

Visegrad Group Ministerial Meeting

21 June 2019, Bratislava

Joint Declaration of the Ministers of the Interior

At the conclusion of the Slovak Presidency of the Visegrad Group (V4), the V4 Ministers of the Interior held a meeting in Bratislava on 21 June 2019 to discuss some of current topics in the field of internal affairs. As for the EU topics, the discussion of the Ministers focused particularly on the process of the formation of the new European Commission. Furthermore the Ministers evaluated the course of the Slovak Presidency, whereas special attention was paid to the issue of the continuing coordination of deployments in the Western Balkans. The Ministers took note of the priorities of the forthcoming Czech Presidency of the V4.

With regard to these main areas of discussion, the Ministers agreed on the following:

Future of the EU policy in the area of migration, asylum and internal security in the context of the future institutional cycle

The Ministers reflected on the future strategies and priorities in the area of internal affairs. They agreed that in the process of the formation of the new European Commission the V4 States should continue their coordination and consult their positions. The Ministers agreed to advance their discussion on the expectations to be communicated to the new Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship.

Evaluation of the Slovak Presidency of the Visegrad Group

The Ministers highly appreciated the results of the Slovak Presidency, which involved expert meetings and other activities in various areas as fight against illegal migration, police cooperation, fight against cybercrime, crises management, environmental crime and others. The Ministers acknowledged a need for regional cooperation and agreed to

continue enhanced operational cooperation in these fields in the framework of the V4 in the future.

They expressed their satisfaction regarding to efficient implementation of MCRM Action Plan for 2018-2020. Expected collaboration is being constantly strengthened and develops in the right direction.

Initiative for Assistance of the Border Protection of Western Balkan Countries

As regards the issue of further support to the Western Balkan states, the Ministers confirmed that it is essential to strengthen strategic and operational cooperation in the area of migration and border management between the V4 countries and the Western Balkans, as well as to ensure that the V4 assistance provided to the Western Balkans will be continued while seeking possible common grounds and cost-effectiveness of the joint efforts. In this context the Ministers welcomed the progress achieved so far, particularly the creation of the network of V4 experts responsible for bilateral deployments, and expressed their readiness to cooperate further in this regard.

At the same time the Ministers welcomed the overall efforts of the European Commission in the process of concluding status agreements with Western Balkan countries what will enable the Frontex Agency to conduct common operations in Western Balkan countries according to the mandate received.

Czech Presidency of the Visegrad Group

The Ministers welcomed the information about the programme of the upcoming Czech Presidency of the V4 and expressed their commitment to continuing close cooperation.