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Statement
of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the
full application of Schengen acquis in Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania
8 December 2022, Brussels

The Czech Presidency has made all efforts, as a matter of priority, to achieve well-deserved full accession of Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania into the Schengen area.

The Czech Presidency congratulates Croatia for the positive result on the Decision on the full application of Schengen acquis in Croatia and welcomes Croatian citizens in the Schengen area without internal border controls as of 1 January 2023.

Regarding Bulgaria and Romania, the proposed draft Council Decision that would allow for lifting the internal border controls from 1 January 2023 has not, unfortunately, gained the unanimous support as required. Austria and the Netherlands voted against the adoption of the draft Decision.

The Czech Presidency has struggled hard to exploit all possibilities on finding a compromise that would allow Bulgaria and Romania to become full members of Schengen in a near future. The Netherlands has been in the position to support Romania, but not Bulgaria. Austria has not moved from its negative stance towards both countries.

While reflecting on supportive interventions by the vast majority of the Member States and the Commission, the Czech Presidency concluded that both Bulgaria and Romania are ready to fully enter the Schengen area without internal border controls and appreciated their key role in the protection of the external borders as well as their substantial contribution to the security of the Schengen area in general. Bulgaria and Romania put in place all the necessary tools, structures and procedures. Therefore, they deserve to become full members of Schengen as soon as possible.



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In that vein, the Czech Presidency further encourages the process of completion of the Schengen area and invites the future Swedish Presidency to revert to this issue as a matter of urgency. At the same time, it invites the Member States concerned to cooperate constructively in the spirit of mutual trust and loyal cooperation.