

Conclusions

Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference

Pleven, 20-21 September 2007

On the occasion of their conference held on 20th September 2007 in Pleven, Bulgaria, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries,

Adopted the following

CONCLUSIONS

I. Prevention of and fight against organised crime

1. The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries acknowledge the necessity for setting up a comprehensive architecture for EU internal security as an integral part in establishing a single area of freedom, security and justice, bearing in mind that such process is a long term.
2. In this context, they decide to strengthen the police cooperation in the field of prevention and fight against organised crime, giving priority to the following activities:
 - Enhancing the exchange of analytical information and experience regarding the functional and structural distinctive characteristics of the organised crime groups;
 - Taking more concrete, specific measures in view of improving the existing cooperation in the light of setting up the comprehensive architecture for the EU internal security;
 - Enhancing the multi-disciplinary intelligence-led approach;
 - Enhancing the cooperation on DNA analysis.
3. The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries welcome the political agreement reached at the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Luxembourg (12 -13 June 2007) on the formal adoption of the Council Decision on stepping up cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime transporting the Prüm Treaty provisions and on the completion of the negotiations regarding Council Decision implementing the ATIA (The Administrative Technical Implementing Agreement) by the end of this year.
4. In addition, they call for swift adoption of the relevant initiatives that will allow access of the competent law enforcement authorities of the EU Member States and Europol to VIS and EURODAC with the purpose of preventing, detecting and investigating terrorism and other serious crimes.

5. In the light of the trends outlined in OCTA 2006 together with the assessment in OCTA 2007, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries decided also to continue their active cooperation with third countries in view of practically implementing the EU priorities.
6. Taking into account the recently failed terrorist attacks in the UK, Denmark and Germany, and the dismantled terrorist groups in Austria, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries emphasise the need for enhancing cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism.

II. Security of the EU external borders

7. The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries welcome the Schengen enlargement and the recent progress in the implementation of the SISOne4ALL project. The Schengen evaluation process of the new Member States is in compliance with the politically accepted time schedule and the dates for lifting the checks at internal land, maritime, and air borders, as foreseen in the June Council Conclusions, remain realistic.
8. The resulting strengthening of cross-border police cooperation is a major opportunity for the enhancement of freedom and security within the EU.
9. The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries underline that enhanced and efficient border control at the EU external borders is essential for establishing a single area of freedom, security and justice.
10. In compliance with the principle of solidarity and shared responsibility in the common policy on the EU external borders management, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries express their support for FRONTEX, and are looking forward to a discussion based on the EC Evaluation Report on FRONTEX in 2008.
11. The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries underline that the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU on 1 January 2007 has given a new dimension to the South-Eastern borders of the Union, thus emphasizing the importance of the security of the Black Sea Region for the Union.
12. In this context, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries support the initiative on establishing a European Patrol Network and a European Surveillance System for Borders.
13. The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries support the extension of the geographic scope of the initiative to all external borders and its subsequent implementation in the Black Sea Region, a useful tool to achieve this goal being in the Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Centre in Burgas.

III. EU Migration Policy

14. The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries refer to the European Council Conclusions and the GAERC Conclusions with regard to Commission's Communications on Applying the Global Approach to Migration to the Eastern and South-Eastern Regions Neighbouring the European Union, and the Communication of the Commission on Circular Migration and Mobility Partnerships between the EU and Third Countries.
15. In this regard, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries support the enhancement of the dialogue with the Western Balkan countries on issues related to illegal migration and trafficking in human beings, taking into account the comprehensive geographic coverage of the Global Approach to Migration.
16. Recognising the importance of the Black Sea Region with regard to migration and fight against trafficking in human beings, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries support the implementation of the Global Approach to Migration with regard also to the Black Sea Region countries.

IV. Establishment of the Group of Friends of the Salzburg Forum

17. Recognising that partnership with third countries is an important task of the Salzburg Forum, and welcoming the initiative of the Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr. Franco Frattini, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries decide to establish the Group of Friends of the Salzburg Forum as a platform for active dialogue and close cooperation. As a first step of this initiative, the Ministers will focus on the Western Balkan countries, not excluding inviting other third countries into a dialogue.

Pleven, 20 September 2007