



Mobility: Immigration alert

January 2024

European Union

Bulgaria and Romania to partially join the Schengen Area on 31 March 2024

Executive summary

On 30 December 2023, the Council of the European Union (EU) announced its decision to partially admit Bulgaria and Romania into the Schengen Area on 31 March 2024. As of this date, air and sea border controls between Bulgaria, Romania and the existing Schengen Member States will be lifted, while land border checks will continue to remain in place.

Background

The Schengen Area is a border-free zone that enables the free movement of eligible EU and non-EU nationals who seek to enter for business or tourism. Depending on their nationality, third-country nationals may require a Schengen C Visa to be admitted for business or tourism for up to 90 days cumulatively in any 180-day period. Those who wish to enter for more than 90 days in any 180-day period may require a D Visa. As of the date of publication, the Schengen Area comprises 27 countries.

Key developments

On 31 March 2024, Bulgaria and Romania will partially join the Schengen Area, and air and sea border controls between Bulgaria, Romania and the existing Schengen Member States will be abolished. Until they become full Member States, land border controls between Romania, Bulgaria and other Schengen Area Member States will remain in place, and Bulgaria and Romania will continue to issue national entry visas (and will not issue Schengen visas). A decision regarding the lifting of land borders is expected in the near future, but an exact date is not yet known.

Impact on employers

Bulgaria and Romania's entry into the Schengen Area is expected to benefit employers by further facilitating the free movement of business travelers across the Area.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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EYG no. 000067-24Gbl

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