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## Germany Considers Tightening the Rules for Syrian Refugees

BERLIN — The German government is considering restoring controls on Syrian refugees arriving here after fleeing war in their homeland, and will significantly tighten rules allowing refugees to bring their families here, the Interior Ministry said on Friday.

The announcement followed weeks of mounting doubt about whether Germany has the capacity to handle almost 800,000 refugees who have arrived so far this year and who could total more than a million by year's end.

Chancellor Angela Merkel and her government have come under fire at home and abroad, accused of triggering the influx of refugees from Syria and elsewhere when the German office overseeing migration said in August that it would no longer check Syrian arrivals. Those pursuing asylum had already been arriving in Central Europe in ever-increasing numbers earlier in the summer, but the pace quickened after that statement.

A spokesman for the Interior Ministry, Johannes Dimroth, said by telephone on Friday that the proposal now was to “return to what was the case before” August for migrants arriving from Syria.

The change has not yet been carried out, another spokesman, Tobias Plate, said by email, and would first have to be discussed in the coalition government.

The three parties in Ms. Merkel's coalition — her Christian Democrats, the Bavarian Christian Social Union and the center-left Social Democrats — just ended weeks of bickering on Thursday

and announced an agreement to tighten admission of migrants, as well as to process and deport more quickly those who do not qualify for asylum or refugee status.

The agreement stipulated that “in order to cope with the current situation better,” new arrivals applying to stay will have to wait two years before being allowed to bring families to Germany.

It also provides for three to five reception centers nationwide for migrants who come from countries considered safe — in the western Balkans, for example — and have little hope of getting asylum.

Their applications to stay will be processed within three weeks of arrival. While awaiting a decision, migrants in these centers will be restricted to that district and will lose all benefits if breaking these rules.

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