



# The Impact of Bulgaria and Romania's Accession to the Schengen Zone

# Romania and Bulgaria's Current Position



Both Romania and Bulgaria are EU members since 2007.



They currently apply parts of the Schengen acquis, such as external border controls and the Schengen Information System as well as of third-country nationals, visa-exempt or in possession of a valid Schengen visa.



However, currently, Romania and Bulgaria only issue national visas that do not provide the right to enter any other country in the Schengen area.



Currently, third-country nationals holding Romanian or Bulgarian residence permits are not allowed to enter the Schengen area without additional Schengen visa if they are visa-nationals.



# Upcoming Changes



Bulgaria and Romania will now partially join the Schengen area. The changes will come into effect on **31 March 2024**.



**Border controls** will be lifted for individuals travelling by air or sea from Bulgaria or Romania to other Schengen countries (and vice versa). However, the border controls will remain in place at internal land borders.



**Stay in Bulgaria and Romania of third-country nationals**, visa-exempt or holding Schengen visas, will count towards allowed stay of 90 days within a 180-days period in the Schengen area.



**Third-country nationals with Romanian or Bulgarian residence permits** will be able to enter other Schengen countries without an additional Schengen visa.

# Expected Changes in the Future



Changes to land border controls will come at a later stage, once Bulgaria and Romania prove they are controlling irregular migration. In the negotiation process, Austria and the Netherlands raised concerns about corruption, organised crime and the potential impact on migration patterns.



There is now an onus on Bulgaria and Romania to ensure that they have robust systems in place for border management and security, to ensure full inclusion in the Schengen area.



It is expected that Romania and Bulgaria will start issuing Schengen visas soon.



The new ETIAS online travel authorisation system and the Schengen Entry and Exit system (EES) will apply to Bulgaria and Romania irrespective of the fact whether they have achieved full inclusion into the Schengen Zone. Our articles on ETIAS and EES can be found on our website [here](#).



## **Deloitte's** view

The accession should bring benefits for businesses and individuals through increased cross-border mobility.

For more information, please contact one of our experts. Be on the lookout for future articles from our Deloitte Belgium and Netherlands collaboration, where we will explore further developments in EU policies impacting talent strategies.



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