

ALDE Party calls on European Council to approve Bulgaria and Romania's Schengen accession before year's end

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party, convening in Estoril, Portugal on October 4-6, 2024:

Acknowledges that:

- Bulgaria and Romania have met all legal and operational criteria for their Schengen accession since 2011. However, the unjustified veto of some Member States has prevented them from joining the border-free area;
- ALDE Party, Renew Europe, the European Parliament, and the European Commission have all expressed their firm support for Bulgaria's and Romania's Schengen accession;
- The Commission President insisted in the State of the Union 2023 address that Bulgaria and Romania should be admitted into the Schengen Area without any further delay;
- On 15.09.2023, the European Commission announced that it formally closed the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism for Bulgaria and Romania, often cited as a prerequisite for lifting the veto;
- On 31.03.2024, Bulgaria and Romania partially joined Schengen with their air and sea borders;
- The accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen Area would boost economic growth and trade. It would also be a powerful symbol of European unity and solidarity.

Underlines that:

- The unjustified veto against Bulgaria and Romania's accession to the Schengen Area has many negative consequences: it feeds into anti-EU propaganda, runs counter to the rule of law, discriminates against citizens and businesses, raises the cost of trade and is particularly detrimental to cross-border diaspora;
- It also hinders economic growth and increases CO2 emissions, estimated at 46,000 tonnes annually with the lengthy queues at the border crossing points between Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary.

Calls for:

- All Member States to lift the veto without delay;
- The Council of the European Union to treat the matter with urgency and push for a vote as soon as can practically be possible;
- The European Commission to treat the full accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen Area as a priority and continue to provide the European Council with all necessary support so that a decision on land borders can be taken in 2024;
- ALDE member parties whose nations are a participant of the Schengen Area to continue to publicly express their support for the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen Area.