

X/13 C/S - BORDER VISAS AGAIN AVAILABLE FOR C/S TOURISTS

VIENNA, AUG 28 (RFE SPECIAL/KOCH) -- THE ISSUING OF 14-DAY TOURIST VISAS FOR CZECHOSLOVAKS AT AUSTRIAN BORDER STATIONS, WAS REINSTATED ON TUESDAY EVENING, THE AUSTRIAN INTERIOR MINISTRY ANNOUNCED. THE PRACTICE HAD BEEN CANCELLED SUNDAY.

THE DECISION TO REVOKE THE CANCELLATION WAS MADE BY THE INTERIOR MINISTRY WHICH SAID THAT IT HAD DETERMINED THAT THE ISSUING OF THE VISAS WOULD NOT CREATE THE BURDEN OF PAPERWORK IT HAD ORIGINALLY FEARED.

THE INTERIOR MINISTRY ALSO RETREATED ON ITS POSITION THAT THE ISSUANCE OF BORDER VISAS COULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO INTERNAL SECURITY.

THE DECISION TO STOP ISSUING VISAS AT THE BORDER HAD RESULTED IN HARDSHIP FOR A NUMBER OF TOURISTS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA WHO HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED OF THE CANCELLATION AND HAD TRIED TO ENTER AUSTRIA IN UPPER AUSTRIA, FAR FROM THE NEXT VISA OFFICE IN EITHER PRAGUE OR BRATISLAVA.

PROTESTS HAD ALSO BEEN LODGED WITH THE AUSTRIAN INTERIOR MINISTRY BY OFFICIALS FROM REFUGEES ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA.

BG/HE *huc* 1443/68

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