Beat: Politics

In March there will be no longer controls in Bulgaria and Romania

They become part of the Schengen area

Brussels (Belgium), 08.01.2024, 19:34 Time

USPA NEWS - The European Union will welcome Bulgaria and Romania into the Schengen area, the largest area of free movement in the world. In March 2024, there will be no longer controls at air and sea borders. Lifting land border controls will be discussed and decided on later in the year. This will allow people and businesses to benefit from their rights to free movement by air and sea, entering or leaving Bulgaria and Romania.

The Commission first confirmed that both countries were ready to become part of the Schengen area in 2011. Since then, Bulgaria and Romania have continued to demonstrate that they fulfil the conditions for becoming Schengen members, and experts reconfirmed in 2022 and 2023 that they were ready to become members. Security, police and judicial cooperation measures have been introduced in these two countries to ensure that the EU remains strong against security threats. This ninth enlargement of the Schengen area will boost travel, trade and tourism and will strengthen the internal market.

The border-free Schengen area guarantees free movement to close to 450 million EU citizens, along with non-EU nationals living in the European Union or visiting the EU. Free movement of persons means every EU citizen can travel, work and live in an EU country without special formalities. The Schengen area underpins this freedom by allowing citizens to move around the Schengen area without any border checks.

The border-free Schengen Area guarantees free movement to more than 450 million EU citizens, along with non-EU nationals living in the EU or visiting the EU as tourists, exchange students or for business purposes, anyone legally present in the EU. Schengen underpins this freedom by enabling citizens to move around the Schengen Area without being subject to border checks.

Today, the Schengen Area encompasses most EU countries, except for Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland and Romania. However, Bulgaria and Romania are currently in the process of joining the Schengen Area and already applying the Schengen acquis to a large extent. On January 2, 2023, Croatia became the newest member state to join the Schengen area. Additionally, also the non-EU States Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein have joined the Schengen Area.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-24035/in-march-there-will-be-no-longer-controls-in-bulgaria-and-romania.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jose A. Martin

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