

Commission: Croatia Ready for Schengen

Thomas Wahl

News

On 22 October 2019, the [Commission issued a Communication](#) 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.

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