

Salzburg Forum Declaration

Thomas Wahl

News

On 6-7 November 2019, the Salzburg Forum met in Vienna/Austria. Austria briefed the home affairs ministers of the EU Member States at the [JHA Council meeting on 2-3 December 2019](#) about the outcome of the meeting. The ministers for the interior at the Salzburg Forum launched a [declaration](#) that discusses the main challenges in home affairs policy at the regional level. In substance, the declaration deals with two issues: 1) human smuggling, borders, and security; 2) the functioning of the Dublin and Schengen systems.

As regards human smuggling, borders and security, the declaration calls on the European Union to focus more strongly on the fight against human smuggling along the Eastern/Central Mediterranean routes. The declaration points to bi-/multilateral cooperation in Central/Southeast Europe and to various agreements at the European and regional levels, which led to good progress in the fight against human smuggling and the enhancement of border protection. The Salzburg Forum also stressed that it is now time to take concrete operational measures, however, and made several proposals in this regard. Ultimately, cooperation along the Eastern Mediterranean route should become a best practice model for joint efforts in the fight against human smuggling. This would be a good contribution to the “Whole-of-Route” approach proposed by the Finnish EU Council Presidency.

As regards the Dublin/Schengen system, the declaration stresses that the EU’s asylum system (based on the Dublin legal framework) is not working properly and that the Schengen system must be reinforced. The Salzburg Forum calls for a new approach to migration, which must include “rules on asylum and migration in the EU that are accepted, consistently implemented and enforced by all EU Member States.” Moreover, the declaration sets out the goals and parameters by means of which the Forum will contribute to the new pact on asylum and migration, which will be drawn up by the new European Commission.

The [Salzburg Forum](#) is a Central European security partnership that was initiated by Austria in 2000. The main goal is to strengthen regional cooperation in the field of internal security. Fields of cooperation include:

- Illegal migration and asylum;
- Police cooperation;
- Information exchange;
- Cooperation in case of major events;
- Witness protection;
- The fight against drugs;
- Police training, etc.

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The Member States of the Salzburg Forum are: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Close dialogue is held with Western Balkan countries and Moldova. There are at least two Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conferences per year.

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