

German Minister Calls on Merkel to Close Borders to Refugees



Berlin, January 19 (RHC)-- A German minister has called on Chancellor Angela Merkel to close the country's borders to incoming refugees from conflict zones. German Transport Minister Alexander Dobrindt told the Muenchner Merkur newspaper that Berlin must prevent refugees from crossing into Germany and even act alone if it cannot reach a Europe-wide deal on resettling them in the continent.

"We must prepare ourselves for not being able to avoid border closures," said Dobrindt, who is a member of the Christian Social Union (CSU), the Bavarian sister party to Merkel's conservative Christian Democrats (CDU).

The CSU has intensified pressure on Merkel over her open-door refugee policy, which saw thousands of refugees arrive in Germany last year. CSU leader Horst Seehofer also told Der Spiegel magazine in a weekend interview he would send the federal government a written request within the next two weeks to restore "orderly conditions" at the country's borders. Bavaria is the main entry point to Germany for refugees.

Merkel has pledged to "measurably reduce" arrivals in 2016, but has refused to introduce a cap, saying it would be impossible to enforce without closing German borders. Instead, she has tried to convince other European nations to take in quotas of refugees, has pushed for reception centers to be built on Europe's external borders, and led an EU campaign to persuade Turkey to keep refugees from entering the bloc.

Europe is facing an unprecedented influx of refugees who are fleeing conflict-ridden zones in Africa and the Middle East, particularly Syria.

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