

Minister for Immigration, Integration and Housing

The European Commission



Udlændinge-, Integrations-
og Boligministeriet

20th January 2016

Udlændinge-, Integrations- og
Boligministeriet

Dear Commissioner Avramopoulos,

As I informed you of by letter of 14 January 2016, the Danish Government has decided to prolong the border control at the Danish internal borders from 14 January 2016 until 3 February 2016.

The decision to prolong the border control was made in accordance with Article 23 and 25 of Regulation (EU) No 1051/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No. 562/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules of governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Border Code).

By letter of 15 January 2016, you have asked to receive any relevant information and in particular figures demonstrating the need and the proportionality of the decision to reintroduce temporary border control, as well as information on the concrete implementation of the controls at internal borders and their effects. You stress in your letter that the temporary reintroduction must not exceed what is strictly necessary to respond to the serious threat.

In Europe, the numbers of asylum seekers are historically high, and according to Frontex, there is an ongoing pressure on Europe's external borders. Our neighboring countries to the North have introduced and prolonged temporary border controls and ID-controls at their internal borders in order to reduce the numbers of asylum seekers. These measures have – as I mentioned during our meeting in Bruxelles two weeks ago – left Denmark with a serious risk to public policy and internal security if the Danish border control were to be lifted at this point.

In connection with the Danish decision to temporarily reintroduce border controls, police efforts in the border areas have been adjusted according to the following principles: The central element of police operations in the border regions has been shifted from controls inside the country to controls at the border. The border controls consist of spot checks based on continuous observation of traffic across the border. The controls are targeted towards passengers on the ferries to Rødby and Gedser and towards persons and vehicles crossing the Danish-German border in Southern Jutland. The situation is monitored closely, and the control effort is adjusted accordingly to ensure public order and internal security.

From 6 September 2015, where vast groups of immigrants and asylum seekers began to cross the Danish-German borders, until 4 January, the Danish Police assesses that a total of

Slotsholmsgade 10
Post 1216 København K
Phone. 7226 8400
E-mail uibm@uibm.dk
Web www.uibm.dk

CVR no. 36977191

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approximately 91,800 immigrants and asylum seekers have entered Denmark. From 4 January until 17 January, approximately 1,000 people have entered Denmark and approximately 55,000 people have been checked at border crossings. In that same period, 303 people have been refused entry and 47 people have been charged with human trafficking. The Danish Police has not since 4 January reported any build-up of illegal immigrants anywhere in the country.

Regarding asylum seekers, I can inform you that Denmark received a historical high number of asylum seekers in 2015 (around 21,300 asylum seekers). In November alone, Denmark received around 5,000 asylum seekers. Also the number of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers increased in 2015 from approximately 800 unaccompanied minor asylum seekers in 2014 to approximately 2,100 in 2015. The number peaked in November 2015 where Denmark received approximately 500 unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. In the first half of January 2016, Denmark has received around 1,000 asylum seekers including approximately 180 unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.

Up until the Swedish decision to temporarily introduce borders control on the Danish-Swedish border, the influx of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers into Sweden was very high. Even though the influx of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers into Denmark in the first half of January 2016 seems somewhat high, it is not as high as the influx into Sweden in late 2015.

Moreover, the Danish border control seems generally to have reduced the number of persons entering Denmark. Since the introduction of border control, the number of asylum seekers has also decreased.

The Danish Government is monitoring the situation at the borders very closely to secure that the scope and duration of the border control will not exceed what is strictly necessary to respond to the serious threat.

It is the opinion of the Danish Government that the Danish border control does not exceed what is strictly necessary in this situation. The border control is deemed to have had a preventive effect as the above figures give grounds to believe that fewer people have a desire to travel through Denmark. In this regard, the border control has resulted in maintaining public policy and internal security in Denmark.

Yours sincerely,



Inger Støjberg