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**The Ministers of Home Affairs of the
EU and Schengen countries**

Brussels, 20 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus in Europe requires vigorous action. The primary objective is to do everything possible to protect the public health of our citizens.

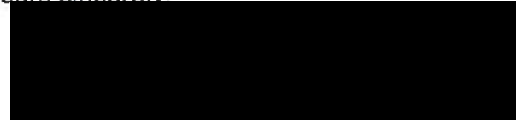
In Belgium, measures have already been taken in various domains.

In light of the most recent developments, the National Security Council decided on 17 March to further strengthen social distancing measures. For example it was decided to ban all gatherings and non-essential movements. These measures are in force at least until 5 April.

We are assessing the situation closely and today I believe that we should go even further. As it is under these circumstances a priority for the Belgian government to enforce the provisions of the ministerial decree of 18 March 2020 that prohibits non-essential movements, I have decided to make use of the option to temporarily reintroduce border control at all the internal borders in accordance with Article 28 of Regulation (EU) 2016/399 (Schengen Borders Code) from today 20 March 2020 at 15.00, for an initial period of ten days.

Please rest assured that the border controls will only be carried out to the extent necessary and in a proportionate way, and that the Belgian authorities will work particularly closely with the authorities of neighbouring countries. Traffic of goods, and movements of persons for the purpose of frontier work or returning home to their residence on the territory of a country of the European Union will not be impeded.

Yours sincerely



Pieter De Crem