

**AGREEMENT
ON INTERCONNECTION OF SCHEMES FOR ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION
OF THE CITIZENS OF THE WESTERN BALKANS**

We, the Western Balkan Participants, referred to collectively as “the Contracting Parties” and individually as “Contracting Party”;

CONVINCED of the necessity of mutual cooperation in the field of digitalization of public administration and provision of eGovernment services, agreed by all Contracting Parties in the respective Western Balkans’ memorandums, in order to improve the efficiency of public administration for the benefit of the citizens of the Contracting Parties,

RESPECTING the signed international agreements, especially in the field of providing trust services and electronic identification,

HAVING REGARD TO the objectives of the Open Balkan initiative,

BEARING IN MIND the Joint Declaration signed in Novi Sad on October 10, 2019, which is based on the objective of implementing the four key freedoms of the EU single market in the Western Balkans,

RECOGNIZING the Joint Declaration of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, the Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia and the President of the Republic of Serbia adopted at the Western Balkans Summit held in Ohrid on November 10, 2019,

ACKNOWLEDGING the Joint Declaration of the Prime Minister of Albania, the Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia and the President of the Republic of Serbia adopted at the Western Balkans Summit in Tirana on 21 December 2019,

EMPHASIZING the common intention, interest and basis for enhancing cooperation and partnership,

INVITING the other Western Balkan participants to join this agreement in the spirit of inclusiveness, regional cooperation and with a view to improving the lives of all within region,

Have agreed as follows:

PURPOSE OF THE AGREEMENT

Article 1

The purpose of this Agreement is for the Contracting Parties to provide access to their own eGovernment services to the citizens of other Contracting Parties, using the authentication schemes for electronic identification of the Contracting Party to which the citizen who uses eGovernment services belongs.

DEFINITIONS

Article 2

For the purposes of this Agreement, the following terms shall have the meaning:

1. Citizen - a person who holds the citizenship of one of the Contracting Parties,
2. Open Balkan ID number - indicates the reference, i.e. unique identification number issued to citizen by Contracting Party of his/her citizenship, in accordance with this Agreement, for the purpose of using electronic services within Open Balkan initiative,
3. Federation of electronic identities - establishment of a trust relationship between the Contracting Parties, by ensuring secure transmission of identification, authentication and information for electronic identification of users who are citizens of one of the Contracting

Parties and who request the electronic services of another Contracting Party, in accordance with the relevant standards for the federation of electronic identities,

4. Interconnection of schemes means defining the minimum-level interoperability of eID schemes for cross-border electronic authentication of their citizens in terms of defining set of data exchanged, formats i.e, enabling federation of electronic identities.

SUBJECT OF THE AGREEMENT

Article 3

The Contracting Parties shall cooperate in achieving the goal set out in Article 1 of this Agreement, and in particular they shall:

- recognize registered electronic identification schemes in the Contracting Parties provided by electronic identification schemes issuers;

- connect national software solutions that would enable the federation of electronic identities on the principle of interconnection of schemes with the eGovernment services of other Contracting Parties;

- establish and implement Open Balkan ID number for their own citizens - issued by each of the Contracting Parties;

- promote the use of electronic services which would further confirm, advance and strengthen the objectives within the framework of cooperation initiatives between the Contracting Parties.

The schemes referred to in this Agreement, provided by issuers of schemes referred to hereof and registered in appropriate registers, shall be mutually recognized, appropriate registers being the following:

- 1) The register of electronic identification service providers and electronic identification schemes in the Republic of Serbia;
- 2) The register of trust service providers and electronic identification schemes in the Republic of North Macedonia;
- 3) The register of trust service providers and electronic identification schemes in the Republic of Albania.

The exchange of data necessary for the practical application of the mutually recognized electronic identification schemes stipulated in this Article is performed in accordance with the interoperability standards for data exchange.

OPEN BALKAN ID NUMBER

Article 4

Citizens can obtain Open Balkan ID number on their national eGovernment Portal or their National Portal for electronic identification.

A prerequisite for obtaining Open Balkan ID number is for a citizen to have an electronic identity issued under registered scheme of electronic identification in his/her country.

Open Balkan ID number represents an additional attribute to already existing electronic identity of a citizen giving him/her possibility to exercise rights within the scope of the Open Balkan initiative, in accordance with the pertinent agreements and other documents that are in force between the Contracting Parties, as well as in accordance with normative acts and the practice of each of the Contracting Parties.

COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

Article 5

The Contracting Parties shall establish and maintain coordination and communication between the competent authorities for legal and technical implementation of this Agreement.

The Contracting Parties shall notify each other through appropriate channels of the competent authorities referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article and shall exchange information on contact points, no later than 30 days from the date of the signing of this Agreement.

Representatives of the authorities referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall hold regular meetings, at least once in a period of 3 (three) months, and report the results of those meetings to the Contracting Parties. The first meeting will be held within 30 (thirty) days from the entry into force of this Agreement.

In addition to communication at the meetings referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article, the exchange of information relevant to the implementation of this Agreement shall be in writing, in electronic or paper form.

The Contracting Parties shall notify each other in writing of any changes relevant to the implementation of this Agreement, no later than 30 (thirty) days from the date of the occurrence of these changes.

EXCHANGE AND PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIAL DATA

Article 6

The Contracting Parties agree that classified information, as defined by each Contracting Parties legislation, if exchanged in the framework of the cooperation provided for in this Agreement, shall be kept as foreign classified information and that such information shall retain the classification levels it has been assigned in the other Contracting Party.

The appropriate Table of equivalence of classification levels envisaged by the domestic legislation of the Contracting Parties should be agreed and exchanged no later than 90 (ninety) days from the entry into force of this Agreement.

PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

Article 7

Processing of personal data between the competent authorities of the Contracting Parties shall be carried out in accordance with the relevant national legislation and international agreements, and following the principles stipulated in Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

FINAL AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Article 8

Technical description of the Open Balkan ID number and processes will be defined in additional Protocols to this Agreement.

Article 9

Any dispute arising from the interpretation or application of this Agreement shall be settled through negotiations.

Article 10

This Agreement shall not affect the rights and obligations of the Contracting Parties arising from other international treaties to which they are parties.

Article 11

This Agreement shall be subject to ratification or approval in accordance with the domestic procedures of each Contracting Party. The Republic of Albania shall act as the Depository of this Agreement.

This Agreement shall enter into force on the 30th (thirtieth) day following the date of the deposit of instruments of ratification by at least two Contracting Parties and shall produce legal effect only between those Contracting Parties.

For a Contracting Party which ratifies or approves this Agreement after its entry into force in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article, the Agreement shall enter into force on the 30th (thirtieth) day following the date of the deposit of instrument of ratification by that Contracting Party.

This Agreement may be amended upon mutual consent of all Contracting Parties. The Agreement shall remain in force indefinitely.

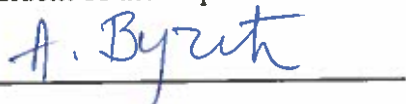
In the event that this Agreement is terminated, confidential information shall continue to be protected in accordance with Article 6 of this Agreement.

Each Contracting Party may withdraw from this Agreement by notifying the Depository, in written form, of its intention to withdraw. In such case, the Agreement shall cease to be in force for that Contracting Party on the 30th (thirtieth) day following the date of the receipt of the notice by the Depository.

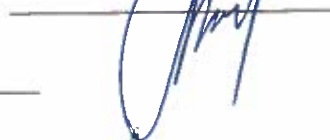
The original of this Agreement in a single copy in the English language shall be deposited with the Depository, which shall transmit a certified copy to each Contracting Party.

Done in Tirana, on the twenty-first December, two thousand twenty-one.

Aleksandar Vučić
President of the Republic of Serbia



Zoran Zaev
President of the Government of the
Republic of North Macedonia



Edi Rama
Prime Minister of the
Republic of Albania

