

Marie De Somer (EPC), Funda Tekin and Vittoria Meissner (Institut für Europäische Politik - IEP)

SCHENGEN AREA

- Provides free movement (without submission to border checks) to more than 400 million of European citizens across countries.
- A textbook example of differentiation and flexibility.
- Internal border controls by member states are allowed in the event of a serious threat to public policy or internal security.

Flexibility is part of Schengen's strength and has facilitated close cooperation among states. Yet in reaction to pressure such as the migration governance crisis of 2015-2016 and the COVID-19 pandemic states have increasingly returned to an uncoordinated reintroduction of border controls.

RISKS OF AN OVER-USE OF THE SYSTEM'S FLEXIBILITY

- Temporary controls become semi-permanent.
- Fragmentation across Europe and among member states.

HOW TO AVOID THEM

- Strengthening existing coordination structures.
- Providing clearer rules on the time range for internal border controls.
- Higher degree of control and coordination by the European Commission, also using its powers to start infringement actions.



- EU Schengen States
- Non-EU Schengen States
- Non-Schengen States