

## **EU Strategy Declaration of the Salzburg Forum**

**Göttweig (Wachau), 27-28 July**

Pursuant to the Joint Declaration of Ministers of Interior of the Salzburg Forum on 22 and 23 May 2006 in Bratislava, the Partners of the Salzburg Group have emphasized as a common objective to intensify the lobbying in EU Home Affairs matters in various EU bodies to foster common interests.

Following the agreement of the Salzburg Forum meeting in Bratislava on 23 May 2006, the Ministers herewith welcome the participation of Croatia as an observer.

Against this background and in order to further implement the Hague Programme the Salzburg Forum Partners will focus on strengthening their cooperation in the following areas:

**1. Fight against organised crime and corruption** – further strengthening the instruments and operational abilities against organised crime, considering that the fight against organised crime also requires adequate measures against corruption with special focus on:

- Modernising and strengthening Europol according to the accomplished „Option Report“ and in line with the Council Conclusions on the Future of Europol adopted at the JHA-Council in June 2006.

As a first step, a political decision on the legal procedure and content of the future legal basis of Europol should be achieved under the Finnish Presidency.

- Strengthening the cooperation in the fight against trafficking in human beings, especially of children and women; for example in the framework of the future Austrian led COSPOL project starting in autumn 2006.
- Promotion and further development of the EU wide Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) and close cooperation concerning the priorities defined in the OCTA, specifically with regard to heroine trafficking, illegal migration and trafficking in human beings in South East Europe.
- Adoption of the implementation of the anti corruption-network.
- Preparation for and implementation of the exchange of DNA data among the law enforcement authorities based on the principle of availability and taking into account the solutions foreseen by the Prüm Treaty.

**2. Fight against terrorism** – actively supporting the implementation of the recently updated EU Counter Terrorism Action Plan as well as the Action Plan on Radicalisation and Recruitment, in particular, focusing on the following:

- Continuing the implementation of all relevant legal and operational measures foreseen in the Action Plan.
- Strengthening the dialogue of cultures and religions within the EU and its surrounding areas with a specific focus on the situation in the Western Balkans.
- Supporting SitCen and Europol via the National Security Services in the assessment on radicalisation and recruitment in the Western Balkans to be presented by November 2006.
- Exchange of best practices in the field of protection of critical infrastructure (e.g. protection of computer networks)

**3. Schengen enforcement** – focusing on a swift abolition of border controls with new Member States while fully maintaining quality standards, the Salzburg Forum encourages:

- The timely completion of the Schengen Information System (SIS II) and the Visa-Information System (VIS) in 2007 in order to lift the internal border controls as soon as possible **taking into account the schedule approved in the Hague Program and reaffirmed by the Conclusions of the European Council in July 2006.**
- An open information exchange in order to identify gaps between the central implementation and the national level and consequently the facilitation of the implementation of national systems.
- The Forum Salzburg partners will work towards a common political position on the further procedure of the Schengen enforcement.

**4. Asylum, migration, border management** – developing a common EU asylum system, an EU migration policy and an integrated external border management, with emphasis on:

- Defining the further steps towards a common EU asylum system.
- Further strengthening cooperation between asylum authorities, for example by improving the exchange of information and launching the Common Portal for Country of Origin Information.
- Promotion of Regional Protection Programs with a specific focus on the regions bordering the EU in the East.
- Developing a common position concerning the forthcoming discussion on the EU's approach to fight illegal migration
- Establishing common standards for return.
- Supporting the Commission in its efforts to conclude readmission agreements with third countries currently pending and adopt new negotiating mandates as appropriate.
- Continuing the organisation of joint return flights coordinated by FRONTEX.
- Rapid implementation and rollout of the VIS as well as the usage of the VIS for law enforcement purposes.

- Taking further the establishment of common visa application centres.

**5. Crisis and disaster management** – strengthening the cooperation on crisis and disaster management on a European and international level by

- Implementing the accomplished requirements for rapid and coordinated actions of the EU in disasters within and outside the EU – ensuring a common political approach in case of an international crisis or disaster.
- Taking forward the co-ordination and cooperation between EU and UN.
- Enhancing cooperation at regional level in order to strengthen the security within the EU and in the EU neighbourhood.

**6. External strategy** – promoting the implementation of the JHA Relex Strategy together with EU neighbouring countries in the East, Southeast and South, as well as the Russian Federation and the United States of America based on the concept "Partnership for Security" between the EU and interested third countries as laid down in the "Vienna Declaration" from 5 May 2006. In particular, the following priorities shall be taken into account

- Strengthening the cooperation with the Western Balkans countries in order to provide assistance for achieving EU security standards and to support them on their way towards future EU membership.
- Implementing the "Action-Oriented Paper on Improving Cooperation, on Organised Crime, Corruption, Illegal Immigration and Counter-terrorism, between the EU, Western Balkans" adopted under the Austrian EU presidency.
- Strengthening regional initiatives in South East Europe in the fight against organised crime and corruption, drugs, illegal migration and terrorism, including the Brdo process and the "Police Cooperation Convention for South East Europe".
- Adopting mandates for readmission and visa facilitation agreements with the countries of the Western Balkans<sup>1</sup> as well as providing full support for the Commission negotiating these agreements.
- Deepening the cooperation with the countries in the eastern neighbourhood of the EU, aiming at the establishment of a comprehensive "Partnership for Security".
- Preparing the Action-Oriented Paper dealing with the relevant ENP countries in the East.
- Fully supporting the Commission's negotiations for readmission and visa facilitation agreement with Ukraine.

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<sup>1</sup> We take into account that Albania has already concluded a readmission agreement with the EU.

- Fully supporting the Commission's activities directed at the preparation of the negotiations of a readmission and visa facilitation agreement with Moldova.
- Supporting a future "Tripartite Cooperative Relationship in the field of Justice and Home Affairs" ("Vienna Initiative") between the Ministers of the Interior of the EU, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, aiming at a first formal meeting under the German EU Presidency.
- Continuing the debate on the visa facilitation with the US, Canada and Australia.
- Supporting the process of democratisation and development of neighbouring countries of the EU by joint activities in the area of freedom, security and justice.
- Supporting the Finnish Presidency in the preparation of the first progress report of the JHA external activities due by December 2006.

Göttweig, 28 July 2006