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Persistent concerns about Danish border measures - European Commission to intensify monitoring

On 14 July, European Commission experts visited Denmark as part of the dialogue with the Danish authorities on the implementation of measures aimed at reinforcing internal controls at the Danish borders. The experts had meetings with the relevant Danish authorities in Copenhagen and visited the Danish-German and Danish-Swedish borders. In a first assessment the experts reported that they were unable to get sufficient justifications from the Danish side for the intensification of the controls at the internal borders. In particular, according to the experts, the risk assessment required to justify the controls was not sufficient and there were no clear instructions to border control officers on how to carry out controls. There also does not seem to be a structured reporting mechanism about the numbers of controls and the results of the intensified border checks.

European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström, who coordinates the work of the European Commission's services involved, expressed her worries about the situation: *"Unfortunately, the mission did not enable us to get adequate answers to our questions. There are persistent concerns about the compatibility of Denmark's strengthened internal control measures with the freedoms provided under the EU Treaty including the Schengen acquis. It is incumbent on Denmark to demonstrate factually that the gravity of the situation justifies putting in place controls which might affect the exercise of free movement of goods, services and persons at the internal borders with Germany and Sweden. We have already sent a letter to the Danish authorities to get further clarifications. The result of the mission makes it even more necessary to establish a reinforced dialogue with the Danish authorities and to put in place a strict monitoring system based on regular information from the Danish authorities, not excluding further visits if necessary. The Commission will not hesitate to use all tools at its disposal to guarantee free movement of goods, services and persons and the full respect of EU legislation".*