



MINISTRY
OF INTERIOR
PRESS OFFICE

STATEMENT

Minister Sándor Pintér received the following question from a journalist concerning the accession of Romania and Bulgaria on 5th January, 2011 during his international press conference held at the Hotel Intercontinental in Budapest: „I would like to ask Minister Pintér about Romania and Bulgaria and the Schengen Area. Paris and Berlin both stated that in the coming time period they see no reason for these two countries to join. My first question therefore is, whether this will be a subject discussed on the informal meeting to be held here in Budapest? My second question is do You see any chance for this situation to change in the next 6 months, or is this already a lost case?

The Hungarian Minister of Interior gave the following answer to the question:

I am an optimist – I never regard anything as a lost case. There is a lot of work invested into Schengen accession in both Romania and Bulgaria. A lot of people worked in order to prepare for this, systems were put in place, the police and border police personnel had participated in trainings in order to fulfill Schengen requirements. We are aware of the German and French positions, but there is a defined course of legal steps of action that has to be followed.

Experts had carried out their work, and they have discussed their opinions in a first reading, the result will be published in the end of January. Then, after learning about this opinion will we have to take the next step, and in the possession of the opinion of the experts will we have to discuss in the Council what Romania and Bulgaria have to carry out in order to join to Schengen states. The process in this regard is very clear: 100 % of all Member States have to give their opinion and their vote in order for them to become Schengen members. I believe that by June the latest, we will have to achieve a political decision which sets out what tasks need to be carried out and with what deadlines, so that they are able to change the point of view taken by France and Germany.

One of the most important priorities set by the Hungarian Presidency is the swift accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen Area, and we are putting all our energy into bringing this to success. Hungary – as it has done before – is giving every help for both Romania and Bulgaria to join Schengen as quickly as possible. No matter how things develop, the Hungarian Presidency would like to pass on torch to the next presidency with the issue of Schengen enlargement satisfactorily closed.

Budapest, 6th January 2011.

Ministry of Interior/Hungary
Press Office