

Chair's Conclusions of the Berlin Process Interior Ministers' Meeting

16 September 2026

Ministers of the Interior and Security of the UK, Western Balkans, at the presence of representatives of the European Union, met on 15 and 16 September 2026 in Vila Gorica, Podgorica, under the chairmanship of Danilo Šaranović, Minister of the Interior of Montenegro. This marks the 12th Berlin Process Meeting, demonstrating continuation of the important dialogue and successful cooperation between the Western Balkan and its EU and UK partners.

Discussions focussed on strengthening the resilience of the Western Balkans, EU Member States and the UK against organised crime threats by enhancing prevention and detection capacities, with an emphasis on strengthening analytical cooperation and the exchange of relevant information, in accordance with applicable legal frameworks and respective competences, as well as on building capacities and partnerships in border management and countering irregular migration, with a particular emphasis on normative framework reforms - specifically, the harmonisation of legal procedures to ensure a faster response to cross-border challenges, including the institutional, administrative and technical capacities required for effective border management.

Conclusions:

1. Participants reiterated their commitment to building resilience in the Western Balkans, recognising that the challenge must be addressed at both national, regional and European levels.
2. During the Berlin Process Interior Ministers' meeting, participants emphasized the importance of further development of regional and international cooperation for the purpose of strengthening the resilience of critical infrastructure, particularly through joint security standards, information sharing, and coordinated incident responses.

3. Participants proposed the most effective measures to protect critical infrastructure from organized crime, including modalities for strengthening the resilience of logistical hubs against drug trafficking and illicit arms trade.
4. Participants approved best practices and proposals for joint action in the fight against common threats regarding organized crime, and agreed upon the need to build institutional resilience, stronger partnerships, and further enhance operational cooperation and interoperability among WB, EU partners, and UK.
5. In line with European standards, participants agreed on the concept of prevention, adequate protection, effective and efficient response, and the ability to recover as the best approach in the development of resilient institutions.
6. Participants agreed upon the importance of cooperation among law enforcement authorities, civil society, and the private sector with the aim of building comprehensive whole-of-society responses to existing and emerging threats.
7. Taking into consideration their link with other forms of organized crime, participants emphasized the fight against illicit trade, smuggling of weapons, and drug trafficking as priority areas, in order to more successfully identify wider criminal networks and their international effect in the future.
8. Aware of the impact they have and the challenges irregular migration causes, participants agreed on the need to ensure even more intensive cooperation to prevent irregular migration flows.
9. Bearing in mind the above, participants recognized the importance to harmonize visa policies in the Western Balkans in alignment with EU standards, as well as other normative frameworks with the EU acquis. The Berlin Process Visa Exploitation Working Group was underlined as a mechanism for a more comprehensive response to visa related cross-border challenges.

10. Participants underlined the important contribution of side events such as the Border Police Chiefs Forum, which was held on 26 and 27 August in Skopje, North Macedonia. They welcomed that participants in the Forum agreed to support this enhanced regional cooperation and concluded that secure and well-governed borders underpin regional stability, public security, confidence among partners, and effective migration management grounded in human dignity, fundamental rights, international obligations and norms, and European standards.
11. Taking into consideration the importance of the protection of fundamental human rights, participants agreed that humane and dignifying approach is an integral part of migration management processes. Participants agreed to implement security measures with respect for human rights of migrants through cooperation with EU law enforcement agencies, international organizations, and civil society, anchored in international standards, transparency, and participation.

Berlin Process Interior Ministers' Meeting participants demonstrated their commitment to joint actions and activities for the purpose of safe communities, as well as readiness to address the mutual challenges and to strengthen collective security. Participants centred their statements around the importance of enhanced cooperation, data exchange, interoperability in migration management, alignment with EU standards, and protection of human rights.

The Chair expresses gratitude to all participants for their insights and invaluable contribution to this Meeting.