Germany to reintroduce border controls with five countries

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Germany will reintroduce border controls with France, Austria, Switzerland, Luxemburg and Denmark from Monday morning due to the coronavirus crisis, interior minister Horst Seehofer said Sunday.

"The spread of the coronavirus is progressing quickly and aggressively...

one of the most important measures will be to cut off the chain of infection," Seehofer told reporters as he announced the new [border controls](link).

The measures will take effect at 8:00 am (0700 GMT) Monday, with goods and cross-border commuters exempt.

German citizens and people with a residency permit will be allowed to return to the country.

People "without a significant reason to travel" and those suspected of having been infected with the virus will not be allowed to cross the affected borders, he said.

Seehofer stressed the new controls would be temporary, and would be reassessed "from time to time".

But the high point of the coronavirus crisis had not yet been reached, he warned, urging citizens to avoid [social contact](link).

The decision had been taken after the Robert Koch Institute, which is responsible for [public health](link) in Germany, had declared that the French border region of Alsace-Lorraine as a risk area.

"This sparked a lot of questions and unrest in the neighbouring states," he said.

Paris, meanwhile, said the decision had been taken in coordination with the French government.

Goth French and German officials said the border closure would not be total.

"We are going to limit [border](#) crossings to the strict minimum, while allowing people and merchandise to go through. It's not a closure," a French interior ministry source told AFP.

In Berlin, national police chief Dieter Romann also said: "We are not closing the borders".

While Germany's measures only apply to five countries, other neighbouring countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic have also closed their borders or introduced severe restrictions.

With Europe now considered to be the epicentre of the pandemic, pressure had been mounting from some politicians to reintroduce borders controls before Sunday's announcement.

Germany has so far recorded 4,838 confirmed infections and 12 confirmed deaths.

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