

Border management: EU concludes agreements with Montenegro and Serbia on Frontex cooperation



The Council today adopted two decisions to conclude the agreements with Montenegro and Serbia on border management cooperation between these countries and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).

Close cooperation with our Western Balkan partners is essential if we are to address the shared migratory challenges which we face. The agreements concluded today on border management cooperation with Montenegro and Serbia are an important part of our overall strategy on border management.

Davor Bozinovic, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Croatia

These agreements will allow Frontex to assist Montenegro and Serbia in border management, carry out joint operations and deploy teams in the regions of these countries that border the EU, subject to the country's agreement.

These activities are aimed at tackling illegal immigration, 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.

Strengthened cooperation between priority third countries and Frontex will help tackle illegal immigration and further enhance security at the EU's external borders.

Next steps

Montenegro has notified its conclusion of the agreement, which will enter into force on 1 July.

The conclusion procedure by Serbia has not yet been finalised. Once this is the case the agreement will enter into force.

Background

A first agreement on border management cooperation was concluded with Albania in 2019. Following this, Frontex launched the first-ever joint operation on the territory of a neighbouring non-EU country in Albania on 22 May 2019.

Similar status agreements have also been initialled with North Macedonia

(July 2018) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (January 2019) and are pending finalisation.

The adoption in 2019 of a new regulation reinforcing the European Border and Coast Guard, will allow for the conclusion of agreements to carry out joint operations and deployments in countries beyond the EU's immediate neighbourhood.