

Joint Declaration of Ministers of Interior of the Salzburg Forum

On the occasion of the Meeting of the Salzburg Forum on the 22 and 23 May 2006 in Bratislava, we note with satisfaction that our cooperation on the basis of the Salzburg Declarations of 27 July 2001, 26 July 2002, 19 July 2003, 15 July 2004 and 29 July 2005 has proven to be very successful. We welcome the participation of Bulgaria, which increases even more the weight of the Salzburg Group as a regional coordination mechanism within the EU framework and opens a new dimension for this informal group. Furthermore, we are looking forward to the next Minister Meeting in July 2006 in Austria, where Croatia will join the Salzburg Group. After our discussions during the Bratislava meeting, we would like to state the following points:

1. In light of our common reflection on the future of the Salzburg Forum we reaffirm to focus, by way of consensus, our activities in the following areas:
 - a. Lobbying in EU Home Affairs matters in various EU bodies to foster common interests. In order to secure a maximum European added value there shall be no duplication with other activities.
 - b. Exchange of know-how, including consultations related to implementation of EU legal and other acts at national level.
2. The effective action of the lobbying process of Forum Salzburg is carried out by the JHA Representatives in Brussels, acting on behalf of the Ministers as clearing points, based on the positions of their respective capitals. This network will continue its efficient action. The JHA Representative from the country in charge of the Presidency of the Salzburg Group will secure the coordination and the Austrian JHA-Representative is responsible for the organisational arrangements. Each Presidency is invited, during its term, to evaluate the work of Forum Salzburg.
3. As regards to the lobbying within EU decision-making procedures, the promotion of common interests shall be carried out by:
 - a. Experts in committees and working groups of Council and Commission;
 - b. JHA counsellors in Brussels in case of political and horizontal issues, e. g. COREPER, CATS, SCIFA, HLWG.
 - c. Council's ministerial meetings.
 - d. The scope for action shall be systematically identified alongside the following action fields:
 - i) The annual work programme of the European Commission.
 - ii) The work programme of the current EU-Presidency, reflecting the priorities of the Hague Programme .
4. By reaffirming a clear scope of joint action and securing an efficient way for safeguarding their common interests the Ministers of the Interior are of the opinion that the enlarged Salzburg Group will be able also in the future to play its active role as a regional forum of cooperation and constitute an important contribution to the further strengthening of the EU Area of Freedom, Justice and Security.

for the Republic of Austria

for the Republic of Bulgaria

for the Czech Republic

for the Republic of Hungary

for the Republic of Poland

for the Republic of Romania

for the Slovak Republic

for the Republic of Slovenia

Bratislava, 23 May 2006