

Joint Declaration by the Ministers of Interior of G6 States Sopot, 18 October 2007

Realizing the principles of Freedom and Justice is not possible without ensuring security to the citizens of the European Union.

Security, both internal and external, constitutes one of the fundamental rights within the European Union, the implementation of which lies within the responsibility of every public authority, every government.

Therefore, aware of their responsibility and their duties, Ministers of Interior of France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom, having convened today in the G6 group, and having taken note of the progress achieved within the working groups after the meeting in Venice, hereby conclude and declare as follows:

1. The European Union Reform Treaty will bring changes to the decision-making process in the area of Freedom, Security and Justice and new coordination structures will be established.

The G6 Ministers will undertake all possible measures in order to ensure that changes concerning the area of Freedom, Security and Justice are implemented in a way ensuring effective and practical cooperation within the EU in that field. In particular, the G6 Ministers will actively participate in the works aimed at achieving the desired shape and scope of tasks of the internal security committee. In this context G6 welcomes and supports the work of the Future Group developing the recommendations concerning a coherent EU policy in the area of home affairs in the future.

2. Transposition of the Prüm Treaty provisions into the EU law should enable Member States to work together more effectively in the field of police cooperation and information exchange.

The G6 Ministers will undertake intense efforts in order to launch an EU-wide debate to establish an effective cooperation with the European Parliament in that area by improving the social communication and media image of the undertaken legislative initiatives.

3. The G6 is united in condemning in the strongest terms all acts of terrorism and reaffirms its determination to tackle terrorism, while expressing its support and solidarity to the victims of terrorism and promoting freedom, democracy and human rights.

The G6 Ministers will continue their commitment to working together, both at G6 and EU level, in a coordinated way in line with the principle of European solidarity, to strengthen States' ability to combat terrorism whilst fully complying with their obligations under human rights instruments.

The G6 Ministers have noted that in some legally regulated cases expulsion has proved an effective tool to protect people from non-nationals who pose a threat to national security.

At the same time, the G6 has recognised the difficulties faced by States in seeking to implement an effective expulsion policy: the need to protect national security, whilst also protecting the human rights of those who pose a threat.

The G6 believes that the mechanism of seeking assurances, on a government-to-government basis, designed to secure this protection, could provide an effective way forward in some cases.

The G6 Ministers also look forward to the EU commitment to promote, in countries to which terrorist suspects are expelled, standards which are compliant with the international obligations, as to the safeguard of human rights in the framework of the EU relations with the relevant Third Countries.

The G6 Governments will initiate and support continued exploration of the expulsion of terrorists and terrorist suspects, seeking assurances through diplomatic understandings, and other policies. In relation to the EU, the Governments will seek to build consensus on these issues through open discussion based on wider consideration of legal frameworks and policies.

In that regard the G6 Ministers welcome the recent proposals announced by the European Commission on combating terrorism and express their wish for a still stronger commitment in preventing and responding to the terrorist threat.

4. Threats of terrorist attacks and acts of violence have lately made mass events organised in the EU Member States a significant challenge regarding the security of their participants.

The G6 Ministers will support initiatives challenging such occurrences in a responsible manner through developing and improving the existing instruments and mechanisms as well also through creating new ones within the EU framework and, where appropriate, together with third states. They underline and firmly support the current EU initiatives on enhancing the security of explosives, precursors and detonators as an efficient tool to prevent and combat terrorist attacks.

The Governments will continue the discussion on these issues on the EU level so as to establish a framework for effective cooperation between competent services that are responsible for providing security and public order in the Member States.

5. The external EU actions have crucial influence on the building of the Area of Justice, Freedom and Security. The EU aims at creating a safe external environment and strengthening the EU external policy objectives by means of promoting the rule of law, democratic values and institutional development. The G6 Ministers will continue to firmly support the development of the external dimension of the area of Freedom, Security and Justice of the European Union.

Operational dialogue with Third Countries constitutes a vital part of the external EU actions in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. It should therefore be fostered in all policy areas thereof, that including, notably, fight against drug trafficking and illegal immigration.

Thus, the Ministers voice their content with the MAOC – Méditerranée centre initiative.

The G6 Ministers will also carry on intense actions in this scope in order to see to an appropriate and satisfactory setting up and implementation of migration management instruments, that including readmission agreements.

The Ministers will not cease to undertake their efforts aimed at supporting the processes in Third Countries in order to promote the rule of law, democratic values and institutional development, the success of which is highly important for the EU policy in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice.

The G6 Ministers welcome the discussion launched on the Green Paper on Asylum; they, however underline in this context that the evaluation of the legal acts in the first harmonisation phase constitutes an essential basis for further reflections within the EU regarding the development of the Common European Asylum System.