
AUSTRIA SAYS EU EMERGENCY BORDER CHECKS MUST BE EXTENDED

13.10.2016

13.10.2016

Reuters

Austria said on Thursday emergency border checks imposed within Europe's free travel zone during the migrant crisis should be extended beyond the mid-November deadline as the bloc does not yet have the situation under control.

Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Austria introduced emergency border checks inside the so-called Schengen zone as the continent struggled to control the chaotic influx of about 1.3 million people last year.

Border controls were restored by countries along migration routes from the main arrival point in Greece to Germany, the top destination for refugees and migrants. But the emergency measures are only authorized until mid-November.

"I think you've got to take a look at the reality. In Greece there are 50,000 refugees ... and there are many in the Balkan countries," said Austrian Interior Minister Wolfgang Sobotka.

"So I can hardly imagine that the system will be functioning on Nov. 15. I think it will probably be necessary to have an extension or we have to think of other steps."

Diplomats in Brussels from several EU member states have said in recent days they do not expect to fully restore the Schengen zone, a major plank of European integration, just yet.

The EU's executive European Commission says it would like to return to normal by the end of the year but said last month the emergency border measures were still justified even though the number of migrant arrivals has dropped.

(Reporting by Gabriela Baczynska and Phil Blenkinsop; Editing by Janet Lawrence)

Kaynak/Source: