

European Border and Coast Guard: agreement on operational cooperation reached with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Today, European Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos and Oliver Spasovski, Minister of Interior of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, initialled a status agreement that will allow teams from the European Border and Coast Guard Agency to be deployed in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Once in force, the agreement will allow the Agency to carry out joint operations with and within the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, especially in the event of sudden migratory challenges.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"I would like to congratulate the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on this important operational step forward in our cooperation on the ground. This agreement will allow the European Border and Coast Guard Agency to fully exercise its potential, reacting swiftly to migratory challenges and protecting our common borders. Today's agreement is the second we have now initialled, and I hope for the ongoing negotiations with the other Western Balkans partners to be finalised quickly."*

The Commission has committed to further strengthening the European Border and Coast Guard Agency's role in protecting the EU's borders, including closer cooperation with the EU's neighbours. Status agreements like the one initialled today with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will reinforce the Agency's ability to act in the EU's immediate neighbourhood, helping to manage irregular migration better and further enhancing security at the EU's external borders.

Closer cooperation between the Agency and Western Balkan partners is also a core element of the [Commission's strategy](#) for 'A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans', which highlights the Western Balkans' European future and calls for enhanced strategic and operational cooperation on migration and border management.

Next Steps

The draft status agreement initialled today with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will be formally signed at a later date, after both sides complete the necessary legal procedures. The European Parliament's consent to the agreement is also required.

Once the agreement enters into force, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency will be able to carry out operational activities and deploy teams in the regions of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that border the EU, in agreement with both the authorities of the former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia and the authorities of the bordering EU Member States.

Background

Under its recently [reinforced mandate](#), the European Border and Coast Guard Agency can carry out operations on the territory of neighbouring third countries, subject to prior agreement. The Commission adopted a model status agreement in November 2016 and subsequently requested the Council to first start negotiations with Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in January 2017. Later, the Commission was also granted mandates to negotiate agreements with Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Today's draft status agreement is the second negotiation concluded between the European Union and the EU's partners in the Western Balkans, following an agreement with Albania in [February 2018](#). A draft status agreement with Montenegro was agreed at technical level in April 2018, and negotiations are ongoing with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For More Information

[Website](#): The European Border and Coast Guard Agency

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