

Danish Minister for Immigration,
Integration and Housing



Ministry of Immigration,
Integration and Housing

Mr Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President of the
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200/Berl 12/78
1049 Bruxelles/Brussels
BELGIUM

Mr Dimitris Avramopoulos
Commissioner for
Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200/Wetstraat 200
1049 Bruxelles/Brussels
BELGIUM

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Ministry of Immigration,
Integration and Housing

Slotsholmsgade 10
DK-1216 Copenhagen K
Denmark

Phone +45 6198 4000
Email uibm@uibm.dk
Website www.uibm.dk

CVR no. 36977191

CC

Council Presidency
Mr Ard van der Steur
Minister of Security and Justice
of the Netherlands
Rue de la Loi 175/Wetstraat 175
1048 Bruxelles/Brussels
BELGIUM

Dear Mr Vice President, dear Commissioner,

Our countries have reintroduced temporary border controls along the internal borders of the Schengen area to manage the migration flow and respond to the concerns of public order and security.

Even though the refugee situation at the internal borders along the Balkan route is no longer as dramatic as in the past, we are concerned about developments at the European Union's external borders. In some places persistent serious shortcomings and structural deficits have been detected by the Schengen evaluation. We do not assume that they can be permanently remedied in the very near future. Furthermore, a considerable number of migrants are still in Greece and along the Balkan route. We do not know whether and to what extent they have been registered.

In general, the situation is extremely volatile and difficult to predict all the more so the central Mediterranean route remains another cause of concern. From our point of view, this threatens the functioning of the Schengen area without internal border controls and generally constitutes a serious risk for public order and security. Dramatic events, such as the 13 November 2015 terror attacks in Paris

and those of 22 March 2016 in Brussels, recently demonstrated that terrorist groups are likely to try and take advantage of deficiencies in border controls.

Without prejudice to measures that can be adopted by Member States under Article 29 Paragraph 5 of Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of 9 March 2016 (Schengen Borders Code) in the event of a serious threat to public policy or internal security, we urge you to submit a proposal to the Council allowing those Member States that face the necessity to maintain or introduce temporary border controls along the internal Schengen borders as from 13 May 2016 in line with Article 29 of Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of 9 March 2016 (Schengen Borders Code), as was announced in your communication "Back to Schengen - a Roadmap" of 4 March 2016. Member States must be able to use this tool in a flexible manner wherever it is necessary to respond to changing migration routes and security needs.

It is our common objective to protect the outstanding achievement of border-free travel in the Schengen area. In their declaration of 7 March 2016, the European Union's heads of state and government emphasized the need to implement the above-mentioned Commission roadmap of 4 March 2016 in order to remove the reintroduced internal border controls by the end of this year. To return to normality it is necessary to permanently remedy the structural deficits at the external borders, including offering support for border management to Member States facing disproportionate pressure at their external borders. Until then, given the volatile and unpredictable situation and persistent irregular internal migration and security threats, internal border controls are still necessary for the Member States we represent. As in the past, the border controls would be limited to a strictly necessary minimum, also with regard to the cross-border traffic of persons and goods.

We now need a sign that Europe can act together to regain the trust of our people and strengthen Schengen.

Yours sincerely,

Wolfgang Sobotka
Federal Minister of the
Interior of Austria



Inger Støjberg
Minister for Immigration, Integration
and Housing of Denmark

Bernard Cazeneuve
Minister of the Interior of France

Thomas de Maizière
Federal Minister of the Interior of Germany

Anders Ygeman
Minister for Home Affairs of Sweden