

February 28th 2019- PRES RO 2019: EU-US Senior Officials Meeting on Justice and Home Affairs

In the context of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, on Thursday, February 28th, at the Palace of Parliament, the EU-US Senior Officials Meeting took place, its main objective being the exchange of opinions about relevant issues in justice and home affairs matters.

The meeting also concerned the preparation of the ministerial meeting agenda of the EU-US Dialogue that will be held in June.

The EU-US Dialogue on the External Dimension of Justice and Home Affairs is a traditional one and takes place on a semi-annual basis during each rotating presidency of the EU Council.

On behalf of the EU, the participants in the dialogue are the Presidency-in-Office of EU Council, the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the General Secretariat of the Council, EUROPOL, EUROJUST, the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and the incoming Presidency of the Council, namely Finland, as an observer. On behalf of US, senior officials from the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice and the Department of State attended.

The meeting in Bucharest was chaired by Mr. Cătălin NECULA, State Secretary within the Ministry of Home Affairs, and by Mr. Sebastian Constantin COSTEA, State Secretary within the Ministry of Justice.

Regarding the domain of home affairs, on the agenda of the meeting, the Romanian Presidency introduced topics related to further cooperation and exchange of views with the US in the fields of counter-terrorism, migration management and visa policy.

Regarding the fight against terrorism, discussions were held on the status of the EU-US PNR (Passenger Name Register) agreement, and also on cooperation related to combating online terrorist content, security threats and information exchange.

With regard to migration and visa policy, issues related to combating smuggling, trafficking of migrants and the US visa policy concerning the five EU Member States that do not enjoy the policy of visa-reciprocity were discussed.

Concerning the justice dimension, the agenda of the meeting provided a framework for discussions on several topics of common interest, such as resilience of electoral systems, security and justice in cyberspace, cross-border access to electronic evidences.

In international judicial cooperation matters, the existing challenges have been highlighted, including the ones that concerns third countries. Also, the data protection field has been approached from the perspective of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the implementation of the Umbrella Agreement.

The meeting represented a great opportunity to strengthen legal relations between all the involved parties.

At the same time, within the meeting, the program of the incoming Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second semester of the year 2019 was presented.