

Declaration

on the establishment of the Group of the Friends of the Salzburg Forum from the Western Balkans.

Pleven, 20-21 September 2007

The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries, the delegation of the Republic of Croatia, having an Observer statute, and the Ministers/delegations of the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Macedonia¹, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Montenegro, within the framework of the Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference held in Pleven on 20 – 21 September 2007;

RECOGNIZING the current global challenges to security and the necessity of joint efforts and work to address the threats related to organised crime, terrorism, illegal immigration, and corruption;

UNDERLINING the high responsibility towards our citizens to guarantee their security and safety;

SHARING the common aim to work towards enhanced area of freedom, security and justice between the EU and its partners, as stated in the Vienna Declaration on Security Partnership of 5 May 2006;

DETERMINED to raise the level of security and stability in the region through enhanced partnership at political and operational level, oriented towards the implementation of specific activities and the achievement of effective practical results;

UNDERLINING the benefit of maintaining continuous dialogue and the significance of further enhancing of the existing contacts and interaction at political and operational level in the field of internal security;

RECOGNIZING the European perspective of the Western Balkans countries and the individual progress that each of them has achieved in the process of its European integration, as well as underlining the positive impact which their achievements in the field of justice and home affairs can have on the stability and democracy in the whole region;

UNDERLINING the necessity of effective coordination of the cooperation in the framework of the Salzburg Forum with the other international, regional and bilateral initiatives and activities, such as SEECP, SECI, Brdo Process, Varna Process, etc.:

¹ FYROM

DECLARE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GROUP OF THE FRIENDS OF THE SALZBURG FORUM FROM THE WESTERN BALKANS

The Friends of the Salzburg Forum is a **platform for dialogue and cooperation** between the Salzburg Forum countries. In this regard, a meeting was held on the 21 September 2007 in Pleven with representatives from the Western Balkan countries.

The relations with the neighbouring regions are of a particular interest to the Salzburg Forum countries, and to the EU as a whole, and are aiming at enhancing the internal security through further development of the regional cooperation.

The cooperation between the Salzburg Forum and its Friends is based on a balanced and flexible approach, aiming to ensure maximum coordination and coherence in their joint activities, thus avoiding unduly duplication and overlap of efforts and resources.

The common goal of the Salzburg Forum countries and their Friends from the Western Balkans is to enhance the level of security of the citizens and to contribute to the further stabilisation of the region.

The additional strengthening of mutual trust is one of the most important prerequisites for an active and successful partnership.

The Salzburg Forum countries will actively support their Friends from the Western Balkans on their way to European integration. They will also encourage and assist them in the adoption and effective implementation of European standards and practices in the field of justice and home affairs, and more specifically towards achieving the European security standards regarding fight against terrorism, organised crime, corruption and illegal migration, building upon the results achieved so far.

The basic approach in the activities of the Salzburg Forum regarding its Friends will be a thematic one, defined by issues of common interest. In such cases, the Friends from the Western Balkans will be invited to meetings in the framework of the Salzburg Forum.

The Friends from the Western Balkans on their part will inform their partners from the Salzburg Forum on their initiatives, activities and projects within in framework of other fora for cooperation, including on the progress in the implementation of joint activities with the EU. Possibilities for implementing projects within the framework of the new Instrument for Pre-accession Aid (IPA) can be discussed.

Pleven, 21 September 2007

