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NOTE

From: Slovenian delegation
To: Council

Subject: Salzburg Forum Ministerial Meeting (27 – 28 May 2019, Portorož, Republic of Slovenia) - Joint declaration

Delegations will find attached a declaration adopted of the Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference, which was held on 27-28 May 2019 in Portorož, Republic of Slovenia.

Salzburg Forum Ministerial Meeting

27 – 28 May 2019

Portorož, Republic of Slovenia

JOINT DECLARATION

The Ministers of Interior and other representatives of the Salzburg Forum states (hereinafter: the Ministers) met on 27 and 28 May 2019 upon the invitation of the Slovenian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum. The regular meeting's objective was to exchange views on key issues currently shaping the environment of internal security and migration in the region, the EU and beyond, to identify common positions, as well as assess their recent regional cooperation. Representatives of the European Commission, Europol, the European Asylum Support Office, the European Border and Coast Guard (Frontex) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) also attended the meeting.

The main challenges discussed by the Ministers were as follows:

Future challenges in the area of migration

The Ministers exchanged views regarding the future of EU asylum and migration policies and expressed their regret that in spite great efforts and significant progress achieved by the Bulgarian, Austrian and Romanian Presidencies of the Council of the EU common EU solutions to all three interlinked pillars (external dimension, border management, internal dimension) have still not been found. They agreed that alongside the need for progress on the legislative side, it is also necessary to fully implement the already agreed measures.

The Ministers agreed that a high level of protection of the EU's external borders and safeguarding the Schengen area as the area of free movement without internal borders should be a priority. They reiterated the need for more effective return policies equipped with incentives and leverages and enhanced response to migrant-smuggling networks.

Progress should be made towards a future crisis-resistant EU asylum system, which remains one of the key outstanding issues in reaching an agreement on the Common European Asylum System. The Ministers also agreed to continue discussion and mutual consultations in order to contribute to the overall negotiations on the future Common European Asylum System.

Future challenges in the area of internal security

The Ministers exchanged their views on the challenges in the area of internal security that the EU and its Member States might face with in the next five years. They discussed the priorities that the Salzburg Forum Member States believe should receive the most attention in addressing the identified challenges.

The Ministers agreed great progress was made in the area of internal security in the last years, during the Bulgarian, Austrian and Romanian Presidencies of the Council of the EU, evident through a number of adopted legislative acts, new available tools and increased operational cooperation. Renewed mandates of decentralised JHA agencies, the adoption of the PNR Directive, the renewed SIS II legislative package, the adoption of the interoperability regulations, the agreed comprehensive and operational set of measures in order to enhance the response to migrant-smuggling networks and substantial progress in the fight against violent extremism, terrorism and antisemitism were named as some of the most important achievements. The Ministers stressed the need for full and harmonised implementation of existing legislation and measures and to refrain from hastily initiating new legislative procedures.

The Ministers agreed that the challenges in the area of internal security are interrelated and that therefore a comprehensive strategic approach is needed, as already expressed e.g. in the Declaration of the Salzburg Forum Vienna Process Ministerial Conference from 12-13 April 2018. They are convinced that the Council, the European Commission and other relevant actors like EU Agencies should develop a future internal security strategy together in order to guarantee common ownership, commitment and to enable more flexible and targeted responses to existing and emerging threats. The Ministers underlined the need to also agree on a concrete action plan for the coming years with clear responsibilities and fixed deadlines.

The Ministers also discussed the role the Salzburg Forum could play in the process of the preparation of EU strategic priorities for the next five years. They welcomed the engagement of the Salzburg Forum in this process, highlighting the similar and specific security needs that the Salzburg Forum Member States face.

Financing of JHA Agencies in the field of internal security

The Ministers took note of current preparations of the next Multiannual Financial Framework and especially its internal security part. They emphasized the role of decentralised agencies in this area, Europol in particular, and that the agencies should be financed sustainably and adequately to the tasks they have been given, but without negative implications on financing the activities performed by EU Member States in the field of internal security.

Overview of the Slovenian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum

The Ministers welcomed the results of the Salzburg Forum Police Chiefs meeting, which was held on 26 and 27 March 2019 and was devoted to the concept of community policing.

The Ministers also welcomed the results of the Witness Protection Working Group and the expert meeting on cross-border transport of waste in relation with environmental crime, both of which were organized in May 2019.

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 on issues of common interest within the framework of the Salzburg Forum.

Portorož, 28 May 2019
