

# Bulgaria and Romania Fully Join Schengen



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**News**

Following a [decision by the Council on 12 December 2024](#), Bulgaria and Romania fully joined the Schengen area as of 1 January 2025. Internal land border controls with Bulgaria and Romania are lifted. As of 1 January 2025, citizens enjoy unrestricted land travel between Bulgaria, Romania, and other Schengen countries.

As of 31 March 2024, the controls at the internal air and sea borders were lifted and the Schengen rules started to apply, which paved the way for the seamless operation of visa procedures and border controls ([→euclid 4/2023, 312](#)).

The EU Commission praised Bulgaria and Romania for meeting all necessary requirements for the complete integration of the two nations into the Schengen area. Both countries have played a vital role in addressing EU border security and migration challenges, with continued financial support and operational assistance from the Commission and Frontex. European Commission President *Ursula von der Leyen* celebrated the achievement, [stating](#), "Today is a day of joy for all Bulgarians, Romanians, and our entire Union. Together, we will reap the benefits of a stronger and more connected Union."

This decision is another crucial step in uniting Europe under Schengen, the world's largest free movement zone, benefiting nearly 450 million people across the EU. Together with Bulgaria and Romania, the Schengen area now covers 29 countries (of which are 25 EU Member States).

The Schengen area is one of the main achievements of the European project. It started in 1985 as an inter-governmental project between five EU countries – France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – and has gradually expanded. Schengen is the name of a small village in Luxembourg, on the border with Germany and France, where the Schengen Agreement and the Schengen Convention were signed in 1985 and in 1990 respectively. The rules that apply at the external and internal borders of the Schengen area - including random border checks on persons and systematic border checks on persons for specific circumstances - are set out in the Schengen Borders Code.

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