

European Commission Warns Italy-Austria Border Controls Equal Political Catastrophe



Brussels, May 9 (RHC)-- European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker warns that the imposition of controls by Austria on its border with Italy will be a “political catastrophe” for Europe.

The warning comes after Vienna threatened to resume checks on the Brenner Pass between Austria and Italy as part of a package of anti-refugee measures in case Rome does not do more to reduce the number of new arrivals heading to Austria.

In an interview with the German news organization Funke Mediengruppe, Junker said the Alpine route is a major European transport corridor and a key link between the north and south of the continent.

Junker criticized Vienna’s response to the refugee crisis, which he said had tempted other countries to close their borders while making far-right politics “presentable” elsewhere in Europe.

Austrian Interior Minister Wolfgang Sobotka said in the Italian capital, Rome, last month that as many as a million refugees were poised to cross the Mediterranean from Libya this year. Italy, however, claims the figure is much lower.

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