

AGREEMENT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REGIONAL YOUTH COOPERATION OFFICE

Preamble

WE, the Western Balkan participants, hereinafter referred to collectively as "the Contracting Parties" and individually as "the Contracting Party";

RECOGNIZING that we, in the region, share many similarities in our histories and have a clear interest in cooperating and creating stable societies that build trust amongst peoples and ensure better livelihoods in the region;

REITERATING that the Agreement on the establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (hereinafter referred to as the "Agreement") follows into the objectives set-out as part of the 'Berlin Process', and based on the 'Joint Declaration on the establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office in the Western Balkans' (hereinafter 'Declaration') signed on 27 August 2015 at the Conference on Western Balkans in Vienna, Austria;

NOTING that the Contracting Parties have worked in partnership with civil society to pave the way for the establishment of a regionally owned institutional mechanism with mandate and capacity to create the conditions and support activities that promote reconciliation, mobility, diversity, democratic values, participation, active citizenship and intercultural learning, with the spirit of the European integration process of the region in mind;

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION that the vision of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office, (hereinafter referred to as "RYCO") is to support a diverse region in which young people, as the group with the most interest in investing in the future, have an

awareness of the past and play an active role in building a more prosperous future for their societies;

STRESSING that RYCO, as an independently functioning institutional mechanism for cooperation is established on values of peace, trust based on mutual understanding, respect for human rights, diversity, dignity, solidarity, cooperation, tolerance and respect, and is underlined by an understanding that only through joint action we can progress as a region;

WELCOMING the inclusive and equitable approach to youth exchanges that will enable young people to use this supportive institutional mechanism realising innovative regionally owned projects;

CONSIDERING that this will make a unique contribution to the desire to improve understanding of the realities of each other's societies by enabling young people to meet, make acquaintances, make friends and engage in regional dialogue on topics that will support them in building better future for all;

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The Regional Youth Cooperation Office with its seat in Tirana, Albania, is hereby established.

Article 2

The mission of RYCO is:

- a) to support the regional exchange of youth, and their sharing of ideas, as a ground for future cooperation prospects in our region, based on the values of co-existence, tolerance and

respect for human rights and diversity, as well as commitment to inclusion and security,

b) to step up regional cooperation among youth and youth-dedicated institutions and ensure implementation of joint programs for young people with the focus on the principles of democratic governance, sustainable economic development, education and innovation,

c) to coordinate youth cooperation in the Western Balkans.

Article 3

1. The Statute of RYCO is hereby adopted and shall constitute an annex hereto,

2. A Host Country Agreement shall be concluded between RYCO and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania.

Article 4

RYCO and certain categories of its personnel shall enjoy privileges and immunities necessary for the performance of their tasks and duties, which shall be defined in the Host Country Agreement.

Article 5

1. This Agreement shall be opened for signature by the Contracting Parties,

2. This Agreement shall be approved pursuant to the relevant legislation of each Contracting Party and shall enter into force as of the day on which the last instrument certifying approval hereof is deposited with the Depositary.

Article 6

1. Upon its entry into force, this Agreement shall be open for accession to other parties pursuant to mutual prior consensus of all Contracting Parties,
2. For an acceding party, the present agreement shall enter into force on the date on the deposit of its instrument of accession with the Depositary.

Article 7

This Agreement shall apply provisionally from the date of its signing until the date of its entry into force in accordance with relevant national legislation of the Contracting Parties.

Article 8

1. The Agreement and its annex hereto may be amended in writing by the consent of all the Contracting Parties,
2. Any such proposal shall be communicated by the Secretary General to the Contracting Parties at least 3 months prior to its submission to the Governing Board for adoption,
3. Amendments adopted as referred to in paragraph 2 shall be subject to approval and shall enter into force in accordance with the relevant national legislation procedure set forth in Article 5 of this Agreement.

Article 9

1. Each Contracting Party may withdraw from this Agreement at any time by written notification to the Depositary, which shall then transmit a certified copy of that notification to each Contracting Party,
2. Withdrawal shall take effect six months from the date on which the notification was received by the Depositary,
3. A Contracting Party shall not be discharged, by reason of its withdrawal, from financial obligations, which accrued while it was a Contracting Party to the Agreement.

Article 10

1. The Council of Ministers of Albania shall act as Depositary of this Agreement,
2. The original of this Agreement in a single copy in the English language shall be deposited with the Depositary, which shall transmit a certified copy to each Contracting Party.

Article 11

All disputes arising from the interpretation or application of this Agreement shall be settled through consultation and negotiations between the Contracting Parties.

Article 12

This Agreement with the Annex attached hereto forms a legally binding instrument between the Contracting Parties.

In witness hereof, the undersigned, being duly authorized by their respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.

Done in Paris on 4th July in the year two thousand sixteen in a single original in the English language.

For Albania, Prime Minister : Mr Edi RAMA

For Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chairman of the Council of Ministers : Mr Denis ZVIŽDIĆ

For Kosovo*, Prime Minister : Mr Isa MUSTAFA

For Macedonia, Prime Minister : Mr Emil DIMITRIEV

For Montenegro, Prime Minister : Mr Milo ĐUKANOVIĆ

For Serbia, Prime Minister : Mr Aleksandar VUČIĆ

Annex: The Statute of Regional Youth Cooperation Office

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.