

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

Once the agreement enters into force, the Agency will be able to assist Montenegro in border management and carry out joint operations with Montenegro, in particular in the event of a sudden change in migratory flows.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"Today we are taking another step to strengthen our cooperation with Western Balkan partners when it comes to border management, migration and security. I would like to thank Montenegro for its efforts and commitment to initial this agreement and hope for a swift conclusion. The challenges we face are common and the only way to address them is by working together."*

Closer cooperation with and greater support for non-EU countries in the neighbourhood are essential for better protection of the EU's external borders, management of irregular migration and enhancement of security. In 2016, the Commission strengthened the European Border and Coast Guard's mandate to allow for deployments in the EU's immediate neighbourhood. Under these rules, 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.

Today's agreement is the fifth agreed with a partner country in the Western Balkans, marking yet another step towards the full operationalisation of the Agency.

Building on this work, [in September 2018](#) the Commission proposed to further reinforce the European Border and Coast Guard to allow joint operations and deployments to take place in countries beyond the EU's immediate neighbourhood as well. This reinforcement will give the European Border and Coast Guard the right level of ambition, corresponding to the common challenges Europe is facing in managing migration and borders.

## **Next steps**

The draft status agreement initialled today with Montenegro 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 Montenegro that border the EU, in agreement with both the Montenegrin authorities and the authorities of the bordering EU Member States.

## **Background**

Today's agreement is the fifth negotiated with a partner country in the Western Balkans. Similar agreements were signed with [Albania](#) (October 2018), and initialled with [the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#) (July 2018), [Serbia](#) (September 2018), and [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (January 2019).

## **For More Information**

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

[Press release](#): Border management: EU signs agreement with Albania on European Border and Coast Guard cooperation

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

[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 Bosnia and Herzegovina

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

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