

The impact of coronavirus on Schengen borders

The Schengen Area

The [Schengen Area](#) consists of 26 countries that have agreed to remove regular checks at their internal borders in order to facilitate the free and unrestricted movement of people: 22 EU Member States (Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden), and 4 associated countries (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein). The [Schengen Borders Code](#) lays down the common rules governing the management of internal and external EU borders, including rules and procedures concerning the exceptional introduction of border checks at internal borders. According to the Code, Member States can introduce temporary border checks at their internal borders in [cases](#) of a foreseeable threat (e.g. a special event), an immediate threat or in the situation of persistent serious deficiencies relating to external borders.

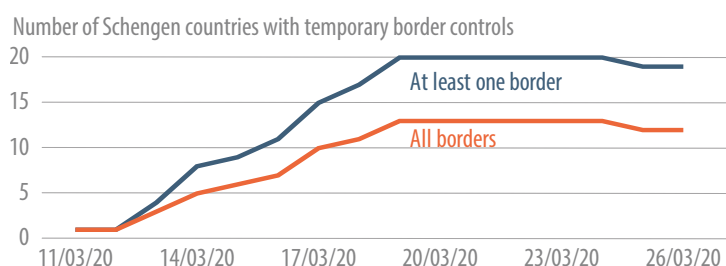
In March 2020, the coronavirus outbreak has pushed many Member States to reintroduce border controls at internal borders on the grounds of an immediate threat to public policy. According to Article 28 of the Code, the duration of such exceptional measure must be limited to no more than ten days, with the possibility to extend them by renewable periods of 20 days, up to a maximum of two months. Member States must notify the Commission and the other Member States before taking action, specifying the reasons, scope and duration of the measures. This information must be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council too. The Commission is supposed to issue an opinion after consulting the other Member States.

In order to ensure the free circulation of goods and services in the single market during the ongoing health crisis, the European Commission put forward [guidelines](#) for border management measures. On 17 March, the members of the European Council accepted the Commission's [proposal](#) to introduce a coordinated restriction of non-essential travel into the EU for a period of 30 days. The travel restriction provides for exemptions for nationals of all EU Member States and Schengen Associated States (UK nationals will be treated in the same way as EU citizens due to the current transition period), for the purposes of returning to their homes and for travellers with an essential function or need. As of 24 March, [all Member States](#) except Ireland (due to its common travel area with the UK) have implemented the temporary restriction.

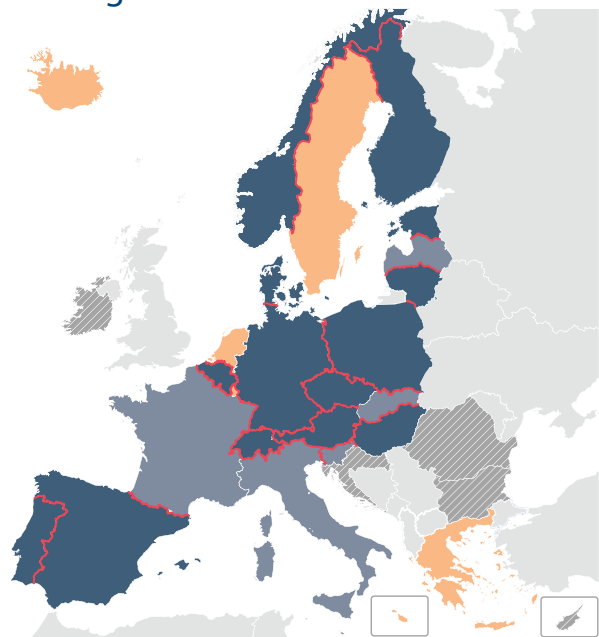
The European Parliament has consistently defended the Schengen Area and [condemned](#) the unjustified reintroduction of internal borders. On 16 March, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, the Chair of the Civil Liberties Committee (LIBE), [called](#) for a coordinated approach and urged Member States to take measures that fully respect the Schengen rules and the principles of proportionality, solidarity among Member States, and non-discrimination.

Internal border measures in the Schengen Area

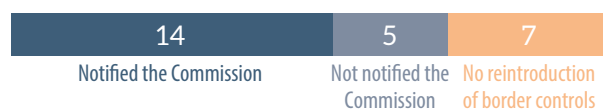
As of 26 March 2020, **14 Schengen countries** have [notified](#) the European Commission of the reintroduction of border controls due to threats related to the spread of COVID-19: Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Finland, Switzerland and Norway. A number of other Schengen countries have introduced restrictions on movement of persons that affect internal borders, such as temporary bans on non-essential travel: France, Italy, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovakia, and Slovenia.



Schengen restrictions on land borders



Schengen countries temporarily reintroducing border controls



BE	Notified	All internal borders	18/03/20 - 30/03/20
CZ	Notified	Land borders with AT and DE	14/03/20 - 04/04/20
DK	Notified	All internal borders	- 12/05/20
DE	Notified	Land borders with DK, FR, LU, AT and CH	16/03/20 - 15/04/20
EE	Notified	All internal borders	17/03/20 - 15/04/20
ES	Notified	All land borders	17/03/20 - 26/03/20
FR	Established	Checks at land borders with DE, ES and CH	18/03/20 -
IT	Restricted	All internal borders	14/03/20 -
LV	Prohibited	All internal borders	17/03/20 - 14/04/20
LT	Notified	All internal borders	14/03/20 - 13/04/20
HU	Notified	Land borders with AT, SI and SK.	12/03/20 - 11/04/20
AT	Notified	Land borders with DE, IT, CH and LI	14/03/20 - 07/04/20
PL	Notified	Land borders with CZ, SK, DE and LT	15/03/20 - 24/03/20
PT	Notified	Land border with ES	16/03/20 - 26/03/20
SI	Established	Special conditions of entry from IT and AT	19/03/20 -
SK	Adopted	All internal borders	13/03/20 -
FI	Notified	All internal borders	19/03/20 - 13/04/20
CH	Notified	Land border with IT, DE, FR and AT (26/03/20 - 15/04/20)	13/03/20 - 12/04/20
NO	Notified	All internal borders	16/03/20 - 26/03/20

EL	No reintroduction of border controls
LU	No reintroduction of border controls
MT	N/A
NL	No reintroduction of border controls
SE	No reintroduction of border controls
IS	No reintroduction of border controls
LI	No reintroduction of border controls

The red lines on the map represent the controls on land borders as of 26 March 2020

▨ Non Schengen countries

Situation by country

Belgium notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at all EU internal borders, between 20 and 30 March. Belgium also [introduced](#) a ban on non-essential inbound and outbound travel, as of 18 March. No list of authorised border crossing points has been [received](#). Exceptions apply, such as with regard to Belgian citizens/residents returning from abroad, [cross-border workers](#) (who are advised to carry a certificate from their employer), health staff, and people involved in the transport of goods. The ban on non-essential travel is currently due to expire on 5 April.

Czechia notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at its land borders with Austria and Germany, as well as on its air borders between 14 March and 4 April (initially 18 March). A list with authorised border crossing points has been [sent](#) to the Commission. Following the declaration of a state of emergency on 16 March, Czechia [introduced](#) an entry ban for all foreigners (except those resident in the country). Czech citizens are also not allowed to exit the country, unless they are permanent residents in the destination country.

Denmark notified the Commission of the continuation of controls introduced for security threats on all its land, sea and air borders. These measures had been renewed on 12 November 2019 and are set to expire on 12 May 2020. No list of authorised border crossing points has been [received](#) by the Commission. As of 14 March, Denmark also introduced [restrictions](#) on entry for foreigners (except for people resident in Denmark, transiting through Denmark or with a 'worthy purpose'). These entry restrictions are currently due to expire on 13 May.

Germany notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at its land borders with Denmark, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland and Austria until 15 April. As of 19 March, controls were introduced at German air borders for flights from Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Denmark, Italy and Spain, as well as controls at German sea borders with Denmark. Those controls were subsequently prolonged until 15 April. A list with authorised border crossing points has been [sent](#) to the Commission.

Estonia notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at its land border with Latvia, as well as on all air and sea borders, between 17 March and 15 April (initially 27 March). A list with authorised border crossing points has been [sent](#) to the Commission. As of 17 March, Estonia [adopted](#) a ban on entry for all foreigners (except those resident in the country). It has also introduced a 14-day restriction of movement for people arriving in Estonia from abroad.

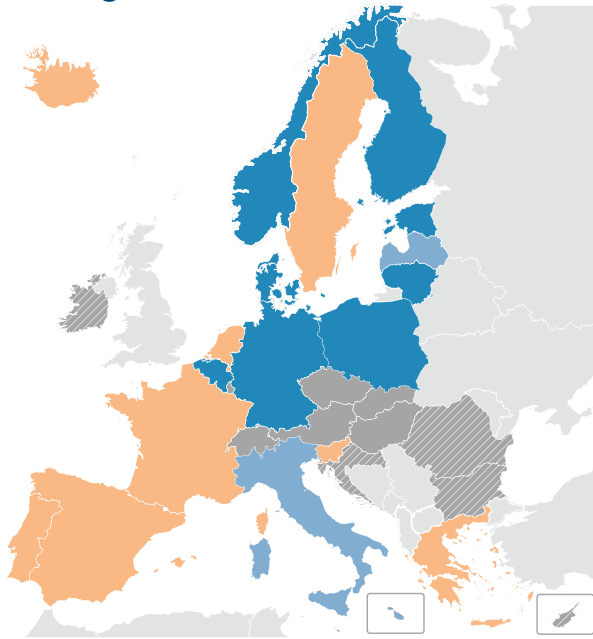
Spain notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at all land borders between 17 March and 26 March. No list of authorised border crossing points has been [received](#) by the Commission. Only Spanish citizens are [allowed](#) to enter the country by land, as well as persons resident in Spain, cross-border workers and those who can prove causes of force majeure or necessity.

France did not notify the Commission though it [established](#) temporary border checks at the land borders with Germany, Switzerland, and Spain, as of 18 March.

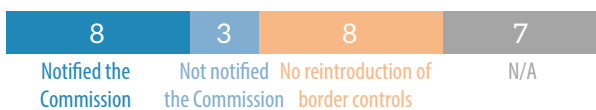
Italy did not notify the Commission though it [introduced](#) a ban on non-essential travel in the country, as of 14 March. Persons are [allowed](#) to travel abroad, or to return to Italy from abroad, but only for work requirements, health needs or reasons of necessity, or to return home or to their place of residence. Italy established a self-quarantine regime for travellers returning to Italy. The operation of air services is limited to certain airports.

Latvia did not notify the Commission though it has [prohibited](#) the movement of passengers and vehicles through border-crossing points at airports and ports, on road and railway lines at the external border of the European Union, as well as through border-crossing points intended for local border traffic, with the exception of the carriage of goods. Among the measures adopted after the declaration of a state of emergency on 14 March, Latvia suspended international transit of passengers through airports and ports, by bus and rail, except for the travel of passengers by State aircraft and military transport. It is still possible to return to Latvia by private car, on foot or by specially organised transport, contingent on permission from the Ministry of Transport. Foreign nationals may leave the country by personal car or specially organised public transport. These measures came into force on 17 March and are set to expire on 14 April.

Schengen restrictions on sea borders



Schengen countries temporarily reintroducing border controls



BE	Notified	All internal borders	18/03/20 - 30/03/20
DK	Notified	Sea borders	- 12/05/20
DE	Notified	Sea borders with DK	19/03/20 - 15/04/20
EE	Notified	All internal borders	17/03/20 - 15/04/20
IT	Restricted	All internal borders	14/03/20 -
LV	Prohibited	All internal borders	17/03/20 - 14/04/20
LT	Notified	All internal borders	14/03/20 - 13/04/20
MT	Announced	Restrictions on border with IT, DE, FR, ES and CH	13/03/20 - 13/03/20
PL	Notified	Sea borders	15/03/20 - 24/03/20
FI	Notified	All internal borders	19/03/20 - 13/04/20
NO	Notified	All internal borders	16/03/20 - 26/03/20

EL	No reintroduction of border controls
ES	No reintroduction of border controls
FR	No reintroduction of border controls
NL	No reintroduction of border controls
PT	No reintroduction of border controls
SI	No reintroduction of border controls
SE	No reintroduction of border controls
IS	No reintroduction of border controls

CZ	N/A
LU	N/A
HU	N/A
AT	N/A
SK	N/A
CH	N/A
LI	N/A

Non Schengen countries

Lithuania notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at all internal borders between 14 March and 13 April (initially 24 March). A list with authorised border crossing points has been [sent](#) to the Commission. Lithuanian citizens, with some exceptions, are [banned](#) from leaving the country, and foreigners are banned from entering, with some exceptions. Persons returning to their country of residence were allowed to transit the country without a stopover until 26 March. The quarantine regime is currently set to expire on 30 March.

Hungary notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at its land borders with Austria and Slovenia between 12 March and 22 March. The measure was extended to include restrictions on the land borders with Slovenia, Austria and Slovakia, and all air borders between 17 March and 11 April. As of 17 March, only Hungarian citizens are [allowed](#) to enter the country.

Malta did not notify the Commission though it [announced](#) restrictions on entry from Italy, Germany, France, Spain and Switzerland, as of 13 March. Malta also [suspended](#) all direct passenger flights to/from Italy, Germany, Spain, France and Switzerland, as of 10 March.

The Netherlands did not notify the Commission though it [suspended](#) all flights from Italy, (as of 13 March), Spain (as of 21 March), and Austria (as of 23 March).

Austria notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls on its land border with Italy between 11 March and 21 March. [Exceptions](#) apply, for example, to people presenting a recent health certificate; cargo and cross-border workers; and people transiting Austria without further stops. The measure was extended to include restrictions on the land borders with Italy, Germany, Switzerland and Liechtenstein between 18 March and 7 April. No list of authorised border crossing points has been [received](#). Austria has [introduced](#) medical checks for EU/EEA citizens on flights arriving in Austria. Persons wishing to enter Austria must present a medical certificate confirming a negative molecular biological test for SARS-CoV-2

Poland notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at its land borders with Czechia, Slovakia, Germany, and Lithuania, as well as at all sea and air borders, between 15 March and 24 March. A list with authorised border crossing points has been sent to the Commission. The borders are [closed](#) for all foreigners (except foreigners resident in the country, cross-border workers and other particularly justified cases). A ban on landing at airports in Poland was introduced for 14 days for international passenger flights, with the exception of flights transporting Polish citizens returning to Poland.

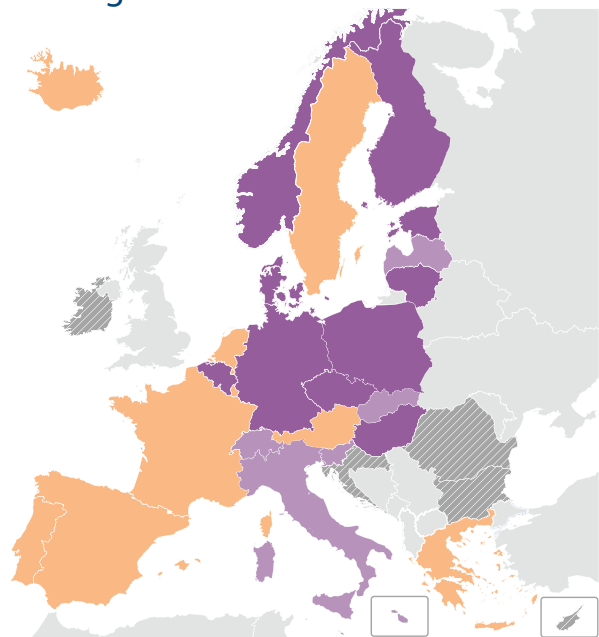
Portugal notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at its land border with Spain between 16 March and 26 March. No list of authorised border crossing points has been [received](#) by the Commission. Movement is still [permitted](#) for the entry of nationals and holders of residence permits in their respective countries, as well as for cross-border workers and the transport of goods. A list of authorised crossing points at the land border has been published. Direct flights from/to Italy and Spain have been suspended.

Slovakia did not notify the Commission though it [adopted](#) entry restrictions for all foreigners, as of 13 March. Exemptions apply for foreign nationals resident in the country with a residence permit, close relatives and foreign nationals employed in Slovakia. All inbound civil flights have been suspended.

Slovenia has not notified the Commission though it [established](#) conditions for entry to Slovenian territory from Italy, as of 19 March, and [conditions](#) of entry from Austria, as of 25 March. Slovenia has [suspended](#) all international passenger flights, as of 17 March.

Finland notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at all EU internal borders between 19 March and 13 April. A list with authorised border crossing points has been [sent](#) to the Commission. Finland [introduced](#) a ban on unnecessary cross-border travel. Finnish nationals and their family members, people resident in the country or transiting to other EU or Schengen countries, and selected categories of people (e.g. healthcare and other professionals, passengers travelling for imperative family reasons, persons in need of international protection, etc.) are allowed to enter the country. Finnish citizens are not allowed to exit the country for unnecessary travel. A mandatory 14-day [quarantine](#) for all people allowed to enter the country has been established. All flights arriving from outside Finnish airspace have been suspended.

Schengen restrictions on air borders



Schengen countries temporarily reintroducing border controls



BE	Notified	All internal borders	18/03/20 - 30/03/20
CZ	Notified	Air borders	17/03/20 - 04/04/20
DK	Notified	Air borders	- 12/05/20
DE	Notified	Air borders with DK, ES, FR, IT, LU, AT and CH	19/03/20 - 15/04/20
EE	Notified	All internal borders	17/03/20 - 15/04/20
IT	Restricted	All internal borders	14/03/20 - 00/01/00
LV	Prohibited	All internal borders	17/03/20 - 14/04/20
LT	Notified	All internal borders	14/03/20 - 13/04/20
HU	Notified	Air borders	17/03/20 - 11/04/20
MT	Announced	Restrictions on border with IT, DE, FR, ES and CH	13/03/20 -
PL	Notified	Air borders	15/03/20 - 24/03/20
SI	Adopted	All internal borders	17/03/20 - 30/03/00
SK	Adopted	All internal borders	13/03/20 -
FI	Notified	All internal borders	19/03/20 - 13/04/20
CH	Notified	All air borders except LI	25/03/20 - 04/04/20
NO	Notified	All internal borders	16/03/20 - 26/03/20

EL	No reintroduction of border controls
ES	No reintroduction of border controls
FR	No reintroduction of border controls
LU	No reintroduction of border controls
NL	No reintroduction of border controls
AT	No reintroduction of border controls
PT	No reintroduction of border controls
SE	No reintroduction of border controls
IS	No reintroduction of border controls
LI	No reintroduction of border controls

Non Schengen countries

Switzerland notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls on its land border with Italy between 13 March and 12 April (initially 23 March). It also notified of the reintroduction of controls on its land borders with France and Austria between 16 March and 15 April, as well as on its air borders for flights from Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Austria between 18 March and 17 April. Lastly, Switzerland notified the reintroduction of controls on all other air borders except with Liechtenstein between 25 March and 4 April. A list with authorised border crossing points has been [sent](#) to the Commission. According to the Swiss Federal [Council](#), exceptions are possible, for example for people who live or work in Switzerland.

Norway notified the Commission of the reintroduction of controls at all internal borders between 16 and 26 March. No list of authorised border crossing points has been [received](#) by the Commission.

Situation in non-Schengen EU countries

The EU countries outside the Schengen Area have also implemented border measures in view of tackling the spread of the coronavirus. Apart from Ireland (which, due to its common travel area with the United Kingdom, could not do so unless the UK also imposed the same restriction), all these countries have implemented the coordinated 30-day temporary restriction of non-essential travel into the EU, as of 20 March.

Bulgaria introduced a temporary ban on the entry into its territory of nationals of countries at risk (including Spain, Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland). The ban was [extended](#) to all foreigners (exceptions apply), as of 20 March. Bulgaria has also established mandatory 14-day home quarantine for all people allowed to enter the country and who arrive from certain countries at risk. **Croatia established** a 14-day quarantine or self-imposed isolation for people arriving from certain countries. **Cyprus introduced** an entry ban for all persons, except its citizens, legal residents, and European or third-country nationals working in Cyprus. Those allowed to enter must present a recent medical certificate and need to observe a 14-day compulsory quarantine at designated accommodation facilities. On 21 March, Cyprus suspended flights from all EEA countries and Switzerland, except for cargo, ferry, humanitarian, ambulance and repatriation flights to Cyprus. **Ireland imposed** a mandatory 14-day quarantine for all persons entering the country, except for people coming from Northern Ireland and staff working in supply chain services. **Romania introduced** an entry ban for all foreigners (exceptions apply), as of 22 March. Flights from/to Italy and Spain have been suspended.

Notes

Internal border: (a) the common land borders, including river and lake borders, of the Member States; (b) the airports of the Member States for internal flights; (c) sea, river and lake ports of the Member States for regular internal ferry connections (according to [Art. 2](#) of the Schengen Borders Code).

In a number of cases restrictions and reductions in air or sea transport services have had the de facto effect of stopping travel, without the need for formal border controls to be reintroduced.

Country codes: Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Czechia (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Croatia (HR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE), Switzerland (CH), Norway (NO), Iceland (IS) and Liechtenstein (LI)

Data source: data collected by EPRS up to 26/03/2020.

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