



SALZBURG FORUM MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Bucharest, 15 June 2018

JOINT DECLARATION

Upon the invitation of the Romanian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum, the Ministers of Interior of the Salzburg Forum Member States met in Bucharest, Romania, on 14-15 June 2018.

Based on the 18-month work programme 2017-2018, the ongoing Romanian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum coordinated its activities with Hungary and Poland, Romania's partners in the trio-presidency of the Salzburg Forum.

The Ministerial Conference was preceded by technical seminars as well as a working session with the Friends of the Salzburg Forum from the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova.

The Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference provided a great opportunity for extensive discussions among the ministers as well as with representatives of the European Commission, Europol, UNHCR, ICMPD, SELEC, PCC SEE.

The main challenges discussed were as follows:

Border management and interoperability

The Ministers shared their views on the announced intentions of the EU Commission on further increasing the operational capacity of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, and a more coordinated approach of the EU in the protection of its external borders. They analyzed the key issues for developing the European Integrated Border Management Strategy (IBM) as presented by the Commission, the possible obstacles in implementing the IBM at national level and the future plans for thematic evaluations. The Ministers highlighted the need to work actively on the implementation of the Council Conclusions on the European IBM, adopted under the Bulgarian Presidency at the last JHA Council in June 2018.

The Ministers also took note of the current status of the interoperability package, the feasibility of its implementation calendar and the need to ensure adequate financial support for eu-LISA in order to facilitate the preparations for the implementation of the future instruments at EU level in order to ensure full interoperability in the foreseen calendar.

The Ministers concluded that the package fills a legislative gap at EU level and that the current political calendar is very ambitious. On the basis of the general approach of the Member States there is a need for intensive negotiations with the European Parliament in order to achieve political agreement and avoid the risk of postponing its implementation.

European dimension of Community Policing

The Ministers acknowledged the opportunity to adapt the law enforcement agencies' response to the particularities of the emerging communities at the level of the Member States, to develop an enhanced approach of the "*community policing*" principles by attaching a European dimension to the concept and complementing the initial mandate of the operational support officers acting under the Prüm Decisions while focusing on prevention and the shaping of an environment where communities and law enforcement authorities proactively interact with each other.

Posting police officers to law enforcement agencies from Member States where significant communities of citizens coming from other Member States reside could channel towards these agencies know-how, trust and capabilities, thus adding a substantial contribution in terms of policing the diverse communities, while overcoming biases and difficulties of preventing and combating crimes and victimization.

The Ministers concluded that in a Europe of mobility, there is a need for further improving the police cooperation and they agreed to further refine this proposal and to discuss it in the Law Enforcement Working Party.

Policing in a connected world – Novel actionable information

The Ministers agreed that in an era of digitalization, the need for innovation and cooperation is stronger than ever. In order to keep up with the dynamics of the criminal environment, all law enforcement authorities should be open to new approaches for combating and preventing crime.

The representatives of Salzburg Forum Member States consider that given the concept of "intelligence led policing" that is being used by all Member State's law enforcement authorities since the beginning of the '90s, it is high time to update this concept with new unified standards, adapted to the present international and European context.

An innovative approach of this concept is represented by the novel actionable information. This term emphasizes the need to develop mechanisms of early warning against risks and threats targeting the EU citizens in a timely, credible and relevant manner for a successful intervention in any incident.

The Ministers concluded that a harmonization of the role played by the Analysis Units within the institutional law enforcement framework might be envisaged. This would be achieved by means of defining European standards in Intelligence Analysis in terms of training and by developing unitary concepts for data analysis.

In this context, the Ministers touched upon the need to maintain the close level of cooperation and effective exchange of information with the UK after BREXIT, in light of the shared threats faced by the Union and the UK.

**Strengthening police cooperation and security in the Western Balkans region.
Managing border security and fighting transnational organized crime, as well as illegal migration**

The Ministers agreed that the security situation at international and regional level is a strong argument for increasing police cooperation among the EU Member States, as well as with EU neighboring countries and making it a constant priority.

The Ministers expressed their concern regarding the current migratory developments in the Western Balkans and expressed their readiness for close coordination, preventive measures and support for each other in case of a migratory crisis. The Ministers declared their commitment to fight illegal migration and human smuggling. In this context, the Ministers agreed that the protection of the EU external borders and of the borders in the region of the Western Balkans is of paramount importance. In the light of the current situation, the Ministers will stay in close contact with each other in order to be able to take further measures as quickly as possible if needed.

Organized crime's foothold on the Western Balkans remains strong, whether in terms of special crime areas like drugs and weapons, trafficking in human beings, corruption or basically poly-criminal activities. The authorities must dismantle criminal networks and their economic bases more effectively, making systematic use of financial investigations and applying more targeted tools. Setting up an efficient track record mechanism with regards to tackling corruption, money laundering and organized crime should represent a priority.

Operational cooperation on countering various types of organized crime in the context of the EU Policy Cycle should increasingly be expanded to include the Western Balkans. The Ministers strongly encourage the WB states to actively participate in operational action plans for the 2018-2021 priorities. At the same time it is essential to further step up strategic and operational cooperation with the Western Balkans on migration and border management. In this context, the Ministers encourage the Western Balkans partners to support and implement all the relevant initiatives and integrative approaches.

Strengthening police cooperation and security across the Western Balkans region, managing border security and fighting transnational organized crime will continue to be priorities on the Salzburg Forum agenda.

Vienna Process

In the framework of the Vienna Process, the Salzburg Forum Member States work towards an EU Security Union that is as citizen-focused, crisis-resistant and future oriented as possible, jointly with the European Commission, EU agencies and other relevant partners, including experts from academia and civil society.

The key issues discussed in the framework of the Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference in Bucharest – especially the protection of the external borders, strengthening the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), Community Policing etc. – will remain high up on the agenda of the future Salzburg Forum EU Council Presidencies.

18-month Work Programme

The Ministers assessed the results of the 18-month work programme of the current trio presidency of Hungary, Poland and Romania. They welcomed the achievements and expressed their determination to further strengthen the cooperation with regard to ongoing activities. The Ministers also initiated discussion on the new 18-month work programme of the upcoming trio presidency of Slovakia, Slovenia and Austria.

Slovak Presidency of the Salzburg Forum

The Ministers took note of the priorities of the upcoming Slovak Presidency of the Salzburg Forum and reiterated their full commitment to continue close cooperation on issues of mutual interest under the umbrella of the Salzburg Forum.

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