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MEETING DOCUMENT

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Working Party on Frontiers

Subject: 2024 STATE OF SCHENGEN PACKAGE

Delegations will find attached the presentation made by the Commission at the meeting of the Working Party on Frontiers of 02 May 2024 on the above-mentioned subject.
2024 STATE OF SCHENGEN PACKAGE
Frontiers Working Party
2 May 2024
STATE OF SCHENGEN PACKAGE 2024

- 2024 State of Schengen report
- Overview of Schengen evaluation activities in 2023
- Compendium of best practices
- Proposal for a Council Recommendation for the 2024/2025 Schengen cycle
- Follow-up report on the situation at the internal borders
2024 STATE OF SCHENGEN REPORT
Key milestones

- Reinforced legislative framework
- Enhanced Schengen governance framework
- Completing the Schengen area
- Enhanced cross-border cooperation
Persisting challenges

- Incomplete **situational awareness** limit coordinated response
- Fragmentation in deployments and information sharing by **liaison officers** in third countries
- Vulnerabilities in **border checks**
- Limited capacities for **return**
- Obstacles to the cross-border exchange of information, particularly linked to ineffective and non-automated **Single Points of Contact**
Main takeaways for border management

**Strategic processes:** EIBM, Capability Roadmap and Contingency planning.

Strong divergencies in the quality of **border checks** at the EU external borders, highlighting particularly low levels in some Member States.

**Frontex:** 22 operational activities ongoing. Need to take the current dynamic environment into account to provide for specialised profiles to address existing gaps. Follow-up to the EBCG evaluation.

**Border surveillance:** integrated surveillance systems, coordination and cooperation, risk analysis and situational awareness.

**EUROSUR:** increased quality and volume of the information exchange. However, operational results and risk analyses are not fully integrated; need for further processing and analysis of information on cross-border crime.
Annex 3: Follow-up report
Follow-up Report

- **Recommendation (EU) 2024/268** on cooperation between the Member States with regard to serious threats to internal security and public policy in the

- Report on the **consultation** by the Schengen Coordinator of the Member States concerned by the reintroduction of internal border controls between May and November 2023

- Ongoing **dialogue** on internal border controls, building on best practices from the consultation

- Based on the information contained in the **notifications** and additional information received in the framework of the **dialogue**
Follow-up Report

• The Report covers the period **October 2023 – March 2024**

• **Update** of the situation at border sections that were subject to the consultation process: AUT, DE, DK, FR, SE, NO

• **Overview** of the situation at border sections subject to a reintroduction of internal border controls since 2023: AUT, IT, DE, PL, CZ, SK, SI

• **Inventory** of bilateral and regional cooperation initiatives developed by Member States
Main observations

• Checks are often non-systematic, based on risk assessment and accompanied by mitigating measures to ensure the fluidity of cross-border traffic

• Bilateral law enforcement cooperation has increased, with Member States developing joint activities such as joint police patrols in common border areas

• Day-to-day contacts and information exchange at joint service centres and Police and Customs Cooperation Centres (PCCCs) ensure situational awareness and help to address cross-border crime, including human smuggling in border areas

• Member States have bilateral readmission agreements in place, but diverging practices following case law of the CJEU
Main observations

- Increase in **regional forms of cooperation**, both at operational and political level

- Often involving neighbouring third countries under a ‘**whole-of-route**’ approach

- Often within the framework of **existing structures** for cooperation: Visegrad+, Salzburg Forum. Brdo-process, Joint Coordination Platform

- **New initiatives**: joint trilateral cooperation (HR/IT/SI), Border Security Taskforce (AUT/HU/RS), OTF Vistula (CZ/DE/HU/LT/UA), OTF Zebra (DE/HR/IT/SI/BA)
Main observations
Way Forward

• The revised Schengen Borders Code – once adopted - will provide a reinforced framework for the use of cross-border police cooperation in border regions as an alternative to internal border controls

• Member States are encouraged consolidate and further develop bilateral and multilateral cross-border cooperation, making full use of available alternative measures, in line with Recommendation (EU) 2024/268

• The new transfer procedure under the revised Schengen Borders Code will facilitate readmissions at the internal borders
Way Forward

• The Schengen Coordinator will continue the **active dialogue** with Member States, including on readmission at the internal border and – once adopted – the entry into force of the revised Schengen Borders Code.

• The Commission will continue to assist Member States in their efforts to step up **regional cooperation**.

• The Commission calls on all Member States to continue to work towards **phasing out** remaining internal borders controls and a sustainable joint management of common challenges.

• The Schengen Coordinator will **report regularly** in the Schengen Council on the state of play and progress made.
2024/2025 Schengen cycle
Delivering on Schengen governance

Reinforce the role of the Schengen Council by providing a structured follow-up framework for common priorities and increased political dialogue, common ownership and collective responsibility of all Member States.

Stepping up the implementation of the Schengen rules through unity of action, thereby reinforcing the governance of the Schengen area.

Based on the results of the Schengen evaluations and the persistent challenges raised by Member States during the Schengen Council.

Concrete issues where individual actions of Member States and collective action of the Schengen Council would bring added value, in line with existing policy initiatives on Schengen matters.
Priority areas for the 2024/2025 Schengen cycle

1. Consolidate the Schengen governance framework

2. Boost the preparedness, security, and resilience at the external borders

3. Consolidate the digitalisation of procedures and systems

4. Step up the fight against cross-border crime

5. Contribute to a common EU system for return

Priorities for a stronger Schengen in the 2024/2025 Schengen cycle
The Annual 2024-2025 Schengen Cycle

16 April 2024
Adoption by the Commission of the State of Schengen Package, together with recommendations for the Schengen Area

18-19 April 2024
Senior Official Meeting

April – May 2024
Discussions in relevant Council preparatory bodies

2024 June Schengen Council
Discussion of the State of Schengen Report
• Priorities setting for the 2024/2025 Schengen cycle
• Schengen declaration

October Schengen Council
Barometer +

December Schengen Council
Progress taking on the implementation of priorities

2025 March Schengen Council
Closure of the annual cycle
Barometer + Scoreboard
Thank you