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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 17 November 2023 regarding the temporary reintroduction of border controls by Finland at Eastern land border from 18 November 2023 to 18 February 2024.

E-MAIL



Ministry of the Interior
Finland

IM 013599 2023
17-11-2023

Helsinki, 16 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,

An increasing number of asylum seekers have arrived since August 2023 from Russia to Finland. Thus far these persons have arrived through the border crossing points at Finland's Southeastern external land border, namely Nuijamaa and Vaalimaa. Since last week the number of arrivals has increased considerably.

Finnish authorities have clear indications of facilitation of illegal immigration where organized international criminal networks are involved. In recent months, the actions of the Russian authorities have noticeably changed, at least at the land border in Southeastern Finland. At this time adequate information has also been gathered to indicate that the Russian authorities are actively contributing to the phenomenon with their actions. The growth of the phenomenon is intensified by greater activity on different social media platforms.

On 16 November 2023, the Government decided based on section 16 of the Border Guard Act on decisive and firm action to further restrict entry into Finland from Russia in order to mitigate the situation. As of 18 November 2023, border crossing points of Vaalimaa, Nuijamaa, Imatra and Niirala will be closed to all traffic. At the Finnish-Russian land border, the possibility to apply for international protection will be concentrated to the border crossing points of Vartiuss and Salla. The new restrictions will enter into force on 18 November 2023 at 00.00 and will remain in force until 18 February 2024. The new restrictions aim to safeguard public order and national security. Finland has informed Russia on the decision with a verbal note.

Limiting 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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