

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council: Towards a stronger and more resilient Schengen Area

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

Schengen, the area without internal border controls, is one of the biggest achievements of EU integration. It has both an important social as well as economic value. Thus, it contributes to the creation of an EU identity, enables the exercise of the four freedoms and contributes to the efficient functioning of the Single Market, and therefore to the growth of the EU economy.

It is a symbol of Europe's interconnectedness and of the ties between European countries.

In the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, adopted in September 2020, the Commission announced that, building on experience from the multiple challenges in the last five years, it will present a Strategy on the future of Schengen, which will include initiatives for a stronger and more complete Schengen.

This public consultation is intended to collect feedback from citizens, civil society and other stakeholders interested in shaping the future of Schengen.

Whenever a reference is made to Schengen States, it concerns EU Member States that are party to the Schengen rules and, therefore, have lifted controls at their internal borders (i.e. all EU Member States with the exception of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Ireland and Romania) as well as the countries of the European Economic Area (EEA) (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and Switzerland

About you

* Language of my contribution

- Bulgarian
- Croatian
- Czech
- Danish
- Dutch
- English
- Estonian
- Finnish

- French
- German
- Greek
- Hungarian
- Irish
- Italian
- Latvian
- Lithuanian
- Maltese
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Slovak
- Slovenian
- Spanish
- Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as

- Academic/research institution
- Business association
- Company/business organisation
- Consumer organisation
- EU citizen
- Environmental organisation
- Non-EU citizen
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Public authority
- Trade union
- Other

* First name

* Surname

* Email (this won't be published)

* Scope

- International
- Local
- National
- Regional

* Level of governance

- Parliament
- Authority
- Agency

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

* Organisation size

- Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- Small (10 to 49 employees)
- Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- Large (250 or more)

Transparency register number

255 character(s) maximum

Check if your organisation is on the [transparency register](#). It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

* Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

- Afghanistan
- Djibouti
- Libya
- Saint Martin
- Åland Islands
- Dominica
- Liechtenstein
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon

- Albania
- Algeria
- American Samoa
- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antarctica
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Macau
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- San Marino
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname

- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Myanmar /Burma
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Northern Mariana Islands
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine

- China
- Christmas Island
- Clipperton
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Cyprus
- Czechia
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saint Barthélemy
- Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States
- United States Minor Outlying Islands
- Uruguay
- US Virgin Islands
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Wallis and Futuna
- Western Sahara
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.** Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

* Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

Anonymous

Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

Public

Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

I agree with the [personal data protection provisions](#)

Questions

1. How often have you taken advantage of the possibility to travel within the Schengen area (prior to the current COVID-19 pandemic)?

- at least once per week
- less than once per week, but at least once per month
- less than once per month
- never

2. What are your main reasons for travelling between countries within the Schengen area (prior to the current COVID-19 pandemic)? You can name up to three reasons.

between 1 and 3 choices

- Tourism
- Business (other than commuting)
- Studies (other than commuting)
- Shopping
- Medical reasons (e.g. doctor/ hospital)

- Commuting for professional or study reasons
- Family/relationship reasons

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Schengen area?

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	I don't know / No answer
The Schengen area is one of the EU's biggest achievements	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Schengen area is good for social and/or economic reasons (e.g. business in my country)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Schengen area has more advantages than disadvantages	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Which element(s) of the Schengen framework should be reinforced (multiple replies are possible):

between 1 and 3 choices

- Removing difficulties in crossing the internal borders between the Schengen States (in particular, lifting long lasting reintroductions of border controls at internal borders which at some border sections have been in place since 2015)
- Better coordination in crisis situations, including in response to common threats such as a pandemic
- Control and monitoring of compliance, by Schengen States, with the applicable rules
- None of those

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The most advanced IT architecture at the external borders (encompassing new databases such as the Entry Exit System[1] and ETIAS[2] and the Interoperability[3] of all the IT databases) is being deployed, with the objective of being fully operational by 2023. At that moment, third country nationals crossing the EU's external borders will be checked against these new databases, in addition to the existing ones in particular the Schengen Information System[4] and the Visa Information System to ensure an even higher level of security in the Schengen area. Furthermore, the European Border and Coast Guard, bringing together Frontex and the national competent border authorities, is further reinforced to work together in an integrated and more efficient way. This includes a standing corps of 10 000 border guards to support Member States where necessary and their efforts in returning third country nationals irregularly staying in the EU.

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/smart-borders/ees_en

[2] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/smart-borders/etias_en

[3] <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/05/14/interoperability-between-eu-information-systems-council-adopts-regulations/>

[4] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen-information-system_en.

5. Do you believe that the measures mentioned above, once implemented, will increase the security of the EU's external borders and hence also further contribute to making the Schengen area stronger?

- Yes
- No
- I do not have an opinion
- I am not aware of any of these initiatives

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The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world demonstrated that certain threats require a uniform response at the external borders. In particular, a coordinated closure of the external borders with third countries for non-essential travel was agreed between the Member States in March 2020 in order to avoid further spreading of the COVID-19 virus.

6. Do you think that a coordination at EU-level of measures applicable at the external borders of the EU in response to common threats such as a pandemic is beneficial?

- Yes
- No
- I do not have an opinion

*

In the Schengen area, internal borders can be crossed without being subject to border controls, unless such checks are temporarily reintroduced in view of a serious threat to internal security/public policy. In such a case, all persons crossing the internal border can be checked when crossing the border, without the need for any further justification.

The abolition of controls at the internal borders does not mean that that police checks cannot be carried out either based on general police competences under national law or in relation to specific powers applicable in the border areas. However these police checks cannot be equal to controls at the internal borders, (meaning that they cannot concern all persons crossing the border, or be carried out in the same place etc. [1]). In view of the above:

[1] For more details see Article 23 of the Schengen Borders Code

7. How have controls at the internal borders between Schengen States impacted on your life (multiple answers are possible)?

between 1 and 6 choices

- I have not been affected by these controls.
- I had to wait in a queue and my trip was delayed.
- I was hesitant to undertake a journey/I decided not to travel.
- I was uncertain about what documents would be needed to be allowed to cross the border.
- My business suffered from delays when transporting goods across the borders.
- My business suffered for other reasons.
- None of the above.

8. Do you agree that border controls at internal borders should be substituted, whenever possible, by alternative measures that are not applied to travellers crossing the border systematically, such as police checks and the use of new technologies, to name but a few?

- Yes
- No
- I do not have an opinion

9. Modern technologies (e.g. number plate recognition) are sometimes used in the internal border areas. The intensification of their use may help preventing long lasting reintroductions of border controls. Which of the below statements reflects better your attitude towards tools such as number plate recognition?

- I consider any automated control measure in the internal border areas as an unacceptable intrusion in my private life.
- I don't mind automated control measures in the internal border areas, provided they are reasonably regulated by law fully respecting data protection rules and I don't have to stop and wait.
- I do not have any opinion on the matter.

It is key that relevant rules and standards are put in place for adequate controls at the external borders and that other measures intended to guarantee security and smooth circulation within the Schengen area are duly implemented. To this effect, mechanisms are in place that evaluate the respect of common rules and standards across the Schengen area by all countries concerned.

10. Do you agree that regular and comprehensive monitoring of the respect of common rules and standards across the Schengen area, with the involvement of EU institutions and all countries concerned, is important to ensure, and foster trust, that those rules and standards are duly implemented?

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Disagree
- I do not have an opinion

Contact

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