

**Priority question for written answer P-000551/2024
to the Council**
Rule 138
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Subject: Schengen conditions for Bulgaria and Romania

On 30 December 2023, the EU Council issued a communication to its delegations on the admission of Bulgaria and Romania to Schengen by air and water.

One part of the Annex to the Agreement is the so-called Joint Austrian, Romanian and Bulgarian statement. It contains five points outlining the continuation of joint efforts to combat 'irregular migration'.

The Annex concludes that the measures serve as a precondition for a possible lifting of checks at the land borders between Bulgaria and Romania and those with their neighbours in Schengen.

This raises a serious question as to the conditions applicable to Bulgaria and Romania's admission to the Schengen area by air and water. More worryingly, the conclusion to the Annex presupposes that further conditions will be imposed on the admission of Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen area as regards land borders, and specifically the 'improvement of the migratory situation in Austria'.

I would therefore like to ask the Council the following questions:

1. Are we to assume that these five points really are binding preconditions for the further integration of Bulgaria and Romania into the Schengen area, including as regards land borders?
2. What indicator can be used to assess whether or not there has been 'a significant improvement of the migratory situation in Austria'?
3. Is this ill-defined condition linked to the specific numbers of migrants returned to Bulgaria and Romania?

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