

Dear Ambassador Burkart, Dear Deputy Chief of Mission Mister Young, dear Mister Donofrio and dear Mister Čaleta; distinguished Guests and Colleagues;

I am honoured to be able to share some views with you today at the opening of this conference.

The time of major changes affecting the wider society is the time when we must review our approaches and seek synergies in the activities undertaken toward our tasks ensuring public security and fighting transnational organised crime. Today's conference is a good example of combining what at first sight seems incompatible and enabling an open discussion between different state services, agencies and international organisations on challenges we must jointly address.

It is a fact that in the organisations where we work we must take into account the limited financial resources available in our countries and adapt to the current capabilities. Aiming for synergies with other partners for a more efficient use of existing platforms that promote the cooperation of law enforcement agencies with other state or private entities will enable us to ensure security of the citizens with fewer resources in the future.

It need not be stressed that a high level of security in South Eastern Europe is of vital importance for all countries present here today; the European Union is however also aware that security in the region is directly linked to internal security of the European Union and in the wider world. The success of our joint response to various types of crime is vitally dependent on commonly agreed legislative bases or international agreements; equal police procedures; on the efficient use of data exchange instruments; and on promotion of trust between the competent authorities of the countries in the region.

Joint actions targeting individual types of crime, sharing relevant information and data through single contact points, mechanisms to ensure admissible evidence for the court and joint results will be the basic topics for discussion at this conference. The experts will discuss the entire chain of police procedures, from the detection of a problem to joint operations, which will provide a comprehensive overview of law

enforcement procedures and open a debate on how to ensure successful completion of procedures.

Just like companies in the business world, so do organised criminal groups adapt to demand and use those transport routes that are safest and most cost-efficient. Nowadays, criminal organisations are no longer specialised for the transfer and distribution of one type of illegal goods; instead, they deal with everything there is a demand for. And this is something we need to be aware of, as such organisations usually have large amounts of funds at their disposal and are thus better organised, which makes it more difficult to stop them.

Financial and economic instability all over Europe also plays a role in the functioning of organised criminal groups. The crisis in the region will undoubtedly increase competition among criminal groups and make them even more aggressive in pursuing their goals. Increased use of weapons cannot be excluded, both in the course of criminal activities and to eliminate competition.

For this reason it is important to start combining various approaches to suppress illegal trafficking in weapons in the region. We have an excellent opportunity in Ljubljana today to create a basis for new forms of cooperation and joint operations. One such new tool for fighting cross-border and organised crime will be introduced today in the Schengen Member States, for as we speak, the migration to the second-generation Schengen information system is taking place in countries of the Schengen area, providing border services and law enforcement authorities with an upgraded instrument for better response to cross border crime and border security.

Dear participants, I wish you a successful conference.