

JOINT STATEMENT
OF HEADS OF POLICE SERVICES
FROM THE MEETING HELD IN ZAGREB, CROATIA,
on 18th February 2016

At the meeting held in Zagreb, on 18th February 2016, and as a follow-up to the meeting held in Skopje, on 3rd February 2016, the Heads of Police Services of the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Slovenia, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Macedonia agreed that the migration flow along the Western Balkans route has to be reduced to the greatest possible extent.

Taking into account the facts regarding new criteria and restrictions introduced by particular states on the route, they agreed on urgent adoption of new measures, fully taking into account the assumed international obligations and agreements regarding the protection of refugees.

Considering the possible ways to improve cooperation in migration flow management, they agreed as follows:

1. All EU and Frontex agency activities at the external border of the European Union in Southeast Europe, particularly those on Greek-Turkish and Macedonian-Greek borders shall be supported.
2. Each party will inform other parties on the route about all measures and restrictions to be introduced, as soon as possible, and, if possible five days prior to their implementation.
3. For the purpose of standardisation of the migrant registration, the unified registration form has been adopted, which will be issued in the Republic of Macedonia as the country of first entry and correspondingly stamped by all police authorities of the countries on the route.

The unified registration form referred to in point 3 is enclosed to this Statement.

4. The controlled transfer of migrants shall be carried out in accordance with bilateral agreements and arrangements of the parties, and by taking into account this Statement (including the unified registration form and the list of migrants with their statement on destination country).
5. First entry will be authorised only to those persons who fulfil the conditions of entry laid down in the Schengen Borders Code and relevant national legislation

(possession of a travel document, visa or residence permit, and other conditions if required).

The said conditions shall also apply to persons arriving from safe countries of origin as defined by the parties to this Statement.

6. On humanitarian grounds, the entry of third country nationals may be authorised to those persons who do not fulfil the conditions referred to in point 5 of this Statement but who are arriving from war-torn areas and are in need of international protection (for example from Syria, Iraq), provided that they can prove their nationality (they are in possession of identity documents or can prove their nationality by language proficiency, copies or scans of other identification documents), and are in possession of the registration form issued by Greek authorities.
7. The parties to this Statement have established additional common criteria which are to be verified in the course of the registration in the following manner:
 - the authenticity of statements and documents;
 - the circumstances in which the person left the country of origin (for example fleeing the war is a valid reason for admission, while family reunification, studying, improving of living conditions, avoiding recruitment and military obligation and personal disputes are not considered as valid reasons for applying for international protection);
 - longer residence in a safe third country could not be considered as valid reason for international protection (for example Afghan national who resided for a longer time in Turkey or Iran).

If a person gives false information (for example, as a reason for escape states the avoidance of war but is not arriving from the country affected by armed conflict) or refuses to cooperate during the registration procedure, he/she will be refused entry.

8. The agreed common measures referred to in points 6 and 7 do not affect the obligations of a particular state in respect of carrying out of border checks and border surveillance.
9. When allowing entry and transit, any other restrictions of destination countries will also be taken into account (for example current daily quotes).
10. The deployment of foreign police officers along the Macedonian-Greek border already yields positive results and conveys a strong message that the countries concerned are resolute in jointly coping with the migration crisis.

The Heads of Police Services agreed that they will further provide necessary support to the competent authorities of the Republic of Macedonia in order to prevent the migration crisis.

For this purpose they will provide assistance according to the needs expressed by the Macedonian side in the following tasks:

- state border surveillance,
- border checks and increased and harmonised migrant profiling measures, and
- registration of migrants on a registration form.

11. The deployment of police officers shall be governed by bilateral arrangements.

12. Police authorities will exchange all urgent information concerning the implementation of this Statement and migration crisis, directly through competent services, the list of which forms an integral part of this Statement.

All parties shall immediately inform each other of any change.

13. This form of cooperation is open for accession by any other interested party.

14. All interested parties will be informed about the content of this Statement.

15. This Statement shall come into effect upon signature by the signatory parties.

Done at Zagreb, 18th February 2016.



Konrad Kogler
General Director for Public Safety
the Republic of Austria



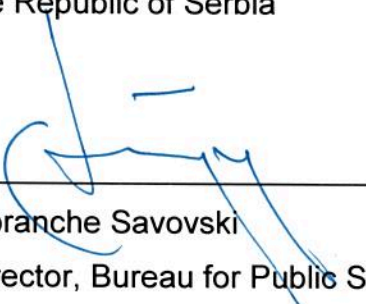
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