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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 Italy 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 16 March 2020 regarding temporary reintroduction of border controls by Switzerland at the borders with Italy between 13 and 22 March 2020.

E-MAIL



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

The Head of the
Federal Department of Justice and Police FDJP

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To the
Ministers of Home Affairs of the Schengen States

Berne, 13 March 2020

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

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

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 decided to reintroduce border control at the Swiss internal borders with Italy because of the corona virus.

The number of corona virus infections is increasing significantly and at an ever faster rate throughout Europe. In Switzerland, too, the number of cases has increased considerably in recent days. We need to undertake all necessary measures in order to slow down the spreading of the virus, ensure the capacity of the medical facilities and protect the most vulnerable. Italy has so far been the most affected Schengen State, with very serious growth rates of COVID-19 disease. It has undertaken extraordinary measures and declared the country restricted zone. The rapid deterioration of the situation in Italy poses a serious threat to public order and internal security for Switzerland as a neighbouring country and requires immediate action.



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The Swiss Government has therefore ordered, in consultation with the competent Italian authorities, internal border controls at the Swiss land border with Italy as of 13 March 2020 for an initial period of ten days. The aim of the controls is to allow only persons who have a good reason, in particular professional reasons or 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 with Italy.

In order to make controls at the internal border to Italy effective and at the same time as efficient as possible, a certain channelling to larger border crossing points is inevitable. For this reason, the following smaller border crossing points have been closed: Pedrinete, Ponte Faloppia, Novazzano Marcello, San Pietro di Stabio, Ligornetto Cantinetta, Arzo, Ponte Cremenaga, Cassinone and Indemini.

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.

The Swiss Government is constantly analysing the situation and for the time being is not ruling out further measures at other internal borders of Switzerland. In the event, however, that such measures would be taken, Switzerland would immediately inform the EU and the Schengen States.

Yours sincerely

Karin Keller-Sutter
Federal Councillor

Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police FDJP

2/2