

2024 State of Schengen Report



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News

On 16 April 2024, the European Commission published the [2024 State of Schengen report](#), providing an overview of the past year's developments and setting new priorities for the upcoming year (for the 2023 report → [eucri](#)m 2/2023, 114-115; for the 2022 report → [eucri](#)m 2/2022, 88-89). The Schengen area, the world's largest free travel zone, is vital for the European Union's competitiveness, facilitating seamless and secure travel for nearly 450 million people. The 2024 report highlighted the following achievements and challenges in 2023:

- *Schengen area performance*: In 2023, the Schengen area remained robust, issuing over 10 million visas and welcoming more than half a billion visitors, reaching 92% that of pre-pandemic levels. This influx significantly bolstered the EU economy.
- *Legislative and governance enhancements*: 2023 saw the adoption of new legislative measures, including revisions to the Schengen Borders Code, the Advance Passenger Information Regulation, and the Directive on information exchange between law enforcement authorities. In addition, an integrated Schengen governance framework was established, strengthening the role of the Schengen Council and enhancing the effectiveness of tools like the Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism, the Schengen Scoreboard, and the Schengen Barometer+.
- *Inclusion of Bulgaria and Romania*: Significant progress was made towards the inclusion of Bulgaria and Romania in the Schengen area, with controls at air and sea borders lifted by 31 March 2024. A further Council decision is required, however, to remove checks at internal land borders, which will be taken at a later stage.
- *Alternative border control measures*: The report highlights advances in utilizing alternative measures for internal border controls, as recommended by the Commission in November 2023. Increased cross-border police cooperation in border regions is encouraged to help phase out longstanding internal border controls.

For the first time, the Commission has [proposed a "Council Recommendation](#) for the 2024/2025 Schengen Cycle" which aims at facilitating the implementation of the following priority actions identified in the Schengen report:

- Improving the implementation of common priorities through the Schengen governance framework;
- Boosting preparedness, security, and resilience at external borders, including enhanced cooperation with third countries;
- Advancing the digitalization of procedures and systems to increase security and efficiency;
- Intensifying efforts against cross-border crime and preventing unauthorized movements;

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- Enhancing the effectiveness of the common EU system for returns through better-integrated cooperation among Member States.

The proposal for said Council Recommendation prepared the Schengen Council meeting on 13/14 June 2024, during which the Council is expected to agree on the priorities for the upcoming 2024/2025 Schengen cycle. The Recommendation is set to be monitored by the Council, with Member States, the Commission and relevant JHA Agencies regularly reporting on specific workstreams.

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