

Mr Secretary General of the Elysée Palace

Élysée Palace
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France

14th of June, 2022

Open letter on the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen area

Mr Secretary General of the Elysée,

On this day in 1985, the Schengen agreement was signed - a unique achievement - which, for over 25 years, has allowed for the free movement of citizens without controls and internal borders.

Faced with the war in Ukraine, the calls for European unity and integration are ubiquitous. We today have the responsibility to move the European project forward: on national level - see for example the Danish decision to hold a referendum on their defense opt-out - but also on European level, where Romania and Bulgaria, after joining the EU in 2007, are to this day blocked from joining the Schengen zone.

Both countries have met the requirements of the “Schengen evaluation” in 2010 and the European parliament acknowledged both countries to be ready to join Schengen in 2011, a decision which was reconfirmed again in 2021 along with Croatia. The European Commission urged the European Council to proceed to a decision, yet since 2015 a vote on Romania and Bulgaria joining the Schengen zone has not been tabled on the official agenda, while Croatia’s accession has been approved by EU governments in 2021.

We want to highlight the importance of putting member states from eastern and western Europe on equal footing for the balance of the European project. Decreasing trust and support for the EU is a direct consequence of non-transparent positions like this one. All citizens of the European Union deserve equal rights and opportunities. If the current war in the Ukraine is not reason enough to leave behind particular interests for advancing common European interests, we do not believe that the urgency of the situation is understood. Europe on the one hand signals its willingness to accept and potentially fast-track new member states, setting a high bar to join the

Union, while at the same time is unwilling to follow through with all benefits that European membership should entail for countries that meet these requirements.

We therefore want to use the occasion of your visit to Romania and Moldavia to remind you, that showing support to members states who shoulder a large part of the current refugees crisis and who are at the front line of a war we hoped to be able to leave behind, is worth little, if this show of support is not backed by concrete actions. Positioning yourself for holding a vote on the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen zone on European level is, in our eyes, long overdue. It would demonstrate that France not only has ambitious goals for the European Union, but also moves forward towards achieving them.

We need a strong Europe more than ever. We need strong actors to drive the European project into the future. And it is often key decisions that can take us the longest way forward - such as promoting Schengen access for Romania and Bulgaria.

Please accept, Mr Secretary General of the Elysée, the expression of our deepest respect.



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Co-President of Volt France



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Co-President of Volt Romania



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Stefan Razvan Florea
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