

Presentation Outline for the Panel Discussion
***Schengen Zone: Study Case of Enhanced Cooperation
Looking Back to the History, Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward***

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during the

GLOBSEC Differentiated Cooperation in Action Part #4: Schengen zone and European Migration Policy Europe on the Move: Open or Closed Borders?

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The broader outlook 2020/2021-2027

- Problematic and unclear political and humanitarian implications of the latest developments in the “EU-Turkey” deal. Great humanitarian concerns have been raised since Turkey has opened its borders and more than 13.000 people have arrived in Greece according to IOM. Geopolitical complexities and instrumentalisation of humans to enforce political/diplomatic support from EU countries regarding the Turkish military operation in Idlib.
- European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) will receive new competences and funding in the following years. The exact extent of the funding is determined by the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 but first sources mention around 11bn euro for the European integrated border management (IBM) and around 30bn euro in total for migration and border management (2021-2027). It is yet to be clarified when exactly the Frontex border personnel will be increased to 10.000.
- Further, the Agency shall expand their competences and collaborate with authorities of third countries in cases of repatriation.

Schengen accession: Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania

- Croatia: positive assessment by EU Commission; Croatia needs to ensure the consistent implementation of all criteria especially in the field of external border management; humanitarian concern over cases of border-violence and violent push backs.
- Bulgaria: repeatedly refuses to join due to the fear of migration influx; Netherlands stresses that Bulgaria is not ready.

- Romania: considers that all criteria have been fulfilled and pushes for accession; Dutch concern over the democratic and rule of law developments in the country; EU Parliament and Commission in favour, Council is still blocking the decision.
- Positive implications on EU integration due to Schengen accession?
- Safeguarding Human Rights and the Rule of Law through e.g. implementing a civil society mandate for monitoring border-violence and illegal deportation to tackle incidents in violation of Human Rights in countries such as Croatia (but also Greece).
- Empowering the role of the Civil Society in safeguarding Human Rights and the Rule of Law and in becoming a guarding of democratic principles and values.

“Little” or “Mini” Schengen system for Western Balkan:

- The idea of a Mini-Schengen dates to a regional council of West Balkan countries Serbia, Albania and North Macedonia in Trieste in 2017.
- In October 2019, these three countries signed a declaration of intent that envisions a Mini-Schengen guaranteeing the free movement of goods, capital, services and people in the region.
- This project, which is set to be finalised by 2021, should also include the other three West Balkan States Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo(!), as Albanian Prime Minister stated.
- Primary focus on enhancing trade and creating a more unified labour market.

Schengen-wide coherence: standardising “safe” country of origin

- Currently 14 Schengen states have a list of “safe countries of origin”. Additionally, Norway and Finland (to a certain extent) use the concept of safe country of origin, despite there being no fixed list of countries that would be considered safe in every situation.
- The number of countries designated as safe countries of origin differs significantly between Schengen states. States with the most “safe” countries on their national lists are the Netherlands and Austria amongst others.
- In most of the Schengen states, the criteria which are used for the assessment are stipulated in national legislation and they generally correspond to the criteria laid out in EU Asylum Procedures Directive.
- Future perspective: Schengen-wide definition for “safe” countries of origin – supranational approach to finding common characterisation of security.
 - Extend the definition to “safe local regions” of origin, thus taking the vast diversity of local circumstances within countries under consideration.