

PROPOSAL FOR A RESOLUTION [5]: TOWARDS A TRULY COMMON AND SECURED SPACE OF FREE MOVEMENT AND A SUSTAINABLE EU MIGRATION POLICY

URGENT NEED TO COMPLETE THE GOVERNANCE OF THE SCHENGEN AREA

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1 On 2 June 2021, the Commission presented a new Strategy for the functioning of the Schengen area, a
2 much awaited document by all governments, parliaments and citizens in Europe. In fact, the COVID-19
3 pandemic has presented an unprecedented challenge and has placed a major strain on the Schengen
4 area, leading almost all Schengen states to reintroduce internal border controls for a long period of
5 time, without coordination and previous information from the partners States. This quasi systematic re-
6 introduction of internal borders controls for many months (more than one year in some regions) has
7 had serious economic implications on the proper functioning of the Single Market, as it has significantly
8 disrupted supply chains within the EU and constitutes a daily obstacle for 3.5 million Europeans living
9 in border regions and crossing borders on a daily basis.

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11 To face this sad “temporary” dismantling of one of the most successful achievements of the European
12 integration and one of the greatest and most popular symbols around the world of the European way
13 of life, the Commission, in the absence of a precise legal framework, issued a series of Recommenda-
14 tions and Guidelines during 2020-2021 that covered various topics from emergency assistance in cross-
15 border healthcare to border management measures ensuring the availability of goods and essential
16 services, as well as the free movement of workers. This also included the creation of a ‘Green Lanes’
17 system to ensure border crossings remained open to all freight vehicles, thereby keeping people and
18 businesses supplied with goods and services.

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20 Despite these efforts, the vast majority of Member States have consistently taken unilateral decisions,
21 based on interpretations, which reflect national situation and interests. From an institutional point of
22 view, the entire management of this emergency constitutes a step backwards towards the well-known
23 inter-governmental approach of the beginning of the Schengen Area in 1985 and confirms the deeper
24 divergences of views and the lack of a holistic and modern policy approach for the governance of the
25 Schengen Area as a whole.

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27 The systematic re-introduction of internal border controls also underlines the lack of trust among
28 Schengen countries regarding the management of migration flows and, in particular, the unsuccessful
29 management of the secondary movements of migrants and refugees within the Schengen states. In fact,
30 the limited amount of progress made since September 2020 regarding the adoption of the New Pact on
31 Migration and Asylum proposed by the Commission, as well as the fragmented policy approach fol-
32 lowed for asylum (notably with the absence of legal ways of entry for people seeking protection and
33 the lack of introduction of the mutual recognition principle for asylum decisions) have had a significantly
34 negative impact on the well-functioning of the Schengen area.

35 It is important to underline that these deficiencies in the EU policy on Migration and Asylum have been
36 repeatedly exposed in a series of crises and challenges at the EU external borders by third countries.
37 This was apparent in March 2020, during the situation at the Greek-Turkish land borders, and more
38 recently in the Ceuta Crisis in May 2021. In both cases, people, and in particular vulnerable categories
39 and children, were used as human shields.

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41 Regarding in particular the external dimension of the EU migration policy, the European Parliament (in
42 its Resolution adopted in May 2021) underlines the importance of a comprehensive EU migrant-centred
43 approach, in which human rights are said to occupy a central place, with the aim of strengthening ‘re-
44 spect for fundamental rights and the human rights of migrants in source, transit and destination coun-
45 tries”.

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47 An effective cooperation with third countries in the area of migration should, without any doubt, include
48 a sustainable and well-functioning readmission policy for the returnees. The Union must increase its
49 external cooperation with countries of origin and work to ensure voluntary return and reintegration as
50 underlined by the new EU Strategy adopted in April 2021. All policy related actions should explicitly
51 commit to ensure the respect of human rights, including the principle of non-refoulement and the rights
52 enshrined in the UN Refugee Convention, and provide effective accountability if violations occur. Any
53 kind of informal arrangements on return and readmission which are concluded, without due democratic
54 scrutiny and parliamentary oversight and which are not subject to judicial scrutiny, should be banned
55 as they are not in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental rights.

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57 In this context, and having in mind the expected increase in migration pressure in the post Covid period,
58 it is urgent that the EU intensifies its efforts to develop a holistic and comprehensive policy for the
59 functioning of the Schengen area. It must additionally revise, where necessary, and complete the Euro-
60 pean migration and asylum policy in order to reflect new global realities as well as European interests
61 and values.

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63 The UEF, in accordance and as a follow up to the previous Resolutions adopted in the area of Migration
64 and Asylum

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66 Notes

- 67 - the importance that the EU Citizens attached to the area of freedom, security and justice and
- 68 the need to restore and foster mutual trust in the implementation of the Schengen rules;
- 69 - the importance of a comprehensive and sustainable EU external migration policy, ensuring the
- 70 full implementation of the 23 objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular
- 71 Migration;

72 Welcomes

- 73 - the **New Strategy** towards a fully functioning and resilient Schengen area presented by the Com-
74 mission in June 2021 as a positive step towards a comprehensive Schengen governance and
75 notes the transparent and enlarged consultation process followed for its elaboration;

- 76 - the improvements of the newly proposed Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism – in
77 particular regarding the **effective implementation of fundamental rights obligations** and the **ex-**
78 **ension of unannounced visits which could, among others, be deployed on sensitive external**
79 **borders and cover systematic human rights violations such as pushbacks;**

80 **Urges**

- 81 - **the Commission to intensify efforts in order to complete** the new structure and present (during
82 2021) the missing measures identified in its June 2021 Communication which aimed at improv-
83 ing EU internal security and compensate for the absence of controls at internal borders by pre-
84 venting and tackling security threats (such as an EU Police Cooperation Code, a revision of the
85 Schengen Borders Code and expanding the use of advance passenger information in relation to
86 intra-Schengen flights) To this, the Commission should also include additional necessary
87 measures related to the Covid 19 pandemic (such as bilateral arrangements for the mutual
88 recognition of the EU Covid certificate);
- 89 - the Commission to present **a detailed evaluation report on the implementation of the 18 official**
90 **EU Readmission agreements in place;**

91 **Calls :**

- 92 - **on the European Parliament to request the re-evaluation of the** expansion of the Schengen Area
93 to those EU Member States that are not yet fully integrated in order to ensure that all funda-
94 mental rights and security obligations are met;
- 95 - **on the European External Action Service to take initiatives supporting policy and normative de-**
96 **velopments in relation to the rights of migrants in multilateral fora and developing a positive**
97 **agenda on well-managed migration and mobility which can contribute positively to inclusive**
98 **growth and sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda;**

99 **Invites**

- 100 - EU Member States to reconsider their positions regarding **the accession to the UN Convention**
101 **on the Rights of Migrant Workers**, one of the core UN human rights conventions.