



‘Schengen is one of the greatest achievements of the European Union.’

Dimitris Avramopoulos, Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs (2016)

Online Module: Executive Summary

The creation of the **Schengen** Area, the geographical area encompassing the Schengen states, is widely considered as one of the major achievements of the EU. This is because there are no checks at the ‘internal borders’ – the national borders between the Schengen states – allowing the free movement of persons and goods throughout the Schengen Area.

However, from a law enforcement perspective, this free movement also presents problems, as it inevitably facilitates new forms of criminality and makes other crimes easier.

To address these issues, the so-called ‘compensatory measures’ have been developed as a framework for law enforcement cooperation within the Schengen Area. Collectively, these measures result in strengthened control and harmonised rules for the crossing of the external borders of the Schengen Area, and ensure cooperation between police and judicial authorities within it.

The Schengen online module aims to give users a broad understanding of the operation of the Schengen Area from a law enforcement perspective. This includes the policies and legislation that underpin Schengen, the various compensatory measures that are supported by Schengen legislation or by bilateral and multilateral treaties, and other issues that are relevant to Schengen as a whole.

The module targets police and law enforcement officers, border guards, customs officers and judiciary staff, who cooperate with colleagues from the other EU Member States or associated countries.

The module consists of an introduction, 11 topic chapters, and a glossary of Schengen-related terms, and abbreviations. In the My Progress section, users can assess their levels of understanding of each of the topics by considering a selection of true/false statements.

The individual chapters are:

1. **Introduction**
2. **EU Area of Freedom, Security and Justice:** The chapter introduces the policy area called the area of freedom, security and justice (AFSJ), a collection of justice and home affairs policies designed to ensure security, rights and free movement within the Schengen Area. The chapter includes the AFSJ's historical development and the roles of the decision-making bodies and agencies involved.
3. **Schengen Acquis:** This chapter describes the development and evolution of the Schengen acquis, the set of rules and legislation, which regulates the abolishment of border controls at the internal borders.
4. **Police Cooperation - Information Exchange:** This is the first of two chapters on police cooperation. It provides an overview of police cooperation in the Schengen Area before focusing on the legislation and measures supporting information exchange.
5. **Police Cooperation - Cross-Border Operations:** This chapter covers two types of cross-border police operations facilitated by Schengen legislation, namely cross-border surveillance and hot pursuit.
6. **Bilateral Agreements and PCCCs:** This chapter focuses on bilateral and multilateral police cooperation agreements, which can facilitate operational cooperation through such means as police and customs cooperation centres (PCCCs) and joint patrols.
7. **SIS/SIRENE:** This chapter describes the Schengen Information System (SIS), which provides data to support external border control and law enforcement cooperation in the Schengen states, and SIRENE, the network of SIRENE Bureaux, which provides supplementary information and support.
8. **Judicial Cooperation:** This chapter covers international judicial cooperation on criminal matters. It includes the legislation itself, judicial tools and the EU agencies and networks involved.
9. **Border Management:** This chapter describes the legislation and measures applied to the management of the external border of the Schengen Area.
10. **Prüm Framework:** This chapter covers the legislation and measures deriving from the Prüm Convention and the Prüm Decisions.
11. **Data Protection:** Many compensatory measures involve the exchange of personal information. This chapter describes how this information needs to be protected and how the rights of data subjects are preserved.
12. **Evaluation Mechanism:** This chapter describes the Schengen evaluation mechanism, which is the quality control instrument used to verify that Schengen states are applying the Schengen rules and standards adequately.