

IntMin Bode: Confident we will take concrete steps towards Schengen accession as soon as possible.

Minister of Internal Affairs Lucian Bode welcomed on Thursday the resolution voted by the European Parliament whereby the European Council is requested to approve Romania's accession to the Schengen area, emphasizing that our country has an "essential" role in the architecture of EU security.

According to a press release issued on Thursday, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI) welcomes the European Parliament's resolution, and the debates that preceded the vote highlighted, once again, the support of this institution and of the European Commission for Romania's accession, as well as Bulgaria and Croatia's to the Schengen area.

"I am confident that we will take concrete steps towards the adoption, as soon as possible, of the decision on our accession to the Schengen area. Romania has a key role to play in the EU's security architecture. A fair balance is needed between the obligations that each Member State assumes and the rights they enjoy. As you well know, Romania fulfills all the conditions for joining Schengen and continues to maintain at the highest level the way the Union's legislation is enforced," said Lucian Bode.

The European Parliament adopted on Thursday, with 505 votes in favor, its resolution on the Annual Report on the functioning of the Schengen area.

According to the MAI, the Resolution reiterates the well-known position of the EP on the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen area and provides "expressly": "Further to its numerous requests for the full application of the provisions of the Schengen acquis in Bulgaria and Romania, [Parliament] urges the Council to honour its commitment and take an immediate decision on the abolition of checks at internal land, sea and air borders and thus allow those Member States to rightfully join the area of free movement without internal border controls (...) considers that solidarity and responsibility are for all, and that the future of the Schengen area must be without fragmentation;"

Along with other members of the European Parliament, rapporteur Tanja Fajon (SI/S&D) and European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson stressed the need to "complete" the Schengen area, being high time that Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia become part of this unique space of freedom, security and justice.