



Commission recommends extending temporary internal border controls for a limited period of three months

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The European Commission has today proposed a Recommendation, to be adopted by the Council, to prolong proportionate controls at certain internal Schengen borders in Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, where controls already take place – according to the Council Recommendation of 12 May – for a period of a further three months. Despite the progressive stabilisation of the situation, the Commission considers that the conditions of the ["Back to Schengen" Roadmap](#) allowing for a return to a normally functioning Schengen area are not yet fully fulfilled.

First Vice-President **Timmermans** said: *"The Schengen area without internal borders is a historical achievement which we must preserve. We are working hard to return to a normal functioning Schengen area as soon as possible, and we have made significant progress. But we are not there yet. That's why we propose today a further limited extension of certain border controls, in line with the Schengen rules. In fact, we are protecting Schengen by applying Schengen."*

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs, and Citizenship, Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"We have one clear priority and determination: to safeguard Schengen and to restore a normally functioning Schengen area as soon as the conditions allow for it. Over the past months we have taken important steps to address deficiencies at our external borders. A milestone in our work has been the recent launch of our European Border and Coast Guard to better address migration and security challenges. But we are unfortunately not there yet. This is why, we recommend to maintain, for a strictly limited period of time, coordinated and proportionate internal border controls at some Schengen borders. In the meantime we continue our work to further address all current migratory and security challenges so we can lift all internal border controls as soon as possible."*

Despite a significant decrease in the number of arrivals of irregular migrants and asylum seekers, notably due to the continued implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, a significant number of irregular migrants still remains in Greece as well as in the Member States which have been most affected by secondary movements from Greece. The lifting of the temporary border controls could therefore, at this stage, lead to an increase in secondary movements. Furthermore, the large number of asylum requests made over the past year, along with the applications still being received, have put a significant strain on national administrations and services in the five Schengen States to which the Recommendation is addressed.

Despite the steady and important progress in the fields identified by the "Back to Schengen" Roadmap, these actions still need time to be fully implemented and deliver the expected results. The full implementation of the [European Border and Coast Guard launched on 6 October](#), which will further strengthen the protection of the EU external borders, will be completed by January 2017. The continued implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement and a sustained reduction of arrivals will enable Member States to further process and absorb the backlog of asylum applications and solidify their reception capacities. Finally, the full application of the existing Dublin rules must be restored, with the full participation of Greece.

As a result, the exceptional circumstances that led to the adoption of the Council Recommendation of 12 May still persist. It is therefore justified to allow the Member States concerned to prolong the current internal border controls for a further proportionate period. Based on the factual indicators available at this stage, the prolongation should not exceed three months. Member States concerned should, before opting for a continuation, also examine whether alternative measures to border controls could achieve the same effect and should inform the other Member States, the European Parliament and the Commission of the outcome of this examination. Those Member States that opt to continue carrying out internal border controls pursuant to today's Recommendation should review weekly the necessity, frequency, location and time of controls, adjust the intensity of the controls to the level of the threat addressed, and phase them out wherever appropriate. Member States will now also have the obligation to provide detailed monthly reports on the controls carried out and their necessity.

The prolongation, which the Commission is recommending for a further period of three months, concerns the same internal borders as that recommended on 12 May:

- **Austria:** at the Austrian-Hungarian and Austrian-Slovenian land border;
- **Germany:** at the German-Austrian land border;
- **Denmark:** in Danish ports with ferry connections to Germany and at the Danish-German land border;
- **Sweden:** in Swedish harbours in the Police Region South and West and at the Öresund bridge;
- **Norway:** in Norwegian ports with ferry connections to Denmark, Germany and Sweden.

Background

The combination of serious deficiencies in the management of the external border by Greece at that time and the significant number of unregistered migrants present in Greece who may have sought to move irregularly to other Member States, created exceptional circumstances constituting a serious threat to public policy and internal security and endangering the overall functioning of the Schengen area. These exceptional circumstances led to the triggering of the safeguard procedure of Article 29 of the Schengen Borders Code and the adoption of the [Council Recommendation](#) on 12 May 2016 to maintain temporary proportionate controls at certain internal Schengen borders in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway for a period of six months.

On 28 September 2016, the Commission issued its [report](#) on the implementation of the Council Recommendation. The Commission concluded that the temporary internal border controls carried out by the Schengen Member States concerned have remained within the conditions set by the Council in its Recommendation. The controls have been limited to what is strictly necessary and proportionate in light of the serious threat to public policy and internal security posed by the risk of secondary movements of irregular migrants entering via Greece. The Commission further concluded that it saw no change of circumstances that would justify an amendment of the Recommendation at the moment of reporting.

For more information

[Council implementing decision setting out a Recommendation for prolonging temporary internal border control in exceptional circumstances putting the overall functioning of the Schengen area at risk](#)

[Questions and answers](#): A coordinated EU approach for temporary internal border controls

[FACTSHEET](#): The Schengen Rules Explained

Back to Schengen – [A Roadmap](#)

[Press release](#): Commission takes next steps towards lifting of temporary internal border controls

[Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on internal border controls](#)

[Press release](#): Commission adopts second Recommendation identifying steps to restore Dublin transfers to Greece

[Press release](#): Launch of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency

[Questions and answers](#): The new European Border and Coast Guard Agency

[Press release](#): Commission reports on progress made under the European Agenda on Migration

[Press release](#): Council adopts Commission proposal on next steps towards lifting of temporary border controls

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Press contacts:

[Natasha BERTAUD](#) (+32 2 296 74 56)

[Tove ERNST](#) (+32 2 298 67 64)

[Markus LAMMERT](#) (+ 32 2 298 04 23)

[Kasia KOLANKO](#) (+ 32 2 296 34 44)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)