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NOTE

from : Slovenian Presidency
to : Delegations
Subject : JHA External Relations Multi-Presidency Work Programme

I. Introduction and priorities under the Slovenian Presidency

Within the area of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) External Relations the Slovenian Presidency will focus on:

- Continuing and further developing relations with third countries.
- Effective implementation and update of the Strategy for the External Dimension of the JHA, adopted by the Council in December 2005.
- Coordination and regular exchanges of information between all relevant actors in the JHA area, including the respective geographical and functional working groups and committees which cover JHA and external relations issues, and the European Parliament.

JHA issues form an increasingly important dimension of the EU's external relations. The EU cannot act alone to achieve its goal of creating an area of freedom, security and justice. In order to implement effective policies to combat terrorism, tackle transnational organised crime, guarantee fundamental rights, manage migration flows, strengthen borders and enhance judicial cooperation we must work with our neighbours and our strategic partners throughout the world. The Slovenian Presidency will seek to consolidate the results already achieved in this area and will continue developing and strengthening relations with all relevant external partners.

In order to meet the expectations of its citizens the European Union must respond to the security threats of terrorism, organised crime, corruption and drugs and to the challenge of managing migration flows. If the EU is to be effective in doing so it needs to work with countries outside the EU. In an increasingly interconnected world this will become ever more important. The EU should therefore make JHA a central priority in its external relations and ensure a coordinated and coherent approach. The development of the area of freedom, security and justice can only be successful if it is underpinned by a partnership with third countries on these issues which includes strengthening the rule of law, and promoting the respect for human rights and international obligations.

The above text is the starting-point of the Strategy for the External Dimension of JHA: ‘Global Freedom, Security and Justice’,¹ which was adopted by the JHA Council on 1 December 2005, and covers all external aspects of the Union policy on freedom security and justice. In addition, at its meeting on 28 April 2006, the JHA Council adopted a general framework for the future strategy of the external dimension in the field of judicial cooperation in civil matters.²

The Strategy for the External Dimension of JHA sets out the key objectives, principles, priorities and tools for the EU’s engagement with third countries, in particular on counter-terrorism, organised crime, migration and asylum. Furthermore, it reflects the Union's special relations with third countries, groups of countries and regions, and focuses on the specific needs for JHA cooperation with them. It identified the following priorities: the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), relations with the Western Balkans, the implementation of the EU-Russia Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice as well as further development of the strategic cooperation with the United States. The Slovenian Presidency will act in line with the approach presented in the Strategy and promote the strategy's priorities. Notwithstanding its commitment to contribute to all external relations as set out in this document, the Slovenian Presidency wants to put particular emphasis on certain areas such as the Western Balkans (in particular the Organised crime threat assessment for the Western Balkan states), the strategic partnerships with the United States and Russia as well as the partners of the ENP. Thematically, the Slovenian efforts will to a large extent be devoted to the fight against terrorism, combating transnational organised crime, improved cooperation in civil and criminal matters as well as the various elements that underpin the comprehensive migration policy (i.a. circular migration and mobility partnerships).

Under the Strategy, the Commission and Council Secretariat systematically monitor the progress of

¹ 15446/05

JHA external activity and report to the JHA Council and GAERC every 18 months. As requested by the Strategy, a first report on the implementation of the Strategy was presented at the December 2006 JHA Council. The report provided an overall assessment of the effectiveness of political, technical and operational cooperation with third countries on JHA issues in the previous period and generally focused on the implementation of the Strategy. The Slovenian Presidency will focus on the progress in the effective implementation of the Strategy and ensure that the JHA Council updates the Strategy by June 2008. To that end the Commission and Council Secretariat will be asked to report on the implementation of the Strategy and present this at the JHA Council in June 2008.

In order to be efficient and coherent, the JHA External Relations Programme requires close cooperation between the Presidency, the Commission, the Council Secretariat and other important actors such as Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, the Task Force of Chiefs of Police, the liaison officers of Member States in third countries and international organizations such as OSCE, OECD, the Council of Europe, the Hague Conference on Private International Law and the United Nations. The Slovenian Presidency will build on the work of the German and Portuguese Presidencies and work closely with the Commission and the Council Secretariat as well as the European Parliament in delivering the agenda. The Slovenian Presidency will also work together with the future French and Czech Presidencies to ensure continuity.

Moreover, strong coordination and intensive exchanges of information between the specific bodies in charge of the JHA External Relations Programme and the respective geographical Council working groups are of primary importance for substantial and consistent results. Coreper is the body with cross-pillar responsibility for ensuring coherence across Council work in this area. The Slovenian Presidency will convene joint meetings between geographical Council working groups and JHA Counsellors in the course of preparing JHA Ministerial meetings with third states in order to intensify exchanges of information regarding EU cooperation with third countries. The Slovenian Presidency has the intention of using the existing forum of JHA Counsellors to convene meetings before CATS and SCIFA meetings, where issues related to the external dimension of JHA will also be addressed.

The Slovenian Presidency will hold JHA Ministerial meetings with the United States, with Russia and with Ukraine. The Presidency will also ensure that relevant JHA matters are included in discussions at Summit level. A list of planned meetings is included at the end of this document.

² 8140/06

II. JHA cooperation with third countries

A. Candidate countries

On November 6 2007 the Commission presented the yearly Progress Reports on Croatia, Turkey (both negotiating accession since October 2005), and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (which received candidate status in December of the same year). The reports include the assessment of the three candidate countries' performance in the relevant areas of the *acquis* and in the light of the political criteria.

Croatia

Regarding Croatia, the Commission reported progress, particularly in the areas of border management, migration and asylum. However, the integrated border management action plan still needs to be implemented as planned and equipment upgraded. Alignment with the *acquis* in this chapter is well underway, but considerable efforts are needed to ensure administrative and enforcement capacity, particularly in terms of inter-agency cooperation including law enforcement authorities, the customs service, prosecutors and the judiciary system, as well as to prevent corruption and to fight organised crime.

Croatia has made some progress on Chapter 23. Reform of the judiciary is moving forward but significant challenges remain, especially to improve judicial efficiency. Some progress has been made in the fight against corruption, with further legislative strengthening and initial results in some important cases handled by the Office for the Prevention of Corruption and Organised Crime (USKOK). However, corruption remains a widespread problem and considerable efforts are still needed. Measures are generally in place to guarantee fundamental rights. However, further efforts are required, especially as regards implementation of minority rights, including refugee return. It will be important not to neglect the rights of other socially vulnerable groups.

During the recent JHA Subcommittee meeting with Croatia, the state of progress was addressed in the fields of judiciary, corruption, fundamental rights, including protection of personal data, border management, visa and document security, asylum and migration, including illegal migration, cooperation in criminal matters and the fight against organised crime, functioning of the police, including international cooperation and Europol, as well as drug prevention, demand and supply reduction. Despite a generally positive assessment of the progress made by Croatia, several important problems remained and should be solved in the near future.

Eurojust agreed on a cooperation agreement with Croatia, thus paving the way for developing a

close cooperation to meet the challenges posed by serious crime often perpetrated by trans-national organisations, and for facilitating the coordination of investigations and prosecutions covering the territory of the Republic of Croatia and one or more Member States of the EU.

Turkey

In the assessment by the Commission on Chapter 23 (Judiciary and fundamental rights) some progress was reported on the judiciary, in particular on its efficiency. However, concerns remain regarding its independence and impartiality. There is no overall National Reform Strategy for the judiciary or a plan to implement it. As regards corruption, little progress has been made in developing a comprehensive anticorruption strategy and in strengthening the legislative framework. There is still no overall strategy or action plan to prevent and fight corruption. As regards fundamental rights, there has been limited progress in legislation and in practice. No major issues have been addressed and significant problems persist. Finally, the atmosphere in the country, in particular as regards issues related to minorities and religion, has not been conducive to the full respect of fundamental rights and might de facto restrict their exercise.

The report on Chapter 24 (Justice, freedom and security) showed that Turkey continued to make further progress in aligning its legislation with the *acquis* and with EU practices in the area of justice, freedom and security and that the Turkish legislation is aligned to a certain extent with the EU *acquis*. Progress can be reported, particularly in the areas of organised crime, drug trafficking and human trafficking. Considerable and sustained efforts are required in areas such as police cooperation and external borders. The same applies to migration and asylum, where there is a need to establish an asylum authority.

The negotiations on an EC – Turkey readmission agreement have been stalled for more than a year.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

In relation to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the EU will continue to assess its progress towards approximation with the EU *acquis* on Justice and Home Affairs.

The Commission report stated that progress has been made in the area of the judiciary, in fighting corruption and in fundamental rights. The authorities have demonstrated a stronger resolve to fight corruption, which has started to show results. However, improving the independence and the efficiency of the judiciary remains a major challenge and corruption is a deep-seated problem. In all three areas, further implementation of existing legislation is required. A persistent lack of budgetary

resources limits administrative capacity.

On Chapter 24, the Commission concluded that overall, there has been some progress as regards the operational capacity of the competent authorities, although mainly at central level. The basic legislation is in place, and the implementing legislation has been largely adopted. Administrative capacity remains particularly weak in the areas of migration, asylum and border management. Organised crime remains a serious concern. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is not yet sufficiently prepared to implement the *acquis* under this chapter.

Agreements on visa facilitation and readmission have been signed and concluded with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, together with four other Western Balkan countries, and entered into force on 1 January 2008. Joint Committees for the management of the implementation will be established according to the agreements.

The following event is planned under the Slovenian Presidency:

- Joint meeting of CIREFI experts with representatives from candidate countries and countries of the Western Balkans, Brussels, 28 April 2008.

B. Other countries with a European Perspective

Western Balkans

The Western Balkans as a whole will be one of the priorities of the Slovenian Presidency.

Among the efforts that will be undertaken, one should mention the initiative for gradual introduction of an organised crime threat assessment for the Western Balkan states (South-East European OCTA, also known as SEE OCTA).

A methodology similar to that used by Europol in drawing up the OCTA will be used to draw up a comprehensive regional threat assessment in the field of organised crime. On this basis, common priority tasks in the region will be defined and then dealt with at national and international level.

SEE OCTA is a project involving regional institutions and Western Balkan partners and which will make use of existing EU and regional instruments and mechanisms in conjunction with political agreement at EU level. The "step by step" approach involves seeking support for the project, capacity building, training, assistance in drawing up a national and central report, assistance when establishing priorities and assistance when preparing concrete measures to implement them.

This initiative received unanimous support from the Western Balkan States at the 7th Regional Ministerial Conference on Illegal Migration, Organized Crime, Corruption and Terrorism (the Brdo Process meeting) that was held on 4 October 2007 in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia.

Furthermore, it is important to call for the attention of other EU Member States. The Slovenian Presidency will thus, in cooperation with Austria and supported by France, organise a conference on SEE OCTA on 27-28 March 2008 in Vienna. Broader support from the EU Member States will help the project attain the set goals more effectively while at the same time, the project could serve as an example of good practice.

The Western Balkan States will draw up national reports, based on the questionnaire prepared by Europol and the Regional center for combating trans-border crime, the SECI (Southeast European Co-operative Initiative) Center. Assistance should be given by interested Member States and Europol. A joint training seminar for representatives of the analytical services of Western Balkan States and analysts of the SECI Centre is being planned with the full support of Europol. The seminar will be held in Slovenia on 7-18 April 2008. Europol will be invited to provide additional training to the SECI Centre analysts, who would be responsible for drawing up the central threat assessment report – SEE OCTA. A document with the goals and recommendations for the implementation of and the follow-up of the project will be presented at the June 2008 JHA Council.

As to the future relations with the SECI Center on combating organised crime in Bucharest, Slovenia is closely associated with the work that should lead to a new legal framework for the SECI Center. The proposal for a draft-SELEC (Southeast European Law Enforcement Center) Convention should be introduced in the first months of the Slovenian Presidency. The SELEC Convention will establish the Center's international legal personality with a view to helping EU institutions and SECI Member States to cooperate more closely and directly and to lay down legal provisions allowing for an adequate data protection mechanism to be set up, as well as a confidentiality regime which complies with European standards. This new Convention should enable the SECI Centre to conclude an operational cooperation agreement with Europol and thus meet the Council conclusions on SECI of December 2006.

The Slovenian Presidency strongly supports the Commission's proposal to support the development of the Center with new funds (earmarked under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance IPA 2008).

Under the Austrian Presidency, an Action Oriented Paper on Improving Cooperation on Organised

Crime, Corruption, Illegal Immigration and Counter-terrorism, between the EU, the Western Balkans and relevant ENP countries was adopted, taking into account the conclusions in the report adopted in 2004 by the Council and prepared by the “Friends of the Presidency” Group. This action-oriented paper contains concrete recommendations on what should be done in specific areas (e.g. improving regional and strategic cooperation, particularly in the areas of trafficking in human beings, drugs and illicit arms and in the fight against terrorism). As requested by the Strategy, a first interim report on the implementation of this AOP based on information provided by some Member States was presented at the December 2006 JHA Council. The Slovenian Presidency will encourage all Member States to report on the ongoing commitments in order to provide a complete picture for the next implementation report, which should be completed during the Slovenian Presidency.

One of the recommendations prepared by the Terrorism Working Group (TWG) on the basis of the EU Joint Situation Centre (SitCen) documents calls upon Member States to continue their endeavour to construct Counter Terrorism capacities in third countries. Following the first round of evaluations of mechanisms for combating terrorism in Member States, the EU adopted 16 recommendations which present guidelines for setting up an effective system for combating terrorism in Member States at EU level. The countries of the Western Balkans could, as a basis for setting up systems for combating terrorism, follow the 16 recommendations of the EU. The basis for deliberation will be the assessment of threats and the assessment of the operations of enforcement authorities competent for combating terrorism, as prepared by SitCen. A questionnaire for Western Balkan countries (following the model of Member State evaluations) will be prepared, based on SitCen's assessment. On the basis of Member States' support of the project, a Council decision regarding these questions will be drawn up.

Radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism in the Western Balkans will represent the key focus of the Slovenian Presidency regarding the combating of terrorism. Documents comprising the basis for deliberations and the preparation of reports will be prepared by SitCen and the Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency. The objective is to establish whether the situation in the Western Balkans in terms of radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism has an effect on the security situation and process of radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism in the EU (especially Member States with »large« diasporas) and the identification of possible measures (e.g. exchange of information among Western Balkan countries via the Slovenian Memorandum of Understanding initiative). In addition to the TWG, the topic could also be simultaneously examined by the working group on counter-terrorism (COTER), which would focus on measures for cooperation with Western Balkan countries, while the TWG would focus on measures for ensuring »internal« security.

With the aim of better information exchange on illegal immigration and illegal immigration

networks between candidate countries, countries of the Western Balkans and EU Member States, the Slovenian Presidency will convene a joint meeting of Centre for Information, Discussion and Exchange on the Crossing of Frontiers and Immigration (CIREFI) experts with representatives from candidate countries and Western Balkan countries. The meeting is scheduled for 28 April 2008.

In general, the Presidency considers that efforts should be devoted to creating the possibility, where appropriate, of an exchange of information between the EU's and the Member States' law enforcement agencies on the one hand and the ESDP rule of law missions on the other, taking into account the legal constraints, i.a. the data protection requirements.

In 2005, a Police Cooperation Convention was signed between the countries in the region, including several neighbouring countries. Slovenia and Austria have agreed to take the lead in the process of implementing this Convention, which should bring to the region several instruments that have proven successful among Schengen states.

The cooperation among EU Liaison Officers posted in Western Balkan states will be continued, i.a. by looking into the possibility of a Task Force of Liaison Officers. Such a Working mechanism would aim at enhancing day-to-day operational cooperation with the LO's networks and improve the coordination with Europol. An EU-Western Balkan liaison officers meeting will take place in Zagreb on 14-15 February 2008.

During the Slovenian Presidency an HDG (Horizontal Working Party on Drugs) Troika with representatives from Western Balkan States is planned for 2 April 2008.

CEPOL will organise in Slovenia an awareness conference for the Western Balkans police authorities on 17-19 March 2008.

In a longer term perspective, The Slovenian Presidency took note of France's desire to prioritise issues relating to money laundering and to trafficking in arms under its Presidency in the second part of 2008.

Following the GAERC Council Conclusions the Slovenian Presidency will open the discussion on visa free regime for Western Balkans region in order to prepare roadmaps to conduct this process. In this regard the Commission will start the dialog with the countries in the region.

The following events are planned under the Slovenian Presidency:

- EU-Western Balkan liaison officers meeting in Zagreb, 14-15 February 2008

- CEPOL awareness conference for the Western Balkans police authorities, Slovenia, 17-19 March 2008
- Conference on SEE OCTA in Vienna, 27-28 March 2008
- HDG Troika EU-Western Balkans, Brussels, 2 April 2008
- Joint training seminar for representatives of the analytical services of Western Balkan States and analysts of the SECI Centre, Slovenia, 7-18 April 2008
- Joint meeting of CIREFI experts with representatives from candidate countries and countries of the Western Balkans, Brussels, 28 April 2008
- EU-Kosovo: Stabilisation and Association Process Steering Tracking Mechanism in JHA format, Pristina, February 2008
- EU-BiH: Reform Process Monitoring, Sarajevo, 20 February and 12 June 2008
- EU-Montenegro: Plenary Enhanced Permanent Dialogue, Podgorica, 21 May 2008
- EU-Montenegro: Sub-enhanced Permanent Dialogue, 17 June 2008 (venue tbc)
- EU-Albania: Consultative Task Force meeting, Brussels, June 2008.

C. The Russian Federation

Co-operation in the JHA area with the Russian Federation is based on the Road Map of the Common Space for Freedom, Security and Justice, which was adopted at the May 2005 Summit. The active participation of both EU Member States and the Russian Federation in implementing this instrument is necessary in order to achieve a high level of security for the citizens of the EU and of the Russian Federation. It is important that implementation of the Road Map is seen as a priority issue in EU and Russia. In addition, in November 2006, the Council took note of the Action Oriented Paper for the implementation of this common space as part of the JHA External Strategy. The Slovenian Presidency will continue implementing the measures envisaged in these papers.

The seventh meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council (PPC) on Freedom, Security and Justice was held in Brussels on 22-23 November 2007. The meeting reviewed the implementation of the EU-Russia Road Map on the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice and discussed future priorities. It was stated that both parties agreed that extensive and concrete cooperation within the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice is an integral part of the EU-Russia strategic partnership and an instrumental tool in addressing common challenges affecting citizens on both sides. The parties stressed the importance of the respect for democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law as core values underpinning this cooperation. Both parties underlined the importance of cooperation on border issues between Russia and the EU Member States, and looked forward to further operational cooperation between the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the

Member States of the European Union (Frontex) and the Border Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation. The participants welcomed the entry into force of the EC-Russia visa facilitation and readmission agreements and pledged their full, unconditional and harmonised implementation. They noted the start of the visa dialogue to examine the conditions for visa-free travel as a long-term perspective and in this context looked forward to the continuation of expert meetings, i.a. on document security including biometrics, illegal migration including readmission as well as public order and security.

The eighth meeting of the EU-Russia PPC on Freedom, Security and Justice is planned during the Slovenian Presidency in Russia. The meeting will assess progress in the implementation of the Road Map on the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice and will define priorities for future cooperation.

The position of the EU liaison officers' network will be further enhanced to take full advantage of the added value they can provide. They play a central role in the effective implementation of the Action Oriented Paper, given its inherent operational nature. The EU liaison officers' meeting in Moscow is scheduled for 27 March 2008 back-to-back with the meeting with representatives of all of the Russian law enforcement authorities.

Slovenia supports the efforts developed, at the initiative of Finland, to establish a single template for reporting by Member States' liaison officers. This single template would serve two goals: to share with Europol relevant information that is until now only kept nationally and to allow information to be exchanged among Member States and thus increase the quality of the risk assessment.

In view of the fact that an efficient fight against organized crime and terrorism requires up-to-date threat assessments, timely analytical and operational support cooperation between the Russian Federation and Europol should further be developed. The Slovenian Presidency also supports the efforts made by Europol to produce the so-called R-OCTA (Russian Organised Crime Threat Assessment).

The Slovenian Presidency will continue to stress the importance of standards for data protection as the condition for sharing information and enhancing cooperation of the Russian Federation with Europol, Eurojust and other European authorities. In this view the Slovenian Presidency will support any efforts to evaluate the standards and effective implementation of personal data protection in Russia based on the 1981 Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with Regard to the Automatic Processing of Personal Data. Bearing this in mind the

Slovenian Presidency will support the negotiations in view of the conclusion of an Agreement between the Russian Federation and Eurojust.

The Presidency recognizes the need for enhanced cooperation of cross-border investigations between Eurojust and the Russian Prosecutor General's Office. The Russian ratification of the Second Additional Protocol to the 1959 Council of Europe Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters would pave the way for direct contacts between EU member states and Russia's judicial bodies.

In the area of criminal law the Slovenian Presidency will encourage the Russian Federation to ratify and implement the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime, which would also enhance cooperation between Europol, member states of the EU and Russia through 24-hours contact points.

In the area of civil law the Presidency supports Russia's readiness to cooperate with the EU in the framework of The Hague Conference. The Slovenian Presidency will focus on matters pertaining to family law. The third round of Russia-Commission informal consultations on judicial cooperation on civil and commercial matters are envisaged in the first weeks of the Slovenian Presidency.

A CEPOL delegation will travel to Moscow with a view to negotiating a Cooperation Agreement (probably January or February 2008).

The following events are planned under the Slovenian Presidency:

- JHA Troika ministerial meeting in the format of a PPC in Russia (date tbc)
- A third round of Russia-Commission informal consultations on judicial cooperation on civil and commercial matters, end of January 2008
- Liaison Officers' meeting in Moscow, 27 March 2008
- EU-Russia Experts COTER Troika with JHA aspects (with TWG participation), Brussels, 24 April 2008
- Expert meeting on illegal migration including readmission, in the context of the EU-Russia visa dialogue
- Expert meeting on public order and security, in the context of the EU-Russia visa dialogue.

D. Eastern European Neighbourhood partners

Ukraine

The important relations with Ukraine in the field of Justice and Home Affairs are described in the

revised EU-Ukraine JHA Action Plan, which was formally adopted by the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council on 18 June 2007.

Moreover, negotiations started with Ukraine with a view to a new Enhanced Agreement, replacing the 1994 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Substantial progress has already been made on the JHA chapter.

The next Ministerial meeting on Justice, Freedom and Security between the Troika of the EU and Ukraine will take place in Kiev, 28-29 May 2008. The meeting will discuss priorities for future common work in line with the revised JHA Action Plan.

Since data protection has on a number of occasions been seen as an obstacle for enhanced cooperation with Ukraine and for exchange of data, the Presidency will support any efforts to evaluate the level of data protection in Ukraine, with a view to facilitating cooperation with Europol and Eurojust.

Slovenia will hold a meeting of EU Liaison officers, in conjunction with a meeting with the Ukrainian law enforcement authorities. An EU-Ukraine liaison officers' meeting is planned for 16 April 2008 in Kiev.

During the Slovenian Presidency an HDG Troika with Ukraine is planned for 2 April 2008 in Brussels.

The agreements on visa facilitation and readmission were concluded and will enter into force on 1 January 2008. Their implementation will be closely monitored through the respective Joint Committees.

There will be a meeting of the JHA Subcommittee with Ukraine in the first semester of 2008 (tbc).

The Republic of Moldova

Recently, a JHA subcommittee was held with the Republic of Moldova during which issues were addressed relating to the judiciary, corruption, migration (legal and illegal migration, readmission, visa, and asylum), border management, the fight against organised crime, human trafficking, drugs, money laundering and economic and financial crime police and judicial cooperation.

The Slovenian Presidency values the contribution of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova

and Ukraine (EUBAM) aiming at a system of border and customs controls and border surveillance which meets not only European standards, but also, and especially, the legitimate needs of the citizens of each country.

The EC – Republic of Moldova readmission and visa facilitation agreements will enter into force on 1 January 2008. Their implementation needs to be closely monitored through the respective Joint Committees.

Based on the JHA Council conclusions of December 2007 the Commission, in close liaison with Member States, will open a dialogue with the Republic of Moldova, with a view to launching pilot mobility partnership and will report back to the Council on the progress made no later than June 2008.

South Caucasus States

The ENP Action Plans with **Armenia**, **Azerbaijan** and **Georgia** were adopted at the Cooperation Council meetings held on 14 November 2006. Under the Portuguese Presidency, during the Cooperation Committees (September 2007) and the Cooperation Councils (October 2007) with the three South Caucasus countries, there has been an in-depth discussion on the implementation of the ENP Action Plans covering each of the priority areas, including JHA issues.

For the time being, regarding **Georgia**, which is an important partner, the EU intends to swiftly pursue the setting up of the new JHA Subcommittee and the enhanced dialogue on migration issues, including visa issues, provided for by the ENP Action Plan. In cooperation with the Commission, Slovenia plans to have a first meeting of the JHA Subcommittee with Georgia in the first semester of 2008.

The following events are planned under the Slovenian Presidency:

- EU-Ukraine JHA Troika Ministerial Meeting, Kiev, 28-29 May 2008
- HDG Troika with Ukraine, Brussels, 2 April 2008
- EU-Ukraine liaison officers' meeting, Kiev, 16 April 2008
- JHA Sub-committee with Georgia (tbc)
- JHA Sub-committee with Ukraine (tbc).

E. Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein

The Slovenian Presidency will continue the cooperation with these countries regarding the “Schengen-relevant” issues. In particular, Slovenia welcomes Switzerland’s interest in becoming a

full member of the Schengen area in the course of 2008 and will support further efforts to enable Liechtenstein to join the Schengen area in the near future.

The Slovenian Presidency will also continue judicial cooperation in civil matters with these countries, in particular by promoting the ratification of the revised Lugano Convention.

Bilateral contacts have demonstrated that Norway is interested in concluding additional agreements with EU to extend the EU mutual legal assistance regime to Norway. Slovenia welcomes this. Consideration should be given as to whether all other Lugano countries would be interested in concluding additional agreements with EU to extend the EU mutual legal assistance regime to them. Whenever non-Schengen relevant issues are addressed, as the case of Norway's interest in participating in the Prüm acquis, the Slovenian Presidency will actively support negotiations aiming at enhancing police and judicial cooperation with these close partners.

F. Partners in the Euro Mediterranean area

The first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Migration was held in Albufeira, Algarve, on 18 and 19 November 2007. The mandate for this meeting was set out by Heads of State and Government in November 2005, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Summit of the Barcelona Process, which acknowledged the growing importance of migration issues within the Euro- Mediterranean Partnership.

The key subjects on the agenda were migration and development, legal migration and fighting illegal migration - and including such areas as remittances and micro-credit, legal migration opportunities, security of travel documents and return. The Declaration approved in Albufeira contains a first section, of a more political nature, outlining the commitment of all Euro-Mediterranean partners to establish and strengthen their cooperation in the area of migration and migration related issues. It also contains a second, more operational section, covering three areas where concrete projects are identified: legal migration, migration and development, illegal migration.

Work will begin early in 2008 on implementing the commitments in the Agreed Ministerial Conclusions. Implementation will be taken forward both through activities under the EC MEDA JAI II Programme and through other bilateral and multi-lateral projects and activities. Several EUROMED partner states have already volunteered to take forward work on issues such as labour migration, readmission, biometrics and remittances. The Presidency will support the implementation of concrete actions and enable the exchange of information in different fora.

Cooperation in the fight against terrorism is continuing with Northern African states. The EU still has to decide whether to draw up an action plan and if so, when this should occur. The preparation of this paper will take into account the overall EU strategies to combat terrorism and will draw on the expertise of the relevant Member States and EU bodies in this matter.

The ENP, which reinforces and complements the Barcelona Process, enables the EU, by negotiating country-specific Action Plans, to work with each partner individually in order to deepen political and economic integration, including cooperation regarding the various dimensions of migration, social integration, justice and security.

Already in 2005 Action Plans with **Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and the Palestinian Authority**, entered into force, while those with **Lebanon and Egypt**, entered into force in 2006 and 2007 respectively. Since then, several meetings have taken place focusing on issues such as migration, the fight against organised crime, drugs and terrorism, as well as police and judicial cooperation.

In the field of judicial cooperation in civil matters the EU Member States participate in the Malta process, bringing together states party to the Hague Conference on Private International Law and Mediterranean countries in order to discuss cross-border family law issues, with particular focus on the rights of the child and child abductions. A meeting in the framework of the Malta process is planned for the spring of 2008 in Cairo, Egypt.

The following events are planned under the Slovenian Presidency:

- JHA sub-committees with: Algeria (tbc), Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.

G. Partners on the American continent

USA

In recent years, the intensive cooperation between the EU and the USA concentrated on global challenges such as terrorism, organised crime, including drug trafficking, corruption and illegal migration, and on law enforcement and judicial co-operation.

Slovenia intends to continue with this close cooperation by organising the JHA Senior Level Officials meeting in Ljubljana, on 9-10 January 2008.

Moreover, exploratory talks on common principles on personal data protection for the exchange of information for law enforcement purposes will be pursued in the framework of the High level Contact Group. The expert meeting of the High Level Contact Group is planned for 7-8 January 2008 in Brussels.

The Presidency will continue the dialogue on reciprocity of visa-exempt regimes for short stays with the aim of having all EU Member States in the Visa Waiver Programme.

During the Slovenian Presidency an HDG Troika with the US is planned, which will take place on 26 June 2008.

An EU-US Experts COTER troika with JHA aspects (with TWG participation) is planned for 22 or 23 May 2008; the main focus will be on links between terrorism and illegal drug trafficking.

With the purpose of exchanging views between Member States and USA/**Canada** regarding the use of new technologies in border controls (especially use of biometrics at borders) with the aim of facilitating passenger flow and at the same time ensuring a high level of security, the Slovenian Presidency will organise a joint meeting of experts on Frontiers/False documents from EU Member States, the USA and Canada. The meeting is scheduled for 27 June 2008.

The Presidency welcomes the efforts made by the USA to conclude their process of ratification and will encourage member states of the EU to finish their procedures for ratification of both mutual legal assistance and extradition agreements.

Further development of judicial cooperation between the USA and Eurojust on the basis of the existing cooperation agreement is encouraged by the Slovenian Presidency.

The Slovenian Presidency emphasizes the importance of the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime as a key instrument both for the EU Member States, the USA as well as other countries.

In the field of judicial cooperation in civil matters, cooperation should focus on the ratification and implementation of international conventions, in particular the Hague Conventions in the area of family law.

Canada

The Slovenian Presidency intends to pursue the dialogue on border and document security, including the work related to the introduction of biometric passports, use of false documents and development of practical cooperation.

The Slovenian Presidency will continue the dialogue on reciprocal visa exempt travel for short stays so that citizens of all EU Member States can travel visa-free to Canada.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Trafficking in drugs originating from Latin-America and the Caribbean (LAC) area will continue to be an important focus of the Slovenian Presidency as it is a key to the handling of other subjects of mutual interest such as money laundering, organised crime and corruption. The opportunities for a structured, comprehensive and regular bi-regional dialogue and for cooperation on migration will possibly be explored at the next EU-LAC Summit in 2008.

Building upon the recommendations of the two previous EU-LAC expert meetings on migration held in Quito (Ecuador) and Cartagena (Colombia) in March 2004 and March 2006 respectively, the third meeting of EU-LAC experts on migration will be held on 10-11 March 2008 in Brussels. It will identify the areas for future cooperation and dialogue on migration issues between the two regions. Following the decision to be taken by Member States at the HLWG, the EU – LAC experts on migration will exchange their views on four major themes which were also retained in the Vienna Summit Declaration (2006): Treatment, Rights and Integration of Migrants, Remittances, New Approaches to Migration Policies and Irregular Migration and the Fight Against Smuggling of and Trafficking in Human Beings. The adoption of the recommendations on continuing the dialogue on migration among EU – LAC partners is planned.

During the Slovenian Presidency two Technical Committee meetings of EU/LAC Mechanism on Drugs (25 January and 5 February) are planned in order to better prepare the X. High Level Meeting of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between LAC and the EU, with the participation of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). A meeting will be held in Vienna, March 4 - 5, 2008 under the co-Presidencies of Bolivia and Slovenia, back-to-back with the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which will take place on 10-14 March 2008 and where the Presidency will actively promote the coordination of the EU positions.

The following events are planned under the Slovenian Presidency:

- EU-US JHA Troika Ministerial Meeting in Slovenia, 13 March 2008 (tbc)
- EU-US Informal JHA Senior Level meeting in Ljubljana, 9-10 January 2008
- EU-US Experts COTER troika with JHA aspects (with TWG participation), Brussels, 22 or 23 May 2008
- EU-US HDG – Troika, Brussels, 26 June 2008
- EU-US expert meeting of the High Level Contact group on data protection principles for the exchange of personal data for law enforcement purposes, Brussels, 7-8 January 2008
- EU-US Policy Dialogue on Border and Transport Security (tbc)
- Joint meeting of experts on Frontiers/False documents from EU Member States, US and Canada, Brussels, 27 June 2008
- Technical Committee meeting of EU/LAC Mechanism on Drugs, Brussels, 25 January 2008
- Technical Committee meeting of EU/LAC Mechanism on Drugs, Brussels, 5 February 2008
- EU-LAC High Level Meeting in Vienna, 4-5 March 2008
- The third EU-LAC experts meeting on migration, Brussels, 10-11 March 2008.

H. Africa

The EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007 provided an important opportunity to enhance the relationship and establish a strategic partnership. On this basis, efforts will be stepped up on the implementation of the Global Approach to Migration, adopted by the European Council of 15/16 December 2005 and the European Council Conclusions on the evaluation of the Global Approach (14/15 December 2006) and on the EU Strategy for Africa (GAERC, 22 November 2005), the Declaration of the Tripoli Conference on Migration and Development (November 2006) and the EU-Africa Plan of Action on Trafficking of Human Beings, especially women and children.

In the light of the Joint Africa - EU Strategy and its first Action Plan the Presidency will work closely with the Commission, Member States and African countries and organizations in order to assure the various JHA aspects of its implementation.

In cooperation with France, Spain and the Commission, attention will also be paid to the follow-up of the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, held in Rabat on 10-11 June 2006, in view of the preparation for the second Ministerial Conference, due to take place in France in the second half of 2008. To this purpose a High Level Officials preparatory meeting will be held in June 2008. The Euro-African Ministerial Conference, which brought together all the EU States and all the African States along the Western African migratory route, adopted an Action Plan and a Political Declaration, whose implementation is ongoing. A first meeting of the Follow-up Committee took place in June 2007. It will also continue to promote the dialogue with key countries of origin and transit in Africa, in particular in the framework of Articles 8 and 13 of the Cotonou Agreement.

An EU-ECOWAS Joint Group on Migration will be held on 16 June 2008 in Brussels for the preparation of the EU-ECOWAS Ministerial troika meeting, which is also scheduled for June 2008 in Brussels. The identification of concrete actions is planned in order to strengthen cooperation in key areas of migration, as identified at the meeting in Ouagadougou in October 2007.

Based on the JHA Council conclusions of December 2007 the Commission, in close liaison with Member States, will open a dialogue with Cape Verde, with a view to launching a pilot mobility partnership and will report back to the Council on progress made no later than June 2008.

The following event is planned under the Slovenian Presidency:

- High Level Officials preparatory meeting for the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, June 2008 (date and venue tbc)
- EU-ECOWAS Joint Group on Migration, Brussels, 16 June 2008.

I. Global approach to migration

The European Council agreed in December 2005 on the Global Approach to Migration and priority actions focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean for 2006, recalling that migration issues are a central element in the EU's relations with third countries, including in particular the regions neighbouring the Union, namely the Eastern, South Eastern and Mediterranean regions. A first step in this regard was taken by implementing these priority actions in 2006. The 2006 December European Council has evaluated these actions and set the priorities for further implementation of the Global Approach to Migration. The European Council agreed on (i) Strengthening and deepening international cooperation with third countries of origin and transit, in particular between the European Union and African and Mediterranean countries (ii) Strengthening co-operation among Member States in the fight against illegal immigration (iii) Improving the management of external borders of the European Union (iv) Developing, as far as legal migration is concerned, well-managed migration policies (v) Promoting integration and intercultural dialogue (vi) Realising the Common European Asylum System by the end of 2010.

In June 2007, the European Council underlined the need to make rapid progress in developing a comprehensive European migration policy that is based on common political principles, is capable of taking into account all aspects of migration (the migration and development agenda, as well as the aspects such as legal migration, integration, protection of refugees, border control, readmission and the fight against illegal migration and human trafficking), and is based on a genuine partnership with third countries and fully integrated into the Union's external policies.

On 16 May 2007 the Commission published two communications. The first one is on circular migration and mobility partnerships between the EU and third countries and the second one on the application of the Global Approach to the Eastern and South-Eastern regions neighbouring the EU. On this basis, the Council adopted on 18 June 2007 conclusions, that were subsequently endorsed by the European Council. Finally, on 20 November 2007 the Council adopted conclusions on Coherence between EU Migration and Development policies. Moreover, the Council adopted on 10 December Conclusions on Mobility Partnerships and Circular Migration in the Framework of the Global Approach to Migration. The issue of the financial resources for a full implementation of the Global Approach to the Eastern and South-Eastern regions neighbouring the EU should be

guaranteed.

Migration was high on the agenda of the Portuguese Presidency and will be one of the priorities under the French Presidency. In a spirit of continuity and sustained efforts, the Slovenian Presidency will take forward the implementation of the Global Approach to Migration, stressing its comprehensive and regionally balanced nature. Efforts will also be made to achieve concrete results concerning the proposed mobility partnerships and on circular migration, in the context of promoting legal migration.

The Presidency will continue to promote the follow-up process in relation to the EU missions to Africa, with a view to strengthening political dialogue and establishing cooperation platforms where appropriate. Based on the discussion on the results and added value of such missions, further missions to Africa and Eastern and South-Eastern regions neighbouring the EU will be considered. Based on the Commission' Communication towards a common immigration policy (December 2007) the Presidency will continue, in consultation with Member States, the discussions on how to provide an efficient implementation and follow-up to the Global Approach.

Global Forum on Migration and Development

As a follow-up to the United Nations High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development that was held on 14 and 15 September 2006, the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development was hosted by Belgium in July 2007.

The Global Forum offers an informal platform for exchanging opinions on all aspects of international migration with the aim of achieving a coherent policy approach, particularly from the point of view of development and general migration policy. The second meeting of the Global Forum will be hosted by the Government of the Philippines in the second semester of 2008.

J. JHA-External relations with other partners

Under the German Presidency the European Council of 21 and 22 June 2007 adopted an EU strategy for a new partnership with **Central Asia**. This strategy will serve as an overall framework for EU relations with Central Asia, including in the field of migration.

The Slovenian Presidency welcomes the increasing priority given to Justice and Home Affairs in several of the political dialogues conducted with Central Asian states. The Presidency supports these dialogues and would welcome any form of enhanced operational cooperation that could emerge from this.

JHA cooperation with the region should foster police cooperation initiatives at EU and regional level on drug-trafficking and organized crime. Border management and security initiatives should receive special attention.

In cooperation with the Commission, The Slovenian Presidency plans to have a meeting of the JHA subcommittee with **Uzbekistan** in the first semester of 2008.

The first meeting of the EU-**India** High-level Dialogue on Migration Issues and Visa Policy was held in June 2006, in the framework of the implementation of the Joint Action Plan.

An EU-India Experts COTER troika with JHA aspects (with TWG participation) is planned for early 2008.

The EU, together with the international community, will continue to assist **Afghanistan** in the areas of security, governance, the rule of law, economic and social development, human rights and also the drug problem that affects the whole of society, with the aim of strengthening Afghan ownership. The Afghanistan Compact and the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (iANDS) launched at the London Conference in January/February 2006 provide the framework for EU support for Afghanistan.

Under the Austrian Presidency, the Action-Oriented Paper Increasing EU support for combating drug production in and trafficking from Afghanistan, including transit routes was adopted. The Presidency will endeavour to continue the implementation of the Action Oriented Plan. With the launch of a € 22 million EU programme for border management in Afghanistan, which is being supported by the UK, an important AOP milestone is already being implemented. The Slovenian Presidency will hold a HDG Troika meeting with Afghanistan (Brussels, 28 February 2008).

During the Slovenian Presidency an attempt will be made to determine whether links between drug trafficking and the financing of terrorism exist and to what degree the phenomenon is present in the EU, its neighbouring countries and in several key third countries such as Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the EU has a strong interest in strengthening cooperation in the field of counter-

narcotics with **the Islamic Republic of Iran** as documented by the EU Action-Oriented Paper on drugs from Afghanistan including Iran on the trafficking routes. Currently there are two Commission-funded assistance projects with Iran worth € 2.3 million in total, one on demand reduction and another on regional cooperation on precursors' control. In the absence of a Cooperation Agreement, project funding is very difficult for the Commission, as its decisions to finance most of the projects must be based on Country Strategy papers.

On 9 December 2005 the seventh meeting since 2001 of the EU Troika with Iran on drug control took place in Brussels. Iran stressed its strong concern at the increase in drug production and smuggling from Afghanistan. Support was therefore sought on equipment (to ensure control of the Afghan border and for communication purposes) and for the whole training cycle (from police to doctor/nurses/medical treatment). The EU and Iranian sides considered that it is highly desirable to implement the recommendations of the Paris Pact Expert Round Table held in Tehran on 13 and 14 of September 2005 in particular in the fields of border control, capacity building and investigation capabilities.

Since December 2005 Iran has shown a somewhat reluctant attitude to further Troikas, however on 29-31 October 2007 the Commission mission to Tehran took place (with the support of the Portuguese Presidency's Embassy in Tehran) and the Iranian side expressed its interest in enhanced cooperation in the field of anti-narcotics. In order to explore the scope for enhanced co-operation between the EU and Iran on drug control and pursuant to its previous meetings on the subject the Slovenian Presidency plans to hold an EU-Iran expert troika on drugs on 14 May 2008 (tbc).

In general, **China** is nowadays becoming a key partner in all sectors of international relations. The EU will continue its dialogue with China on illegal migration, including readmission, and trafficking in human beings and co-operation on combating corruption, organised crime and terrorism. Efforts shall be enhanced to make progress in the negotiations of the readmission agreement. Activities on facilitating people-to-people exchanges will continue. In line with the Joint Statement of the 2006 Summit and the Council conclusions of December 2006 on the EU-China Strategic Partnership cooperation, the implementation of the Approved Destination Status (ADS) Agreement remains important.

The negotiating mandate to conclude an EU-China Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) contains provisions relating to JHA cooperation. The negotiations of the PCA were launched in January 2007. The Slovene Presidency hopes both sides can move forward on JHA issues.

The EU-**Japan** Summit in Tokyo in June 2006 underlined the intention to contribute substantially to the elaboration of the UN counterterrorism strategy and to further enhance cooperation in the

fight against terrorism in South East Asia. On 5 June 2007 the 16th Summit between the EU and Japan took place. The launch of preliminary, informal discussions on cooperation between the EU and Japan in the area of legal assistance in criminal matters was welcomed.

In the year 2007 two rounds of informal discussions on possible EU-Japan Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement took place, both under the German Presidency. The Slovenian Presidency intends to hold the third round of informal discussions in spring 2008 and possibly propose that the Council adopt a mandate to the Presidency to start formal negotiations for conclusion of the agreement.

Early 2008, the Presidency will launch negotiations on a passenger name record agreement with **Australia**.

The following events are planned under the Slovenian Presidency:

- EU-India Experts COTER troika with JHA aspects (with TWG participation), Brussels, January/February 2008
- HDG Troika meeting with Afghanistan, Brussels, 28 February 2008 (tbc)
- HDG Troika meeting with Iran, Brussels, 14 May 2008 (tbc)
- JHA Sub-committee with Uzbekistan
- The third round of informal discussions on co-operation between the EU and Japan in the area of legal assistance in criminal matters with Japan in spring 2008.

K. International Organizations

Council of Europe

The Slovenian Presidency recognises the important role of the Council of Europe as the body for setting internationally recognised legal standards and will continue to promote standards of the Council of Europe in various fields, such as human rights, cybercrime and data protection.

The Slovenian Presidency will hold a CATS troika meeting with the Council of Europe which will be devoted to information exchange and to strengthening the mutual commitments of both international organisations. The meeting will be held in the margins of the CATS troika in June 2008 in Brussels.

The Slovenian Presidency will examine the readiness of member states of the EU to accept the common position regarding the normative proposal for a simplified extradition procedure which is discussed in the Council of Europe in relation to existing mechanisms for extradition as defined by

the 1957 European Convention on Extradition.

Interpol

The Slovenian Presidency will hold a CATS troika meeting with Interpol. Interpol plays a significant role in promoting and supporting international police cooperation. All EU Member States are also members of Interpol. It is with this in mind that the Slovenian Presidency would like to give an additional push to the established ways of cooperating and identify those fields where there could be mutual benefit for the two entities. The Slovenian Presidency intends to discuss the matter of entering data into and retrieving data from Interpol's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents Database by the EU Member States (Council Common Position 2005/69/JHA) as well as Interpol's Missing Persons Database. Cooperation in other fields, such as Interpol's Stolen Motor Vehicles Database and child pornography could be additional topics for discussion. The meeting will take place in Brussels (poss. in March 2008).

United Nations: The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

The 17th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice will be held from 14 to 18 April 2008 in Vienna, and will be preceded by pre-session consultations on 11 April 2008. The Presidency will coordinate the activities of the EU Member States with a view to supporting the efforts of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to enhance the implementation of existing UN instruments on combating transnational crime. The Presidency will support efforts of the EU to attach special importance to "aspects of violence against women that pertain directly to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice" which is a topic for the thematic debate. The 17th session will progress towards finalizing the programme for the twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice which will be held in 2010.

United Nations: the United Nations Convention against Corruption

The second session of The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption will be held during the Slovenian Presidency, from 28 January to 1 February 2008 in Bali, Indonesia. The preceding Portuguese Presidency will be responsible for coordination and for the representative function.

United Nations: the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)

Carriage of goods

The final session of Working Group III for the preparation of the draft Convention on the carriage

of goods will be held on 14-25 January 2008 in Vienna. The chapter on jurisdiction has been finalised. Adoption in the plenary is planned at the 41th session, which will be held from 16 June to 3 July in New York.

Arbitration and Conciliation

The 47th session of the Working Group on International Arbitration and Conciliation (Working Group II) of the UNCITRAL was held in September 2007. The aim of this session was a thorough and detailed debate on the proposed revision of the UNCITRAL arbitration rules, adopted in April 1976. The Working Group will continue the work on revised arbitration rules in the 48th session, which will be held from 4th to 8th February 2008 in New York.

Insolvency law

Working group V on insolvency law will continue to address questions related to corporate groups in insolvency at its 34th session which will be held from 3-7 March 2008 in New York.

Intellectual property rights and securities

At the 13th session, scheduled for 19-23 May 2008 Working group VI will, have a first exchange of views on the aspects of intellectual property rights as securities in international business.

The Hague Conference on Private International Law

On 3 April 2007 the EU became a member of the Hague Conference on Private International Law. The Slovenian Presidency will aim to strengthen relations of the EU with the Hague Conference as it recognizes the binding role of this international body in responding to global needs in the area of civil law. Particular focus will be put on the strategy of the EU in relation to the Hague Conference. On 1-3 April 2008, the Council on General Affairs and Policy of The Hague Conference will take place in The Hague.

On 23 November 2007 the new Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance and a Protocol on the Law Applicable to Maintenance Obligations were adopted by the Twenty-First Diplomatic Session of the Hague Conference. Signature in the short term is desirable in view of the major importance of this Convention.

The Slovenian Presidency will undertake efforts to promote accession of the EU to the 1996 Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children. The convention constitutes an important additional legal instrument to the 1980 Hague Convention on the civil aspects of international child abduction which improves the protection of children in international situations,

avoiding conflicts between the legal systems of states.

III. List of External Relations events by date: 1 January 2008 to 30 June 2008

January

7-8 EU-US expert meeting of the High Level Contact group on data protection and data sharing, Brussels

9-10 EU-US Informal JHA Senior Level meeting, Ljubljana

24 EU-Israel Subcommittee on Justice and Legal matters, Israel

25 EU-LAC Technical Committee Meeting, Brussels

A third round of Russia-Commission informal consultations on judicial cooperation on civil and commercial matters, end of January 2008

EU-India Experts COTER troika with JHA aspects (with TWG participation), Brussels

EU-Morocco Subcommittee on Justice and Security, Brussels

EU-Morocco Working Group on Migration/Social Affairs, Brussels

February

5 EU-LAC Technical Committee Meeting, Brussels

14-15 EU-Western Balkans liaison officers' meeting, Zagreb

19-20 EU- Tunisia Subcommittee on Justice and Security, Tunis

19-20 EU- Tunisia Working Group on Migration/Social Affairs, Tunis

20 EU-BiH: Reform Process Monitoring, Sarajevo

28 HDG Troika meeting with Afghanistan, Brussels (tbc)

Expert meeting on illegal migration including readmission, in the context of the EU-Russia visa dialogue

EU-Kosovo: Stabilisation and Association Process Steering Tracking Mechanism in JHA format, Pristina

March

4-5 EU-LAC High Level Meeting, Vienna

10 EU-Canada experts COTER troika with JHA aspects (with TWG participation), Brussels

10-11 EU-LAC experts meeting on migration, Brussels

13 EU-US JHA Troika Ministerial Meeting, Ljubljana (tbc)

17-19 CEPOL awareness conference for the Western Balkans police authorities, Slovenia
27 Liaison Officers' meeting, Moscow
27-28 Conference on SEE OCTA, Vienna

Expert meeting on public order and security, in the context of the EU-Russia visa dialogue
CATS troika meeting with Interpol, Brussels

April

2 EU-Ukraine HDG Troika, Brussels
2 EU-Western Balkans HDG Troika, Brussels
7-18 Joint training seminar for the representatives of analytical services of Western Balkan States and analysts of the SECI Centre, Slovenia
16 EU-Ukraine liaison officers' meeting, Kiev
24 EU-Russia Experts COTER Troika with JHA aspects (with TWG participation), Brussels
28 Joint meeting of CIREFI experts with representatives from candidate countries and countries of the Western Balkans, Brussels

EU-Japan Informal Meeting (informal consultations for an agreement on extradition and mutual legal assistance), Brussels
EU-Algeria JHA Subcommittee, Alger (tbc)

May

14 EU-Iran Troika on drugs, Brussels (tbc)
21 EU-Montenegro: Plenary Enhanced Permanent Dialogue, Podgorica
22/23 EU-US Experts COTER troika with JHA aspects (with TWG participation), Brussels
28-29 EU-Ukraine JHA Troika Ministerial Meeting, Kiev

EU-Russia JHA Troika Ministerial PPC Meeting, Russia (date tbc)

June

12 EU-BiH: Reform Process Monitoring, Sarajevo
16 EU-ECOWAS Joint group on migration, Brussels
17 EU-Montenegro: Sub-enhanced Permanent Dialogue (venue tbc)
23/24 Article 36 Committee CATS troika with the Council of Europe, Brussels
26 EU-US HDG Troika, Brussels

27 Joint meeting of experts on Frontiers/False documents from EU Member States, the United States of America and Canada, Brussels

EU-Albania: Consultative Task Force meeting, Brussels

EU-African Ministerial Conference preparatory meeting (Rabat process)

Other meetings likely to take place, but for which no date has been set:

Policy Dialogue on Border and Transportation Security (tbc)

JHA Sub-committee with Georgia (tbc)

JHA Sub-committee with Uzbekistan (tbc)

JHA Sub-committee with Ukraine (tbc)

EU-Jordan Subcommittee on Justice and Security, Jordan (tbc)

EU-Jordan Subcommittee on Migration/Social Affairs, Jordan (tbc)

EU-Lebanon JHA Subcommittee, Lebanon (tbc)
