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NOTE

From: Finnish delegation

To: Working Party on Frontiers/Mixed Committee
(EU-Iceland/Liechtenstein/Norway/Switzerland)

Subject: Temporary reintroduction of border controls at the Finnish internal borders in accordance with Article 25 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 23 November 2023 regarding the temporary reintroduction of border controls by Finland at Eastern land border from 24 November 2023 to 23 December 2023.



Ministry of the Interior
Finland

E-MAIL

IM 013828 2023
23-11-2023

Helsinki, 23 November 2023

Mr Margaritis Schinas
Vice-President of the
European Commission

Ms Ylva Johansson
Commissioner for Home Affairs
European Commission

Ms Thérèse Blanchet
Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

EU Delegations of Member States and Schengen countries

Dear Colleagues,

Previously, on 18 November 2023 the Finnish government decided to temporarily restrict border traffic and to concentrate the possibility to apply for international protection at the eastern land border between Finland and Russia. This was done in order to mitigate the intentional instrumentalisation of migrants and to safeguard public order and national security. Since the entry into force of the restrictions authorities of the Russian Federation have continued to actively contribute to migrants arriving to the border crossing points of Vartius and Salla. International criminal organisations are apparently involved in the activity and social media platforms are instigating the phenomenon through active marketing.

The situation persists and the Finnish authorities have indications that the phenomenon is intensifying. Due to this estimation and continued threat to public order and national security the Government has decided based on section 16 of the Border Guard Act on further restrictions of entry into Finland from Russia in order to mitigate the situation. As of 24 November 2023, border crossing points of Vaalimaa, Nuijamaa, Imatra, Niirala, Vartius, Kuusamo and Salla will be closed to all traffic. The remaining border crossing point, Raja-Jooseppi, shall be used for border crossings. The possibility to apply for international protection will be concentrated to the Raja-Jooseppi border crossing point as well. The new restrictions will enter into force on 24 November 2023 at 00.00 and will remain in force until 23 December 2023. Finland has informed Russia on the decision with a verbal note.

Concentrating the possibility to apply for international protection will be done only as to the extent necessary to manage the situation. Particular attention is paid to providing help to vulnerable persons. Finland continues to assess the effectiveness, necessity and proportionality of the measures taken at the external border with Russia in light of the development of the phenomenon and will adjust its response accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

Mari Rantanen

Minister of the Interior

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