

EU moots new Schengen rules

EU interior ministers are set to consider tightening rules allowing free movement within the Schengen zone when faced with extraordinary flows of migrants. The move reflects concern about the arrival in Italy of some 25,000 illegal migrants fleeing unrest in North Africa

Schengen states:

Incorporates 25 European countries – 22 EU members plus Switzerland, Iceland and Norway

Non Schengen EU:

UK and Ireland comply with some Schengen provisions but maintain border checks

Expected to join in coming years

France and Italy want revision of Schengen after France closed border to trains carrying African migrants from Italy

KEY PROVISIONS OF SCHENGEN

■ Agreement abolishes internal borders, enabling passport-free movement across member countries

■ Immigration checks carried out on zone's single external border under single set of police rules

■ Police and judicial co-operation enhanced – shared information database on wanted or undesirable people and stolen objects

■ Non-EU nationals with Schengen visa can travel freely throughout area for up to three months within six-month period

■ Signatories may reinstate border controls for short period if necessary for “public policy or national security” reasons

Source: European Commission © GRAPHIC NEWS

