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Meeting of G8 Justice and Interior Ministers in Munich brings major progress in the field of international security policy and judicial cooperation

The justice and home affairs ministers of the G8 states and the Vice-President of the EU Commission, who met in Munich at the invitation of Federal Justice Minister Brigitte Zypries and Federal Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, have concluded their 3-day meeting with several agreements to step up cooperation among G8 partners.

The working meeting was attended by the justice and interior ministers from France, Italy, Japan, Canada, Russia, the United Kingdom, the USA and Germany, and the Prosecutors-General from Russia and the United Kingdom. It focused on counter-terrorism, the fight against cross-border crime and child pornography and the effective enforcement of intellectual property rights.

The most important results are summed up in the Concluding Declaration and in the separate declaration on "Afghanistan Counter-Narcotics" and "Reinforcing the International Fight against Child Pornography". The three declarations can be download at www.g-8.de , www.bmi.bund.de and www.bmj.bund.de/g8-ji.

Federal Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble emphasized:

"It is only in an international alliance that we can tackle international terrorism. We have agreed to further intensify our joint efforts and to extend them to other fields. It is extremely important that our security and law enforcement authorities continue

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their comprehensive and swift information exchange. Cooperation in tackling the terrorist misuse of the Internet plays a specially prominent role here; we have agreed concrete steps in this regard in Munich.

Successful security policy must take action as soon as possible, i.e. before terrorist organizations are formed and concrete attack plans are drawn up. We have therefore agreed to expand the sharing of our knowledge and experience of those processes by which some residents of or countries become radical and violent, culminating in what is known as „home-grown“ terrorism.

We are very concerned about the rapid increase of opium production in Afghanistan and its implications for the drugs market worldwide. We intend to continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Afghan government in all efforts to bring about a reduction in the cultivation and trafficking of narcotics through their National Drug Control Strategy and its four priorities: disrupting the drugs trade by targeting traffickers and their backers; strengthening and diversifying legal rural livelihoods; reducing the demand for illicit drugs; and, developing state institutions at the central and provincial level.

We also intend to intensify the exchange of experience in the fields of migration and integration. Migration and integration have become everyday experiences in our globalized world. The phenomenon of major, sustained migration and the issues related to it will accompany us permanently. The integration of immigrants needs to succeed if we want to avoid situations where migration becomes a problem for internal tolerance and stability of our free systems.

Moreover, we have discussed that we intend to intensify our cooperation with regard to the protection of critical infrastructures, which is absolutely vital given their international networks.”

The Ministers also agreed to improve the protection of intellectual property rights. Product piracy and other violations of protected rights damage economies, companies and individuals. In 2006 alone, German customs seized illegally imitated goods valued at 1.2 billion euros – and an OECD study conducted this year found that the damage worldwide amounts to 200 billion euros. The German Finance Ministry estimates that product piracy costs German companies 25 billion euros per year and endangers approximately 70,000 jobs. Many trusting consumers are cheated by product piracy; in some cases, injuries to health can result – for example, by dangerous

ingredients in counterfeited medications or allergy-causing dyes in pirated textiles. Both offenders and victims can be found throughout the world, both in developing and in industrialised countries.

Federal Minister of Justice Brigitte Zypries emphasised, “In a globalised world, efforts against piracy and illegal copying only at the national level will not lead to success. We concur in our endeavours to resolutely protect holders of rights under both civil and criminal law, and to better support them in the cross-border assertion of these rights. For that purpose, we have agreed to enhance the exchange of information among our criminal prosecution authorities by way of national contact points, as well as improving opportunities for cooperative investigations that transcend national boundaries.”