



**Group of the Progressive Alliance of
Socialists & Democrats
in the European Parliament**

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The President

Brussels, 28th September 2017

**To Mr Donald Tusk,
President of the European Council**

Dear President Tusk,

Caro Donald,

The Schengen area is one of the biggest achievements bearing the European Union rubberstamp, as well as the largest free travel area in the world.

Moreover, a strong and united Schengen directly contributes to an enhanced security cooperation at EU level and a high degree of mutual trust amongst the Member States. As called for by President Juncker in his State of the Union Address 2017, if we want to strengthen the protection of our external borders, then we need to open the Schengen area of free movement to Bulgaria and Romania without any hesitations. Following the thorough subsequent evaluations carried out by the European Commission, Romania and Bulgaria proved to fulfil the conditions necessary to join Schengen area.

In this respect, yesterday's decision of the European Commission is a clear acknowledgement in this respect.

Against this background, on behalf of the Socialists and Democrats Group that I am chairing, I strongly encourage you, dear President Tusk, to take the necessary steps towards enabling the full application of the Schengen acquis in Bulgaria and Romania and abolition of checks on persons at internal land, sea and air borders. Allowing these Member States to join Schengen will not only be the natural step towards a more united Europe, but also a solid bridge contributing to the consolidation of mutual trust within the European Union.

Best regards,

Gianni Pittella