

Austrian Minister Says Schengen on the Brink of Collapse



Amsterdam, January 27 (RHC)-- Austrian Interior Minister Johanna Mikl-Leitner says that Europe's passport-free travel system in the 26-country Schengen area may soon collapse. Mikl-Leitner made the comment following an eight-hour-long EU interior ministers meeting held in the Dutch capital Amsterdam, The Guardian reported on Tuesday.

The talks were held over the possible extension of national border controls in the Schengen zone to deal with the influx of refugees pouring into Europe. In a bid to curb the influx of asylum seekers, several EU states, including Germany and Austria, have introduced a border checking system due to expire in May.

According to Dutch Migration Minister Klaas Dijkhoff, EU governments are calling on the European Commission for authorization to extend the border controls past the May expiry date. Such a move would deal a severe blow to the Schengen system's main principle of free travel within Europe.

The EU is facing its worst refugee crisis since World War II with more than a million estimated to have entered the continent in 2015 while a record number is expected for this year.

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