

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002528/25
to the Commission
Mary Khan (ESN), Petra Steger (PfE)
(24 June 2025)**

Subject: 40th anniversary of Schengen — a failed promise of security

14 June 2025 marked the 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the Schengen Agreement. However, instead of a cause for celebration, this anniversary provides above all an occasion to deliver a sobering assessment: The former promise of secure and control-free internal borders has developed into a serious threat to internal security and public order in view of the ongoing loss of control at the EU's external borders. Instead of an area of security, freedom and the rule of law, Schengen has become a gateway for people smuggling, organised crime and Islamist terror.

A functioning Schengen system requires effective external border controls and a clear distinction between legal and illegal migration. In reality, neither of these is guaranteed, which is why Member States are increasingly forced to adopt their own protective measures in the form of internal border controls. However, the Schengen Borders Code allows this only temporarily — a paradoxical scenario, as these measures only become necessary in the first place due to the EU's failure to fulfil its duties. These circumstances raise fundamental questions about the viability of the Schengen area in the future.

1. What concrete measures is the Commission taking to finally protect the EU's external borders effectively?
2. Does the Commission recognise that, without a clear distinction between legal and illegal migration, Schengen has been gutted when it comes to security policy?
3. Does the Commission consider it proportionate that Member States are allowed to respond only temporarily to systemic failures on the part of the EU, even though the threat of illegal mass migration is on the rise?

Submitted: 24.6.2025

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(1 August 2025)**

The Commission is taking a range of measures to strengthen the protection of the EU's external borders. These include supporting Member States through the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), which is equipped to provide operational assistance, deploy rapid border interventions, and enhance surveillance capabilities.

The Commission also continues to work on implementing the Pact on Migration and Asylum⁽¹⁾, which aims to improve the management of migration flows and ensure effective external border control, in full compliance with fundamental rights.

The Commission acknowledges the importance of distinguishing between legal and irregular migration to uphold the integrity of the Schengen system and security in Europe.

EU migration and asylum law, as well as the Schengen *acquis* provide a comprehensive framework for this distinction, corroborated by the Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Regarding internal border controls, the Commission recognises the challenges posed by security threats and unauthorised secondary movements.

The Schengen Borders Code⁽²⁾ allows for temporary internal border controls in exceptional circumstances, and the Commission is assessing the proportionality and necessity of such measures on a case-by-case basis.

The principle of free movement within the Schengen area remains a cornerstone of the EU, and the Commission is committed to addressing security threats and irregular migration flows to reduce the need for internal border controls.

⁽¹⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code), OJ L 77, 23.3.2016.