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**PROPOSAL**

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| From: | Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director |
| date of receipt: | 23 September 2022 |
| To: | General Secretariat of the Council |
| No. Cion doc.: | COM(2022) 492 final ANNEX |
| Subject: | ANNEX to the Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of North Macedonia on operational activities carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in the Republic of North Macedonia |

Delegations will find attached document COM(2022) 492 final ANNEX.

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EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 23.9.2022
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ANNEX

**ANNEX**

***to the***

**Proposal for a**

**COUNCIL DECISION**

**on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of North Macedonia on operational activities carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in the Republic of North Macedonia**

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN**

**THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**AND**

**THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA**

**ON**

**OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY**

**THE EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY**
**IN**

**THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA**

THE EUROPEAN UNION,

and THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA,

hereinafter referred to individually as a "Party" and collectively as the "Parties",

WHEREAS situations may arise where the European Border and Coast Guard Agency ('the Agency') coordinates operational cooperation between the Member States of the European Union and the Republic of North Macedonia, including on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia,

WHEREAS a legal framework in the form of a status agreement should be established for the situations where the team members deployed by the Agency will have executive powers on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia,

WHEREAS the status agreement may provide for the establishment by the Agency of antenna offices on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia to facilitate and improve coordination of operational activities and to ensure the effective management of the human and technical resources of the Agency,

WHEREAS the Parties will comply with the provisions set out in the declarations attached to this Status Agreement,

CONSIDERING that the Republic of North Macedonia, a candidate country for membership of the European Union since 2005, closely cooperates with the Union in managing migratory flows and countering illegal immigration and cross border crime,

CONSIDERING the high level of protection of personal data in the Republic of North Macedonia and the European Union; and,

CONSIDERING that the Republic of North Macedonia has ratified the Council of Europe Convention No. 108 of 28 January 1981 for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data and the additional Protocol thereto;

BEARING IN MIND that respect for human rights and democratic principles are fundamental principles governing the cooperation between the Parties;

CONSIDERING that the Republic of North Macedonia has ratified the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 4 November 1950, the rights enumerated in which correspond to those in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;

CONSIDERING that all operational activities of the Agency on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia should fully respect fundamental rights and the international agreements to which the European Union, its Member States and/or the Republic of North Macedonia are party,

CONSIDERING that all persons participating in an operational activity are obliged to maintain the highest standards of integrity, ethical conduct and professionalism as well as respect for fundamental rights and to meet obligations imposed upon them by the provisions of the operational plan and the Agency's code of conduct,

HAVE DECIDED TO CONCLUDE THIS AGREEMENT:

*Article 1*
**Scope**

1. This Agreement governs all matters necessary for the deployment of border management teams from the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps to the Republic of North Macedonia where the team members may exercise executive powers.

2. The deployment referred to in paragraph 1 may take place on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia.

*Article 2*
**Definitions**

For the purposes of this Agreement, the following definitions apply:

(1) 'operational activity' means a joint operation or a rapid border intervention;

(2) 'Agency' means the European Border and Coast Guard Agency established by Regulation (EU) 2019/1896[1] on the European Border and Coast Guard or any amendment thereto;

(3) 'border control' means the activity carried out at a border, in accordance with and for the purposes of this Agreement, in response exclusively to an intention to cross or the act of crossing that border, regardless of any other consideration, consisting of border checks and border surveillance;

(4) 'border management teams' means teams formed from the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps to be deployed during joint operations and rapid border interventions at the external borders in Member States and in third countries;

(5) 'consultative forum' means the advisory body established by the Agency pursuant to Article 108 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896;

(6) 'European Border and Coast Guard standing corps' means European Border and Coast Guard standing corps provided for in Article 54 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896;

[1] Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624 (OJ EU L 295, 14.11.2019, p. 1).

(7) ‘EUROSUR’ means the framework for information exchange and cooperation between the Member States and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency;

(8) ‘fundamental rights monitor’ means fundamental rights monitor as provided for in Article 110 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896;

(9) ‘home Member State’ means the Member State from which a staff member is deployed or seconded to the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps;

(10) ‘incident’ means a situation relating to illegal immigration, cross-border crime, or a risk to the lives of migrants at, along, or in proximity to, the external borders of the European Union or the Republic of North Macedonia;

(11) ‘joint operation’ means an action coordinated or organised by the Agency to support the national authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia responsible for border control aimed at addressing challenges such as illegal immigration, present or future threats at the borders of the Republic of North Macedonia or cross-border crime, or aimed at providing increased technical and operational assistance for the control of those borders;

(12) ‘team member’ means a member of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps deployed through a border management team to participate in an operational activity;

(13) ‘Member State’ means a Member State of the European Union;

(14) ‘operational area’ means the geographical area wherein an operational activity is to take place;

(15) ‘participating Member State’ means a Member State which participates in an operational activity, by providing technical equipment or staff of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps;

(16) ‘personal data’ means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person;

(17) ‘rapid border intervention’ means an action aimed at responding to a situation of specific and disproportionate challenge at the borders of the Republic of North Macedonia by deploying border management teams in the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia for a limited period of time to conduct border control together with the national authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia responsible for border control;

(18) ‘Statutory staff’ means staff employed by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in accordance with the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European

Union and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the Union laid down in Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom, ECSC) No 259/68[2];

(19) 'executive powers' means powers necessary to perform the tasks required for border control which are conducted on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia during an operational activity as provided for in the operational plan.

*Article 3*

**Launching Operational Activities**

1. An operational activity under this Agreement shall be launched by a written decision of the Agency's executive director upon a written request of the competent authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia. Such request shall include a description of the situation, possible aims and envisaged needs, and the profiles of staff needed, including those staff having executive powers, as applicable.

2. If the Agency's executive director considers that the requested operational activity would likely entail or lead to serious and/or persistent violations of fundamental rights or international protection obligations, then the executive director shall not launch the operational activity.

3. If, following the receipt of a request under paragraph 1, the Agency's executive director considers that further information is necessary in order to decide whether to launch an operational activity, he or she may request further information or authorise Agency experts to travel to the Republic of North Macedonia to assess the situation there. The Republic of North Macedonia shall facilitate such travel.

4. The Agency's executive director shall decide not to launch an operational activity if he or she considers there to be justified cause to suspend or terminate it under the relevant provisions of Article 18.

*Article 4*

**Operational Plan**

1. For each operational activity, the Agency shall draw up an operational plan in accordance with Articles 38 and 74 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896. This operational plan shall be agreed upon between the Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia and shall be binding on the Agency, the Republic of North Macedonia and the participating Member States.

2. The operational plan shall set out in detail the organisational and procedural aspects of the operational activity, including:

[2] OJ EU L 56, 4.3.1968, p. 1.

(a) a description of the situation, with *modus operandi* and objectives of the deployment, including the operational aim;

(b) the estimated time that the operational activity is expected to last in order to achieve its objectives;

(c) the operational area;

(d) a description of the tasks, including those requiring executive powers, responsibilities, including with regard to the respect for fundamental rights and data protection requirements, and special instructions for the teams, including on permissible consultation of databases and permissible service weapons, ammunition and equipment in the Republic of North Macedonia;

(e) the composition of the border management team as well as the deployment of other relevant staff/ the presence of other members of the Agency's statutory staff, including fundamental rights monitors;

(f) command and control provisions, including the names and ranks of the border guards or other relevant staff of the Republic of North Macedonia responsible for cooperating with the team members and the Agency, in particular the names and ranks of those border guards or other relevant staff who are in command during the period of deployment, and the place of the team members in the chain of command;

(g) the technical equipment to be deployed during the operational activity, including specific requirements such as conditions for use, requested crew, transport and other logistics, and financial provisions;

(h) detailed provisions on immediate incident reporting by the Agency to the management board and to relevant authorities of the participating Member States and of the Republic of North Macedonia of any incident encountered in the course of an operational activity performed under this Agreement;

(i) a reporting and evaluation scheme containing benchmarks for the evaluation report, including with regard to the protection of fundamental rights, and final date of submission of the final evaluation report;

(j) [*Intentionally left blank*];

(k) the terms of cooperation with Union bodies, offices and agencies other than the Agency, other third countries or international organisations;

(l) general instructions on how to ensure the safeguarding of fundamental rights during the operational activity, including personal data protection and obligations deriving from applicable international human rights instruments;

(m) procedures whereby persons in need of international protection, victims of trafficking in human beings, unaccompanied minors and other persons in

vulnerable situations are directed to the competent national authorities for appropriate assistance;

(n) procedures setting out a mechanism to receive and transmit to the Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia complaints (including those lodged under Article 8(5) hereunder) against any person participating in an operational activity, including border guards or other relevant staff of the Republic of North Macedonia and team members, alleging breaches of fundamental rights in the context of their participation in an operational activity of the Agency;

(o) logistical arrangements, including information on working conditions and the environment of the areas in which the operational activity is to take place; and,

(p) provisions concerning an antenna office, as established in accordance with Article 6.

3. The operational plan and any amendments thereto or adaptations thereof shall be subject to the agreement of the Agency, the Republic of North Macedonia and the Member States neighbouring the Republic of North Macedonia and/or bordering the operational area, after consultation of the participating Member States.

4. Exchange of information and operational cooperation for the purposes of EUROSUR shall take place in accordance with the rules for establishing and sharing the specific situational pictures to be set out in the operational plan for the operational activity concerned.

5. The evaluation of the operational activity in accordance with paragraph (3)(i) of this Article shall be conducted jointly by the Republic of North Macedonia and the Agency.

6. The terms of cooperation with Union bodies, offices and agencies in accordance with paragraph (3)(k) of this Article shall be conducted in line with their respective mandates and within available resources.

*Article 5*

**Incident Reporting**

The Agency and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of North Macedonia shall each have an incident reporting mechanism to allow timely reporting of any incident encountered in the course of an operational activity performed under this Agreement.

The Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia shall assist each other in carrying out all necessary inquiries and investigations into any incident reported via such

mechanism, such as identifying witnesses and collecting and producing evidence, including requests to obtain and, if appropriate, hand over items connected with a reported incident. The handing over of any such items may be made subject to their return within the terms specified by the competent authority delivering them.

*Article 6*

**Antenna Offices**

1. The Agency may establish antenna offices on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia to facilitate and improve coordination of operational activities and to ensure the effective management of the human and technical resources of the Agency. The location of the antenna office shall be established by the Agency in consultation with the relevant authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia.

2. The antenna offices shall be established in accordance with operational needs and remain operational for the period of time necessary for the Agency to carry out operational activities in the Republic of North Macedonia. Subject to the agreement of the Republic of North Macedonia, that period of time may be prolonged by the Agency.

3. Each antenna office shall be managed by a representative of the Agency appointed by the executive director as head of the antenna office who shall oversee the overall work of the office.

4. The antenna offices shall, where applicable:

   (a) provide operational and logistical support and ensure the coordination of Agency's activities in the operational areas concerned;

   (b) provide operational support to the Republic of North Macedonia in the operational areas concerned;

   (c) monitor the activities of the teams and regularly report to the Agency's headquarters;

   (d) cooperate with the Republic of North Macedonia on all issues related to the practical implementation of the operational activities organised by the Agency in the Republic of North Macedonia, including any additional issues that might have occurred in the course of these activities;

   (e) support the coordinating officer in his or her cooperation with the Republic of North Macedonia on all issues related to their contribution to operational activities organised by the Agency and, where necessary, liaise with the Agency's headquarters;

(f) support the coordinating officer and fundamental rights monitor(s) assigned to monitor an operational activity in facilitating, where necessary, the coordination and communication between the Agency's teams and the relevant authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia as well as any relevant tasks;

(g) organise logistical support relating to the deployment of the team members and the deployment and use of technical equipment;

(h) provide all other logistical support regarding the operational area for which a given antenna office is responsible, with a view to facilitating the smooth running of the operational activities organised by the Agency;

(i) ensure the effective management of the Agency's own equipment in the areas covered by its activities, including the possible registration and long-term maintenance of that equipment and any logistical support needed; and,

(j) support other staff and/or activities of the Agency in the Republic of North Macedonia as agreed between the Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia.

5. The Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia shall ensure the best possible conditions for the fulfilment of the tasks assigned to the antenna offices.

6. The Republic of North Macedonia shall provide the Agency with reasonable assistance to ensure the operational capacity of the antenna offices.

*Article 7*

**Coordinating Officer**

1. Without prejudice to the role of antenna offices as described in Article 6, the executive director shall appoint one or more experts from the statutory staff of the Agency to be deployed as coordinating officer(s) for each operational activity. The executive director shall notify the Republic of North Macedonia of such appointment.

2. The role of the coordinating officer shall be to:

(a) act as an interface between the Agency, the Republic of North Macedonia and the team members, providing assistance, on behalf of the Agency, on all issues relating to the conditions of the deployment, to the teams;

(b) monitor the correct implementation of the operational plan, including, in cooperation with the fundamental rights monitor(s), as regards the protection of fundamental rights, and report to the executive director thereon;

(c) act on behalf of the Agency in all aspects of the deployment of the teams and report to the Agency on all those aspects; and,

(d) foster cooperation and coordination among the Republic of North Macedonia and participating Member States.

3. In the context of operational activities, the executive director may authorise the coordinating officer to assist in resolving any disagreement on the execution of the operational plan and deployment of the teams.

4. The Republic of North Macedonia shall issue only instructions that are in compliance with the operational plan to the team members. If the coordinating officer considers instructions issued to team members not to be in compliance with the operational plan or with applicable legal obligations, he or she shall immediately communicate this to the Republic of North Macedonia officers carrying out a coordinating role and to the executive director. The executive director may take appropriate measures, including the suspension or the termination of the operational activity, in accordance with Article 18 of this Agreement.

*Article 8*

**Fundamental Rights**

1. In performing their obligations under this Agreement, the Parties undertake to act in compliance with all applicable human rights law instruments, including the 1950 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto, the 1965 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the 1984 United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
2. Team members shall, in the performance of their tasks and in the exercise of their powers, fully respect fundamental rights, including access to asylum procedures and human dignity, and shall pay particular attention to vulnerable persons. Any measures taken in the performance of their tasks and in the exercise of their powers shall be proportionate to the objectives pursued by such measures. While performing their tasks and exercising their powers, they shall not discriminate against persons on the basis of any grounds such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation in line with Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

   Measures interfering with fundamental rights and freedoms may be taken by team members in the performance of their tasks and/or in the exercise of their powers

only when necessary and proportionate to the objectives pursued by such measures and must respect the essence of these fundamental rights and freedoms in accordance with applicable international, Union and national law.
This provision shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to all staff of national authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia participating in an operational activity.

3. The Agency's fundamental rights officer shall monitor each operational activity's compliance with applicable fundamental rights standards. The fundamental rights officer, or his or her deputy, may carry out on-the-spot visits to the third country; he or she shall also provide opinions on the operational plans and inform the Agency's executive director about possible violations of fundamental rights relating to an operational activity. The Republic of North Macedonia shall support the fundamental rights officer's monitoring efforts, as requested.
4. The Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia agree to provide the consultative forum with timely and effective access to all information concerning the respect for fundamental rights in relation to any operational activity performed under this Agreement, including through on-the-spot visits to the operational area.
5. The Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia shall each have a complaints mechanism to process allegations of breaches of fundamental rights committed by their staff in the exercise of their official functions in the course of an operational activity performed under this Agreement.

*Article 9*

**Fundamental Rights Monitors**

1. The Agency's fundamental rights officer shall assign at least one fundamental rights monitor to each operational activity to, *inter alia*, assist and advise the coordinating officer.
2. The fundamental rights monitor shall monitor compliance with fundamental rights and provide advice and assistance on fundamental rights in the preparation, conduct and evaluation of the relevant operational activity. This shall include, in particular:
    (a) following the preparation of operational plans and reporting to the fundamental rights officer to enable him or her to fulfil his or her tasks as provided for in Regulation (EU) 2019/1896;
    (b) conducting visits, including long-term visits, where operational activities take place;
    (c) cooperating and liaising with the coordinating officer and providing advice and assistance to him or her;
    (d) informing the coordinating officer of and reporting to the fundamental rights officer on any concerns regarding possible violations of fundamental rights relating to the operational activity; and,

(e) Contributing to the evaluation of the operational activity as referred to in Article 4(3)(i).

3. Fundamental rights monitors shall have access to all areas in which the operational activity takes place and to all documents relevant for the implementation of that activity.

4. While present in the operational area, fundamental rights monitors shall wear insignia that clearly allow for their identification as fundamental rights monitors.

*Article 10*

**Team Members**

1. Team members shall have the authority to perform the tasks described in the operational plan.

2. While performing their tasks and exercising their powers, team members shall comply with the laws and regulations of the Republic of North Macedonia. Team members shall also comply with applicable Union and international law while performing their tasks and exercising their powers.

3. Team members may perform tasks and exercise powers in the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia only under instructions from, and in the presence of, border management authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia. The Republic of North Macedonia may authorise team members to perform specific tasks and/or exercise specific powers on its territory in the absence of its border management authorities subject to the consent of the Agency or the home Member State, as appropriate.

4. Team members who are statutory staff of the Agency shall wear the uniform of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps while performing their tasks and exercising their powers unless specified otherwise in the operational plan.
Team members who are not statutory staff of the Agency shall wear their national uniform while performing their tasks and exercising their powers unless specified otherwise in the operational plan.

   While on duty, all team members shall also wear visible personal identification and a blue brassard with the insignias of the European Union and of the Agency on their uniforms.

5. The Republic of North Macedonia shall authorise relevant team members to perform tasks during an operational activity that require the use of force, including the carrying and use of service weapons, ammunition and other equipment, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the operational plan.

   - Team members who are statutory staff of the Agency may carry and use, service weapons, ammunition and other equipment subject to the consent of the Agency.

- Team members who are not statutory staff of the Agency may carry and use service weapons, ammunition and other equipment subject to the consent of the relevant home Member State.

6. The use of force, including the carrying and use of service weapons, ammunition and other equipment, shall be exercised in accordance with the national law of the Republic of North Macedonia and in the presence of border management authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia. The Republic of North Macedonia may authorise team members to use force in the absence of relevant border management authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia.

   - For team members who are statutory staff of the Agency, such authorisation to use force in the absence of border management authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia shall be subject to the consent of the Agency.
   - For team members who are not statutory staff of the Agency, such authorisation to use force in the absence of border management authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia shall be subject to the consent of the relevant home Member State.

   Without prejudice to the requirements of national law, any use of force by team members shall comply with the principles of necessity and proportionality, and with the duty of precaution. Any such use of force must also comply fully with applicable Union and international law, including the rules laid down in Annex V to Regulation (EU) 2019/1896.

7. The Agency shall, in advance of the deployment of the team members, inform the Republic of North Macedonia of the service weapons, ammunition and other equipment team members may carry under paragraph 5 of this Article. The Republic of North Macedonia may prohibit the carrying of certain service weapons, ammunition and other equipment, provided that its own law provides for the same prohibition to its own border management authorities. The Republic of North Macedonia shall, in advance of the deployment of the team members, inform the Agency of the permissible service weapons, ammunition and equipment and of the conditions for their use. The Agency shall make this information available to Member States.

   The Republic of North Macedonia shall make the necessary arrangements for the issuance of any necessary weapon permits and facilitate the import, export, transport and storage of weapons, ammunition and other equipment at the disposal of the team members, as defined in the operational plan, as requested by the Agency.

8. Service weapons, ammunition and equipment may be used in legitimate self-defence and in legitimate defence of team members or of other persons in accordance with the national law of the Republic of North Macedonia. Any such use shall respect the relevant principles of international and Union law.

9. National databases shall be accessed only by persons authorised by the Republic of North Macedonia. The Republic of North Macedonia may allow data from its national databases to be shared with team members in accordance with the operational plan. Team members shall only consult data which is necessary for performing their tasks and exercising their powers.

10. For the implementation of operational activities, the Republic of North Macedonia shall deploy officers of national authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia responsible for border management who are able and willing to communicate in English to carry out a coordinating role on behalf of the Republic of North Macedonia.

*Article 11*

**Privileges and Immunities of the Property, Funds, Assets and Operations of the Agency**

1. Any premises and buildings of the Agency in the Republic of North Macedonia shall be inviolable. They shall be exempt from search, requisition, confiscation or expropriation.

2. The Agency's property and assets, including means of transport, communications, archives, any correspondence, documents, identity papers and financial assets shall be inviolable.

3. The Agency's assets include assets owned, co-owned, chartered or leased by a Member State and offered to the Agency. Upon the embarkation of representative(s) of competent national authorities, these shall be treated as assets being on government service and authorised to that effect.

4. No measures of execution may be taken in respect of the Agency. The Agency's property and assets shall not be the subject of any administrative or legal measure of constraint. Property of the Agency shall be free from seizure for the satisfaction of a judgment, decision or order.

5. The Republic of North Macedonia shall permit the entry and removal of articles and equipment deployed by the Agency to the Republic of North Macedonia for operational purposes.

6. The Agency shall be exempt from all duties (including customs duties) and taxes as well as any prohibitions and restrictions on imports and exports in respect of articles intended for its official use, regardless whether they are transported by the Agency or a third party.

*Article 12*

**Privileges and Immunities of the Team Members**

1. Team members shall not be subject to any form of inquiry or legal proceedings in the Republic of North Macedonia or by authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia, except under the circumstances referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article.

2. Team members shall enjoy immunity from the criminal, civil and administrative jurisdiction of the Republic of North Macedonia in respect of all acts performed by them in the exercise of their official functions.

   Where the authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia intend to institute criminal, civil or administrative proceedings against a team member before any court of the Republic of North Macedonia, the competent authorities shall immediately notify the Agency's executive director thereof.

   Following receipt of such notification, the Agency's executive director shall, without undue delay, inform the relevant authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia whether the act in question was performed by the team member in the exercise of his or her official functions. If the act was stated as performed in the exercise of official functions, the proceedings shall not be initiated. If the act was stated as not performed in the exercise of official functions, the proceeding may be instituted. The qualification by the Agency's executive director shall be binding upon the Republic of North Macedonia, which may not contest it.

   Pending this qualification, the Agency shall refrain from taking any measure intended to jeopardise possible subsequent criminal prosecution of the team member by the competent authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia, including facilitating the return of the concerned team member from the Republic of North Macedonia to his/her home Member State.

3. The initiation of proceedings by team members shall preclude them from invoking immunity from jurisdiction in respect of any counter-claim directly connected with the principal claim.

4. The premises, dwellings, means of transport and communications, and possessions, including any correspondence, documents, identity papers and assets of team members shall be inviolable, except in case of measures of execution as permitted pursuant to paragraph 8 of this Article.

5. The Republic of North Macedonia shall be liable for any damage caused by team members to third parties in the exercise of their official functions.

6. In case of damage caused by gross negligence or wilful misconduct or not in the exercise of official functions by a team member who is a member of the statutory staff of the Agency, the Republic of North Macedonia may request, via the Agency's executive director, that compensation be paid by the Agency.

   In case of damage caused by gross negligence or wilful misconduct or not in the exercise of official functions by a team member who is not a member of the statutory staff of the Agency, the Republic of North Macedonia may request, via the Agency's executive director, that compensation be paid by the home Member State concerned.

7. Team members shall not be obliged to give evidence as witnesses in legal proceedings in the Republic of North Macedonia.

8. No measures of execution may be taken in respect of team members, except in the case where a criminal, civil or administrative proceeding not related to their official functions is instituted against them. Property of team members, which is certified by the Agency's executive director to be necessary for the fulfilment of their official functions, shall be free from seizure for the satisfaction of a judgment, decision or order. In criminal, civil or administrative proceedings, team members shall not be subject to any restrictions on their personal liberty or to any other measures of constraint.

9. Team members shall, with respect to services rendered for the Agency, be exempt from social security provisions which may be in force in the Republic of North Macedonia.

10. The salary and emoluments paid to team members by the Agency and/or the home Member States, as well as any income team members receive from outside the Republic of North Macedonia, shall not be taxed in any form in the Republic of North Macedonia.

11. The Republic of North Macedonia shall permit the entry of articles for the personal use of team members and shall grant exemption from all duties (including customs duties), taxes, and related charges other than charges for storage, transport and similar services, in respect of such articles. the Republic of North Macedonia shall also allow the export of such articles.

12. Team members' personal baggage shall be exempt from inspection, unless there are serious grounds for considering that it contains articles that are not for the personal use of team members, or articles whose import or export is prohibited by the law or subject to quarantine regulations of the Republic of North Macedonia. Inspection of such personal baggage shall be conducted only in the presence of team members concerned or an authorised representative of the Agency.

13. The Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia shall appoint contact points that are available at all times who shall be responsible for the exchange of information and immediate actions to be taken in case an act performed by a team member may be in violation of criminal law as well as for the exchange of information and the operational activities in relation to any civil and administrative proceedings against a team member.

    Until action is taken by the competent authorities of the home Member State, the Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia shall assist each other in carrying out all necessary inquiries and investigations into any alleged criminal offence in respect of which either or both the Agency or the Republic of North Macedonia have an interest, in the identification of witnesses and in the collection and production of evidence, including the request to obtain of and, if appropriate, the handing over of items connected with a purported criminal offence. The handing over of any such items may be made subject to their return within the terms specified by the competent authority delivering them.

*Article 13*

**Injured or Deceased Team Members**

1. Without prejudice to Article 12, the executive director shall have the right to take charge of, and make suitable arrangements for, the repatriation of any injured or deceased team members, as well as of their personal property.
2. An autopsy shall be performed on a deceased team member only with the express consent of the home Member State concerned and in the presence of a representative of the Agency and/or the home Member State concerned. If such autopsy is conducted outside the Republic of North Macedonia, the Republic of North Macedonia shall be informed of the results of the autopsy upon request.
3. The Republic of North Macedonia and the Agency shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible with a view to the early repatriation of injured or deceased team members.

*Article 14*

**Accreditation Document**

1. The Agency shall issue a document in the Macedonian and English languages to each team member for the purposes of identification vis-à-vis the national authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia and as proof of the holder's rights to perform the tasks and exercise the powers referred to in Article 10 of this Agreement and in the operational plan (the 'accreditation document').

2. The accreditation document shall include the following information on the staff member: name and nationality; rank or job title; a recent digitised photograph and tasks authorised to be performed during the deployment.
3. For the purposes of identification vis-à-vis the national authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia, team members shall be obliged to carry the accreditation document on their person at all times.
4. The Republic of North Macedonia shall recognise the accreditation document, in combination with a valid travel document, as granting the relevant team member entry and stay in the Republic of North Macedonia without the need for a visa, prior authorisation or any other document, up to the day of its expiration.
5. The accreditation document shall be returned to the Agency at the end of the deployment. The competent authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia shall be informed thereof.

*Article 15*

**Application to Agency Staff Not Deployed as Team Members**

Articles 12, 13 and 14 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to all Agency staff deployed to the Republic of North Macedonia who are not team members, including fundamental rights monitors and the Agency's statutory staff deployed to antenna offices.

*Article 16*

**Protection of Personal Data**

1. The communication of personal data shall take place only if such communication is necessary for the implementation of this Agreement by the competent authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia or the Agency. The processing of personal data by an authority in a particular case, including the transfer of such personal data to the other Party, shall be subject to the data protection rules applicable to that authority. The Parties shall ensure the following minimum safeguards as a precondition for any data transfer:

(a) personal data must be processed lawfully, fairly, and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject;

(b) personal data must be collected for the specified, explicit and legitimate purpose of implementing this Agreement and not further processed by the communicating authority nor receiving authority in a way incompatible with that purpose;

(c) personal data must be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purpose for which they are collected and/or further processed; in particular, personal data communicated in accordance with the law applicable to the communicating authority may concern only the following:

- First name;
- Last name;
- Date of birth;
- Nationality;
- Rank;
- Travel document bio page;
- Accreditation document;
- ID/passport/accreditation document picture;
- E-mail address;
- Mobile phone number;
- Weapon details;
- Duration of the deployment;
- Location of the deployment;
- Aircraft or vessel identification numbers;
- Arrival date;
- Arrival airport/border crossing point;
- Arrival flight number;
- Departure date;
- Departure airport/border crossing point;
- Departure flight number;
- Home Member State/third country;
- Deploying authority;
- Tasks/operational profile;
- Means of transportation, and/or;
- Route

of team members, Agency staff, relevant observers, or members of staff exchange programmes;

(d) personal data must be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;

(e) personal data must be kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which the data were collected or for which they are further processed;

(f) personal data must be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, taking into account the specific risks of processing, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures ('data breach'); the receiving Party shall take appropriate measures to address any data breach, and shall notify the communicating Party of such breach without undue delay and within 72 hours;

(g) both the communicating authority and the receiving authority shall take every reasonable step to ensure without delay the rectification or erasure, as appropriate, of personal data where the processing does not comply with the provisions of this article, in particular because those data are not adequate, relevant, accurate, or they are excessive in relation to the purpose of processing. This includes the notification of any rectification or erasure to the other Party;

(h) upon request, the receiving authority shall inform the communicating authority of the use of the communicated data;

(i) personal data may be communicated only to the following competent authorities:

- the Agency; and
- the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Further communication to other bodies requires the prior authorisation of the communicating authority;

(j) the communicating and the receiving authorities are under an obligation to make a written record of the communication and receipt of personal data;

(k) independent oversight shall be in place to oversee data protection compliance, including to inspect such records; data subjects shall have the right to bring complaints to the oversight body, and to receive a response without undue delay;

(l) data subjects shall have the right to receive information on the processing of their personal data, access such data and rectification or erasure of inaccurate or unlawfully processed data, subject to necessary and proportionate limitations on important grounds of public interest; and

(m) data subjects shall have the right to effective administrative and judicial redress for violation of the aforementioned safeguards.

2. Each Party will conduct periodic reviews of its own policies and procedures that implement this provision. Upon request by the other Party, the Party that received the request will review its personal data processing policies and procedures to ascertain and confirm that the safeguards in this provision are implemented effectively. The results of the review will be communicated to the Party that requested the review within a reasonable time.
3. The data protection safeguards under this Agreement will be subject to oversight by the European Data Protection Supervisor and the Agency for Personal Data Protection of the Republic of North Macedonia.
4. The Parties will cooperate with the European Data Protection Supervisor, as supervisory authority of the Agency.
5. The Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia shall draw up a common report on the application of this Article at the end of each operational activity. This report shall be sent to the Agency's fundamental rights officer and data protection officer as well as to the Agency for Personal Data Protection of the Republic of North Macedonia.
6. The Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia shall set out detailed rules on the communication and processing of personal data for the purposes of operational activities under this Agreement in specific provisions of the relevant operational plans. These provisions shall comply with the relevant requirements of the laws of the European Union law and of the Republic of North Macedonia. They shall describe, *inter alia*, the intended purpose of the communication, the controller(s) and all roles and responsibilities, the categories of data communicated, the specific data retention periods, and all minimum safeguards. In the interest of transparency and foreseeability, these provisions shall be made publicly available in accordance with the relevant guidance of the European Data Protection Board.

*Article 17*

**Exchange of Classified and Sensitive Non-Classified Information**

1. Any exchange, sharing or dissemination of classified information in the framework of this Agreement shall be covered by a separate administrative arrangement concluded between the Agency and the relevant authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia that shall be subject to the prior approval of the European Commission.
2. Any exchange of sensitive non-classified information in the framework of this Agreement:
   (a) shall be handled by the Agency in accordance with Article 9(5) of Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443[3];

[3] Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 of 13 March 2015 on Security in the Commission, (OJ EU L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41).

(b) shall receive a level of protection by the receiving Party that is equivalent to the level of protection offered by the measures applied to that information by the communicating Party in terms of confidentiality, integrity and availability; and

(c) shall be conducted via information exchange system that fulfils the criteria of availability, confidentiality and integrity for sensitive non-classified information, including the communication network referred to in Article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896.

3. The Parties will comply with intellectual property rights related to any data processed in the framework of this Agreement.

*Article 18*

**Decision to Suspend, Terminate and/or Withdraw Financing for an Operational Activity**

1. If the conditions to conduct an operational activity are no longer fulfilled, the Agency's executive director shall terminate that operational activity after informing the Republic of North Macedonia in writing.
2. If the provisions of this Agreement or of the operational plan have not been respected by the Republic of North Macedonia, the Agency's executive director may withdraw financing of the relevant operational activity, and/or suspend or terminate it, after informing the Republic of North Macedonia in writing.
3. If the security of any participant of an operational activity deployed in the Republic of North Macedonia cannot be guaranteed, the Agency's executive director may suspend or terminate the relevant operational activity or aspects thereof.
4. If the Agency's executive director considers that violations of fundamental rights or international protection obligations that are of a serious nature or are likely to persist have taken place or are likely to take place in relation to an operational activity performed under this Agreement, he or she shall withdraw the financing of the relevant operational activity, and/or suspend or terminate it, after informing the Republic of North Macedonia.
5. The Republic of North Macedonia may request the Agency's executive director to suspend or terminate an operational activity if the provisions of this Agreement or of the operational plan are not respected by a team member. Such request shall be made in writing and shall include the reasons therefor.
6. A suspension, termination or withdrawal of financing under this Article shall take effect from the date of notification to the Republic of North Macedonia. It shall not affect any rights or obligations arising out of the application of this Agreement or the operational plan before such suspension, termination or withdrawal of financing.

*Article 19*

**Combating Fraud**

1. If it becomes aware of the existence of credible allegations of fraud, corruption or any other illegal activities connected to the implementation of this Agreement, the Republic of North Macedonia shall immediately notify the Agency, the European Anti-Fraud Office and/or any other institutions, bodies or authorities of the European Union competent in such matters.
2. Where such allegations relate to European Union funds disbursed in relation to this Agreement, the Republic of North Macedonia shall, in accordance with any applicable established cooperation mechanisms, provide all necessary assistance to the aforementioned institutions, bodies, authorities in relation to investigative activities on its territory.

*Article 20*

**Implementation of this Agreement**

1. For the Republic of North Macedonia, this Agreement shall be implemented by the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of North Macedonia.
2. For the European Union, this Agreement shall be implemented by the Agency.

*Article 21*

**Dispute Settlement**

1. Any disputes arising in connection with the application of this Agreement shall be examined jointly by representatives of the Agency and the Republic of North Macedonia's competent authorities.
2. Failing any prior settlement, disputes concerning the interpretation or application of this Agreement shall be settled exclusively by negotiation between the Parties.

*Article 22*

**Entry into Force, Amendment, Duration,**
**Suspension and Termination of the Agreement**

1. This Agreement shall be subject to ratification, acceptance or approval by the Parties in accordance with their own internal legal procedures. The Parties shall notify one another of the completion of the procedures necessary for that purpose.
2. This Agreement shall enter into force on the first day of the second month following the date on which the Parties have notified each other of the completion of the internal legal procedures in accordance with paragraph 1 of this Article.
3. This Agreement may be amended only in writing by mutual consent of the Parties.

4. This Agreement is concluded for an indefinite period. The Agreement may be terminated or suspended by written agreement between the Parties or unilaterally by either Party.

   In case of a unilateral termination or suspension, the Party wishing to terminate or suspend shall notify the other Party thereof in writing. A unilateral termination or suspension of this Agreement shall take effect the first day of the second month following the month during which the notification was given.

5. Notifications made in accordance with this article shall be sent, in the case of the European Union, to the Secretary General of the Council of the European Union and, in the case of the Republic of North Macedonia, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Done in the Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish and Macedonian languages, each of these texts being equally authentic.

For the European Union

For the Republic of North Macedonia

Done at XX, date, DD/MM/YYYY.

DECLARATION WITH REGARD TO ICELAND, THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY, THE SWISS CONFEDERATION AND THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

The Parties to the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of North Macedonia on operational activities carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in the Republic of North Macedonia take note of the close relationship between the European Union and Iceland, the Kingdom of Norway, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein, particularly by virtue of the Agreements of 18 May 1999 and 26 October 2004 concerning the association of those countries with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen acquis. In such circumstances it is desirable that the authorities of Iceland, the Kingdom of Norway, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein, on the one hand, and the Republic of North Macedonia, on the other hand, conclude, without delay, bilateral agreements on operational activities carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in the Republic of North Macedonia in terms similar to those of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of North Macedonia on operational activities carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in the Republic of North Macedonia.