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From:	Norwegian Mission
To:	Working Party on Frontiers/Mixed Committee (EU-Iceland/Liechtenstein/Norway/Switzerland)
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Subject:	Report on the temporary reintroduction of border controls at the Norwegian internal borders in accordance with Article 28 of Regulation (EU) 2016/399 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code)

Delegations will find attached a copy of a letter received by the General Secretariat of the Council on 4 November 2021 regarding the report on the temporary reintroduction of border controls by Norway at the internal borders between 16 March 2020 and 6 October 2021.

E-MAIL



**ROYAL NORWEGIAN  
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SECURITY**

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**Covid-19 – report on the reintroduction of temporary controls at Norwegian internal borders**

In order to combat further spread of the Covid-19 virus infections, Norway reintroduced internal border controls at all international borders (land, sea and air) on the 16th of March 2020, pursuant to article 28 of Regulation 2016/399 on the rules governing the movements of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code). Furthermore, restrictions for travel into Norway for foreign citizens without registered residence in Norway were applied. From 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2020, Norway designated a number of border crossing points on the Norwegian internal border as sole legal border crossing points.

Restrictions at the internal borders were gradually lifted until internal border controls due to Covid-19 ended on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October.

Norway also introduced travel restrictions at the external borders in accordance with the Council recommendations.

As the crisis evolved, measures to restrict mobility were deemed necessary in order to curb the spread of the virus. Such restrictions was required both on the Norwegian territory and on traffic across internal and external borders.

Internal border controls were introduced at all land, sea and air borders. Opening hours at border crossing points that remained open was limited in order to control the traffic flow.

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Essential traffic was allowed. Special provisions were also made for cross border commuters, including allowing crossing at border crossing points that would otherwise be closed.

The aim was that every person should be controlled at the border in order to determine whether the person belonged to the groups allowed entry and in order to provide guidance on tests and quarantine.

Experience from the pandemic shows that import of infection has been one of the main challenges in the fight against the pandemic, and that import of infections have resulted in secondary infections in several parts of the country, notably in densely populated areas. At the time of the introduction of controls at the internal borders, National statistical information indicated that the unprecedented measures taken to reduce and prevent the further spread of the Covid-19 virus infections where having a positive effect. It was further assessed that a common feature of countries that has fared better during the pandemic have implemented strict, and in some cases very strict, border controls in order to hinder import of the infection. The controls at internal borders and restrictions on entry where as such deemed as both necessary and proportional.

Norway has maintained regular contact with neighbouring countries on all levels, including regular Nordic VTC meetings between Ministers responsible for borders in order to share information and to seek solution to practical challenges that might occur.

The general impact of the pandemic, the internal border controls and entry regulations combined, resulted in a significant reduction of cross border traffic. Still, during the period with internal border control, more than six million controls where conducted at the borders. 26 799 persons were refused entry to Norway due to health regulations, less than 0,5 percent of those crossing the border. In addition, there were a number of persons who voluntarily chose not to cross the border, after receiving advice and explanations about entry regulations from the border guards.

These measures where all in effect until lifted 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2021. Restrictions at the external borders still remains.

Yours sincerely



Unni Gunnes  
Director General



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