

Austria to Build Slovenia Border Fence to 'Control' Migrant Flow

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28/10/2015



Both countries are part of the passport-free Schengen zone and have been key transit countries for tens of thousands of refugees and migrants desperately seeking to reach northern Europe via the Balkans.

"This is about ensuring an orderly, controlled entry into our country, not about shutting down the border," she told public broadcaster Oe1.

The politician of the conservative OeVP party added that the situation risked escalating as people were forced to wait in freezing temperatures for hours before being allowed to cross from one nation into another.

"We know that in recent days and weeks individual groups of migrants have become more impatient, aggressive and emotional. If groups of people push from behind, with children and women stuck in-between, you need stable, massive measures," Mikl-Leitner said.

On Tuesday, the minister had already hinted at the fence during a visit to the Spielfeld border crossing, saying that she was considering "structural measures" to be implemented at the checkpoint.

Last week, she drew strong criticism from opposition members for saying that it was time for the EU to "build fortress Europe".

But the Socialist Democrats (SPOe), who are in a ruling national coalition with the

Conservatives, today appeared to side with Mikl-Leitner.

SPOe Defence Minister Gerald Klug said he could imagine barriers and containers at the Spielfeld border "to be able to control the migrants in an orderly manner".

More than 700,000 people fleeing war and misery have reached Europe's Mediterranean shores so far this year, with a majority coming from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

From Greece, they begin a gruelling trek through the western Balkans and central Europe in the hope of reaching the EU's economic powerhouse Germany, the preferred destination for many migrants.

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