

# Germany requests border control extension for Austrian frontier

Germany's interior minister has defended a request to continue checks by accusing the EU of failing to protect its external borders. Germany is one of six countries that reimposed controls in the visa-free Schengen zone.



German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer on Thursday said he reached out to Brussels for permission to extend border control measures on the German-Austrian frontier.

Since the height of the migration crisis in 2015, Germany has imposed border checks on its border with Austria. German authorities currently perform checks at three cross-border highways and other alternating locations on that frontier.

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Seehofer cited security and irregular migration as the primary reasons for extending border checks. However, he also criticized the EU's inability to curb irregular migration at its external borders.

"Deficits in the protection of the EU external borders and the scale of the illegal, secondary migration at the moment allow no other conclusion than that domestic

border controls at the German-Austrian border remain necessary,” Seehofer said in a statement released by the Interior Ministry.



German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer has been a vocal critic of German Chancellor Angel Merkel’s policy on refugees

### **Border controls in visa-free zone**

Seehofer has been a vocal critic of German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s open-door policy for refugees, especially those from Syria.

In 2015, nearly 900,000 people entered the country irregularly, many of them fleeing conflict and extreme poverty in the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

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Other Schengen countries have imposed temporary border controls, including France, Austria, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The latest round of temporary German measures was set to expire in May.

Under Schengen zone rules, countries are not allowed to impose border controls unless “a serious threat to public policy or internal security has been established.” The controls are limited to three-month extensions, although some EU member states are looking to change that.

Germany is a founding member of the 26-country visa-free Schengen zone.

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