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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 France, Germany and Austria 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 17 March 2020 regarding temporary reintroduction of border controls by Switzerland at the borders with France, Germany and Austria between 16 and 25 March 2020.

E-MAIL



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

The Head of the
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To the
Ministers of Home Affairs of the Schengen States

Berne, 16 March 2020

Temporary reintroduction of border control at the internal borders of Switzerland with Germany, France and Austria

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 corona virus.

In the past two days, the situation has dramatically changed: in Switzerland alone, the number of infected persons has more than doubled. Austria has reintroduced internal border controls with Switzerland and made entry into the country dependent on health checks, among others. Rail and air traffic with Austria has been largely disrupted or has been completely suspended. Germany and France have also adopted or are preparing far-reaching measures.

Switzerland recognises the need to slow down the further spread of the corona virus by all available means, thus ensuring that the health systems of Switzerland and neighbouring countries do not collapse under the burden. Restriction of the free movement of persons in

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the Schengen area under these circumstances is an unavoidable and necessary measure to guarantee public order and internal security. This view is now shared by many Schengen states.

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 reintroduce border controls (in addition to controls already installed at the land border to Italy) at the Swiss internal land borders with France, Germany and Austria as of 16 March 2020 for an initial period of ten days.

The aim of the controls is to allow only persons who have a Swiss residence permit, 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.

In order to make controls at the internal borders effective and at the same time as efficient as possible, a certain channelling to larger border crossing points is inevitable. For this reason, smaller border crossing points might be closed depending on operational needs.

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