

# Commission Encourages Member States to Reduce Internal Border Controls



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News

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On 23 November 2023, the Commission released a [Recommendation](#) on cooperation between the Member States with regard to serious threats to internal security and public policy in the area without internal border controls. The Commission emphasised that there is a need to increase cooperation to ensure security, while phasing out long lasting border controls as stated in the 2023 Schengen Report (→ [related link](#)). It presents several alternative measures to internal border checks and includes several proposals for increased cooperation and information exchange in the event of reintroduction of such controls. The recommendation addresses eight thematic areas:

- "Structured cooperation at all levels": Member States should establish permanent contact points to ensure a coordinated response to serious threats to public policy or internal security;
- "Reinforcing capacity for joint measures": Member States should review and, where appropriate, adjust their bilateral frameworks to provide grounds for cross-border law enforcement cooperation. Actions should also include joint risk analyses and the provision of sufficient resources for joint patrols;
- "Law enforcement cooperation": Member States should take the necessary measures to give effect to the 2022 Council Recommendation on operational law enforcement cooperation (→ [eucri](#)m 2/2022, 120), including the establishment or reinforcement of police and customs cooperation centres, and the increased use of available Union funding for transnational law enforcement projects and the deployment of good practices;
- "Stepping up joint actions to fight migrant smuggling": Member States should take coordinated measures and work together with Europol, Eurojust and Frontex to step up the fight against migrant smuggling;
- "Making use of relevant tools in the area of returns": Member States are encouraged to make full use of bilateral readmission agreements between Member States and international partners. Increased use of mutual recognition of return decisions is also key to expedite returns;
- "Measures to address unauthorised movements": Member States confronted by unauthorised movements should, in the first place, intensify police controls in the internal border areas; any decision to reintroduce internal border controls in this regard should be accompanied by mitigating measures and be under constant review;
- "Stepping up actions to fight terrorism and cross-border organised crime": Member States should review and increase their engagement in EMPACT (→ [eucri](#)m 2/2021, 89-90) as well as effectively implement Directive 2023/977 on the exchange of information between the law enforcement authorities (→ [eucri](#)m 1/2023, 36-39);

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- "Applying mitigating measures": Member States should limit the use of systematic checks at internal borders to exceptional situations, giving preference to mobile checks in the territory and enhancing the use of modern technologies. Member States should limit the impact on the fluidity of traffic and make sure that cross-border transport connections are available.

The Recommendation is accompanied by a [report on the consultation between the Schengen Coordinator and Member States](#) which notified the reintroduction of internal border controls between May and November 2023. This concerned Denmark, Germany, France, Austria, Norway and Sweden. The report provides information on the situation at the border and the cooperation between the Member States sharing the border.

Moreover, the Commission presented [another staff working document](#) on 23 November 2023 entitled "The Dublin Roadmap in action - Enhancing the effectiveness of the Dublin III Regulation: identifying good practices in the Member States". The Dublin III Regulation determines the Member State responsible for reviewing asylum applications. The Dublin Roadmap was agreed on in November 2022 and aims to improve the overall implementation of transfers under the Dublin III Regulation. It includes a concrete timeline for the implementation of specific measures in all Member States. Following the structure of the objectives and actions in the Roadmap, the report presents the emerging good practices identified and the findings of bilateral meetings held with Member States. It aims to help other Member States to implement in the most effective way the actions to which they have committed under the Dublin Roadmap, when addressing individual challenges.

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