

Informal meeting of justice and home affairs ministers July 7, 2017

At the informal meeting of EU justice ministers the future of e-Justice was set

During the second day of the Justice and Home Affairs Informal Council meeting in Tallinn, ministers of Justice discussed the future of e-Justice, the sale of consumer goods, mutual recognition of freezing and confiscation orders and data retention..

On **the future of e-Justice**, the chair of the informal Council meeting, Estonian Minister of Justice Urmas Reinsalu said that enhancement of cross-border cooperation in the EU has to help to diminish the digital capacity gap between the Member States, pay more attention to sustainable maintenance of existing e-Justice tools, electronic identity and interoperability of IT-systems.

The Member States shared their views on how to ensure the stable, long-term management of e-CODEX, the EU secure information exchange platform, through EU level legislation and whether entrusting its maintenance to eu-LISA would be the best possible solution. Also, consideration whether to agree on high-level on the direction for the future of e-Justice and to prepare the strategy and action plan for the years 2019-2023 was discussed. As an outcome of today's meeting, an agreement was reached that the direction for the future of e-Justice and preparation of strategy and action plan for the years 2019-2023 should be agreed upon on the high level. There was a broad consensus that a long-term sustainable management of e-CODEX must be ensured.

On the topic of **cross-border freezing and confiscation of assets**, the ministers discussed the possibilities of improving existing EU legislation with the objective to make procedures faster and more effective. The question whether the appropriate legal form of the instrument would be a directive or a regulation was discussed. "We have taken note of the aspects mentioned by the ministers and will reflect on these points during the negotiations. There are strong positions on both sides, thus we have to find the suitable way forward. It is clear we need to find a solution here," minister Reinsalu said.

In the beginning of the session on **the sale of goods proposal**, Mr. Urmas Reinsalu said that as the digital content proposal reached a general agreement in June, the Estonian Presidency starts the discussions on some substantive issues of the proposal. Therefore he invited the





ministers to express their views on whether the rules for online and offline sale of consumer goods should be as similar as possible and what would be needed for the rules to be fit for the digital age, in particular regarding the specificities of goods with embedded digital content.

The EU Justice Ministers expressed strong support for further developing the e-Justice area in order to make existing legal solutions electronically more available to everyone.

“In conclusion the ministers agreed that the rules on online and offline sales should be coherent, although there are some procedural questions of extending the scope,” minister Reinsalu said.

In a format of joint session between the Ministers of Justice and Home affairs, the issue of **data retention** was discussed. The ministers exchanged views on possible options for data retention for the purpose of prevention and prosecution of crime, underlining that this does not concern the content of the messages.

“Communications metadata is a very important element in fight against serious crime, for example to help discover links between possible criminals and locate the victims of crime,” minister Reinsalu said.

“Estonia has always considered data retention an important element in fight against serious crime. During the presidency, Estonia will continue the good work of the Maltese and will be looking into different options for addressing the current situation of legal uncertainty,” said Mr. Reinsalu.

Further information

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