

EP Requests Swift Return to Fully Functioning Schengen Area

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News

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Reopening borders, a Schengen recovery plan, and a revision of the Schengen rules to ensure a truly European governance – these are the three main demands in a [European Parliament resolution on the situation in the Schengen area](#) following the COVID-19 outbreak.

In the resolution adopted on 19 June 2020, the EP calls to mind that the Schengen area is a tangible and cherished achievement at the very heart of the EU project, allowing unrestricted travel for more than 400 million people and having immeasurable value for citizens and businesses alike. It expresses concern over how Member States handled the Schengen Borders Code and the Free Movement Directive when they reintroduced internal border controls to curb the COVID-19 pandemic. The EP calls for a swift return to a fully functional Schengen area, while the Commission should take the lead in coordinating the actions at the European level. Any uncoordinated, bilateral action by individual EU countries and non-respect for the non-discrimination principle in the reopening of borders is rejected. Member States should reduce restrictions on the freedom of movement to the same extent that COVID-19 containment measures are relaxed. MEPs advocate a more regional approach instead of national border controls.

They also urgently call for a discussion on a recovery plan for Schengen in order to prevent any temporary internal border controls from becoming semi-permanent. In the medium term, reflection is necessary on how to enhance mutual trust between Member States and how to ensure that the Union's legislative tools provide for a truly European governance of the Schengen area. This would allow for an effective European coordinated response to challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission is called on to table legislative proposals to this end.

In their resolution, MEPs ultimately ask for the Council and Member States to increase their efforts in Schengen integration and to take the necessary steps to admit Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia into Schengen.

After introducing [internal border checks](#) to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, EU countries have started to lift controls and associated travel restrictions. On 11 June 2020, [the Commission recommended](#) to Schengen countries that they should lift internal border controls by 15 June 2020; temporary restrictions on non-essential travel into the EU can be prolonged until 30 June 2020. In turn, the Commission set up an [online platform](#) (called Re-open EU) with up-to-date information for travellers.

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