMDAiLCJ0ZW1wbGF0ZUlkIjoiNTY1NWQwMDhjYjU2ZTYwZmM2NDQ3ZTIyIn0~), trapped between the Aegean Sea they’ve just crossed and the northern border they no longer can. [In an interview](http://click.link.ft.com/e/i2Rc5ZSjAufKhDpFuQRYJw~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC9iZGRmMzJjMi1jMzM2LTExZTUtODA4Zi04MjMxY2Q3MTYyMmUuaHRtbCNheHp6M3lHZUwwTjl0R_Z7InVzZXJVdWlkIjoiYTI4YTcxYTgtMmYyOC00MmEwLWI0YTMtZTgxZWUyMjUwZjU1IiwidHJhbnNhY3Rpb25JZCI6IjB4NTQ5ZjNlN2FiNjgwMDAwMCIsInRlbXBsYXRlSWQiOiI1NjU1ZDAwOGNiNTZlNjBmYzY0NDdlMjIiLCJzb3VyY2UiOiJzaW1wbGUtZW1haWwtc2VydmljZSIsImVtYWlsSWQiOiI1NmE2YTU4MjRmZTY0YjAzMDBjMmUzZWMiLCJyZXF1ZXN0ZWRTZW5kVGltZSI6IjE0NTM3OTU2OTkiLCJwcm9kdWN0IjoiRW1FIn0~), Ioannis Mouzalas, the Greek migration minister who is well respected in relief circles for his earlier career as [a physician to the developing world](http://click.link.ft.com/e/KvAluEQqwNjWHPUDnQCS1g~~/AAAFwAA~~~), warned such a policy would only “worsen the trauma” rather than solve it. “It’s not easy to trap [asylum seekers] and we do not intend to become a cemetery of souls,” Mr Mouzalas said.

The idea of suspending Greece from Schengen has not gone away, however. Ministers from both Austria and Sweden [have raised the possibility anew](http://click.link.ft.com/e/2jEQn-xQh3QM9lMDQppuEA~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC9iZGRmMzJjMi1jMzM2LTExZTUtODA4Zi04MjMxY2Q3MTYyMmUuaHRtbCNheHp6M3lHZUwwTjl0R_Z7InNvdXJjZSI6InNpbXBsZS1lbWFpbC1zZXJ2aWNlIiwicHJvZHVjdCI6IkVtRSIsInRlbXBsYXRlSWQiOiI1NjU1ZDAwOGNiNTZlNjBmYzY0NDdlMjIiLCJlbWFpbElkIjoiNTZhNmE1ODI0ZmU2NGIwMzAwYzJlM2VjIiwidXNlclV1aWQiOiJhMjhhNzFhOC0yZjI4LTQyYTAtYjRhMy1lODFlZTIyNTBmNTUiLCJ0cmFuc2FjdGlvbklkIjoiMHg1NDlmM2U3YWI2ODAwMDAwIiwicmVxdWVzdGVkU2VuZFRpbWUiOiIxNDUzNzk1Njk5In0~), with Austria’s interior minister being the most explicit, suggesting Schengen’s external border “move towards central Europe.” Despite the clamour, the European Commission is now shutting its ears to the idea. “We have never discussed a suspension from Schengen or the exclusion of a member state from Schengen,” said a commission spokeswoman. “Neither of these options exist under current rules.” While that might be right technically, [the Schengen code](http://click.link.ft.com/e/dcOAxzpiNmqsBiS82cPsJA~~/AAAFwAA~~~) does allow the commission to draw up plans for the reimposition of border controls in any part of the zone ”where exceptional circumstances put the overall functioning of the area without internal border control at risk”.

At their meeting in Amsterdam yesterday, EU interior ministers repeated their request for the commission to look into this. The process is Byzantine: a series of reports must be prepared by the commission to find if there are deficiencies, then Greece must be given three months to fix them. Only then can Article 26 – the part of the Schengen code that allows carte blanche border controls – be implemented. With multiple EU leaders warning there are just six to eight weeks to save Schengen, that may indeed be the next step Europe is forced to take.

**What we’re reading**

Today, the Danish parliament is expected to pass a highly-controversial bill that would allow authorities to [strip refugees of most of their valuables](http://click.link.ft.com/e/EFuYnPOUsb_CXg7uH8VQXA~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC80MjBhOWI1ZS1iOTQ2LTExZTUtYTdjYy0yODBkZmU4NzVlMjguaHRtbCNheHp6M3lIR3pPT0NYR_Z7InNvdXJjZSI6InNpbXBsZS1lbWFpbC1zZXJ2aWNlIiwicHJvZHVjdCI6IkVtRSIsInVzZXJVdWlkIjoiYTI4YTcxYTgtMmYyOC00MmEwLWI0YTMtZTgxZWUyMjUwZjU1IiwiZW1haWxJZCI6IjU2YTZhNTgyNGZlNjRiMDMwMGMyZTNlYyIsInRlbXBsYXRlSWQiOiI1NjU1ZDAwOGNiNTZlNjBmYzY0NDdlMjIiLCJyZXF1ZXN0ZWRTZW5kVGltZSI6IjE0NTM3OTU2OTkiLCJ0cmFuc2FjdGlvbklkIjoiMHg1NDlmM2U3YWI2ODAwMDAwIn0~) to pay for their stay in Denmark. Ahead of the vote, Denmark’s immigration minister Inger Støjberg was [hauled before the European Parliament](http://click.link.ft.com/e/Qzfh1rtMSKJvdAuYX4qxMg~~/AAAFwAA~) to explain the government’s decision to propose the measure, and much of the domestic coverage in Denmark has focused on how much the legislation is damaging the country’s image abroad. The Danish daily Politken helpfully reverted to [the mellifluous English phrase “international shitstorm”](http://click.link.ft.com/e/vzaUG7bvT4HbFb02G63GAg~~/AAAFwAA~~~) to describe the reaction. The paper’s political editor argues the government may have been surprised by the wrath from Brussels, but they shouldn’t have been: domestic critics have been making the same argument for months, he argues.

For months, the most debated issue in the corridors of power both in Brussels and Berlin has been whether German Chancellor Angela Merkel can survive the ongoing refugee crisis as new rebellions from within her own centre-right party have grown almost daily. Der Spiegel has [a seminal piece out (translated into English)](http://click.link.ft.com/e/oLUPffd7Cwd-UqQibT3Jpw~~/AAAFwAA~) looking at not only how the rebellion has built, but also why Ms Merkel has chosen to expend years of accumulated political capital on this fight. Has a “rough draft of Merkel’s downfall” been written, the piece asks? Today’s must-read on the refugee crisis.

<https://www.ft.com/content/46567bbb-9220-3507-9f3a-3f093cc137aa>

[WORLD NEWS](http://www.reuters.com/news/archive/worldNews) | Fri Nov 13, 2015 | 12:04pm EST

# EU gives green light to German, Swedish temporary border checks

A group of migrants, coming off an incoming train, are seen next to a police officer on the platform at the Swedish end of the bridge between Sweden and Denmark, in Hyllie district, Malmo, November 12, 2015. REUTERS/Stig-Ake Jonsson/TT News Agency

The European Commission has formally authorized the temporary reimposition of border controls by Sweden and Germany's extension of frontier checks to help get a grip on a large influx of asylum seekers, the EU executive said on Friday.

With refugees flooding into European Union territory in the worst migrant crisis since World War Two, the viability of the EU's Schengen system of open borders is under strain as never before as EU members reintroduce controls at their frontiers.

Sweden, long a haven for people fleeing war and persecution, was the latest EU state to re-establish checks at its borders to stem a tide of migrants coming from Denmark.

Germany reimposed border controls on Sept. 13 and decided to extend them beyond an initial limit of two months foreseen by Schengen rules, using a clause that permits stretching checks to a maximum of six months.

"The temporary reintroduction of border controls between member states is an exceptional possibility explicitly foreseen in and regulated by the Schengen Borders Code, in case of a serious threat to public policy or internal security," the European Commission said in a statement.

The Swedish decision "prima facie appears to be a situation covered by the rules", it said.

The decision replicated similar provisional authorizations granted by the EU executive to Austria, Hungary and Slovenia when they imposed temporary border controls in recent weeks.

"We have no objections to measures that should remain proportionate," a Commission spokeswoman told a regular news briefing.

### RELATED COVERAGE

* [Swiss government split as asylum numbers rise](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-switzerland-idUSKCN0T21YI20151113?mod=related&channelName=worldNews)
* [Merkel defends decision to send back refugees to other EU countries](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-germany-merkel-idUSKCN0T21QP20151113?mod=related&channelName=worldNews)
* [U.N. urges Greece to boost aid at Lesbos island 'epicenter' of migrant crisis](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-greece-un-idUSKCN0T21PH20151113?mod=related&channelName=worldNews)

"(But) the situation serves to further underscore the pressing need to quickly implement the measures proposed in order to manage the refugee crisis," the statement said, including a plan to relocate refugees from the first countries of arrival to other EU states, thus reducing uncontrolled flows.

EU leaders held an extraordinary summit in Malta on Thursday to discuss the refugee crisis and stronger coordination with Turkey, the main transit country for migrants heading to Europe.

"Saving Schengen is a race against time. And we are determined to win that race," the head of EU leaders, Donald Tusk said after the meeting.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-eu-schengen-idUSKCN0T21FN20151113>

**1-05-2016**

# Secure EU external borders to help save Schengen passport-free area, urge MEPs

**The reimposition of checks at the Schengen area’s internal borders has put one of the greatest and most tangible achievements of the European project at risk, observed most MEPs speaking in a debate with the Commission and the Council on Wednesday. They agreed that, in order to restore the normal functioning of the passport-free zone, the EU’s external borders need to be properly secured.**

Many speakers warned about the costs that these internal border checks impose particularly in the transport and tourism sectors. Others questioned the need for and proportionality of the current controls and demanded that they be lifted as soon as possible. Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos underlined that these border checks are “exceptional and temporary” and assured MEPs that the aim is to lift them by the end of the year, at the latest.

Replay videos of statements by

[Jeanine HENNIS-PLASSCHAERT](http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=363c8051-44bd-415a-b296-a60200c471a8), Dutch minister of defence, for the Council

[Dimitris AVRAMOPOULOS](http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=39292b2a-87d5-4f12-89f3-a60200c47677), Commissioner in charge of migration and home affairs

[Milan ZVER](http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=765f8120-2293-4439-a39c-a60300fcce89) ([EPP](http://www.eppgroup.eu/), SL)

[Tanja FAJON](http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=ab03343d-cd87-4d0b-93c7-a60300fe2f3e) ([S&D](http://www.socialistgroup.eu/gpes/index.jsp?request_locale=EN), SL)

[Monica MACOVEI](http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=6a9347fc-ec83-452b-93cc-a60300fe3c55) ([ECR](http://ecrgroup.eu/), RO)

[Sophia IN 'T VELD](http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=9a86e19d-3831-4b44-8727-a60300ff79dd) ([ALDE](http://www.alde.eu/), NL)

[Kostas CHRYSOGONOS](http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=f0f7d675-7611-4628-80e0-a60300ffdbf6) (GUE/NGL, EL)

[Ska KELLER](http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=d0dadac2-dd43-483e-9846-a6030100ee97) (Green/EFA, DE)

[Beatrix VON STORCH](http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=ce677afd-1dfe-42b7-baef-a6030100f8d8) ([EFDD](http://www.efdgroup.eu/), DE)

[Harald VILIMSKY](http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=35f0d8b3-6449-4587-a1f5-a603010242cf) (ENF, AT)

**Note to editors**

The Commission[*proposed a recommendation*](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1627_en.htm)to the Council on 4 May to prolong “proportionate controls” at the internal borders of Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway (not an EU member state, but part of the Schengen area) for six months (which may be renewed, no more than three times, up to a maximum of two years).from newsletter. Commissioner Avramopoulos announced in plenary session that the Council is expected to approve the recommendation tomorrow.

France also has controls in place, under the national state of emergency following the terrorist attacks in Paris, but these will be considered separately.

[Video recording of debate (click on 11.05.2016)](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/video?debate=1462971857557)[EbS+](http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs/schedule.cfm?sitelang=en&page=3&institution=0&date=05/11/2016)[EuroparlTV: Restoring Schengen](http://europarltv.europa.eu/en/player.aspx?pid=)[Testing times for Schengen [Policy podcast] (April 2016)](https://epthinktank.eu/2016/04/07/testing-times-for-schengen-policy-podcast/)[The economic impact of suspending Schengen (At a glance, March 2016)](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_ATA(2016)579074)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ireland/en/news-press/secure-eu-external-borders-to-help-save-schengen-passport-free-area-urge-meps>

## Sverige skærper grænsekontrol, men indstiller id-kontrol på grænsen til Danmark

### Den svenske regering vil skærpe grænsekontrollen. Det er dog på tide at droppe id-kontrollen over Øresund.

Den svenske regering har besluttet at skærpe grænsekontrollen, men finder det ikke længere nødvendigt at gennemføre id-kontrol på busser, tog og færger mellem Danmark og Sverige.

»Regeringen mener, at grænsekontrollen fortsat er nødvendig og skal skærpes«, siger den svenske indenrigsminister, Anders Ygeman.

Netop den skærpede grænsekontrol er grunden til, at id-kontrollen kan falde bort, forklarer minister for infrastruktur Anna Johansson.

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### Store gener

»Fordelen er, at mange pendlere over Øresund har oplevet store gener ved id-kontrollen«, siger Johansson.

Den påkrævede id-kontrol af alle rejsende med bus, tog og færger over Øresund ophører med det samme.

Anders Ygeman siger, at behovet for id-kontrol i dag er langt mindre end for halvandet år siden, da ordningen blev indført.

I efteråret 2015 kom 10.000 asylansøgere til landet om ugen. I dag er det tal nede på 500.

### Fokus flyttes

Medlem af retsudvalget i Sverige Annika Hirvonen Falk mener, at den ændrede kurs betyder mere kontrol af biler og gods end af passagerer, pendlere og asylansøgere.

»Man flytter vores fokus hen til at stoppe import af våben i stedet for mennesker«, skriver hun i en erklæring.

Ligesom Sverige har også Danmark indført midlertidig grænsekontrol som en konsekvens af det øgede pres fra migranter og flygtninge. Det samme har Østrig, Tyskland og Norge.

EU-Kommissionen har godkendt de ekstraordinære foranstaltninger, men samtidig understreget, at der er tale om en midlertidig løsning.

ritzau

<http://politiken.dk/udland/art5932347/Sverige-sk%C3%A6rper-gr%C3%A6nsekontrol-men-indstiller-id-kontrol-p%C3%A5-gr%C3%A6nsen-til-Danmark>

## Fakta: Sverige ophæver id-kontrol på dansk jord

### Rejsende skal fra midnat torsdag ikke længere vise gyldigt id, før de rejser ind i Sverige fra Danmark.

Den svenske regering har besluttet at indstille id-kontrollen mellem Danmark og Sverige.

Det betyder, at DSB ikke længere skal gennemføre id-kontrol over sundet for passagerer, der rejser til Sverige. Det betyder kortere rejsetid mellem Danmark og Sverige.

12. november 2015 indfører Sverige midlertidig grænsekontrol.

December 2015 beslutter et flertal i den svenske Riksdag, at der skal indføres id-kontrol på rejsende til Sverige. Det træder i kraft 4. januar 2016. Det betyder, at alle transportselskaber, der opererer fra Danmark til Sverige, bliver pålagt at kontrollere alle passagerer, før de når til Sverige.

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Samme dag, 4. januar 2016 indfører Danmark midlertidig grænsekontrol, der i første omgang skulle gælde ti dage til 14. januar.

»Den danske grænsekontrol betød stikprøver ved den dansk-tyske grænse i Jylland samt ved færgelejerne i Gedser, Rødby og Rønne og er siden blevet forlænget. Senest i januar, hvor EU-Kommissionen gav fem lande, heriblandt Danmark, lov til at forlænge grænsekontrollen.

Id-kontrollen mellem Danmark og Sverige blev forlænget med tre måneder i både november 2016 og februar 2017.

2. maj 2017 beslutter den svenske regering at indstille id-kontrollen mellem Danmark og Sverige, så rejsende ikke længere skal vise gyldigt id, før de kommer ind i Sverige.

»Den danske grænsekontrol mellem Danmark og Tyskland fortsætter. Den svenske regering vil stramme grænsekontrollen, hvorfor id-kontrollen bliver overflødig.

Den nuværende ordning, der udløber 4. maj, blev indført i januar 2016 på grund af den store asyltilstrømning til Sverige. I efteråret 2015 kom 10.000 til Sverige hver eneste uge. Nu er antallet nede på 500 per uge.

Kilder: Ritzau, TT og Transportministeriet.

<http://politiken.dk/udland/art5932363/Sverige-oph%C3%A6ver-id-kontrol-p%C3%A5-dansk-jord>

# Danmark innfører grensekontroll mot Tyskland

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OPPDATERT: 04.JAN.2016 13:51

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Fra 4.januar blir alle som reiser fra Danmark til Sverige avkrevd gyldig ID. Her fra kontrollen ved togstasjonen på Kastrup.FOTO: TT NEWS AGENCY

**Beslutningen kom kort tid etter at Sverige innførte grensekontroll mot Danmark. Det grenseløse Europa er i fare, mener tyske myndigheter.**

Grensekontrollen vil innebære tilfeldige passkontroller.

Statsminister Lars Løkke Rasmussen kom med kunngjøringen på en pressekonferanse samtidig som grensekontrollen ble innført.

## Skal vare ti dager

**Tiltaket kommer etter at Sverige samme dag innførte ID-kontroll av alle reisende fra Danmark.**

— Det kan få store konsekvenser for Danmark når andre nordiske land stenger sine grenser. Det kan føre til flere asylsøkere, sier Løkke Rasmussen.

Kontrollene innføres mandag klokken 12. Tiltaket skal i første omgang vare i ti dager, men med mulighet for forlengelse i ytterligere 20 dager.

[**400 syriske flyktninger skal kastet ut. 88 av dem er barn.**](http://www.aftenposten.no/norge/Norge-vil-utvise-tusenvis-av-flyktninger-til-EU-land-15949b.html)

## Flertall reiser videre

Siden starten av september er mer enn 91.000 migranter og flygtninger kommet over den dansk-tyske grensen. Av den har 13.000 søkt asyl, mens resten trolig er reist videre til Sverige, Norge og Finland, sa statsminister Lars Løkke Rasmussen på et pressemøte mandag.

Danmarks statsminister Lars Løkke Rasmussen kom mandag formiddag med nyheten om at landet innfører grensekontroll.

 Simon Læssøe

— Vi føler oss tvunget til å innføre grensekontroll mot Tyskland. Det stopper ikke de som vil søke asyl i Damnark, men vi kan ikke ha folk som går på danske motorveier, sa statsministerenda han la frem tiltaket.

## Tyskland: Schengen-avtalen i fare

Den tyske regjeringen mener at Schengen-avtalen er i fare som følge av grensekontrollene i Sverige og Danmark.

**- Bevegelsesfrihet er et viktig prinsipp, en av de viktigste sakene som EU har oppnådd de siste årene, sier talsmann for det tyske utenriksdepartementet, Martin Schäfer.**

— Schengen er meget viktig, men den er i fare, tilføyer han etter å ha fått spørsmål om Danmarks beslutning om å innføre midlertidig grensekontroll mandag.

[**Hva vil skje hvis kampen mot menneskesmugling lykkes? Én: Flere blir sittende fast i konfliktområder uten mulighet til å unnslippe**](http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/Er-menneskesmuglerne-problemet--Jorgen-Carling-16313b.html)

## Gjennomføres med stikkprøver

Grensekontrollen vil bli gjennomført ved den dansk-tyske grensen i Jylland samt ved fergeleiene i Gedser, Rødby og Rønne. Den vil bestå av stikkprøver, som baseres på løpende observasjon av trafikken over grensen, opplyser Udlændingeministeriet [i en pressemelding](http://uibm.dk/nyheder/2016-01/regeringen-indforer-midlertidig-graensekontrol).

Danmark vil foreløpig ikke innføre såkalt transportøransvar, slik svenskene har gjort. Det gir transportselskaper ansvar for å sjekke dokumentene til sine passasjerer.

<http://www.aftenposten.no/verden/Danmark-innforer-grensekontroll-mot-Tyskland-15930b.html>

# Danmarks svar: Gränskontroller mot Tyskland

Det svenska beslutet att från och med midnatt införa id-kontroller på resor från Danmark till Sverige gav bara tolv timmar senare ringar på vattnen. Vid lunchtid införde Danmark tillfällig gränskontroll mot Tyskland.

Av [TT](https://www.svd.se/av/tt)

 4 jan, 2016

[Spara artikel](https://www.svd.se/johansson-s-danska-beslutet-borde-kommit-tidigare)

 Dela

Stäng

### Dela artikeln:

### Danmarks svar: Gränskontroller mot Tyskland

**Id-kontrollerna**

[Snabbt om](https://www.svd.se/i/snabbt/om/id-kontrollerna)[Allt om](https://www.svd.se/om/id-kontrollerna)

Foto: Thomas Lekfeldt / TT NYHETSBYR N

– Vi vill inte återigen se att flyktingar och migranter vandrar på våra motorvägar, säger statministern Lars Løkke Rasmussen, som förklarar att regeringen känner sig tvingad att införa gränskontroller vid tysk-danska gränsen.

\*\*Till skillnad från \*\*Sveriges åtgärder ska de danska kontrollerna inte vara heltäckande:

– Polisen kommer inte att be alla att visa pass, säger han.

Han räknar inte heller med att antalet flyktingar ska minska i och med detta. Tvärtom kan antalet asylsökande komma att öka, säger Lars Løkke Rasmussen.

– De som inte vill söka asyl ska stoppas vid gränsen och inte släppas in i Danmark.

I första omgången kommer gränskontrollen att pågå i tio dagar, med möjlighet till förlängning.

SvD Världen - omvärldens viktigaste händelser direkt i din mejlkorg

Začátek formuláře

  Jag godkänner härmed [SvD:s användarvillkor](https://kundservice.svd.se/Ovrigt/Anvandarvillkor/) samt [SvD:s personuppgiftspolicy.](https://kundservice.svd.se/Ovrigt/PERSONUPPGIFTSPOLICY-FOR-SVD/)

Konec formuláře

[**Anmäl dig här**kundservice.svd.se](https://kundservice.svd.se/Nyhetsbrev)

Justitie- och migrationsminister Morgan Johansson välkomnar det danska beslutet om gränskontroller.

– Jag ser positivt på det. Men det borde ha kommit tidigare. En stor del av våra problem har ju uppstått därför att Danmark fungerat som ett transitland för flyktingar, vilket strider mot Schengen-reglerna. Man har inte velat ta tag i det, men nu gör man det, säger Morgan Johansson till TT.

Morgan Johansson (S). Foto: Claudio Bresciani/TT

\*\*Han medger \*\*att det finns en risk för dominoeffekt, om även Danmark skulle införa transportöransvar med id-kontroller, vilket försvårar möjligheten att söka asyl.

– Samtidigt vill jag säga att vi gör det här därför att vi vill förebygga en akut situation, där vi inte längre kan ta emot asylsökande på ett bra sätt.

Tysklands regering är däremot kritisk. Sveriges och Danmarks agerande bidrar till att Schengen-samarbetet nu är i gungning, heter det i en kommentar från UD-talesmannen Martin Schäfer.

**Samtidigt manar** Lars Løkke Rasmussen till handling på EU-nivå.

– Det är uppenbart att EU inte kan skydda sina yttre gränser, och att fler länder kommer att tvingas införa interna gränskontroller (inom Schengen-området), säger den danske statsministern.

– Europas ledare måste reagera på detta.

### Fakta/Id-kontroller från Danmark

Lagen som kontrollerna grundas på började gälla den 21 december, men först i dag, den 4 januari, börjar den tillämpas.

Företag som kör bussar, tåg eller färjor från Danmark till Sverige måste kontrollera att passagerarna har giltigt id med foto.

Den som saknar giltigt id får inte åka med. Reglerna gäller även bilresenärer.

Undantag görs för barn som reser tillsammans med föräldrar.

Ensamkommande barn måste ha giltigt id.

Transportörerna kan få böta 50 000 kronor om de inte har gjort de kontroller som krävs och låter personer utan giltigt id åka med.

Polisen ska kontrollera att transportörerna gör det de ska.

I november infördes tillfälliga ID-kontroller på färjor från Tyskland och Danmark till Sverige. Då utfördes enbart stickprovskontoroller.

Källa: Näringsdepartementet

<https://www.svd.se/johansson-s-danska-beslutet-borde-kommit-tidigare>

# Deutschland darf Grenzkontrollen bis Mai verlängern

Grenzkontrollen im Schengen-Raum bleiben in einigen EU-Staaten die Regel: Der EU-Ministerrat hat einer Verlängerung zugestimmt.

7. Februar 2017, 15:13 UhrQuelle: ZEIT ONLINE, AFP, dpa, nad[11 Kommentare](http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2017-02/schengen-abkommen-und-url-schengen-abkommen-grenzkontrollen-eu-ministerrat-bruessel#comments)

Ein Polizist beobachtet an der Kontrollstelle Schwarzbach an der Autobahn Salzburg-München (A8) den Verkehr. © Sven Hoppe/dpa

Deutschland und vier andere Länder dürfen ihre Grenzkontrollen um drei weitere Monate bis Anfang Mai verlängern. Der EU-Ministerrat in Brüssel nahm eine Empfehlung der Kommission an. Die Staaten sollen sich in den kommenden Monaten mit betroffenen Anrainern austauschen und die Kontrollen auf das nötige und angemessene Maß beschränken, hieß es weiter.

Deutschland hatte wegen der hohen Flüchtlingszahlen im September 2015 als erstes Schengen-Land Kontrollen an der Grenze Bayerns zu Österreich eingeführt. Es folgten Österreich, Dänemark, Schweden und Norwegen.

Eigentlich herrscht im Schengen-Raum Reisefreiheit, Ausnahmen sind nur befristet möglich. Bereits Ende vergangenen Jahres hatte sich die EU-Kommission dafür ausgesprochen, [die Kontrollen wieder zu beenden](http://www.zeit.de/politik/2016-03/schengen-raum-fluechtlingskrise-grenzkontrollen-eu-kommission-plan). Ende Januar erklärte sie dann, der Zeitpunkt sei "trotz einer allmählichen Stabilisierung der Lage" noch nicht gekommen. EU-Innenkommissar Dimitris Avramopoulos warnte jedoch schon damals vor einem Dauerzustand. Die Kontrollen könnten "nicht für immer" fortgesetzt werden.

Bundesinnenminister Thomas de Maizière (CDU) hatte bereits deutlich gemacht, dass er die Kontrollen auch über Mai hinaus verlängern will. Er wolle sie fortan nicht mehr nur mit der Flüchtlingskrise, sondern auch mit der Terrorgefahr begründen. Eine Zustimmung der Kommission für die Verlängerung wäre dann nicht mehr nötig. Die EU-Kommission will hingegen sobald wie möglich die Reisefreiheit im Schengen-Raum zurück.

<http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2017-02/schengen-abkommen-und-url-schengen-abkommen-grenzkontrollen-eu-ministerrat-bruessel>

Kanzler Christian Kern noch Außenminister Sebastian Kurz

# Schengen-Streit: Geschlossen gegen offene Grenzen

## EU gibt letztmaliges Okay bis November, Österreich/Deutschland für unbefristete Grenzkontrollen.

* [**Michael Bachner**](https://kurier.at/autor/mag-michael-bachner/8.589)
* [**Ingrid Steiner-Gashi**](https://kurier.at/autor/mag-ingrid-steiner-gashi/8.576)
* [**Ida Metzger**](https://kurier.at/autor/ida-metzger/17.634.383)

03.05.2017, 18:51

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Innenminister Wolfgang Sobotka will im Kampf gegen aus Syrien heimkehrende Extremisten die Grenzkontrollen aufrecht erhalten, solange der Krieg nicht zu Ende ist. Diese Position vertritt der ÖVP-Minister spätestens seit Ende Jänner, als bei einem EU-Innenministertreffen auf Malta einmal mehr über den lückenhaften Schutz der Außengrenzen debattiert wurde.

Nach EU-Recht sind Grenzkontrollen im an und für sich kontrollfreien Schengenraum nur zeitlich befristet möglich. Seit Herbst 2015, als die Grenzkontrollen in Österreich und Deutschland sowie Dänemark, Schweden und Norwegen begannen, wurde die Erlaubnis zu diesen Kontrollen von Brüssel immer wieder verlängert. Nun, mit einer letzten Verlängerung bis Jahresende , soll damit Schluss sein.

## Reisefreiheit?

Brüssel will wieder zur Reisefreiheit zurückkehren. Sobotka, aber auch deutsche Politiker wie Innenminister Thomas de Maiziere (CDU) und CSU-Ministerpräsident Horst Seehofer sind klar für weitere Grenzkontrollen. Seehofer will nötigenfalls gar den "Brenner dicht machen".

Sobotka sagte kürzlich: "Solange die Außengrenzen nicht dementsprechend geschützt werden können, werden wir auch weiterhin nationale Maßnahmen ergreifen." Am Mittwoch zeigte er sich im KURIER-Gespräch am Rande eines USA-Trips entspannt, er "will einmal abwarten. Man kann jetzt noch nicht sagen, was im November ist". Falls es bis dahin zu den erwarteten 24.000 Asylanträgen kommt, könne man mit dem Argument der inneren Sicherheit auch weitere Kontrollen veranlassen – sogar ohne vorherige Konsultationen (Paragraf 28 des Schengen- Abkommens).

Brüssel sieht das anders: Die Kommission will die Grenzkontrollen – wie etwa am Walserberg zu Deutschland – ein letztes Mal bis November verlängern. Danach, sagt EU-Kommissar Avramopoulos, "ist nach rechtlichem Standpunkt eine weitere Verlängerung unmöglich".

Ob es Sobotka, Seehofer & Co auf einen Rechtsstreit mit Brüssel ankommen lassen, ist offen. Letztlich droht ein Vertragsverletzungsverfahren. Weder Kanzler Christian Kern noch Außenminister Sebastian Kurz wollten den Konflikt kommentieren.

Im Innenministerium wird, was den Brenner angeht, auf die gute Kooperation mit Italien verwiesen. Es gibt auch "trilaterale Streifen" zwischen Deutschland, Italien und Österreich. Kontrolliert werden dabei vor allem die Züge aus Italien.

Slowenien lehnt die letztmalige Verlängerung der Grenzkontrollen übrigens ab. Es gebe eine "vernachlässigbare" Zahl illegaler Grenzübertritte nach Österreich. Weitere Kontrollen würden nur zu langen Wartezeiten beim Karawankentunnel führen – vor allem in den Sommerferien.

<https://kurier.at/politik/ausland/schengen-streit-mit-der-eu-geschlossen-gegen-offene-grenzen/261.827.595>

## Merkel verhindert klares Zeichen gegen Grenzkontrollen

Veröffentlicht am 21.10.2016 | Lesedauer: 4 Minuten

Vielen Fragen offen an Tag eins des EU-Gipfels. Hier im Gespräch: Xavier Bettel (Luxemburg), Theresa May (Großbritannien), Christian Kern (Österreich), Dalia Grybauskaite (Litauen) und Angela Merkel

Quelle: REUTERS/X00380

Flüchtlinge, Syrien, Brexit und Ceta: Am ersten Tag des EU-Gipfels war Streit absehbar. Kanzlerin Merkel setzte trotzdem die Verlängerung der Grenzkontrollen durch - auch aus innenpolitischen Motiven.

[6 Kommentare](https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article158933829/Merkel-verhindert-klares-Zeichen-gegen-Grenzkontrollen.html#Comments)

Anzeige

Die Europäische Union will illegale Migration noch strikter unterbinden. Beim Gipfel in Brüssel einigten sich die Staats- und Regierungschefs am Donnerstagabend darauf, den Grenzschutz weiter auszubauen und mehr illegal eingereiste Migranten ohne Bleiberecht zurückzuschicken.

Beim Thema Migration wurde zwar Einigkeit über die große Linie gefunden. Über die deutschen Pläne zur Verlängerung der Grenzkontrollen im Schengenraum wurde jedoch gestritten.

Deutschland und andere Länder verhinderten, dass der EU-Gipfel ein klares Zeichen gegen die Verlängerung der innereuropäischen Grenzkontrollen setzt. Eine Formulierung, mit der deutlich gemacht werden sollte, dass die zurückgehenden Flüchtlingszahlen einen „schrittweisen Abbau“ erlauben, wurde am Donnerstagabend aus der Abschlusserklärung gestrichen. Stattdessen ist deutlich vorsichtiger nur noch von einer „Anpassung“ an die aktuellen Erfordernisse die Rede.

Für Bundeskanzlerin [Angela Merkel](https://www.welt.de/themen/angela-merkel/" \o ") (CDU) dürfte dieser Punkt auch wegen des Flüchtlingsstreits mit CSU-Chef Horst Seehofer wichtig gewesen sein. Gerade die Bayern wollen die Grenzkontrollen bis auf Weiteres aufrechterhalten.

### De Maizière nennt Lage „äußerst fragil“

Über die von Ländern wie Deutschland, Österreich und Dänemark eingeführten Grenzkontrollen gibt es in der EU seit einiger Zeit Unmut. Länder wie Polen, Tschechien, Slowakei, Ungarn und Italien fordern ein Ende der im Schengenraum eigentlich nicht erlaubten Kontrollen. Sie argumentieren, dass die illegale Migration durch das Schließen der Balkanroute unter Kontrolle gebracht sei.

Zwischen den 26 Mitgliedstaaten des Schengenraums gibt es normalerweise keine Grenzkontrollen. Derzeit kontrollieren sechs der Länder ihre Grenzen oder zumindest Abschnitte davon. Die Kontrollen wurden in der Flüchtlingskrise eingeführt und sind jeweils bis Mitte November genehmigt. Eine Ausnahme ist Frankreich, das noch bis mindestens Ende Januar kontrolliert und dies mit der unsicheren Lage nach den Terroranschlägen begründet.

Anzeige

Bundesinnenminister Thomas de Maizière (CDU) verteidigte die deutschen Pläne. „Auch wenn sich die Flüchtlingssituation an den Binnengrenzen derzeit entspannt hat, so stellt sich die Lage nach wie vor als äußerst fragil dar“, kommentierte er. Er habe bereits die EU-Kommission gebeten, die Verlängerung der Grenzkontrollen zu empfehlen.

Der österreichische Kanzler Christian Kern sagte in Brüssel: „Für uns ist es wichtig, dass die Möglichkeit zu Grenzkontrollen auch bei den Binnengrenzen jetzt zunächst einmal um weitere sechs Monate verlängert wird.“

Ob die Grenzkontrollen innerhalb des eigentlich grenzkontrollfreien Schengenraumes tatsächlich verlängert werden können, wird in den nächsten Wochen davon abhängen, wie viele EU-Staaten die Pläne befürworten. Eine einfache Mehrheit reicht nicht aus.

<https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article158933829/Merkel-verhindert-klares-Zeichen-gegen-Grenzkontrollen.html>

# The end of Schengen? Restrictions by Denmark and Sweden are 'threatening Europe's passport-free zone'

As Sweden and Denmark demand ID to travel between their nations for the first time in 50 years and four other passport-free countries reintroduce checks, the EU’s open border faces its biggest threat yet

* [Leo Cendrowicz](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/leo-cendrowicz) Brussels
* Monday 4 January 2016 21:42 GMT

Europe’s passport-free Schengen zone is facing the biggest test of its two-decade existence after Sweden  re-imposed controls on visitors crossing from Denmark across what had been one of most open borders in the world.

Hours after the measures came into effect, Denmark announced it would slap new controls on its own border with Germany, while Berlin warned that the 26-nation zone of passport-free travel was now “in danger”.

Six Schengen countries – Austria, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark and non-EU member Norway – have now reintroduced border checks as Europe struggles to cope with an unprecedented influx of refugees and migrants from conflict zones including Syria and Afghanistan.

## [Six countries in Schengen now have border checks in place](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-six-countries-in-schengen-now-have-border-checks-in-place-a6796296.html)

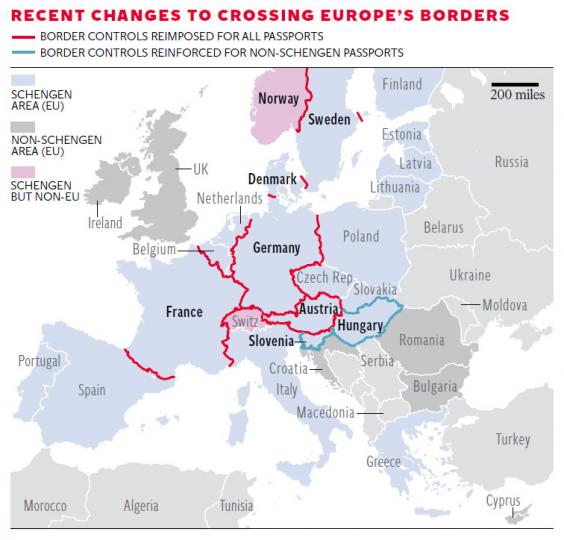
Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen blamed Sweden for his own country’s introduction of random border checks. “We are simply reacting to a decision made in Sweden. This is not a happy moment at all,” he said. Without action, he said, the checks in Sweden could “increase the risk of a large number of illegal immigrants accumulating in and around Copenhagen”.

Sweden’s new identity-controls target travellers crossing by train or bus from Denmark over the five-mile Öresund Bridge, or using ferry services. Some 17,000 commuters cross the Öresund between Danish capital Copenhagen and Malmo in Sweden daily.

The rules, enforcing an identity check for travellers between the two nations for the first time in half a century, meant rail passengers had to exit their trains and show photo identification at checkpoints in Copenhagen before reboarding to cross the bridge. Direct journeys from Copenhagen’s main station to Sweden were cancelled, with the changes doubling the usual 40-minute commute time.

Denmark’s rail company, DSB, along with ferry and bus companies, conducted the checks. Sweden’s state-owned train operator, SJ, said last month it would stop its services to and from Denmark if such a measure were introduced, as it would not have time to conduct the checks.

Danish Transport Minister Hans Christian Schmidt described the new measures as “extremely annoying” and suggested Sweden should pay for the checks, which DSB estimates will cost around £100,000 a day.



Sweden’s new controls represent a turnaround for the Nordic nation which has taken in more asylum seekers per capita than any other European country. Although the left-leaning government initially welcomed the Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan refugees who swept across Europe last summer, it only expected about 100,000 to make it to Sweden, many of them through Denmark. The final figure was more than 160,000 and strained local essential services. Such scenes have been replicated across the continent, with more than one million refugees and migrants having arrived in Europe during 2015, and nations such as Hungary and Slovenia reinforcing the exterior borders of the Schengen zone.

The new controls are not just a reverse of the 1995 Schengen accord, but also a setback to the post-1945 Nordic Council tradition of open borders that includes the five-nation Nordic Passport Union, which came into force in 1957. It was “a dark day for our Nordic region”, said former Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel responded by calling for a “joint European solution”, on the issue of refugees and migrants, her spokesman Steffen Seibert said. “The solution won’t take place on national borders between country A and country B,” he added. German foreign ministry spokesman Martin Schaefer said: “Schengen is very important but it is in danger.”

However, Germany itself imposed controls at its Austrian border last September, just days after offering refuge to all Syrian nationals. Under Schengen rules, members can ask for a six-month exemption from the agreement on free circulation in exceptional circumstances.

Norway said last week it would tighten its rules and turn back asylum seekers without visas. Its right-leaning government said the draft law would create one of Europe’s toughest immigration systems, making it more difficult to claim welfare benefits, and only allowing family reunifications after four years of work or education in the country. Around 30,000 people sought asylum in Norway last year, most crossing the border from Sweden.

The UN’s special representative for migration, Peter Sutherland, said Europe should improve its external border controls and speed up asylum processing rather than retreating from Schengen. “Recreating borders across the EU will not answer anything, least of all, the humanitarian crisis we face,” he said.

Elizabeth Collett, director of Migration Policy Institute Europe, warned that the new border measures would do little to stop refugees. “The political message to neighbours is, ‘It’s your turn, you deal with it.’ But that just passes the problem along,” she said. “None of the drivers that have led people to migrate have changed, given the conflict in Syria and instability elsewhere.”

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-end-of-schengen-restrictions-by-denmark-and-sweden-are-threatening-europes-passport-free-zone-a6796696.html>

# Germany says Schengen 'in danger' after Denmark and Sweden impose new border controls

Danish prime minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen told reporters in Copenhagen that police were conducting spot checks on travellers crossing the border from Germany

* [Ashley Cowburn](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/ashley-cowburn)
* [@ashcowburn](https://twitter.com/ashcowburn)
* Monday 4 January 2016 14:43 GMT

Germany has said the passport-free Schengen zone is “in danger” after both Denmark and Sweden introduced border controls to stem the flow of migrants.

Responding to the new border controls in the Nordic countries, German foreign ministry spokesman Martin Schaefer told reporters: "Freedom of movement is an important principle - one of the biggest achievements [in the European Union] in recent years….Schengen is very important but it is in danger.”

The concerns raised over the passport-free zone came as Denmark announced it would introduce controls at its border with Germany just hours after neighbouring Sweden introduced similar measures.

Danish prime minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen told reporters in Copenhagen that police were conducting spot checks on travellers crossing the border from Germany. Hours earlier Sweden imposed border controls on the Oresund bridge – which connects Malmo in southern Sweden and Copenhagen in Demark – making it harder for bother migrants and commuters to travel.

Mr Rasmussen, referring to the Swedish measure, said: “When other Nordic countries seal their borders it can have major consequences for Denmark… It can lead to more asylum seekers.” The Danish prime minister insisted, however, there would be no issues for “ordinary” Danes and Germans who wished to cross the border.

He added: "If the European Union cannot protect the external border you will see more and more countries forced to introduce temporary border controls," the prime minister said.

The Swedish government decided to tighten border controls after 160,000 people applied for asylum in Sweden last year — the highest number in Europe except for Germany. Most of them were from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-says-schengen-in-danger-after-denmark-and-sweden-impose-new-border-controls-a6795956.html>

# Refugee crisis: Sweden imposes border controls on bridge connecting Malmo and Copenhagen in Denmark to restrict migrants

The Oresund Bridge is used predominantly by commuters and the new rules are expected to add an extra half an hour to the 40-minute commute

* [Caroline Mortimer](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/caroline-mortimer)
* [@cjmortimer](https://twitter.com/cjmortimer)
* Monday 4 January 2016 08:26 GMT

Sweden has imposed border controls on the bridge connecting it with Denmark in an effort to reduce the number of migrants entering the country.

Identity checks have been introduced on the Oresund bridge, which links Malmo in southern Sweden and Copenhagen in Denmark.

The new restrictions are expected to add an extra 30 minutes to the 40-minute commute and rail operators have also reduced the daily number of trips between the two countries.

The checks the bridge - which is described as being part of a wider metropolitan area straddling the border - will make it harder for ordinary Danes and Swedes to get to work and goes against an open-border policy that dates back to the 1950s.

[Speaking to the BBC Radio 4’s Today programme](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35218921), Dr Per Tryding from the Swedish Chamber of Commerce said: “This border is literally through a big city area - a big metropolitan area which is split by the border and we have a lot of commuters - many more than go over the actual bridge that will be affected.

“We’ve had a nordic Schengen agreement since the fifties so this is a real shock for that reason for people here - sort of a version of the Berlin Wall.”

He said the move was designed to provoke the Danish government and make them shut their own borders - which would potentially move the refugee flows further south.

But Dr Tryding said the originally architects of the “mini Nordic Schengen” had foreseen future problems and had designed measures to deal with temporary problems such as refugees or terrorism which he said should be used.

He said this could potentially lead to the end of the Schengen agreement and that the government was “playing with fire”.

## Refugee crisis - in pictures

Sweden has secured a temporary exemption from the Europe wide agreement to impose the border controls after it had 150,000 border applications in 2015.

Over one million refugees have crossed in Europe over land and by sea over the past year as they flee conflict and oppression in the Middle East and Africa.

Sweden is the second most popular destination after Germany, in contrast with Denmark - which expects to see 20,000 asylum seekers in 2016.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-sweden-imposes-border-controls-on-bridge-connecting-malmo-and-copenhagen-to-reduce-a6795251.html>

Swedish Migration Minister Morgan Johansson

# Refugee crisis: Sweden considering new law allowing 'emergency' closure of Øresund Bridge to Denmark

Ministers have not yet finalised the proposal, which they say would only be implemented in an "emergency"

* [Lizzie Dearden](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/lizzie-dearden)
* [@lizziedearden](https://twitter.com/lizziedearden)
* Thursday 3 December 2015 23:55 GMT

The Swedish government is drawing up a law that would allow it to stop traffic across the famous Øresund Bridge connecting it to Denmark as the refugee crisis continues.

A proposal, which has not yet been finalised, would be part of new legislation bringing in compulsory identity checks on all public transport entering Sweden as part of efforts to reduce the number of asylum seekers arriving.

A spokesperson for Sweden’s infrastructure minister said the plan would allow the government to stop road traffic over the bridge and along other roads into Sweden, but not trains.

Around 20,000 vehicles cross Øresund Bridge every day, going to and fro between the Danish capital of Copenhagen and Sweden's third largest city Malmo for work and freight.

Anna Johansson, the infrastructure minister, told local news agency TT that closing the bridge would be a “very dramatic measure” only to be used in an emergency.

"Our intent and our hope is that we will not have to use this legal possibility," she said.

Sweden, which has a population of around 9.6 million people, has proposed a number of changes to tighten migration with up to 190,000 asylum seekers expected to arrive this year.

Thousands of refugees continue to risk their lives crossing to Italy and Greece and continue their journey to western Europe, even as political will to welcome them wanes and winter makes conditions ever more treacherous.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-sweden-considering-new-law-allowing-emergency-closure-of-resund-bridge-to-denmark-a6759716.html>

 interior minister Anders Ygeman

# Refugee crisis: Sweden introducing border checks to 'bring order' to country's asylum system

The country is expected to have taken in 190,000 refugees in 2015

* [Olivia Blair](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/olivia-blair)
* [@livblair](https://twitter.com/livblair)
* Thursday 12 November 2015 09:40 GMT

Sweden will introduce temporary border checks to "bring order" to the country’s asylum system, according to its interior minister.

The checks will start at noon and are initially expected to last for about ten days.

At present, it is not clear whether the move will mean Sweden can turn refugees away at the border, but it will prevent people using the country as a route to reach countries such as Finland and Norway.

Once at the border, refugees will have to decide whether to apply for asylum in Sweden or turn around.

The interior minister Anders Ygeman said the move will “bring order” to Sweden’s system while sending a signal to the EU.

He said: “Sweden is the country that has taken the greatest responsibility for the refugee crisis,” and claimed “other countries have to take their responsibility”.

It is believed Sweden, which has a population of 9.7 million, will have taken in 190,000 asylum seekers this year.

In comparison, the UK Government have a target to take in [20,000 Syrian refugees](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/britain-could-take-20000-refugees-this-year-and-children-will-not-be-deported-at-18-david-cameron-10493033.html)over the next five years.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-sweden-introducing-border-checks-to-bring-order-to-countrys-asylum-system-a6731286.html>

# Paris attacks: EU ministers agree on tougher border security around passport-free Schengen zone

Move to ensure 'systematic controls' in area come after revelation Paris mastermind slipped back into Europe undetected

* [Leo Cendrowicz](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/leo-cendrowicz) Brussels
* Friday 20 November 2015 20:33 GMT

Tough new border security measures have been agreed by European Union ministers in Brussels to ensure “systematic controls” on all travellers entering the passport-free Schengen zone.

The move follows the revelation that Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the Belgian terrorist said to have planned the Paris attacks, slipped back into Europe undetected after first fleeing to join foreign jihadi fighters in Syria.

## [These are the most expensive passports in the world](http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/these-are-the-most-expensive-passports-in-the-world-a6742496.html)

The French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said that the measures represented a “crucial” change. “We can’t take more time. This is urgent,” he said. “Terrorists are crossing the borders of the European Union.”

Britain’s Home Secretary, Theresa May, said the Paris attacks, which left 130 dead, showed the need for improved security across the EU. “There was a clear link between security of the EU’s external borders and security within the EU,” she said.

Citizens of the 26-member Schengen zone – which does not include Britain – have their documents visually checked by security officials whenever they leave or enter the area. The new proposals would upgrade the controls so that documents are systematically checked against criminal and security databases. “A Europe with no internal borders is only possible when external borders are controlled,” said the Austrian Interior Minister, Johanna Mikl-Leitner.

The checks will be bolstered by new technologies: the meeting’s conclusions called for “systematic registration, including fingerprinting, of all migrants entering into the Schengen area, and systematic security checks using relevant databases”. These include a watchlist with the details of 4,000 foreign fighters, a database of stolen documents and the Visa Information System.

The ministers also pushed for more co-ordination between Frontex, the EU border agency, and Europol, its joint police agency. Frontex will be asked to “assist the member states to tighten controls of external borders to detect suspicious travels of foreign terrorist fighters and smuggling of firearms, in co-operation with Europol”.

However, the EU was warned by three United Nations agencies that a sudden tightening of controls along the refugee route through the Balkans would worsen an increasingly untenable situation, stranding many people outdoors amid plunging temperatures. In a joint statement, the UN refugee and children’s agencies – UNHCR and Unicef – along with the International Organisation for Migration said that the restrictions would mean “people being profiled on the basis of nationality”.

Ministers also agreed to speed up efforts to collect and store data on air travellers within Europe, through the long-delayed passenger names’ records system. This has been blocked for several years by the European Parliament on data privacy grounds

Ms May said there needed to be “immediate progress” on obtaining access to passenger name records, and said Britain would press ahead with its own checks. “The negotiation has taken too long. That must be concluded,” she said.

She was echoed by Mr Cazeneuve, who urged MEPs to waive their objections. “Not a single EU citizen will understand why the parliament continues blocking this essential tool,” he said.

A call by the EU Home Affairs Commissioner, Dimitris Avramopoulos, for the creation of a new EU intelligence service was dismissed by the ministers, however.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/paris-attacks-eu-ministers-agree-on-tougher-border-security-around-schengen-zone-a6742781.html>

# Brussels Briefing: Greece and Schengen

[Brussels blog](https://www.ft.com/stream/6773e864-78ab-4051-abc2-f4e9ab423ebb)

Konec formuláře

JANUARY 26, 2016

by: Peter Spiegel

**This is the Tuesday edition of our new Brussels Briefing. To receive it every morning in your email in-box,**[***sign up here***](http://nbe.ft.com/nbe/profile.cfm?brussels=Y)**.**

In many ways, it is a threat that has more bark than bite. Although Greece has been part of Europe’s Schengen bloc since 2000, it has the almost unique status of sharing no land border with another member of the passport-free travel zone (Iceland doesn’t, either). For that reason, [suspending Greece from Schengen](http://click.link.ft.com/e/5cNtQsI3UVmm_li1l-e5xg~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC80NjNkYzdhMC05ODJiLTExZTUtOTIyOC04N2U2MDNkNDdiZGMuaHRtbCNheHp6M3lHZUwwTjl0R_Z7InVzZXJVdWlkIjoiYTI4YTcxYTgtMmYyOC00MmEwLWI0YTMtZTgxZWUyMjUwZjU1IiwicmVxdWVzdGVkU2VuZFRpbWUiOiIxNDUzNzk1Njk5IiwiZW1haWxJZCI6IjU2YTZhNTgyNGZlNjRiMDMwMGMyZTNlYyIsInRyYW5zYWN0aW9uSWQiOiIweDU0OWYzZTdhYjY4MDAwMDAiLCJwcm9kdWN0IjoiRW1FIiwidGVtcGxhdGVJZCI6IjU2NTVkMDA4Y2I1NmU2MGZjNjQ0N2UyMiIsInNvdXJjZSI6InNpbXBsZS1lbWFpbC1zZXJ2aWNlIn0~) would probably have no direct effect on the unrelenting influx of refugees from Turkey’s shores into Germany and points north. Although [the noise surrounding such a suspension](http://click.link.ft.com/e/NDHQBAVEXh04rfGTqxnf8g~~/AAAFwAA~) has risen in recent days, only those who fly from Athens into the rest of Europe would find their travel disrupted, and there are not many migrants who have been lining up at the Aegean Airlines ticket desk to book an aisle seat to Munich. (The price of a plane ticket may actually be cheaper, but [this video](http://click.link.ft.com/e/LNpjStKslXLVhWlKtN8xaA~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEK2h0dHBzOi8vd3d3LnlvdXR1YmUuY29tL3dhdGNoP3Y9WU8wSVJzZnJQUTRH9nsicmVxdWVzdGVkU2VuZFRpbWUiOiIxNDUzNzk1Njk5IiwidHJhbnNhY3Rpb25JZCI6IjB4NTQ5ZjNlN2FiNjgwMDAwMCIsInNvdXJjZSI6InNpbXBsZS1lbWFpbC1zZXJ2aWNlIiwidGVtcGxhdGVJZCI6IjU2NTVkMDA4Y2I1NmU2MGZjNjQ0N2UyMiIsImVtYWlsSWQiOiI1NmE2YTU4MjRmZTY0YjAzMDBjMmUzZWMiLCJ1c2VyVXVpZCI6ImEyOGE3MWE4LTJmMjgtNDJhMC1iNGEzLWU4MWVlMjI1MGY1NSIsInByb2R1Y3QiOiJFbUUifQ~~) explains why refugees can’t fly commercial.)

That’s why newfound support for EU aid to Macedonia [so it can beef up its border defences](http://click.link.ft.com/e/7lIj8FMer9xJ34qaf6PrQQ~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC9jNDA1MDRjYy1jMTJiLTExZTUtOWZkYi04N2I4ZDE1YmFlYzIuaHRtbCNheHp6M3lHZUwwTjl0R_Z7InNvdXJjZSI6InNpbXBsZS1lbWFpbC1zZXJ2aWNlIiwidXNlclV1aWQiOiJhMjhhNzFhOC0yZjI4LTQyYTAtYjRhMy1lODFlZTIyNTBmNTUiLCJ0ZW1wbGF0ZUlkIjoiNTY1NWQwMDhjYjU2ZTYwZmM2NDQ3ZTIyIiwidHJhbnNhY3Rpb25JZCI6IjB4NTQ5ZjNlN2FiNjgwMDAwMCIsInByb2R1Y3QiOiJFbUUiLCJlbWFpbElkIjoiNTZhNmE1ODI0ZmU2NGIwMzAwYzJlM2VjIiwicmVxdWVzdGVkU2VuZFRpbWUiOiIxNDUzNzk1Njk5In0~) with Greece has suddenly become the hot topic within many interior ministries and the European Commission. It would achieve what governments up north have long wanted – to [keep refugees inside Greece](http://click.link.ft.com/e/7vvDYC447ikFjjvqCK5trQ~~/AAAFwAA~), where they can be processed and, if they qualify, relocated across the EU – while not broaching the politically toxic topic of Schengen expulsion.

In a letter sent yesterday, Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission president, gave his full-throated support to the Macedonia plan: “I welcome your suggestion,” Mr Juncker wrote to Miro Cerar, the Slovenian prime minister who has been driving the concept. Although legally, Brussels itself cannot currently send such aid to a non-EU member, Mr Juncker said individual member states should “support controls on the border with Greece through the secondment of police/law enforcement officers, and the provision of equipment.”

The Greek government has not reacted well to the idea. Alexis Tsipras, the prime minister, has long worried about his country [becoming a “black box” for migrants](http://click.link.ft.com/e/C3gcVbcnyDU1HZGQBuHelg~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC82NGIzMGY1ZS1hM2VhLTExZTUtODczZi02ODQxMWE4NGYzNDYuaHRtbCNheHp6M3lHZUwwTjl0R_Z7InByb2R1Y3QiOiJFbUUiLCJyZXF1ZXN0ZWRTZW5kVGltZSI6IjE0NTM3OTU2OTkiLCJlbWFpbElkIjoiNTZhNmE1ODI0ZmU2NGIwMzAwYzJlM2VjIiwidXNlclV1aWQiOiJhMjhhNzFhOC0yZjI4LTQyYTAtYjRhMy1lODFlZTIyNTBmNTUiLCJzb3VyY2UiOiJzaW1wbGUtZW1haWwtc2VydmljZSIsInRyYW5zYWN0aW9uSWQiOiIweDU0OWYzZTdhYjY4MDAwMDAiLCJ0ZW1wbGF0ZUlkIjoiNTY1NWQwMDhjYjU2ZTYwZmM2NDQ3ZTIyIn0~), trapped between the Aegean Sea they’ve just crossed and the northern border they no longer can. [In an interview](http://click.link.ft.com/e/i2Rc5ZSjAufKhDpFuQRYJw~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC9iZGRmMzJjMi1jMzM2LTExZTUtODA4Zi04MjMxY2Q3MTYyMmUuaHRtbCNheHp6M3lHZUwwTjl0R_Z7InVzZXJVdWlkIjoiYTI4YTcxYTgtMmYyOC00MmEwLWI0YTMtZTgxZWUyMjUwZjU1IiwidHJhbnNhY3Rpb25JZCI6IjB4NTQ5ZjNlN2FiNjgwMDAwMCIsInRlbXBsYXRlSWQiOiI1NjU1ZDAwOGNiNTZlNjBmYzY0NDdlMjIiLCJzb3VyY2UiOiJzaW1wbGUtZW1haWwtc2VydmljZSIsImVtYWlsSWQiOiI1NmE2YTU4MjRmZTY0YjAzMDBjMmUzZWMiLCJyZXF1ZXN0ZWRTZW5kVGltZSI6IjE0NTM3OTU2OTkiLCJwcm9kdWN0IjoiRW1FIn0~), Ioannis Mouzalas, the Greek migration minister who is well respected in relief circles for his earlier career as [a physician to the developing world](http://click.link.ft.com/e/KvAluEQqwNjWHPUDnQCS1g~~/AAAFwAA~~~), warned such a policy would only “worsen the trauma” rather than solve it. “It’s not easy to trap [asylum seekers] and we do not intend to become a cemetery of souls,” Mr Mouzalas said.

The idea of suspending Greece from Schengen has not gone away, however. Ministers from both Austria and Sweden [have raised the possibility anew](http://click.link.ft.com/e/2jEQn-xQh3QM9lMDQppuEA~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC9iZGRmMzJjMi1jMzM2LTExZTUtODA4Zi04MjMxY2Q3MTYyMmUuaHRtbCNheHp6M3lHZUwwTjl0R_Z7InNvdXJjZSI6InNpbXBsZS1lbWFpbC1zZXJ2aWNlIiwicHJvZHVjdCI6IkVtRSIsInRlbXBsYXRlSWQiOiI1NjU1ZDAwOGNiNTZlNjBmYzY0NDdlMjIiLCJlbWFpbElkIjoiNTZhNmE1ODI0ZmU2NGIwMzAwYzJlM2VjIiwidXNlclV1aWQiOiJhMjhhNzFhOC0yZjI4LTQyYTAtYjRhMy1lODFlZTIyNTBmNTUiLCJ0cmFuc2FjdGlvbklkIjoiMHg1NDlmM2U3YWI2ODAwMDAwIiwicmVxdWVzdGVkU2VuZFRpbWUiOiIxNDUzNzk1Njk5In0~), with Austria’s interior minister being the most explicit, suggesting Schengen’s external border “move towards central Europe.” Despite the clamour, the European Commission is now shutting its ears to the idea. “We have never discussed a suspension from Schengen or the exclusion of a member state from Schengen,” said a commission spokeswoman. “Neither of these options exist under current rules.” While that might be right technically, [the Schengen code](http://click.link.ft.com/e/dcOAxzpiNmqsBiS82cPsJA~~/AAAFwAA~~~) does allow the commission to draw up plans for the reimposition of border controls in any part of the zone ”where exceptional circumstances put the overall functioning of the area without internal border control at risk”.

At their meeting in Amsterdam yesterday, EU interior ministers repeated their request for the commission to look into this. The process is Byzantine: a series of reports must be prepared by the commission to find if there are deficiencies, then Greece must be given three months to fix them. Only then can Article 26 – the part of the Schengen code that allows carte blanche border controls – be implemented. With multiple EU leaders warning there are just six to eight weeks to save Schengen, that may indeed be the next step Europe is forced to take.

**What we’re reading**

Today, the Danish parliament is expected to pass a highly-controversial bill that would allow authorities to [strip refugees of most of their valuables](http://click.link.ft.com/e/EFuYnPOUsb_CXg7uH8VQXA~~/AAAFwAA~/RgRYia6BP0EIAStL6v5uAWFCCgAEtSqnVkhgCMBSEmFuZHJldy5qYWNrQGZ0LmNvbQlRBAAAAABEVmh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2ludGwvY21zL3MvMC80MjBhOWI1ZS1iOTQ2LTExZTUtYTdjYy0yODBkZmU4NzVlMjguaHRtbCNheHp6M3lIR3pPT0NYR_Z7InNvdXJjZSI6InNpbXBsZS1lbWFpbC1zZXJ2aWNlIiwicHJvZHVjdCI6IkVtRSIsInVzZXJVdWlkIjoiYTI4YTcxYTgtMmYyOC00MmEwLWI0YTMtZTgxZWUyMjUwZjU1IiwiZW1haWxJZCI6IjU2YTZhNTgyNGZlNjRiMDMwMGMyZTNlYyIsInRlbXBsYXRlSWQiOiI1NjU1ZDAwOGNiNTZlNjBmYzY0NDdlMjIiLCJyZXF1ZXN0ZWRTZW5kVGltZSI6IjE0NTM3OTU2OTkiLCJ0cmFuc2FjdGlvbklkIjoiMHg1NDlmM2U3YWI2ODAwMDAwIn0~) to pay for their stay in Denmark. Ahead of the vote, Denmark’s immigration minister Inger Støjberg was [hauled before the European Parliament](http://click.link.ft.com/e/Qzfh1rtMSKJvdAuYX4qxMg~~/AAAFwAA~) to explain the government’s decision to propose the measure, and much of the domestic coverage in Denmark has focused on how much the legislation is damaging the country’s image abroad. The Danish daily Politken helpfully reverted to [the mellifluous English phrase “international shitstorm”](http://click.link.ft.com/e/vzaUG7bvT4HbFb02G63GAg~~/AAAFwAA~~~) to describe the reaction. The paper’s political editor argues the government may have been surprised by the wrath from Brussels, but they shouldn’t have been: domestic critics have been making the same argument for months, he argues.

For months, the most debated issue in the corridors of power both in Brussels and Berlin has been whether German Chancellor Angela Merkel can survive the ongoing refugee crisis as new rebellions from within her own centre-right party have grown almost daily. Der Spiegel has [a seminal piece out (translated into English)](http://click.link.ft.com/e/oLUPffd7Cwd-UqQibT3Jpw~~/AAAFwAA~) looking at not only how the rebellion has built, but also why Ms Merkel has chosen to expend years of accumulated political capital on this fight. Has a “rough draft of Merkel’s downfall” been written, the piece asks? Today’s must-read on the refugee crisis.

<https://www.ft.com/content/46567bbb-9220-3507-9f3a-3f093cc137aa>

# Is the Schengen dream of Europe without borders becoming a thing of the past?

With Sweden and Denmark reintroducing border controls in a new Europe of razor-wire fences, fear of mass immigration and homegrown terror, obituaries are already being written

[**Ian Traynor**](https://www.theguardian.com/profile/iantraynor)**in Schengen, Luxembourg**

Tuesday 5 January 2016 12.15 GMTLast modified on Thursday 9 March 2017 12.37 GMT

During a break in a working day recently, Rainer Maring decided on impulse to take his apprentice for a mini history lesson. The pair of German painters and decorators got in the company van at lunchtime and took their ham sandwiches across the river Mosel from [Germany](https://www.theguardian.com/world/germany) to Luxembourg, into the vine-clad village of Schengen.

You cross the bridge from Germany into Luxembourg, turn left, and 300 metres on you’re in France – three countries in about three minutes, and not a police officer in sight. In 1985, ministers from five governments met here to launch a bold experiment in border-free travel. Cars and lorries with green dot stickers on their windshields could roam the five countries – the same three plus Belgium and the Netherlands – without passports.

The ID-free travel zone became fully fledged in 1995 and kept growing. And the village acquired unexpected pride and renown as the birthplace of a free travel regime that now embraces 26 countries from Iceland to [Greece](https://www.theguardian.com/world/greece). It is known as Schengen Europe.

Maring showed the teenager the rusting iron structure erected to mark the original agreement where visitors attach padlocks and other mementos in tribute to ID-free travel, easy cross-border commuting to work, shopping binges in another country, weekends away, and beach or skiing holidays unencumbered by boring passport hassles.

But recounting the story of one of the key experiences of European integration, the painter and decorator sounded elegiac, as if describing not current realities but those of a lamented past.

“It was an ideal, that all these countries would unite and be the same and equal,” Maring sighed. “But Europe’s not working right. Now all of this is in danger. We’re going backwards. There are lots of calls to close down the borders. It’s all going wrong.”

Across the street from the iron structure, the village elders have built a little museum dedicated to the liberties of Schengen. That, too, is intended to be idealistic and uplifting but these days looks and sounds ironic, with a heavy dose of melancholy.

“The suppression of internal borders of the [European Union](https://www.theguardian.com/world/eu)is recognition that all the citizens of the states concerned belong to the same space, that they share a common identity,” says a proclamation stencilled on the museum wall.

In a time of the new European nationalism, of razor-wire fences and renewed border controls, of mass immigration and homegrown terror, of fear and insecurity, the stencil seems quaintly old-fashioned. [Germany re-established border controls](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/13/germany-border-crackdown-deals-blow-to-schengen-system) in September amid an unprecedented number of refugee arrivals, and France did the same after the Paris terror attacks.

All across [Europe](https://www.theguardian.com/world/europe-news), the proponents of closed national societies are gaining ground against those favouring liberal, open regimes. In a sense, the museum in Schengen feels about right, an exhibition dedicated to a short-lived, historical curiosity, a provisional system that buckled and dissolved under the pressures of internal populism and external strains.

Nicolas Sarkozy, the ex-president of France who hopes to reclaim the post in 2017, has declared “Schengen is dead”. For Mark Rutte, the Dutch prime minister, the comparison is with the decline and fall of the Roman empire: “Big empires go down if the external borders are not well-protected.”

This kind of talk is viewed as cheap and irresponsible by policymakers in Brussels who accuse mainstream national leaders of appropriating the incendiary language of far-right mavericks to try to shore up their shrinking electoral bases.

“This is the main argument we’re hearing these days – that Schengen is over,” Federica Mogherini, the EU’s foreign and security policy chief, told the Guardian. “It’s sad to see Europe panicking before 700,000 refugees. This is a sign of weakness.

“Schengen is different because the temptation to question it comes from inside. First it was the refugees, then terrorism. But what does Schengen have to do with terrorism? Nothing. It has in it the mechanisms that we need also to face these threats.”

Nonetheless, there is a strong sense among policymakers that national leaders in Europe lack the political will to bolster and support the Schengen system in a crisis, that they are more focused on courting voters by ignoring Schengen in favour of national remedies.

“Internal border controls will be a nightmare,” admitted an ambassador in Brussels from a large EU country. “But there are ideas about redefining the Schengen space. It’s about getting control of the Greek borders. If this doesn’t happen, some say the Schengen system could collapse fully.”

Another ambassador from a key country said: “We want to keep Schengen, but everyone has to respect the rules. The system does not work any more. It was not designed for what we have right now, hundreds of thousands of refugees.”

With hundreds of thousands having entered Greece from Turkey in 2015, the focus is on forcing Athens to tighten controls and surrender some sovereignty over its borders by passing authority to EU agencies, a quantum leap and an intolerable precedent for the present generation of nationalists.

But the Greek border with Turkey is mainly maritime, in the Aegean. The Greeks are reluctant to agree to joint border controls with the Turks. And the European commission’s [recent proposals for a European border guard empowered to overrule national authorities](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/dec/11/brussels-plans-to-strip-schengen-nations-of-authority-over-borders-europe) are hugely contested and may take years to implement.

“What does protecting borders mean in this specific case, letting people die at sea?” asked Mogherini. “Protecting borders at sea means if you see someone in difficulty you have to act.”

The widespread conviction among European governments that the system is dysfunctional means that they increasingly opt for national action. President François Hollande renewed French border controls following the [Paris terror attacks](https://www.theguardian.com/world/paris-attacks) while Manuel Valls, the prime minister, says France will not agree to take in any more refugees under European quota schemes pushed by Germany. The French are starting to police and ID-check transnational Schengen train traffic from Paris.

Germany, too, has re-established national border controls. The Austrians are erecting a barbed wire fence on the border with fellow Schengen member Slovenia. From [Hungary](https://www.theguardian.com/world/hungary) to Macedonia, Croatia and Slovenia, the fences are sprouting across central and southern Europe.

In the north and east, similar processes are under way. Sweden, the most open country in Europe for immigrants, [re-erected ID checks and controls on the first Monday of 2016](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/03/sweden-to-impose-id-checks-on-travellers-from-denmark) on its border with Denmark. Denmark followed hours later with reintroduced controls on its border with Germany so that Sweden-bound refugees would not become stuck in the country, said prime minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen. At the end of 2015, the newly elected nationalist government in Warsaw, reacting to the Paris terror attacks, announced it needed to take full control of its own borders.

Anti-immigrant sentiment is widespread everywhere in Europe, but nowhere is it more strident than in eastern Europe, where the governments of Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland are the nationalist cheerleaders of a closed Europe. Yet they love the benefits that Schengen brings.

Viktor Orbán, the pugnacious rightwing Hungarian leader, rarely has a good word to say about the EU, but for Schengen he makes an exception. “For Hungarians, Schengen is freedom.”

Robert Fico, the prime minister of Slovakia, runs Orbán a close second in his contempt for west European liberals. Yet there are more passport-free crossings daily between Bratislava to Vienna – a 45-minute commute to work – than anywhere else in the EU.

All across continental Europe – though not in Britain or Ireland, which remain outside Schengen – the free-travel zone long ago became part of the texture of daily life. Italians, French, and Germans go back and forth to work in (Schengen) Switzerland every day in their tens of thousands without ID checks, just some of the 1.7 million people who in 2014 commuted daily to work in another country without document checks, according to the Bruegel thinktank in Brussels.

The Øresund Bridge between Copenhagen and the Swedish city of Malmö meanwhile links two Schengen countries and has helped spawn a vibrant transnational economic area of 4 million people. When identity checks were introduced on the bridge on Monday, [up to 8,000 commuters in Denmark endured 45-minute delays on their route back](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/04/swedish-border-controls-oresund-bridge-commuters-refugees).

The erosion of Schengen comes with high costs attached. “The French reintroduced border controls and there were traffic jams everywhere, three to four hours,” said Roger Weber, a former mayor of Schengen village in Luxembourg. “The impact on the economy is huge. It’s suicidal, especially at a time like this when economic prospects are poor. We can’t live with closed borders.”

And it is arguable whether the new nationalism and proliferating border controls will stem immigration or combat Europe’s homegrown terror problem. The attacks are almost invariably carried out by people with EU and Schengen passports.

Hungary’s razor wire has had no impact on the numbers reaching the EU. Orbán simply succeeded in diverting the flow to neighbouring countries.

When [Mehdi Nemmouche killed four people](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/01/suspect-arrest-brussels-jewish-museum-shooting) with a Kalashnikov at Brussels’ Jewish Museum in May 2014, the French national had already been identified through the databases that are the heart of the Schengen system, although inadequately exploited. The failure was national rather than “European” or “Schengen”.

Nemmouche flew into Frankfurt after leaving Syria for Turkey and was flagged on arrival as suspicious in the Schengen databases, known as SIS and SIS-2. German police alerted the French authorities, who took no action.

The atrocity highlighted how the key to effective policing of terrorism or organised crime – both by definition transnational and cross-border – lies in pooling intelligence and automatic sharing of information by security services across the 26 countries.

“It’s not that easy to do all this,” Gilles de Kerchove, the EU’s counter-terrorism coordinator, told the Guardian. “We’re not a federal state. Intelligence is the exclusive competence of member states. And some parts of Europe don’t have the electronic equipment.”

National intelligence services in the EU share plenty of information, but they tend to do it one country to another without any systematic sharing through the common databases. National agencies are said to be highly reluctant to input information into shared EU systems for fear of betraying sources and operational methods. There is a “golden rule”, for example, that a service receiving intelligence may not share that with a third party without the permission of the agency supplying the information.

That may be changing as a result of events, with the French in particular pushing strongly for greater pooling of intelligence following the Paris attacks. The French are said to have increased fivefold the volume of information shared via the Schengen systems.

Whether these efforts are enough to rescue Europe’s free-travel zone is unclear. Meanwhile, the Schengen obituaries are being written, not just by pundits but by senior officials involved in the policy-making.

“If the flow of refugees is not slowed down in four to six months, people really think Schengen is in terminal trouble,” said a third ambassador in Brussels.

For the painter and decorator making his modest pilgrimage to the shrine of what he hoped heralded a better, freer and more humane Europe, the death of Schengen is no answer at all to the grave questions thrown up by immigration.

“If you close down the borders, Islamic State has won,” said Rainer Maring. “People are talking about this all the time. They’re a bit worried about all this politics. And one more thing. It might sound stupid and be hard to imagine, but war is still possible in Europe.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/05/is-the-schengen-dream-of-europe-without-borders-becoming-a-thing-of-the-past>