



**COUNCIL OF
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NOTE

From : Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia
To : Council
Subject : Police cooperation within the Salzburg Forum - an example for successful Regional Cooperation
- Joint Presentation of the Salzburg Forum on EU level

Further to the call of Minister Alliot-Marie, President of the JHA Council, made at the Informal Meeting of the Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs of the European Union in Cannes on 7 and 8 July 2008, to present on EU level successful models of regional cooperation in the police field, Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia present the Salzburg Forum initiative functioning among them as a form of regional cooperation which may serve as a role model for the other EU Member States.

1. The Salzburg Forum which was founded in 2001 constitutes a platform for regional cooperation in the field of internal security between Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Croatia takes part in the Salzburg Forum as an observer.

2. The Salzburg Forum performs its activities in three basic areas, as follows: coordination and representation of the interests of the participating countries in the European institutions; development and strengthening of police cooperation and deepening relations with third countries - the so-called "external dimension of Salzburg Forum".
3. The Salzburg Forum is a security partnership which was created in order to *contribute to the establishment of a common European Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and to guarantee a high security standard*. To achieve this goal, the partners work closely together, particularly in the fields of police cooperation, border control and fight against illegal migration.
4. The Salzburg Forum countries have signed far-reaching agreements on police cooperation among each other which form the legal framework for a close operational cooperation. These agreements provide for example for the setting-up of common police cooperation centres and joint patrols in the border regions.
5. The Salzburg Forum became an important regional initiative of cooperation on political and expert level for discussion exchange of ideas and information, as well as consultation and definition of aims and positions in the field of regional security. Several working groups have been established in order to promote strategic and operational cooperation in the home affairs area:
 - Traffic Police;
 - Major Events;
 - Witness Protection;
 - DNA Data Exchange.
6. Furthermore, the Salzburg Forum is constantly exploring new fields of co-operation, following the latest developments on EU level. Right now, among other topics, exchanges of views on juvenile crime, the future of integrated border management, cross-border enforcement of road traffic fines, implementation of the Prüm provisions and striking the right balance between security and fundamental rights are on the agenda. Ministers have recently discussed the topic of a possible regional co-operation in civilian crisis management missions for the first time.

7. The Schengen Enlargement in 2007 turned five of the eight countries of the Salzburg Forum into full Schengen Member States which lead to further dynamics in the police cooperation within the Salzburg Forum. Respective measures on sharing expertise with the other two SF countries (Bulgaria and Romania) have been taken in order to support them in the process of their accession to the Schengen area envisaged for 2011.
8. Taking into account that EU citizens are equally entitled to the rights of both security and the right of free movement, Ministers have agreed during their meeting in July 2007 in Innsbruck upon further development of the existing police cooperation towards the establishment of a *Central European Operational Network (CEON)*. The activities within the Central European Operational Network aim at further strengthening and linking the already existing pillars of such a regional cooperation. In legal terms, this process is based on the existing bilateral and multilateral agreements as well as on the EU Acquis.
9. In order to implement the *Central European Operational Network* the following measures will be taken or enhanced on the bilateral or regional level:
 - Amendment of existing bilateral agreements;
 - Comprehensive and coordinated security concepts for the border regions;
 - Regular meetings of high-ranking representatives of the Ministries;
 - Mixed patrols in the border regions;
 - Common Police Cooperation Centres;
 - Establishment of a network of Common Centres;
 - Joint risk assessments;
 - Exchange of liaison officers;
 - Concerted action plans;
 - Cross-border hot pursuit;
 - Special forms of cooperation (e.g. cross-border surveillance, controlled delivery, undercover investigations, joint investigation teams);
 - Exchange of information;
 - Support in case of major incidents (major events, disasters, severe accidents);
 - Cooperation in the field of road safety;
 - Cooperation regarding basic and advanced training;
 - Joint exercises.

10. The establishment of Common Centres has proved as one of the corner stones of operational police cooperation. Following the example of the German-French centre in Kehl, all Forum Salzburg countries have set up bi-und multilateral centres among each other, with other EU Member States and third countries. Although the costs for the setting-up and running of Common Centres are relatively high, there is a clear return on invest. The Centres are platforms for daily operational police cooperation characterised by a permanent information exchange, the overcoming of language barriers and the fostering of a common understanding on policing by the involved law enforcement officers. Common Centres contribute to a high degree to the setting up of the European area of freedom, security and justice beyond their direct regional impact.
11. Therefore the Forum Salzburg countries are in favour to launch a debate on the adoption of an EU legal Instrument for the establishment of and the cooperation between common centres of the Member States.
12. Police cooperation within the Salzburg Forum is a proved example of a successful regional partnership on the home affairs area within the framework of the European Union and contributes considerably to the security of the Forum Salzburg countries and Europe as a whole.
13. The Salzburg Forum countries are ready to provide the other EU Member States with the experience they have gained through this cooperation.
