

Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference
Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia,
11 – 12 November 2014

JOINT DECLARATION

The Ministers of Interior of the Salzburg Forum states met on 11 and 12 November 2014 upon the invitation of the Slovenian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum. The main objective of the conference was to exchange views on key issues on the agenda in the field of internal security and police cooperation and to identify common positions in the respective strategic topics and also to assess ongoing regional cooperation and make plan for the next steps. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the European Commission, Cepol and Europol.

On the occasion of their meeting, the Ministers have agreed on the following:

Foreign fighters and the threat of further radicalisation and recruitment

The Ministers took note of the presentation of the Slovenian initiative for an integrated and complementary approach of the European Union to supporting counter-terrorism measures in the Western Balkans. The initiative is based on the integration of existing initiatives of EU stakeholders and international strategic partners in the region and on complementarity, while taking into account also the existing programmes for granting financial support to these activities.

The Ministers welcomed the proposed initiative, which in their view takes into account the actual needs and priorities of the Western Balkan countries in the field of counter-terrorism. The Ministers expressed their support for the initiative and agreed to take an active part in its implementation. They will also take into consideration the Italian-Austrian initiative against foreign fighters. The Ministers also invited the relevant EU institutions together with the Salzburg Forum Member States in order to make this initiative a success.

The Ministers also exchanged their views regarding measures proposed by the JHA Council in October 2014 for more effective border control to prevent and detect travel of foreign fighters, with an emphasis on the question of how the implementation of these measures can affect border checks at the EU external border. Furthermore, they reiterated their support to finalize the work on the EU PNR directive.

New regulation establishing a European Union agency for law enforcement training (Cepol)

The Ministers exchanged views regarding the new Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union agency for law enforcement training (Cepol), repealing and replacing the Council Decision 2005/681/JHA, which the Commission published on 16 July 2014 and which is currently being discussed by the competent Council Working Group.

The Ministers agreed that the proposed Cepol Regulation represents a good basis for further discussions within Council's bodies and welcomed the general approach of the Commission in preparing the proposal. The Ministers discussed the new elements that the proposal has introduced, namely training becoming available not only to senior police officers, the establishment of a Scientific Committee for Training, the implementation of the Law Enforcement Training Scheme (LETS), and the procedure for appointment of the Agency's director.

The Ministers exchanged their views on existing solutions in the proposal, which are of strategic importance, and agreed to consider them carefully while drawing up their national position for negotiation process on the proposal for Cepol Regulation.

Strengthening Regional Cooperation in the Area of Drug Precursors

In April 2013, the Ministers agreed that there was a need for enhanced regional cooperation in the fight against increasing abuse of drug precursors for methamphetamine production. As a follow-up to this decision, the Czech Republic distributed a questionnaire on national regulations in the area of drug precursors. The conclusion of the evaluation was that for a successful fight against methamphetamine production and distribution it is crucial to cooperate in this area on the regional level and that regulation of the sale of medicaments containing pseudoephedrine and of the red phosphorus handling in the Salzburg Forum Member States was necessary.

As a continuation of their efforts to intensify regional cooperation in this field, the Ministers presented the current situation regarding synthetic drugs and changes concerning the regulation of free access to medicaments containing pseudoephedrine in their respective countries. The Ministers reiterated their determination to pay due attention to the issue of drug precursors, including the exchange of relevant information.

Enhancing police cooperation of Salzburg Forum members in the form of police chief meetings

The Ministers took note of the proposal to organize regular meetings of Salzburg Forum Chiefs of Police, in order to establish a close link between politics and operational police work. The Ministers agreed that a strong link and close interaction between the political/strategic and the operational police level is necessary to create an added value for the work in the area of public security and to further enhance the cooperation in the framework of the Salzburg Forum. At the same time, it was

outlined that the meetings of Chiefs of Police in the framework of other EU and regional formats should be taken into account and the aim should be to avoid duplication in order to be even more efficient.

The Ministers welcomed Austria's willingness to organize the first meeting of the Salzburg Forum Chiefs of Police in the first half of 2015, under the Austrian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum.

Evaluation of the Slovenian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum

The Ministers took note of the expert meetings and other activities organized by the Slovenian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum.

Regarding regional cooperation, the Ministers took note of the information on the work of the Witness Protection Group and reaffirmed their support for the continuation of its work. Based on the outcome of the expert meeting on cross-border transport of waste in relation with environmental crime, the Ministers acknowledged the need for regional cooperation and agreed to continue enhanced operational cooperation in this field in the framework of the Salzburg Forum.

Austrian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum

The Ministers welcomed the information on the programme of the upcoming Austrian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum and expressed their commitment to continuing close cooperation.

Brdo pri Kranju, 12 November 2014