

SALZBURG FORUM MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

2 – 4th October 2008, Hévíz

JOINT DECLARATION

of the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum

On the occasion of their ministerial conference under the Hungarian Presidency on 2-4th October, 2008 in Hévíz, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries, together with Croatia as an Observer, adopted the following conclusions:

Recognizing that European Home Affairs Policy (EHAP) is now at a crossroad and the next years may be decisive to see whether the Member States of the European Union are able to find effective solutions to the challenges while maintaining the „European model” by balancing mobility, security and privacy;

Reiterating once again their conviction that the relevant chapters of the “post-Hague programme”, to be proposed by the European Commission in 2009 should be based on the findings of the Future-Group report as much as possible;

the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum declare their wish to continue to play a proactive role in the further development of European Home Affairs Policy, and propose that certain jointly identified aspects of special significance for the region where the Salzburg Forum countries are geographically located, are duly taken into account in the finalization of the next multi-annual programme determining European Union JHA Policy for the coming five years. These aspects are the following:

- management of the external borders of the European Union, in particular the use of new technologies therein;
- development of cross-border police co-operation, with special focus on border zones within the Schengen Area where border checks have been lifted, based on the process of establishing a Central European Operational Network (CEON);
- fight against illegal migration;

- the integration of migrants and the promotion of intercultural dialogue, being core elements of a broad concept of internal security;
- striking the right balance between providing our citizens with a high level of security, also by the use of new technologies, and respecting fundamental rights and freedoms, in particular, privacy;
- developing the external aspect of EHAP, with particular emphasis on the dialogue with countries of neighbouring regions (e.g. the Western Balkans, the Black Sea region and the ENP countries of Eastern Europe).

The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum countries, being aware of risks posed by illegal migratory flows, and cross-border organized crime that are ever more prevalent;

Identifying the better use of new technologies, as one of the crucial means to develop and strengthen Member States' response to threats and to better manage the external borders and to combat illegal immigration;

Underlining that the principles of joint responsibility, solidarity and burden sharing should continue to be prevalent in the area of external border management, especially when introducing high technology solutions in the field of border protection;

Understanding that it is essential, that practice-oriented pilot projects explore and address the possible constraints of the introduction of new technologies and solutions,

Decide to join their forces to launch a European Pilot Project aimed at testing of border checks based on biometric identifiers performed at road- and rail border crossing points, with a view to the future implementation of the Draft Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 as regards the use of the Visa Information System (VIS) under the Schengen Borders Code. The objective of the project is that by 2012, border guard or police officials are ready to perform biometric checks at the border with tried and tested equipment, without serious bottlenecks in border traffic, thus ensuring an increased efficiency of border control throughout the Schengen Area.

The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum once again reiterate their support to the efforts of Bulgaria and Romania to meet their goal of becoming full members of the Schengen Area

according to the envisaged time-schedule, and emphasize the importance of the successful completion of the Schengen-evaluation exercise by these two countries in this regard.

The Salzburg Forum countries welcome the current developments indicating that transatlantic security co-operation among the EU Member States and the United States will deepen and take new forms in the coming period. In particular, the Salzburg Forum takes note of the progress made by some of its Member States in the course of negotiations with the American authorities that may enable these countries to enter the Visa-Waiver Programme of the United States in the immediate future. They welcome as well initiatives to improve the cooperation with the United States in the fight against terrorism and serious crime and the efforts of the European Union in the framework of the transatlantic agenda to conclude a framework agreement on data protection.

The Salzburg Forum states, considering Civilian Crisis Management as one of the most dynamically expanding areas of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP);

Bearing in mind that civilian crisis management is based on the assumption that fostering lasting peace and stability in post-conflict situations requires long-term and effective support to democratic transition;

the Salzburg Forum Ministers decided to begin to explore a common approach to addressing possible police capability shortfalls in special police units for civilian ESDP missions. In the course of this discussion, SF partners aim to

- investigate, in the context of an expert meeting to be held to this end, their comparative advantages of their countries in the different areas of special policing and identify elements within their national services which could be made available, as part of a multinational Salzburg Forum special police team, for joint training and team-building followed by periodic refresher courses and eventually, if and when contributing Salzburg Forum partners so decide, for deployment to a civilian ESDP mission;
- rely on and complement existing Salzburg Forum and EU initiatives for the cooperation of special police forces, such as the cooperation of witness security units in the Salzburg Forum context or the ATLAS network of EU Members States' special intervention units.

The Ministers called attention to the importance of effectively implementing existing European Union legislation concerning the mutual recognition of financial penalties for road traffic offences; and wish to continue to give support to new initiatives in this field.

Finally, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum reiterate their willingness to enhance the practical police cooperation among their police forces. Therefore they

- reiterate their commitment for mutual support to start with the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Prüm Decision in particular on the exchange of DNA profiles, dactyloscopic data and vehicle registration data as soon as possible;
- welcome the proposal of Austria to organize in the 1st half of 2009 a workshop on juvenile crime in order to evaluate the situation in the Salzburg Forum countries, compare national strategies for the prevention and the fight against juvenile crime, and explore whether a regular cooperation between the competent authorities of the Salzburg Forum countries in this field will bring an added value.

Hévíz, 3rd October 2008.