

Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference

11 – 12 September 2025

Valtice, Czech Republic

Joint Declaration

The Ministers of the Interior of the Salzburg Forum Member States met on 11 and 12 September 2025 in Valtice, on the occasion of the Ministerial Conference held under the Czech Salzburg Forum Presidency. The meeting was also attended by the representatives of the Danish Presidency of the EU Council, the European Commission, Europol, Frontex, the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), and the Joint Coordination Platform (JCP).

The Ministers of the Interior of the Salzburg Forum Member States agreed on the following:

Ensuring safe childhood: curbing violence among minors

Taking into account the rising violence among minors, the Ministers shared experience regarding how to address this deeply concerning phenomenon in their respective countries. Acknowledging the increasing numbers and seriousness of violent acts committed by minors including gun violence, the growing number of children and youth recruited into criminal structures, often via online platforms as well as an upward trend in both attempted and completed suicides of minors, they stressed the urgency to enhance prevention and early detection.

The Ministers also emphasised the utmost need to better address, in particular, domestic violence and transgenerational transmission of violence in order to ensure safe childhood. Moreover, reducing the exposure of children to various online threats including the dangers of cyberbullying and online exploitation, as well as ensuring strengthened support for the psychosocial development of minors.

Also stressing that safe environment for children helps to strengthen the overall security, the Ministers expressed the readiness to enhance the exchange of experience and best practices in this area.

Current challenges in the fight against drug trafficking

Recalling the risk of drug trafficking to destabilise our societies and the seriousness of this threat to internal security of the EU, the Ministers discussed the current challenges in this area in the Salzburg Forum region.

In this regard, they highlighted differences in legal regulations of products containing low-potency cannabis or the issue of psychoactive substances that are not included in international lists nor in the UN schedules such as kratom. They also stressed that the differences among the Member States' legislations on drugs are increasingly misused by organized criminal groups. The Ministers urged to continue discussions on these topics in the future.

Moreover, the Ministers agreed that the unprecedented increase in drug trafficking through e-commerce, postal parcels and courier services in the Member States represents a major challenge for customs administrations and other competent authorities. Therefore, the use of new AI tools as well as increased financing for primary detection and protective equipment should be considered.

Furthermore, they agreed that this challenge should be addressed in a coordinated manner at regional level, through a closer cooperation of Member States' law enforcement authorities and enhanced cooperation with Europol. In that sense, the need for strengthened cooperation with third countries that are key producers of precursors and new psychoactive substances or where production is being relocated was stressed with the aim to create necessary synergies and leverages.

In this respect, the Ministers also exchanged views on priorities that should be taken in the account in the new EU Action Plan against drug trafficking to be submitted by the Commission in autumn 2025.

Migration fit for the future: the way forward for European reform

With regard to the expected further increase in international migration in the future as a result of the ongoing volatile geopolitical developments and deteriorating security situation, the Ministers confirmed that migration continues to be an important topic impacting a wide range of policies and, therefore, requiring decisive actions on regional as well as European level.

Acknowledging that the asylum and migration reform represents a step towards more efficient asylum procedures as well as more effective measures to counter illegal migration and address the system's deficiencies, the Ministers recognised the necessity to discuss options for fine-tuning and potentially further developing certain elements of the relevant legal acts through targeted amendments.

In this respect, reducing administrative and financial burden, as well as ensuring a better response to crisis situations, including to instrumentalization and weaponization of migration and other forms of migrant smuggling activities, were particularly highlighted. The Ministers agreed that focus should be also given to finalising negotiations on the key proposals complementing the migration and asylum reform, including the introduction of new and innovative solutions.

Furthermore, the importance of strengthened cooperation with third countries including countries of origin and transit along all routes through a holistic approach including relevant EU policies, instruments and tools was stressed. Results achieved through various projects (EU-agencies, JCP, Member States) were positively taken note of and the importance of close cooperation to further enhance progress was underlined.

The need to complement investigations into criminal networks engaging in migrant smuggling with thorough financial investigations and with monitoring online promotion of migrant smuggling services was also widely recognized.

Emphasis was also placed on increasing and accelerating return and readmission process and the necessary cooperation of the national administrations with the judiciary to avoid setbacks in procedures regarding expulsion of convicted foreigners and a possible shift in balance between the states' interests.

Ukraine: addressing migration challenges

Recalling that Ukraine is facing Russia's war of aggression for the fourth consecutive year, the Ministers discussed the main challenges that the Salzburg Forum countries have been facing in hosting displaced persons from Ukraine since the beginning of the war as the main destination countries, with Poland and Czechia hosting the largest shares in absolute numbers and *per capita*, respectively.

Alongside the ongoing migration flows from Ukraine to the EU, the significant inward movement has been recorded this year, thus posing a major and continuous challenge to national capacities, the housing, education, healthcare, and labour systems, in particular. Furthermore, there has been a significant increase in asylum applications lodged by the displaced persons from Ukraine, thus putting additional pressure on the asylum and reception system of the Member States.

In this regard, the Ministers exchanged their views on key factors to be considered when assessing the future situation in Ukraine and its possible migratory impact at the EU, regional and national levels. In this respect, they called for a quick, flexible and coordinated response at the EU level to any possible future scenarios, including rapid increase in migration flows, and confirmed that providing temporary protection in a coordinated manner has proved to be an efficient and successful approach. In this context, all future strategies must be developed in line with the interest of the Member States and in close cooperation with Ukraine.

Outlook of the Czech Presidency of the Salzburg Forum

The Ministers took note of the information on plans and upcoming events during the Czech Presidency of the Salzburg Forum, including the Salzburg Forum Police Chiefs meeting to be held in Prague on 23 and 24 October and the meeting of the Border Guards and Foreign Police Chiefs to take place in Prague on 29 and 31 October.

Incoming Hungarian Presidency of the Salzburg Forum

The Ministers welcomed the preliminary plans of the incoming Hungarian Presidency and expressed their commitment to continue working together effectively on issues of common interest in the framework of the Salzburg Forum.

Valtice, 12 September 2025