

Border management: EU signs agreement with Albania on European Border and Coast Guard cooperation

The agreement was signed on behalf of the EU by Herbert **Kickl**, Minister of the Interior of Austria and President of the Council, Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship and on behalf of Albania Interior Minister Fatmir Xhafaj.

Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship: *“The migratory and security challenges do not stop at our external borders. Nor should we. A Europe that protects is a Europe that works together with partner countries in its neighbourhood and beyond. Today’s agreement with Albania – the first of this kind with a third country – is a milestone in the EU’s external cooperation on border management. I hope it will pave the way for greater cooperation with the whole Western Balkan region.*

Herbert **Kickl**, Minister of the Interior of Austria: *“The introduction of new measures to improve controls at the EU’s external borders has led to a significant drop in illegal border crossings. But more can still be done. Cooperation with our neighbours is particularly important. This agreement will allow us to increase our support to Albania in the field of border management.*

This agreement allows the European Border and Coast Guard Agency to coordinate operational cooperation between EU member states and Albania on the management of the EU’s external borders. The European Border and Coast Guard will be able to take action at the external border involving one or more neighbouring member states and Albania. This can include intervention on Albanian territory, subject to Albania’s agreement.

The activities included by the agreement are aimed at tackling irregular migration, in particular sudden changes in migratory flows, and cross-border crime, and can involve the provision of increased technical and operational assistance at the border. For each operation, a plan has to be agreed between the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and Albania.

Next Steps

The draft decision on the conclusion of the agreement has been sent to the European Parliament, which will be invited to give its consent in order for the agreement to be concluded.

Background

Today’s status agreement with Albania is the first one being concluded with a third country. Negotiations with Albania started in December 2017 and the

draft status agreement was initialled by Commissioner Avramopoulos and Albanian Interior Minister Xhafaj in February. The Council then authorised the signature of the agreement on 13 July 2018.

Draft status agreements were already initialled with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia ([on 18 July](#)) and with Serbia ([on 20 September](#)). Negotiations with Montenegro and with Bosnia and Herzegovina are ongoing.

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency can carry out deployments and joint operations on the territory of neighbouring non-EU countries, subject to the prior conclusion of a status agreement between the European Union and the country concerned. [In September](#), the Commission proposed to further reinforce the European Border and Coast Guard, giving it the right level of ambition and allowing joint operations and deployments to take place in countries beyond the EU's immediate neighbourhood.

For More Information

[Status agreement between the EU and Albania on actions carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in Albania](#)

[Press Release](#): Border management: European Border and Coast Guard Agency strengthens operational cooperation with Albania

[Press release](#): European Border and Coast Guard: Agreement reached on operational cooperation with Serbia

[Press Release](#): European Border and Coast Guard: agreement on operational cooperation reached with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia