Brussels, 13 September 2011

NOTE

from: Swedish delegation
to: Working Party on Frontiers/Mixed Committee (EU-Iceland/Liechtenstein/Norway/Switzerland)

Subject: Report on temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders in accordance with Article 29 of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code)

Delegations will find attached a copy of the letter received by the General Secretariat of the Council on 12 September 2011 concerning the report on the temporary reintroduction of border controls by Sweden at internal borders on 22 - 23 July 2011.
Brussels, 9 September 2011

Director-General
Ivan Bizjak
General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
rue de la Loi, 175
1048 Bruxel

Report on the temporary reintroduction of border control at the Swedish internal borders

Dear Director-General,


Background

Following the serious events that took place in Norway on 22 July 2011, the head of the National Bureau of Investigation within the Swedish National Police Board decided in the late evening to reintroduce border control at the Swedish internal borders. The border control was lifted in the morning the following day. The decision was made in accordance with Articles 23 and 25 of the Schengen Borders Code.

Initial steps

Based on the information gathered - even though scarce at first - the Swedish National Police Board together with the Swedish Security Service assessed that it would be necessary to reintroduce border control at internal borders. This assessment was based partly on the assumption that the attacks could have been carried out by several
people. In addition, a possible link to the terrorist attack in Stockholm in December 2010 could not be ruled out at that time. Therefore, it was concluded that border control would be an effective way to search for possible accomplices in order to prevent further attacks. Furthermore, Norwegian authorities decided to reintroduce border control immediately after the attacks had occurred and, in their contact with Swedish Police, saw the benefit of Swedish authorities to follow suit.

Consequently, the Swedish National Police Board decided to reintroduce border control at internal borders after which all 21 county police authorities were ordered to implement the decision. According to the decision border control was to be in effect from 11 p.m. on 22 July and be carried out until 25 July, pending further decisions. The Swedish Security Service and the Government Offices were also informed about the decision.

The Government Offices, via the Swedish Permanent Representation to the European Union, in its turn on 23 July 2011, sent an e-mail to the European Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council, informing about the temporary reintroduction of border control at the internal borders as well as to all Member States and Schengen Associated Countries. The Swedish Permanent Representation furthermore informed, through e-mail and by a following signed letter, the Chairman of the Committee of on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs; Mr Juan Fernando López Aguilar of the European Parliament, about the same thing on 27 July 2011. However, by then the border control at internal borders had already been lifted again.

Measures taken by county police authorities

Besides the counties close to the Norwegian border - including the Greater Gothenburg Region, the Stockholm and Malmö regions were the most affected by the decision, due to the large amount of international travel to and from these regions.

At Stockholm-Arlanda International Airport the existing personnel was reorganised shortly after receiving the decision in order to implement the decision on border control at internal borders. The same procedure was carried out later that morning at Stockholm-
Skavsta International airport. No extra border checks at Stockholm’s major ports were carried out, since there were no scheduled calls at the passenger terminals during the night. In the Malmö region extra personnel was ordered to carry out border checks at the Öresund connection from Denmark, at the major ports in the county and at Malmö Airport.

In most of the counties bordering Norway, preparations concerning border control were made in close co-operation with Norwegian police before a decision was taken on a national level in Sweden, bearing in mind that Norwegian authorities had already decided to reintroduce border control at internal borders. Following the decision from the Swedish National Police Board, most of the aforementioned counties had already commandeered extra personnel that quickly were able to carry out border control, which mostly consisted of checking vehicles crossing the land border into Sweden.

Some counties along the Baltic coast with intra-Schengen maritime traffic also carried out extended border control following the decision from the Swedish National Police Board.

As mentioned above, all the county police authorities in Sweden were alerted following the terrorist attacks in Norway and were ordered to carry out border control at internal borders when necessary. Obviously some of the inland districts with no international traffic were less affected by the decision on border control. Therefore, in a few counties the decision by the National Police Board did not lead to extra measures being taken other than personnel being on high alert.

Closing measures

Early on 23 July the Swedish National Police Board was informed by Norwegian authorities that the suspected culprit of the attacks in Norway was apprehended and that there were no suspicions of any accomplices being involved. Therefore, the head of the National Bureau of Investigation decided that the border control was to be lifted on 9 a.m. on 23 July.

Results and conclusions
None of the border checks that were carried out during the short period of time in which the decision was in effect resulted in any arrests or refused entries.

Obviously the border control were primarily concentrated to passenger traffic to and from Norway. In this respect, the good cooperation with Norwegian authorities was of the utmost importance.

However, due to the short period of time in which the decision was in effect, the time of day and the short amount of time for preparations preceding the decision, the reintroduction of border control at internal borders had limited effect.

I would be grateful if you could pass on this information to all Member States and Schengen Associated Countries.

Yours faithfully,