

**Meeting of the interior ministers of
France, Germany, Italy, Poland,
Spain and the United Kingdom**

Stratford-upon-Avon, 25 and 26 October 2006

CONCLUSIONS

The interior ministers of France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom met in Stratford-upon-Avon, United Kingdom, on 25 and 26 October 2006 to agree action on matters of mutual interest in the areas of migration, terrorism and organised crime.

This informal 'G6' grouping met again to continue to share ideas and identify concrete actions to be taken forward by them to improve the safety of their citizens. The G6 is not an EU body but in addition to improving practical co-operation among its members it can also provide a useful impetus and forum for piloting ideas in the wider area of freedom, security and justice. ¹

Ministers welcomed the good progress made since their last meeting on 22-23 March in Heiligendamm, Germany and endorsed in particular:

- Work on developing a joint strategy to improve re-admissions, including pooling information, in particular influencing third countries to issue travel documents promptly.
- Ongoing work to exchange views on integration contracts or measures with immigrants and exchange of information on dialogue with Muslim communities, including around language training and providing social and cultural knowledge of the affiliating societies for recent immigrants;
- Plans to deepen co-operation on tackling the trafficking of human beings, which will be developed at operational level after the meeting in Stratford;

¹ Other EU Member States and the European Commission are fully informed about G6 discussions. If they result in EU level proposals these are negotiated by all Member States in the usual way.

- Progress on improving operational co-operation and dialogue with African Countries, including plans to pool information on a central data base;
- Efforts to improve cooperation regarding monitoring and analysing the use of the internet by terrorist organisations, including a successful conference in Berlin in September;
- Continued exchange of information on terrorist suspects between the G6;
- The ongoing development of joint support teams in case of serious terrorist attack;
- A model to improve the co-operation between liaison officers in the Western Balkans, to be further developed after Stratford.

To develop some of these work streams further and in the face of new challenges Ministers discussed ways to improve cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism, integration, organised crime and migration control.

1. Fighting terrorism

Ministers agreed that terrorism needs an individual and collective response as nations. It continues to pose a very significant and developing threat to the citizens of all countries. We share a common duty to tackle terrorism and unequivocally condemn those who are involved in terrorism. There can be no excuse or justification for terrorist murder.

Ministers therefore agreed to take the following specific actions to combat the threat:

- Work to pre-empt the next terrorist attacks by agreeing action to identify developing threats and recommending appropriate responses;
- Improving cooperation in monitoring and analysing internet use by terrorist organisations, including by supporting Germany's project "check the web", in order to make the internet a more hostile operating environment for terrorists;
- Share ongoing research into explosives, in particular on liquid explosives and giving support for more EU funding;
- Support work on traceability of explosives and an early warning system on diverted explosives

- Encourage the EU to maintain the high level of protective security at European airports, to enhance research for new technical screening devices and to argue for these standards to be adopted globally.

Ministers noted the importance of addressing the needs of victims of terrorism and agreed to share experience on how best to support them.

They also agreed to continue the programme of mutual information visits to national counter-terrorism centres following the success of the first such visit to Germany in October 2006.

2. Promoting integration

While recognising the different situations prevailing in each of their countries Ministers underlined their commitment to providing the necessary conditions for the successful integration of all communities in their societies. Recent events in G6 countries have demonstrated the need to challenge and undermine misleading and extremist ideas and ideals, in particular by developing in the context of engagement between civilisations, cultures and religions, a constructive dialogue of values with Muslim communities to dispel any notion that the fight against terrorism is a conflict with Islam.

Following the intensive exchange of information about integration programmes agreed at Heiligendamm Ministers agreed to:

- Hold a conference to provide a forum to encourage dialogue and debate between public service agencies and Muslim Communities;
- Conduct regular exchanges of information between Member States on programmes for engagement with Muslim communities;
- Take appropriate measures, such as road shows and media campaigns in European cities to encourage Muslim youth support for democratic values and to propagate effective arguments against extremist justification for terrorism. These measures will target young audiences, including by testimonials of “secular Muslim” role models, to demonstrate possibilities for Muslim youth to succeed in modern European societies.
- Support the continued implementation of the EU’s strategy on radicalisation and recruitment.

3. Fighting organised crime

Ministers stressed that combating organised crime remains a high priority. The smuggling of people, drugs, arms and other illicit goods by organised groups poses a significant threat and contributes to crime both inside the EU and within countries along trafficking routes. Ministers agreed that to prevent and reduce the harm caused by such activity there are real benefits in tackling organised crime outside the borders of the EU, including by further improving operational co-operation between liaison officers and by strengthening local law enforcement.

Ministers agreed to take the following action:

- Establish a joint operation to tackle the trafficking of human beings, beginning with an expert seminar in November in Poland;
- Develop and embed a model of co-operation between liaison officers in the Western Balkans, with G6 leads for each country in the region, to pool resources and share intelligence;
- Undertake joint operations to tackle drugs trafficking off the West coast of Africa, in addition to existing projects relating to North Africa, using where appropriate the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre (Narcotics);
- Produce an action plan to address organised crime in eastern and south Eastern Europe, including Russian organised crime, to complement existing EU work in this area.

Ministers underlined the need for effective EU level structures to underpin the efforts of Member States in combating organised crime. In particular they reaffirmed their commitment to the rapid conclusion of negotiations on the second generation Schengen Information System and the Visa Information System. They noted the considerable achievements of institutions such as Europol and Eurojust and underlined their support for both. But they also noted the need to continue to reform Europol to improve its capacity to deliver quality analysis of the organised crime threat and stressed the importance of better co-ordination between EU law enforcement bodies, including Frontex, in particular to address cross cutting issues such as illegal immigration.

Ministers also noted that Missing Trader Intra-Community (MTIC) VAT fraud costs Member States millions in lost revenue and helps to finance organised crime. They therefore agreed to find ways to improve practical co-operation with each other and with Finance colleagues to develop a law enforcement response to this issue.

Immigration

Ministers, recalling the principle of European solidarity in the common management of external borders, underlined their commitment to controlling migration and tackling illegal immigration, particularly at the external maritime and land borders of the EU, and called on Frontex to be given the necessary support to co-ordinate meaningful EU level action in this area. They agreed that the EU Global Approach to Migration should continue to form the basis of our international strategy and stressed the need to engage with third countries to build their capacity to manage migration and to foster dialogue. To this end they underlined the need to build on the outcomes of the Rabat conference and the importance of the forthcoming ministerial EU-Africa conference on co-development in Libya, which will support the development of a coherent and balanced response to the challenges of managing migration flows between the two continents in a spirit of co-operation and shared responsibility.

Ministers highlighted the need to do more to tackle clandestine, illegal routes used by irregular migrants from Africa to the EU and the routes used by those travelling into the EU from beyond its eastern land borders. Ministers agreed the following specific actions to respond to the challenge of illegal immigration:

- Setting up a joint analysis unit to disrupt the activities of illegal immigration networks and people smugglers on routes from Africa (East, North and sub-Saharan) by systematically sharing intelligence on seaborne activity between Libya and EU countries;
- A proposal for a working group at Europol to collect and analyse all information concerning criminal networks linked to illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings from West and North Africa and European Neighbourhood Partnership countries with the purpose of dismantling these organised criminal groups;
- Leading EU efforts to broker regional agreements with third countries in Africa to tackle illegal immigration by sea;
- Providing the European Commission with expert support to achieve targeted and effective readmission agreements with third countries;
- Working with other EU members states on a GDISC (General Directors of Immigration Services) capacity building programme for the Ukraine to effectively respond to irregular transit migration.

Ministers underlined the importance of exploiting new technology to strengthen border surveillance and controls, including through the exchange of passenger information. They also welcomed the general framework set out in the Franco-German paper for closer co-operation in the immigration and asylum fields and agreed to explore them further with a view to a common approach from the G6 to the December JHA and European Councils.

International Policing

Ministers agreed on the importance of concerted EU action to build up effective policing infrastructures in third countries particular in post-conflict situations. They agreed to consider ways to build on the existing EU action in this field, through better co-ordination and enhancement of the response. It was agreed that the incoming Italian Presidency would take this forward at the next G6 meeting.