EU calls emergency talks on new coronavirus

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But for any such measure to be imposed in Europe the 27 EU members would have to coordinate the decision, since most of them are in the Schengen passport-free travel area.

The virus, which first emerged at the end of last year, has killed more than 900 people. Some 40,000 people have been infected in China and 350 elsewhere.

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The European Union will host an extraordinary meeting of health ministers on Thursday, along with a WHO envoy, to discuss the novel coronavirus outbreak.

So far, only around 30 cases of the new strain have been detected in Europe, but the World Health Organisation warns that cases outside China could accelerate.

"Now is the time to join forces to stop this epidemic," said European Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarcic.

The EU ministers discuss ways to prevent the virus' spread and "adopt conclusions in relation to the EU response to the novel coronavirus outbreak".

Last week, German health minister Jens Spahn suggested at a meeting with his French counterpart Agnes Buzyn that Europe impose restrictions on travellers from China.

The United States has already banned the arrival of foreign nationals who have visited China recently.

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