



Sixth Regional (Jumbo) Security Coordination Conference

“Enhancing regional security cooperation: A pillar of the European path of the Western Balkans”.

6 December 2021, Paris

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

1. The 6th Jumbo security conference of the Regional Cooperation Council was held on 6th of December 2021 in Paris, in partnership with the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Institute for Higher National Defense Studies (IHEDN). The conference gathered around 80 participants from France, the 6 Western Balkans economies, other European countries, EU institutions and agencies, as well as relevant regional and international organizations. It was also followed online by 30 persons who could not travel to Paris due to the current sanitary restrictions.
2. The exchanges underlined the necessity to promote a comprehensive approach to regional cooperation, involving all relevant actors and ongoing projects as the common regional market, with the objective to facilitate the integration of the entire region to the European Union. Security cooperation is one of the pillars of this approach.
3. Participants echoed the EU-Western Balkans Summit Declaration, held on October 6 under Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU, especially its part related to necessity to strengthen cooperation on core security issues, including at operational level between the EU and the Western Balkans.
4. The conference also recognized importance of regional security cooperative order as the main precondition for implementation of an ambitious socio-economic, digital and green agenda in the Western Balkans supported by the EU Economic and Investment Plan for Western Balkans. Freedom of movement of people, goods and services can be guaranteed only if law enforcement institutions across the region create environment that will effectively fight illicit financing, illegal migration, disinformation, violent extremism, illicit procession and trade of SALW and organized crime that is misusing concept of open society.
5. To that end, the conference dealt with the diversity of the challenges that security cooperation needs to address (radicalization, violent extremism, illegal migration, trafficking of human beings, organized crime). Far from being limited to the Western Balkans, these challenges have a European and global dimension and, moreover, are interconnected.
6. The debates regarding the struggle against violent extremism focused on the problematics of online radicalization and the treatment of radicalized persons in detention, on which French representatives from ministries of Interior and Justice presented their expertise and experience, including the national referral platform for illicit contents online. Cooperation among agencies to receive and treat information on time is important. The online platforms need to be regulated and professionally monitored. De-radicalization and



disengagement are the main aspects of the approach to radicalized and terrorist inmates. Western Balkans Partners are on a good path to understand and respond to the threat. The regional cooperation and assistance from EU MS and EU agencies is crucial and very much necessary for the future.

7. Regarding illegal migration, panelists presented the state of play in the region, highlighting the pressing challenges related to smuggling of migrants, trafficking of human beings and insufficient capacities related to migration and asylum that currently exist in the Western Balkans. The panelists also provided valuable recommendations on illegal migration flows and their impact on the security of Western Balkans and Europe, focusing on the need for an increased regional cooperation and coordinated response on migration challenges that Western Balkans region is facing. Panelists agreed that the challenges currently faced along the Western Balkans migration routes cannot be solved through national actions only, therefore called for comprehensive and collective cross border/boundary approach based on cooperation among WB and EU.
8. The panel on organized crime was devoted in particular to cross-cutting issues like the illicit financial flows. The French customs shared their experience through the presentation of their strategy, which was followed by comprehensive updates on the current regional coordination initiatives on fighting organized crime (IISG, Berlin Process security commitments steering group, UNODC anti-corruption and illicit financing roadmap). The issue of trafficking was also raised, through the presentation of the current state and lessons learned from the regional roadmap on SALW control. On all these topics, participants insisted on the necessity of reinforcing coordination between the national, regional and WB-EU levels and on the specific added value of regional processes to foster information exchange and operational cooperation between Western Balkans experts and with the EU, and in helping to identify the needs of individual economies in the region and matching them with assistance by partners. The possible synergies between regional processes have been mentioned.
9. The Jumbo security conference was an opportunity to take stock of the various initiatives and processes contributing to security cooperation. The Regional Cooperation Council and France, as co-chairs of the conference, underlined the need to reinforce the interactions and improve the synergies between these processes, which are complementary, in the framework of a common cooperative security order. France reiterated its commitment to fully support this perspective, including in view of its upcoming chairmanship of the Council of the EU.
10. The participants also called upon the RCC to continue facilitating the Annual Security Conference (Jumbo), as an important and all-inclusive security platform for dialogue between law enforcement institutions from the Western Balkans with the relevant institutions in the EU member states and beyond.
11. Finally, the participants expressed their gratitude to the RCC secretariat as well as to the teams of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Institute for Higher National Defense Studies for the excellent organization of this conference.