

# European Border and Coast Guard: Agreement reached on operational cooperation with Serbia

The Agency will be able to assist Serbia in border management and carry out joint operations with Serbia, in particular in the event of a sudden change in migratory flows.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"Today is another milestone in our cooperation with Serbia on migration, border management and security. I want to thank the Serbian authorities for their efforts, willingness and commitment to reach this agreement. Step by step, we are better protecting the EU's external borders, and we are doing so also by cooperating more closely with partner countries in our direct neighbourhood and beyond. I look forward to finalising the agreement soon and hope to also swiftly conclude the ongoing negotiations with other Western Balkan partners."*

Supporting and cooperating with non-EU countries is essential for the protection of the EU's external borders. In 2016, the Commission strengthened the European Border and Coast Guard's mandate to allow for deployments in the EU's immediate neighbourhood. Last week, following President **Juncker's** [State of the Union Address 2018](#), the Commission proposed to [further reinforce the European Border and Coast Guard](#), giving it the right level of ambition and allowing the joint operations and deployments to take place in countries beyond the EU's immediate neighbourhood.

Today's status agreement with Serbia is the third agreement initialled with partner countries from the Western Balkan region, following [Albania](#) in February and [the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#) in July. Negotiations with Montenegro and with Bosnia and Herzegovina are ongoing.

## Next Steps

The draft status agreement initialled today with Serbia will be formally signed at a later date, after both sides complete the necessary legal procedures. The European Parliament's consent 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 Serbia that border the EU, in agreement with both the Serbian authorities and the authorities of the bordering EU Member States.

## Background

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency can already 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. Under the [new proposal](#) to further reinforce the European Border and Coast Guard, such agreements could also be concluded with countries beyond the EU's immediate neighbourhood.

#### **For More Information**

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

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

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

[Website](#): Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs