



SALZBURG FORUM ANNIVERSARY MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

23 – 24 June 2021, Prague

JOINT DECLARATION

of the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum

The Ministers of the Interior and representatives of the Salzburg Forum Member States met on the occasion of the Salzburg Forum Anniversary Ministerial Conference held under the Czech Presidency on 23 – 24 June in Prague.

The conference also gathered representatives of the Portuguese EU Council Presidency, the European Commission, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), Europol, the European Asylum Support Office as well as representatives of the Secretariat of the Joint Coordination Platform, the Ministers and representatives of the Western Balkans, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Switzerland, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Moreover, the representative from Kosovo took part as a special guest¹.

Commemorating the 20th anniversary of the signature of the first Salzburg Forum Joint Declaration in 2001, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum evaluated their cooperation so far in terms of the goals anchored in the Salzburg Forum Vision 2020 as well as discussed the future direction of the Salzburg Forum.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



Reiterating the importance of the Salzburg Forum as the largest regional cooperation platform in the area of Home Affairs within the European Union, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum adopted the Salzburg Forum Agenda 2030 as a new multi-annual strategic document setting goals for their cooperation in the next ten years.

Considering the cooperation within the EU as one of the central functions of the Salzburg Forum, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum stressed the necessity to focus future efforts on maximising the potential of the Salzburg Forum in terms of coordinating positions on issues of common interest and their lobbying at the EU level.

Reaffirming the regional cooperation of the Salzburg Forum as a key tool for the fight against cross-border crime and ensuring safety in the region, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum expressed their commitment to further promote the Salzburg Forum as "Model Region Central and Southeast Europe" with regard to strategic and operational cooperation within the EU as well as with third countries.

Bearing in mind the ever-growing relevance of the external dimension of internal security and migration, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum are ready to pay due attention to the relations of the Salzburg Forum with respective third countries and regions in the future. In particular, given the geographic proximity, developing closer cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries as a whole will be considered in order to bring these countries closer to EU standards as well as to actively contribute to building a mutual security partnership.

The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum also confirmed their long-term goal of bringing the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova closer to EU standards in the area of freedom, security and justice as well as promoting security in the region as their top priority.

The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum also reiterated their continuous commitment to prevent and combat transit irregular migration and contribute to security and stability along the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes, mainly through improved overall cooperation,



protection of external borders and strengthened cooperation and capacity building in different fields, including returns, as well as using proactive complementary communication measures to promote these initiatives. To this end, they stressed their strong support to further operationalisation of the Joint Coordination Platform in close cooperation between the Salzburg Forum countries and all relevant partners.

The implementation of the Salzburg Forum Agenda 2030 will be launched during the incoming Hungarian Salzburg Forum Presidency. The Ministers are ready to provide their full support in this regard.

Being aware of the necessity to receive a useful feedback as well as recommendations for the best possible implementation, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum commit themselves to carry out a mid-term review of the Salzburg Forum Agenda 2030 in 2026.

In this context, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum also endorsed the outcomes of the on-line meeting of the Salzburg Forum Police Chiefs (13 May 2021) who had strongly supported the content of the draft Salzburg Forum Agenda 2030 as well as agreed on the necessity to strengthen police cooperation within the EU by sharing best practices gained during the COVID-19 pandemic, to further promote development of the Joint Coordination Platform and to focus on developing closer cooperation between police and customs in relation to Europol where possible.

Taking into account the enormous impact of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis on the lives of EU citizens as well as on the functioning of the European Union, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum exchanged their experiences from the pandemic in the context of Schengen cooperation. In the light of the strategy on the future of Schengen recently presented by the European Commission, they welcomed the need to reform Schengen to address current needs and existing deficits in the security and other areas.. To this end, they reiterated the necessity to restore the full functioning of Schengen while maintaining a sufficient level of flexibility as



regards temporary reintroduction of border controls in case of future crises, assuming that this measure should be used as a last resort.

The Ministers of the Salzburg Forum also stressed their commitment to further strengthening police cooperation within the EU with a special focus on improved cooperation in the Schengen area as well as reiterated their support to Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia towards their full Schengen membership.

Following the presentation of the incoming Slovenian EU Council Presidency, the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum welcomed priorities set out in the area of Home Affairs and expressed their readiness to support Slovenia during its Presidency term.

Finally, following the Vienna Declaration on effectively combating irregular migration along the Eastern Mediterranean Route (July 2020), the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum, together with the Ministers and representatives of the Western Balkans, Denmark, Germany, Greece and Switzerland discussed migration challenges along the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes.

Confirming the key role and the mandate of the recently established Joint Coordination Platform in the prevention and fight against irregular migration along the aforementioned migration routes, the respective Ministers jointly adopted the declaration setting political guidelines for further work of the Joint Coordination Platform.

The Ministers reaffirmed their preparedness for any situation requiring cooperation as well as their commitment to supporting each other in a pro-active and coordinated manner. To this end, they are committed to making best possible use of the Joint Coordination Platform in their joint efforts towards combating irregular migration.

Prague, 24 June 2021