

Joint EU-U.S. statement following the EU-U.S. Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Meeting

On 22 and 23 May 2018, the EU-U.S. Ministerial Meeting on Justice and Home Affairs was hosted by the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU Council in Sofia, Bulgaria. The meeting reaffirmed the long-standing, fruitful cooperation between the United States of America and the European Union in the areas of justice and home affairs, as well as the importance of jointly addressing common security threats.

The United States was represented by the U.S. Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, and the Acting Deputy Secretary for Homeland Security, Claire Grady.

The European Union, hosting the meeting, was represented by the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos, the Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra Jourová, the Commissioner for the Security Union Julian King, as well as Bulgarian Minister of Interior Valentin Radev and Minister of Justice Tsetska Tsacheva, together with Austrian Federal Minister for the Interior Herbert Kickl and Federal Minister for Constitutional Affairs, Reforms, Deregulation and Justice Josef Moser, on behalf of the current and incoming Presidencies of the Council of the European Union.

The European Union and the United States discussed their shared efforts to combat terrorism, focusing on effective information sharing, preventing radicalization, use of the internet for terrorist purposes, and vigilance with respect to aviation security, and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats, and explosives, especially in relation to the evolving chemical threats to aviation and in public spaces. With regard to EU-U.S. information sharing on Passenger Name Records (PNR), participants of the meeting emphasized the importance of such sharing, and noted impending developments in the separate EU-Canada PNR discussions. The participants agreed to continue the discussion of PNR, at the next EU-U.S. Ministerial, which will take place in Washington, D.C., in the second half of 2018.

Participants also discussed security and law enforcement cooperation in cyber-space, affirming the importance of allowing swift access to electronic evidence by law enforcement and judicial authorities, while also protecting privacy and civil liberties. Similarly, they stressed the need to maintain a safe, open, and secure cyberspace for the promotion of economic and social development, and exchanged views on how to best address this growing challenge.

The European Union and the United States also exchanged information on developments in the area of migration, border management, and their respective visa policies. The European Union provided an update on migration trends in Europe and ongoing initiatives to enhance the management of its external borders; the European Union and the United States took stock of the continuing progress by the European Union and the United States, including that of the five concerned EU Member States, towards meeting the statutory requirements of the Visa Waiver Program, in order to be considered for designation. Both sides also acknowledged the need for strengthening operational cooperation to effectively prevent and eradicate migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, and also discussed the importance of secure and lawful immigration systems.

Finally, the United States and European Union discussed the importance of ensuring swift exchange of financial information and improving the effectiveness of financial investigations. The European Union and the United States discussed the latest developments in these areas and shared best practices in an effort to step up their common fight against anti-money laundering and terrorism financing.

Underlining the progress made in these vital areas of common interest, and re-emphasizing the fact that common solutions are necessary in order to address global security threats, the European Union and the United States committed to meet again in the second half of 2018 in Washington, D.C.

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