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The Ministers of Home Affairs of the
EU and Schengen countries

Brussels, 30 April 2020

Dear Colleagues,

By letters of 20 March, 30 March and 17 April, I informed you about the temporary reintroduction of border controls at all internal Belgian borders in accordance with article 28 of the Schengen Borders Code in order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This last notification covers a period until 8 May.

Last Friday April 24th, the Belgian National Security Council decided on a first timeframe for the Belgium strategy to ease and leave confinement in three phases. In the first two phases we will give priority on restoring economic activity and the opening of schools. Only in a third phase, that will certainly not start earlier than June 8th, we will consider the possibility of reopening our internal borders for other than essential movements. Specific timing will depend on the evolution of the health situation and the risk of spread of the COVID 19-virus in Belgium and in the neighboring countries. We continue to assess the situation on a daily basis and we will continue organizing close concertations with our neighboring countries.

I therefore have to notify a further extension of this measure on the base of article 28 SBC until May 19th. At that moment the maximum period of 2 months, provided for in article 28 SBC, will be covered.

As mentioned before, Belgium will however not be able to lift internal border controls at that date. As non-essential travels to or from our territory will not be permitted until at least 8 June, I have to notify further internal border controls, based on article 25 and 27 SBC after 19 May at least until 8 June. I will keep you informed of any further necessary extension of this measure.

As stated in my first letter of 20 March, the controls at the internal borders are necessary to ensure that the measures of non-essential movements and social distancing, as adopted by the government, are complied with on the whole Belgian territory.

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 continue working particularly closely with the authorities of neighboring countries. Traffic of goods, and movements of persons for the purpose of cross border work or returning home to their residence on the territory of a country of the European Union will not be impeded, and where possible, facilitated. Even if several local authorities have taken the initiative to close a number of border crossings on local roads, passage at all primary border crossings remains fully assured.



Pieter De Crem