



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: Switzerland Mission

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

Subject: Temporary reintroduction of border controls at the Swiss borders with Spain 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 18 March 2020 regarding temporary reintroduction of border controls by Switzerland at the borders with Spain between 18 and 27 March 2020.

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

The Head of the
Federal Department of Justice and Police FDJP

E-MAIL

SCH-3003 Bern
GS-FDJP

Margaritis SCHINAS
Vice-President of the European Commission
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

Ylva JOHANSSON
EU-Commissioner for Home Affairs
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

Jeppe TRANHOL-MIKKELSEN
Generalsekretariat des Rates
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

To the
Ministers of Home Affairs of the Schengen States

Bern, 18 March 2020

Temporary reintroduction of border control at the internal borders of Switzerland with Spain

Dear Vice-President of the Commission
Dear Commissioner
Dear Secretary-General of the Council
Dear Madam / Sir

By letter of 13 March, I informed you that Switzerland had reintroduced internal border controls against Italy in the light of the threat to public order and internal security posed by the ever more rapidly spreading new corona virus. Only three days later, I had to inform you about the reintroduction of internal border controls at the land borders with France, Germany and Austria.

The situation in Switzerland and throughout Europe remains critical. To limit the spreading of the virus, we need to limit mobility to the bare essentials - especially in international air transport.

In application of article 28 of Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code), Switzerland has therefore decided to extend with immediate effect the border controls already reintroduced at the land borders with Italy,

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France, Germany and Austria to the air borders with these countries. In view of the dramatic developments in Spain, Switzerland has also decided to introduce border controls on flights from Spain from 18 March, 00:00 hours, for an initial period of ten days.

The aim of all these controls is to allow only Swiss nationals as well as persons who have a Swiss residence permit, professional reasons, are only transiting through Switzerland or who are in a situation of extreme necessity, to enter Switzerland. The Swiss authorities will take the necessary steps to ensure that the border control activities are facilitated in a way to allow smooth processing of travelers. Nevertheless, delays may occur at the internal borders concerned.

In order to make controls effective and at the same time as efficient as possible, a certain channelling to larger border crossing points is inevitable. Therefore, smaller airfields and airports will be closed for incoming flights from Italy, France, Germany, Austria and Spain. The border crossing points at the national airports in Zurich-Kloten, Geneva-Cointrin and Basel-Mulhouse will remain open.

In addition, Switzerland will implement the temporary restrictions on non-essential travel to the EU and the Schengen Area recommended by the EU Commission on 16 March 2020 and endorsed by the EU Council on 17 March 2020, at its external borders.

Finally, Switzerland has decided to stop issuing Schengen visas and national visas until 15 June 2020. This does not apply to applications from persons who are in a situation of extreme need or who are of great importance as specialists in the health sector.

With these measures, Switzerland aims to prevent the disease from spreading too rapidly, which would endanger the ability to provide adequate care to the population and protect the most vulnerable people from the virus, while minimizing the impact of the measures on the free movement of persons.

Yours sincerely

Karin Keller-Sutter
Federal Councillor
Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police FDJP
