

Salzburg Forum Police Chiefs Meeting

Laa an der Thaya, Austria

19-20 March 2015

JOINT DECLARATION

Based on the Joint Declaration adopted by the Ministers of the Interior of the Salzburg Forum Member States on 12 November 2014 in Brdo pri Kranju (Slovenia) in the framework of the Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference under Slovenian Presidency, the Police Chiefs of the Salzburg Forum Member States, i.e. Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia met in Laa an der Thaya (Austria) on 19 and 20 March 2015 upon the invitation of the Austrian Presidency in the Salzburg Forum. The main objective of the Police Chiefs Meeting was to establish and strengthen contacts, to build a working atmosphere of trust and to exchange views on key issues currently shaping the environment of internal security in the region and beyond as well as to find joint approaches to overcome current challenges.

On the occasion of their meeting, the Police Chiefs had a thorough debate on a number of topical issues, upon which they concluded on the following:

Fight against Terrorism

The Police Chiefs exchanged their views on the current situation regarding terrorism and confirmed their commitment to do everything within the limits of their competences to combat terrorism. The Police Chiefs are aware that a comprehensive approach including reacting, preventing and shaping elements is necessary to effectively counter terrorism.

In this context, the Police Chiefs expressed their determination to re-act to current threats represented by foreign terrorist fighters. When it comes to being able to react better and faster to acute threats, the Police Chiefs strongly emphasized the need to support and strengthen the role of Europol in the fight against extremism and terrorism. Regarding Europol, the Police Chiefs declared to make an effort in particular that all relevant information on foreign terrorist fighters collected by the legally entitled authorities should be transmitted to Europol's "Focal Point Travellers" as well as to the "Network of Contact Points entrusted with the task of collecting and exchanging operational information on foreign fighters". Moreover, the Police Chiefs reaffirmed their support for the Slovenian initiative co-chaired by Austria in the framework of the Council Working Group on Terrorism with regard to the Western Balkans.

When it comes to prevention, the Police Chiefs reaffirmed that prevention is one of the key elements to combat terrorism. In this respect, the Police Chiefs welcomed the initiative of the Austrian

chairmanship in the Salzburg Forum to organize a seminar on prevention measures against terrorism.

With regard to shaping, the Police Chiefs underlined the significance of the involvement of civil society. Furthermore, the Police Chiefs took note of the Conference “Tackling Jihadism TOGETHER Shaping – Preventing – Reacting” taking place on 20 March 2015 in Vienna with the participation of the Ministers of the Interior and of Foreign Affairs from Austria, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia and the Western Balkan countries.

Fight against Illegal Migration

The Police Chiefs exchanged their views on the challenge of illegal migration for the Salzburg Forum Member States. In this regard the Members face different challenges resulting from the Eastern Mediterranean Route, the Western Balkan Route, and the Eastern Route including the Ukraine. Therefore the Police Chiefs agreed to encourage cooperation with third countries, in particular the Western Balkans. In this context, the Police Chiefs stated their determination to take joint action on the level of criminal police, border police and when it comes to capacity building. The Police Chiefs put special focus on the fight against human smuggling by taking action in the area of intelligence sharing and operational planning. Following the discussion, the upcoming Bulgarian Presidency declared its readiness to organise a meeting of the Heads of Units in charge of combatting human smuggling from all Salzburg Forum Member States in the 2nd half of 2015. When it comes to capacity building, the Police Chiefs confirmed their support for third countries, in particular the Western Balkan countries.

In addition, the Police Chiefs reflected on the importance of sustainable common measures on the EU level to support third countries for a fast and comprehensive reaction to effectively fight corruption, organised crime and networks of traffickers.

Having in mind the situation along the Eastern Mediterranean Route and the Western Balkan Route, the Police Chiefs underlined that the Salzburg Forum Member States should maintain the ability to respond flexibly to the rapidly changing situation at the EU borders, especially in the context of the unstable and alarming situation in Ukraine, which should be monitored continuously.

Information Management and Enhancing Cooperation between the Single Points of Contact

The Police Chiefs reaffirmed their awareness that police operations can quickly take on a cross-border dimension where a fast and coordinated response is necessary. In this regard, the Police Chiefs exchanged information on the situation in their countries especially with regard to the functioning of their national operation control centres, as well as their single points of contact and their police cooperation centres at the borders. It was agreed that the existing channels for international exchange of information and police intelligence represent an efficient tool for cross-border cooperation including communication in cases of significant ad hoc incidents with possible

cross-border effects. In this regard, the Police Chiefs agreed to exchange the contact details of their respective single points of contact in order to use the existing communication systems more efficiently.

The Police Chiefs agreed that the present Joint Declaration will serve as a solid basis for discussion at the upcoming Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference in St. Pölten on 4 and 5 May 2015 and should enable the Salzburg Forum Member States to continue and deepen their efforts with regard to the topics discussed above.

Laa an der Thaya, 20 March 2015