



Western Balkans Summit
London 2018

Declaration by the Chair of the Interior and Security Ministers meeting of the London Western Balkans Summit, 9 July 2018

On 9 July 2018, the United Kingdom welcomed Interior and Security Ministers of the Berlin Process participants and Bulgaria (as the host of the 17 May EU-Western Balkans Summit) to London for the first meeting of such Ministers convened under the Berlin Process. Ministers drew the following conclusions.

We agreed that collectively we face many security threats, including serious and organised crime; violent extremism, terrorism and the financing of terrorism; corruption; money laundering and financial crime; trafficking of human beings and smuggling of migrants; the trafficking of weapons and drugs; and cybercrime and threats to cyber security. We recognised that these threats were transnational and increasing in complexity. We therefore reaffirmed our commitment to deepening regional cooperation and enhancing our collective response.

We welcomed progress already made on strengthening this collective response, and looked forward to supporting the Flagship Initiatives on Security and Migration, and on Strengthening the Rule of Law, detailed in the European Commission's 6 February Western Balkans Strategy. We agreed that we supported the many existing mechanisms for cooperation, including agreements with EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies, the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI), the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) approach, the Police Cooperation Convention for Southeast Europe (PCC-SEE), and the South-east European Police Chiefs Association (SEPCA).

We agreed in particular to further strengthen information exchange on serious organised crime, terrorism and other security threats and to further cooperate in tackling the illicit possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms; human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants; and corruption. In this context we agreed to maximise the use of international police and judicial cooperation tools in line with EU *acquis* and best practices. We welcomed the objective in the Western Balkans Strategy of strengthening cooperation on security and rule of law between the Western Balkans and the EU, including with EU agencies.

Information-Exchange

We acknowledged the cooperation between our law enforcement and security institutions in the field of information-exchange, and committed to ensuring that this was done in a legal, timely, proactive, secure, high-quality, efficient and effective manner. We stressed that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law were complemented and reinforced by effective security measures. We therefore welcomed the *Joint Declaration on the Principles of Information-Exchange in the Field of Law Enforcement*.

Illicit Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of Firearms

We reconfirmed our common determination, and reinforced our commitment to put an end to illicit possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms. We therefore warmly welcomed the Franco-German coordination initiative on combatting illicit firearms trafficking in the Western Balkans and endorsed the *Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and their ammunition in the Western Balkans*. The Roadmap complements existing European Union activity to counter that threat, specifically the Action Plan on Illicit Trafficking in Firearms between the European Union and the South East Europe region 2015-2019, the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative on *Elements towards an EU Strategy against illicit Firearms, Small Arms & Light Weapons and their Ammunition*, and Europol's EMPACT work.

We agreed that by 2024, we aimed to make the Western Balkans a safer region, and an exporter of security, where comprehensive and sustainable mechanisms, fully harmonised with European and other international standards, were in place to identify, prevent, prosecute, and control the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives.

Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants

We agreed that we were united in our commitment to end human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants in all societies, including in and through the Western Balkans. These crimes do not respect borders or jurisdictions, and nor do they recognise the dignity or worth of human beings. We committed to stepping up domestic action, and to strengthening cooperation regionally and internationally to prevent and combat these crimes, and to sharing best practice through the network of regional anti-trafficking coordinators or equivalent mechanisms. We therefore took note with appreciation of the endorsement of the *Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery, and Human Trafficking* by the six Governments of the Western Balkans.

Corruption

We recognised that corruption impedes economic growth, weakens democratic institutions, disrupts social order, destroys public confidence and undermines the rule of law. Both public and private sectors are involved. We also acknowledged that tackling corruption is vital for sustaining economic stability and growth, maintaining security of societies, protecting human rights, reducing poverty, protecting the environment for future generations and addressing serious and organised crime. Building on the work of the Trieste 2017 Summit, we welcomed the commitments to be made by the six Governments of the Western Balkans to address corruption.

Implementation

We supported the importance of implementing commitments made during the London Summit. We therefore endorsed the *Terms of Reference for a Berlin Process Security Commitments Steering Group* agreed by Western Balkans participants to support implementation of the security commitments made through the Berlin Process. We looked forward to the ideas, tools and proposals of this Steering Group in countering shared security threats.