

Joint Declaration
of the Ministers of the Interior on Regional Cooperation
in the Framework of the Enlarged European Union

Salzburg, July 19, 2003

On the occasion of the Fourth Forum Salzburg, the Ministers of the Interior of Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia in the presence of Commissioner Vitorino, have noted with satisfaction the great progress made in relation to the Security Partnership in Central Europe, which had been created on the basis of the declarations of 27th of July 2001 and 26th of July 2002.

In this context, the Ministers appreciate in particular the accelerated implementation of the Schengen-oriented cooperation at the borders as well as the preparations for the establishment of a European external border management.

It is the objective of the Forum Salzburg 2003 to continue the successful cooperation upon signing of the Accession Treaties by the partner countries, and to contribute to safeguarding efficient decision-making structures in a European Union enlarged to 25 member states by creating a regional coordination mechanism in the area of common interests of the participating countries in the field of interior.

The Ministers of the Interior, who have assembled here, have agreed as follows:

1. The Ministers of the Interior welcome the enlargement of the European Union and the resulting expansion of the Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice.
2. In order to reach this goal it has to be ensured that the enlarged Union remains fully capable of making decisions.
3. The Ministers of the Interior are of the opinion that a regional cooperation presents an important contribution to safeguarding a coordinated way of formulating demands and objectives in an enlarged European Union.
4. In the sector of Justice and Home Affairs, the cooperation is supposed to promote security in Central Europe which is in the interest of all European countries.
5. Vital elements of security are a harmonised European asylum and migration system, an integrated management of the external borders, and coordinated combating of terrorism and organised crime in all its varieties.
6. In order to secure the best possible coherent way of shaping demands, objectives and decisions, the Ministers agree upon a mechanism of coordination to clarify and implement their points of view in the areas of common interests.

- 6.1 The cooperation in the field of Justice and Home Affairs primarily takes place when preparing JAI Councils of Ministers, COREPER, SCIFA, and Article 36-Committee. Coordination can, if necessary, also be applied to other topics of common interest in this respect

The JAI representatives in Brussels act on behalf of the Ministers as clearing point for the coordination of regional procedures. The Austrian JAI-representative is responsible for the organisational arrangements. Until July 1, 2004 Austria will chair the Group. After this date, the chair will rotate every six months in accordance with EU practices, alphabetically starting with the Czech Republic.

In the course of the process the parties shall endeavour that issues that are of importance to the partners and the need for coordination or action resulting therefrom are clarified as fast as possible in order to ensure extensively a coordinated procedure in relation to both form and content.

In the case when the interest of any partner country participating in the regional cooperation is concerned, the party may call on the mechanism of cooperation mentioned above.

7. Having noted with satisfaction, that this cooperation has already started in practice Ministers have decided to put it formally into force with the day of the signature of this declaration.
8. The Security Partnership in Central Europe, developed under the purview of the Ministers of the Interior of the countries involved, shall be regarded as useful tool for an enhanced, efficient and flexible regional co-operation, thus actively contributing of the EU efforts in the JHA field.

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