

Berlin, 20 December 2006

Informal Meeting of EU Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs in Dresden from 14 to 16 January 2007

The first informal meeting of ministers under the German EU Presidency will be held by EU Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs in Dresden from 14 to 16 January 2007. The meeting will be chaired by the Federal Minister of Justice, Brigitte Zypries, and the Federal Minister of the Interior, Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble.

“The fight against terrorism and crime is a major priority in shaping and strengthening our common area of freedom, security and justice. This is an area where our citizens expect Europe to provide common solutions”, said Federal Minister of the Interior Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble. “Our aim is to further improve practical cooperation between police and judicial authorities and institutions, strengthen the citizens’ rights in Europe and ensure legal certainty for citizens and businesses”, added Federal Minister of Justice Brigitte Zypries only days before the beginning of Germany’s EU Presidency.

Joint programme of the first team presidency

For the first time, three Member States succeeding each other in holding the EU Presidency have coordinated their programmes with one another. This team presidency starting with Germany on 1 January 2007 and followed by Portugal and Slovenia until 30 June 2008 will shape European justice and home affairs on the basis of a programme developed jointly by these three Member States. Thus, important projects can be prepared well in time and implemented in a targeted manner.

JHA Council and informal meeting

In accordance with a long-standing European tradition, the informal meeting in Dresden is intended for a comprehensive discussion on important topics and for developing long-term ideas.

The discussions in Dresden will mainly focus on strengthening cross-border police cooperation by transposing the Prüm Treaty into EU law, on the future of judicial cooperation in family law and law of inheritance, as well as on the cross-border use of information technology by judicial authorities. Another topic will be the planned common European strategy to fight illegal migration by strengthening border police cooperation and initiating a dialogue with the countries of origin as equal partners.

For the first time, the Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs of Bulgaria and Romania will attend the meeting in Dresden as members of the European Union. In addition to the Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs of the 27 Member States, representatives of the candidate countries, i.e. Turkey, Croatia and Macedonia, as well as representatives of the EU Commission and the European Parliament will participate.

Additional information for press representatives

On the German EU Presidency website, which is already available at www.eu2007.de, you will find important information on organizational and technical matters and on the central accreditation procedures for EU Presidency events. On this website, you can also register for the informal Council meeting in Dresden. As from 1 January 2007, the start of Germany's EU Presidency, the site at www.eu2007.de will become the central information portal of Germany's EU Presidency. All important documents, press releases and interviews in the context of the German EU Presidency can be found on this site. Comprehensive information on Europe and Germany's Council Presidency is also available at www.bmj.bund.de/europa and at www.bmi.bund.de.