

40 Years of Schengen - EU Renews Commitments



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News

On 12 June 2025, the Council of the European Union adopted the [Schengen Declaration to mark the 40th anniversary of the Schengen Agreement](#). Together with the Council, representatives of the Schengen Associated Countries and the European Commission affirmed the Schengen area's role as one of Europe's most tangible achievements. It enables the world's largest zone of free movement for over 450 million people, fostering trade exceeding €4.1 trillion in 2024 and facilitating two million cross-border commutes daily.

Acknowledging growing geopolitical instability, hybrid threats, and technological challenges, the Council has committed to keeping Schengen a strategic and operational asset, supported by innovation, large-scale IT systems, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence. Cyprus' accelerated efforts toward full integration were also welcomed.

The declaration set out seven commitments:

- Uphold freedom, security, and EU values in a single area of justice;
- Preserve free movement as a core principle, using internal border controls only as a last resort, while reinforcing external border management and tackling cross-border crime and terrorism;
- Strengthen Schengen as the backbone of European security through enhanced law enforcement, inter-agency cooperation, and interconnected IT systems with strong data protection;
- Control entry to the EU by preventing unauthorised crossings and ensuring humane returns for those without the right to stay;
- Reinforce Schengen's external dimension via visa policy, border management, and cooperation with third countries;
- Maintain mutual trust, improve Schengen governance at EU and national levels, and ensure coherent evolution of the Schengen acquis;
- Invest in Schengen's long-term functioning with funding, innovation, technology, and a merit-based approach to future enlargement.

The Council concluded by pledging to protect Schengen's founding principles – freedom of movement, security, and mutual trust – as it continues to serve European citizens for decades to come.

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