[Press release – MEPs call for free movement across borders to be swiftly and fully re-established](#)

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MEPs express their concern about remaining [internal border controls in the Schengen area](#) and their impact on people and businesses, in [a resolution](#) adopted on Friday by 520 votes in favour, 86 against and 59 abstentions.

They stress that a swift and coordinated return to a fully functional Schengen area is of utmost importance to safeguard freedom of movement, one of the main achievements of European integration, and to ensure the EU's economic recovery after the pandemic. MEPs reject any uncoordinated, bilateral action by individual EU countries and highlight the principle of non-discrimination in the reopening of borders.

MEPs also urgently call for a discussion on a Recovery Plan for Schengen to prevent any temporary internal border controls from becoming semi-permanent. The plan should also include contingency plans in case of a potential second wave.

Civil Liberties Committee Chair and rapporteur [Juan Fernando López Aguilar](#) (S&D, ES) said: "While it is good news that more and more internal border restrictions are being lifted, the way in which it has been done leaves a lot to be desired. Without the return to a fully functional Schengen Area, we are

still missing an essential stepping-stone on our way to recovery. A complete return to free movement, no discrimination, mutual trust and solidarity are of utmost importance and core values of the EU."

Future of Schengen: new governance and enlargement

In the medium-term, MEPs stress that a reflection on how to enhance mutual trust between member states and ensure a truly European governance of the Schengen area is needed. In light of new challenges, they call on the Commission to propose a reform of Schengen governance.

MEPs also ask Council and member states to increase their efforts in Schengen integration and take the necessary steps to admit Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia into the Schengen area.

Background

After introducing [internal border checks](#) to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, EU countries have started to lift controls and related travel restrictions. [The Commission recommended](#) to Schengen countries that they should lift the internal border controls by 15 June 2020; the Commission in turn set up an [online platform](#) called Re-open EU with up-to-date information for travellers.

[The Schengen Area](#) encompasses most EU member states, except for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland and Romania. Of non-EU states, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein have joined the Schengen Area. Europe is celebrating this week the 35th anniversary of the agreement that was signed on 14 June 1985 in Schengen (Luxembourg) to abolish internal border controls.