

## **Schengen evaluation of Greece: Council adopts recommendation to address deficiencies in external borders**

On 12 February 2016, the Council adopted a recommendation on addressing serious deficiencies identified during an evaluation of Greece's application of the Schengen acquis in the area of external border management. The recommendation proposes to Greece remedial action to address these deficiencies.

The action recommended covers areas such as registration procedures, sea border surveillance, border check procedures, risk analyses, human resources and training, infrastructure and equipment and international cooperation.

The recommendation acknowledges that the EU currently faces an unprecedented migratory and refugee crisis following a sharp increase in mixed migratory flows during 2015. This has meant that several member states have experienced difficulties in ensuring adequate external border controls in accordance with the Schengen acquis, as well as in the reception and processing of migrant arrivals.

Because of its geographical situation, and as result of the shift in migration routes as well as the overall increase in numbers, Greece has been particularly affected by these developments. The very large number of arrivals is such that the external border controls of any member state would be placed under severe pressure.

The recommendation also notes that Greece has taken a number of measures to deal with the situation, but that given the scale of the situation, further efforts are needed. The overall functioning of the Schengen area is at serious risk. The difficulties faced by Greece have an impact on the EU as a whole, and have to be resolved collectively.

### **Background**

On 2 February 2016 the Commission adopted the Schengen evaluation report on Greece and submitted to the Council a recommendation to address specific deficiencies in the external border management.

The report was carried out following an unannounced on-site evaluation visit to Greek sea border sites (Chios and Samos Islands) and land border sites (Orestiada, Fylakio, Kastanies, Nea Vyssa) from 10 to 13 November 2015.

The Schengen evaluation mechanism, established in October 2013 by the Council Regulation 1053/2013, provides for the verification of the application of the Schengen rules through monitoring visits to a given member state by teams with experts from the Commission and member states. After the visits, that can be announced or unannounced, a Schengen Evaluation Report is drawn up and agreed by the Schengen evaluation committee of member state experts. If the report identifies any weaknesses in the evaluated area of the Schengen acquis, the Commission presents to the Council for adoption recommendations for remedial action.

The Commission may also, under Article 19b of the Schengen Borders Code, recommend that the evaluated member state take certain specific measures with a view to ensuring compliance with this recommendation.

Where, after three months from the adoption of the Council recommendation, serious deficiencies persist and the measures taken have not proved sufficient, the Commission may trigger the application of the procedure provided for in article 26 of the Schengen Borders Code.

Under article 26 of the Schengen Borders Code, the Commission may propose a recommendation, to be adopted by the Council by qualified majority, to reintroduce controls at all or specific parts of the border of one or more member states as a matter of last resort. They may be introduced for a period of up to six months. Controls can be prolonged for additional six month periods up to a maximum duration of two years.

[\(will be available soon\) Recommendation on addressing the serious deficiencies identified in the 2015 evaluation of the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of management of the external borders by Greece](#)

[A item note and Statement by Greece](#)

[Schengen Borders Code \(consolidated version\)](#)

[Schengen Evaluation Mechanism \(Regulation 1053/2013\)](#)

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