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## ROMANIA RECEIVES ACCESS TO THE SCHENGEN VISA INFORMATION SYSTEM

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Romania received access to the Visa Information System after a favorable vote of the European Parliament on October 4.

The Visa Information System allows Schengen states to exchange visa data. The country received access alongside Bulgaria.

The access allows the two countries to check and verify data, but not actual entrance rights to the system to make changes.

Antonio Tajani, the President of the European Parliament, said on his Twitter account that Romania and Bulgaria must join Schengen asap. Today's vote on access to Visa Information System is a step forward to strengthen external border control.

His statement comes after the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker argued, in his September State of the Union speech, that Romania and Bulgaria should join the Schengen area of free movement immediately if the union wants to strengthen the protection of its external borders.

The European Commission had said before that Romania and Bulgaria meet the conditions for joining the Schengen area but several countries opposed the accession in the last years. At the end of September, the European Commission has officially asked the European leaders to accept Romania and Bulgaria in the Schengen area.

A final political decision on Romania and Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen area needs to be taken by the European Council with an unanimous vote.

German, Austrian, Dutch officials oppose Romania entering Schengen.

<https://www.romania-insider.com/romania-access-schengen-visa-system-october-2017/>

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