

Schengen area expands to almost all EU countries

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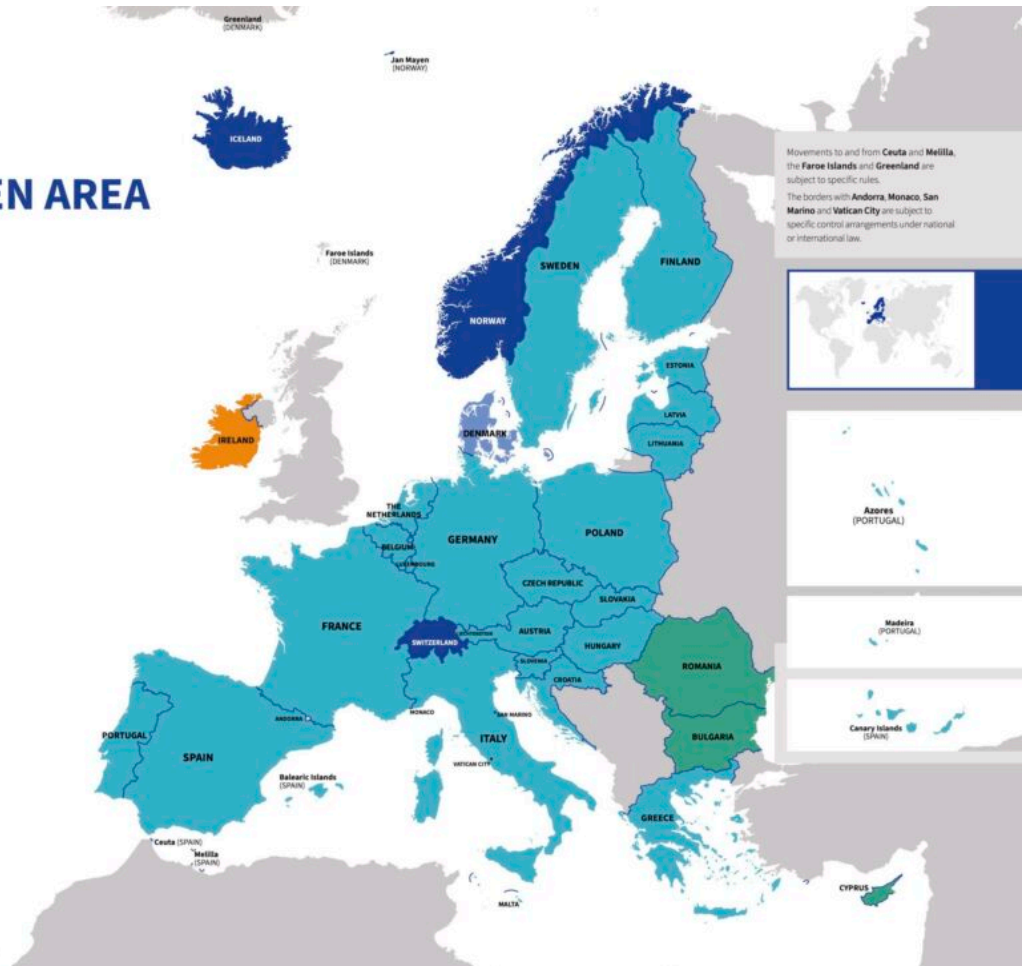
Effective March 31st, **Romania** and **Bulgaria** are now part of the Schengen area. This means that passengers and crew arriving in these countries are able to move freely within the EU (by air and sea) without any further immigration or border checks. “Schengen Flights” landing in Romania or Bulgaria are not required to clear customs.

The first “Schengen flight” landed at 0020L on March 31 at LBSF/Sofia, from Naples.

The Schengen Area was established in 1985. Before Bulgaria and Romania’s admission, it was comprised of 23 of the 27 EU member countries, along with Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The only remaining Non-Schengen countries in the EU are **Ireland** (because Ireland has a common travel area with the UK, and the UK doesn’t like the Schengen idea very much), and **Cyprus**.

THE SCHENGEN AREA

- The Schengen acquis applies in its entirety to the European territories of the following EU Member States: **Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain (including the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands), France, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal (including Madeira and the Azores), Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden.**
- **Denmark** is an EU Member State that has a special position with regard to the application of the Schengen acquis. It has to implement the entire Schengen acquis, not as EU law but as an obligation under international law. As a consequence, Denmark does not vote when Schengen measures are adopted by the EU.
- **Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway** (except Svalbard) and **Switzerland**, which are not EU Member States, are associated with the implementation of the Schengen acquis through Association Agreements. They have the right to be present and make suggestions during the preparation of Schengen acquis acts that are subsequently adopted by the EU institutions. They have to implement all Schengen acts after their adoption by the EU institutions and notify the Council accordingly.
- **Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus** are EU Member States bound by the entire Schengen acquis; however, they do not yet apply the parts of the acquis that concern the absence of controls at internal borders, including visas. Bulgaria and Romania are also connected to the Schengen Information System. Cyprus will be fully connected to the Schengen Information System from 23 July 2023. The controls at the internal borders with these Member States can be lifted only as a result of a decision adopted by the Council.
- **Ireland** is an EU Member State which does not participate in the Schengen cooperation. However, it may request and be authorised to take part in some parts of the Schengen acquis concerning police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters. Today, Ireland provisionally applies the areas of the Schengen acquis in which it has asked to participate, including the Schengen Information System related to police.



Schengen countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Non-Schengen countries in Europe: Ireland, the UK, Albania, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Cyprus, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

Non-Schengen countries in the EU: Ireland, Cyprus.