

SALZBURG FORUM MINISTERIAL MEETING

Brussels, 1 December 2010

JOINT DECLARATION

Upon the invitation of the Slovenian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum, the Home Affairs Ministers of the Salzburg Forum Member States met in Brussels on 1st December 2010

and,

Bearing in mind their common goal to achieve a more efficient cooperation among their countries, discussed issues of common concern related to the security of their countries' citizens and ways to enhance their efforts in those areas.

The Ministers believe that

- Compliance with national and EU legislation in the fight against all forms of crime is one of the fundamental commitments of all Salzburg Forum Member States;
- Solidarity among the Salzburg Forum Member States in relevant EU dossiers, such as visa reciprocity, should be further strengthened;
- Adequate levels of cooperation between the Salzburg Forum Member States in relation to policing are to be ensured;
- Irrespective of the level of cooperation achieved, consistent enforcement of the adopted commitments in the field of international police cooperation between the Member States should be ensured.

With regard to the above, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum Member States are especially aware and agree that enhancing the levels of cooperation between Salzburg Forum Member States in the prosecution and sanctioning of road traffic offences committed in an individual Salzburg Forum Member State by residents of other Salzburg Forum Member States as well as agreeing on common rules of cooperation in the area of witness protection are important issues that deserve special attention

and therefore the Ministers adopt the following

CONCLUSIONS

I. On the 18-month Work Programme of the Salzburg Forum Presidency Trio

The Salzburg Forum Member States give their full support to the implementation of the 18-month Work Programme of the Salzburg Forum Presidency Trio (Austria, Bulgaria and Czech Republic) for the period January 2011 – June 2012, harmonized during the Slovenian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum.

II. On EU Coordination

- 1) The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum regard the upcoming Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2011 as another major opportunity to further promote their common interests in EU decision-making. By coordinating their positions, the Salzburg Forum Member States will – to the extent possible – work to assist the Hungarian Presidency in achieving the goals set in the Work Programme.
- 2) The Salzburg Forum Member States will continue to seek ways in which to achieve a closer cooperation with the European Parliament and enhance their mutual dialogue on the Common European Asylum System.

- 3) The Ministers invite the respective Salzburg Forum Presidency to monitor closely the state of play of the project aiming at the establishment of the second generation of the Schengen Information System as well as the legislative and practical developments concerning the establishment of a new EU Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom and security and justice. The respective Salzburg Forum Presidency is invited to facilitate dissemination of relevant information and to continue the established contacts with the European Parliament, where relevant. Additionally, the Presidency of the Salzburg Forum is invited to provide for coordination of the Salzburg Forum Member States' position on the new proposed regulation on a Schengen evaluation mechanism and regarding the European Asylum Package.

III. On Enlargement of the Schengen Area

The Ministers look forward to the forthcoming enlargement of the Schengen area and the resulting strengthening of cross-border police cooperation as a major opportunity for the enhancement of freedom and security within the European Union. They reconfirm their full support for the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen Area in accordance with the foreseen calendar during the Hungarian Presidency of the EU Council in 2011, provided that the requirements for the full application of the Schengen acquis have been fulfilled.

IV. On Road Safety

- 1) The Salzburg Forum Member States regard resolving the open issues of cross-border enforcement of road traffic offences as one of their priority goals and commit to continue their endeavours on the basis of the work achieved so far. To ensure the efficiency of cooperation in the area of road safety and the cross-border enforcement of road traffic offences, the Ministers shall take whatever steps are necessary and make use of all opportunities in order to advance these commonly accepted conclusions within all international frameworks;

- 2) The Ministers fully support the text of *The Salzburg Forum Report on Improving Road Safety by Enhancing Cross-Border Enforcement* submitted by the Salzburg Forum Expert Group on Road Safety and produced at its meeting on 18 November 2010 in Ljubljana;
- 3) Taking into account the national legislations of the individual Member States, the Ministers support the approval of the Belgian proposal on facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road safety related traffic offences;
- 4) The Ministers invite the incoming Austrian Salzburg Forum Presidency (1st half of 2011) to organize a workshop on expert level to be tasked with the evaluation of the state-of-play of the EU initiative on cross-border enforcement as well as with presenting to the Salzburg Forum Member States a proposal for further concrete actions according to Chapters IV and V of the Report referred to in point 2 of this Chapter;

V. On Witness Protection

- 1) Salzburg Forum Member States have agreed on the need to produce a multilateral document which would facilitate a quicker and more efficient cooperation in the area of witness protection;
- 2) Salzburg Forum Member States support the *Draft Agreement on Cooperation in Witness Protection between the Salzburg Forum Member States*, harmonized at the level of witness protection experts, as a suitable basis for further work in the area of witness protection with the goal of preparing the text of an international agreement which would determine fundamental rules of cooperation in the area of witness protection in the Salzburg Forum Member States.
- 3) The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum Member States are of the opinion that the Salzburg Forum Member States should continue working on the text of the agreement within the Working Group on Witness Protection referred to in point 2 of this Chapter as soon as possible.

- 4) With a view to sharing the best practices of the Salzburg Forum group with the EU, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum Member States agree that the current Presidency shall notify the Ministers of the EU Member States at the upcoming informal Justice and Home Affairs Council under the Hungarian EU Presidency of the elements contained in the draft agreement referred to in point 2 of this Chapter.

By means of this Joint Declaration, the Home Affairs Ministers of the Salzburg Forum Member States express their determination to further enhance cooperation in the fight against international crime and other violations of national regulations, including, inter alia, road traffic offences, as well as cooperation based on common foundations regarding witness protection, with the goal to increase the security of citizens and the efficiency of national regulations, especially in the fight against the above mentioned illegalities.

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