

## EU marks 40 years of Schengen

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Dhaka: Forty years after the signing of the Schengen Agreement, the Council of the European Union has adopted a new Schengen Declaration, reaffirming its commitment to the Schengen area and highlighting its significance for European cooperation and integration.

The original Schengen Agreement was signed on 14 June 1985 by Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, with the goal of gradually removing internal border controls and enabling free movement for citizens.

The Schengen Convention, signed in 1990, laid out the practical arrangements for implementation and officially entered into force in 1995.

Nowadays, the Schengen area consists of 29 countries. All EU member states except for Cyprus and Ireland plus Iceland, Liechtenstein,

Norway, and Switzerland are a part of the agreement.

The Schengen Zone has thereby become the world's largest area of free movement. Over 450 million Europeans enjoy seamless mobility and two million of them even commute daily across internal borders. Schengen facilitates intra-EU trade, exceeding € 4,100 billion in 2024, and attracts 40pc of international tourism

"We have come together on the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Schengen Agreement to highlight our common commitment to Europe's security, building resilience and readiness for today's challenges.

Guided by our shared values, we pledge to continue investing in the common area without internal borders, ensuring strong management of our external borders, a more effective fight against illegal migration and a high level of internal security.

We are determined to work together and foster mutual trust, so that present and future generations of Europeans can continue to enjoy the benefits of the Schengen area," stated Tomasz Siemoniak, Polish Minister of the Interior and Administration.

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