



By: TA | AP Brief

Poland is reinstating border controls with Germany



Poland will temporarily reinstate border controls with neighboring Germany and Lithuania, in response to border restriction taken by Germany to discourage asylum-seekers, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said Tuesday.

The decision comes after new German Chancellor Friedrich Merz made tougher migration **policy** a pillar of his election campaign in February.

After he took office in May, Germany **stationed** more police at the border and said some asylum-seekers **trying** to enter Europe's biggest economy would be turned away.

Even before that, Merz's predecessor in February had **extended** by six months the border checks Germany had imposed on all its frontiers last fall as it attempted to cut the number of migrants arriving in the country.

Tusk said that "the German side refuses to allow migrants to enter its territory. ... The change in practice introduced tensions and a sense of asymmetry," according to Polish state broadcaster TVP.

He said he had discussed the issue with Merz, "informing him that the patient position of Poland is slowly being exhausted."

The European Union has a visa-free travel area known as Schengen that **allows** citizens of most member states to travel easily across borders for work and pleasure. Switzerland also belongs to Schengen although it is not an EU member.

According to the EU, member states are allowed to temporarily reintroduce border controls in cases of a serious threat, like internal security. It says border controls should be applied as a last resort in exceptional situations, and must be limited in time.

A signal that migration policy in Germany has changed

In the past, Tusk has repeatedly **denounced** Germany's temporary border measures as "unacceptable."

Several of Germany's neighbors have also recently expressed dismay at the enforced border controls by Berlin, saying it slows down cross-border traffic of daily commuters and threatens visa-free Schengen travel.

Tusk said Tuesday the temporary measures will come into force on Monday, the Polish news agency PAP reported.

Just before Tusk's announcement, Merz had told reporters at a press conference in Berlin that his government was in very close contact with the Polish government to keep the impact of Germany's border controls with Poland "as low as possible."

Germany's government coordinator for German-Polish relations and cross-border cooperation expressed concern about the German-Polish border controls.

"The German border controls are necessary as a political signal that migration policy in Germany has changed," Knut Abraham told the German daily Welt.

"But we can also see that the controls are putting a massive strain on coexistence in the border region."

"The solution cannot be to push migrants back and forth between Poland and Germany or to cement border controls on both sides," he said.