

Global Immigration alert

December 2024

Schengen Area

Bulgaria and Romania to become full Schengen members effective 1 January 2025

Executive summary

Effective 1 January 2025, Bulgaria and Romania will become full members of the Schengen Area. This decision was confirmed during the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting held on 12 December 2024.

Background

The Schengen Area (which encompasses all EU Member States with the exception of Ireland and Cyprus) 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 29 countries.

Key developments

Bulgaria and Romania partially joined the Schengen Area on 31 March 2024, and as of that date, air and sea border controls between these countries and other Schengen Member States were lifted. Effective 1 January 2025, all border controls (including land controls) will be abolished, enabling the unrestricted movement of people, goods, services and capital between these two countries and other Schengen Member States.

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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