

# 2023 State of Schengen Report



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

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## News

On 16 May 2023, the European Commission presented the second [State of Schengen Report](#) as part of its initiative to strengthen Schengen governance (for the first report → [eucri](#)m 2/2022, 88-89) 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 (→ [eucri](#)m 2/2022, 120) 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.

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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.

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