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Informal meeting of justice and home affairs ministers of the EU and the Eastern Partnership

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Press release

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**Innsbruck** – The ministers responsible for justice and home affairs of Estonia, Bulgaria, Austria and Romania, representing the trio of presidencies of the Council of the EU and the incoming presidency, met in Innsbruck on 13 July 2018 with their counterparts from the Eastern Partnership countries, namely the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The European Commission was represented by the Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality and the Commissioner for the Security Union. The European External Action Service (EEAS) and the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) were also represented.

The meeting offered an opportunity to discuss the priorities for the cooperation between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries, with ministers affirming their commitment to pursue their reform processes, in line with the key deliverables for 2020 pertaining to justice and home affairs. They focussed their discussions on the promotion of the rule of law and the fight against corruption within security and judicial authorities.

“The fight against corruption does not end within national borders, which is why the exchange between EU member states as well as the cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries supported by the European Commission is of the greatest possible importance. Corruption causes costs of around 120 billion euros per year within the European Union. It jeopardises the good functioning of public institutions and affects the principles of legality and legal certainty”, stated the Austrian Federal Minister for Justice, Josef Moser.

The ministers reaffirmed their joint commitment to strengthen the rule of law and anti-corruption mechanisms, as agreed at the Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2017. In this context, the ministers emphasised that the fight against corruption and implementation of public administration reforms are of crucial importance for promoting good governance at all levels and increasing public confidence in national and local institutions. Ministers also underlined the key role of civil society in ensuring the implementation and supervision of anti-corruption

mechanisms.

The ministers discussed the establishment of effective measurement of progress in the fight against corruption and presented the most relevant measures undertaken in the field of supervision and enforcement of their countries' anti-corruption legislation, in line with the "European Standards".

"Only by ensuring good governance on all levels can the population's trust in the judiciary and security authorities be guaranteed. The rule of law, proper administration, integrity and transparency are essential cornerstones in the fight against corruption", the Austrian Federal Minister for Justice said.

In the field of justice, the ministers discussed specific measures aimed at ensuring an appropriate system of recruitment and promotion of judges and public prosecutors, as well as the adoption of disciplinary rules and codes of ethics for these groups. Participants reconfirmed the political commitment to focus their reform efforts on recruitment, accountability and disciplinary proceedings, access to justice and legal aid, court administration (backlogs and e-Justice), training and the enforcement of judgements. Reforms in these areas will be guided by the "European Standards".

Ministers encouraged all parties to continue addressing the challenges in these areas within the relevant Eastern Partnership structures, such as the Eastern Partnership platform dedicated to strengthening institutions and good governance, the Eastern Partnership Panel on Rule of Law, and existing bilateral subcommittees on justice, freedom and security.

Official photos of this event will be published on the [official Flickr channel](#).

More information about the event can be found on the [event page](#).