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2017/0088 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the conclusion on behalf of the European Union of an Agreement between the European Union and Iceland on supplementary rules in relation to the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa, as part of the Internal Security Fund, for the period 2014 to 2020

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

• Reasons for and objectives of the proposal

Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing, as part of the Internal Security Fund, the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa and repealing Decision No 574/2007/EC entered into force on 21 May 2014 and became applicable as of 1 January 2014¹.

Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 laying down general provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management also entered into force on 21 May 2014 and became applicable as of 1 January 2014². Under Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, the provisions of the Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 apply to the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa as part of the Internal Security Fund (hereinafter referred to as 'the ISF – Borders and Visa').

The purpose of the ISF – Borders and Visa is to establish a solidarity mechanism binding the participating states by the same European rules on the control of external borders in each other's interests and on each other's behalf. The ISF – Borders and Visa will serve to accomplish a key objective of the Schengen *acquis*, namely to share responsibility for an 'efficient, high and uniform level of control at the external borders', as set out in Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council³. It is thus a development of the Schengen *acquis*.

Article 5(7) of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 provides that the countries associated with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* participate in the instrument in accordance with its provisions and that arrangements are to be concluded on their financial contributions and the supplementary rules necessary for such participation, including provisions ensuring the protection of the Union's financial interests and the power of audit of the Court of Auditors, as the respective Association Agreements do not provide for such rules.

The aim of the draft Agreement with Iceland (hereinafter referred to as 'the associated country') is to establish the arrangements referred to in Article 5(7) of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 and to enable the Commission to assume ultimate responsibility for implementation of the budget of the instrument in this associated country and determine this country's contribution to the Union budget in respect of this instrument.

As regards budgetary and financial controls, the Member States are subject to horizontal obligations (e.g. the competence of the Court of Auditors and of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)), derived either directly from the Treaty or from secondary Union legislation. These obligations apply to the Member States directly and are therefore not laid down in Regulation (EU) No 515/2014. However, in application of Article 5(7) of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 they must be extended to the associated country by means of the draft Agreement.

¹ OJ L 150, 20.05.2014, page 143.

² OJ L 150, 20.05.2014, page 112.

³ OJ L 77, 23.3.2016, page 1.

In order to protect the Union's financial interests against fraud and other irregularities, Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 provides for Commission staff, the Court of Auditors and OLAF to be granted suitable access to carry out controls. Article 5(9) of Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 adds that cooperation agreements with third countries will expressly empower the Commission, the Court of Auditors and OLAF to conduct such audits, on-the-spot controls and inspections. Consequently, this is provided for in the draft Agreement.

- **Consistency with existing policy provisions in the policy area**

Not applicable.

- **Consistency with other Union policies**

Not applicable.

2. LEGAL BASIS, SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY

- **Legal basis**

Having as its aim the conclusion of arrangements between the Union and Iceland on this country's contribution to the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa for the period 2014-2020 and on the supplementary rules necessary for this participation, the present proposal for the conclusion of the Agreement is based on Articles 77(2) and 218(6)(a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

- **The necessity for the proposed decision**

On the basis of Article 5(7) of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 the conclusion of the Agreement with Iceland is necessary for the establishment of the arrangements on this country's contribution to the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa for the period 2014-2020 and on the supplementary rules necessary for this participation.

- **Proportionality**

Not applicable.

- **Choice of the instrument**

Not applicable.

3. RESULTS OF EX-POST EVALUATIONS, STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- **Ex-post evaluations/fitness checks of existing legislation**

Not applicable.

- **Stakeholder consultations**

Not applicable.

- **Collection and use of expertise**

Not applicable.

- **Impact assessment**

Not applicable, considering that the proposal is linked to the programme management and aims at signing an international agreement which was negotiated on the basis of the negotiating directives established by the Council.

- **Regulatory fitness and simplification**

Not applicable.

- **Fundamental rights**

Not applicable.

4. BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

Article 10 and the Annex of the draft Agreement describe the provisions related to the annual financial contributions of the associated country to the budget of the Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visa and their possible adaptation to the situation described as per the Annex.

5. OTHER ELEMENTS

- **Territorial application**

Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 constitutes a development of the Schengen *acquis*. In this regard, the present Agreement with Iceland also builds on the Schengen *acquis*.

In accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of Protocol No 22 on the position of Denmark annexed to the TEU and TFEU, Denmark does not take part in the adoption of this decision and will not be bound by it or be subject to its application. In accordance with Article 4 of the aforementioned Protocol, Denmark will decide within six months after the Council has adopted this proposal whether it will implement the proposed decision in its national law.

This proposal constitutes a development of elements of the Schengen *acquis* in which the United Kingdom and Ireland do not take part and they will therefore not be bound or subject to its application, in accordance with Council Decisions 2000/365/EC⁴ and 2002/192/EC⁵ respectively.

- **Implementation plans and monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements**

Article 17 of the Agreement specifies the applicable reporting and monitoring arrangements. By 15 February each year and until 2022 included, Iceland is to submit an annual implementation report to the Commission for the previous financial year.

- **Explanatory documents (for directives)**

Not applicable.

- **Detailed explanation of the specific provisions of the proposal**

Not needed.

⁴ Council Decision of 29 May 2000 concerning the request of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 131, 1.6.2000, p. 43).

⁵ Council Decision of 28 February 2002 concerning Ireland's request to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 64, 7.3.2002, p. 20).

In light of the abovementioned considerations, the Commission proposes that the Council approves, after having received consent from the European Parliament, the Agreement with Iceland on supplementary rules in relation to the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa, as part of the Internal Security Fund, for the period 2014 to 2020.

Proposal for a

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on the conclusion on behalf of the European Union of an Agreement between the European Union and Iceland on supplementary rules in relation to the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa, as part of the Internal Security Fund, for the period 2014 to 2020

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 77(2) and 218(6)(a) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Having regard to the consent of the European Parliament⁶,

Whereas:

- (1) In accordance with Council Decision 2017/XXX [...] ⁷, the Agreement between the European Union and Iceland on supplementary rules in relation to the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa, as part of the Internal Security Fund, for the period 2014 to 2020 ('the Agreement') was signed on [...], subject to its conclusion.
- (2) In accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of the Protocol (No 22) on the position of Denmark, annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Denmark is not taking part in the adoption of this Decision and is not bound by it or subject to its application. Given that this Decision builds upon the Schengen *acquis*, Denmark should, in accordance with Article 4 of that Protocol, decide within a period of six months after the Council has decided on this Decision whether it will implement it in its national law.
- (3) This Decision constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* in which the United Kingdom does not take part, in accordance with Council Decision 2000/365/EC⁸; the United Kingdom is therefore not taking part in the adoption of this Decision and is not bound by it or subject to its application.
- (4) This Decision constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* in which Ireland does not take part, in accordance with Council Decision 2002/192/EC⁹. Ireland is therefore not taking part in the adoption of this Decision and is not bound by it or subject to its application.

⁶ OJ C , , p. .

⁷ [Full reference]

⁸ Council Decision 2000/365/EC of 29 May 2000 concerning the request of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 131, 1.6.2000, p. 43).

⁹ Council Decision 2002/192/EC of 28 February 2002 concerning Ireland's request to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 64, 7.3.2002, p. 20).

- (5) In order to allow for the prompt application of the measures provided for in the Agreement and not delay the approval and implementation of the national programme, the Decision should enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.
- (6) The Agreement should be approved,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The Agreement between the European Union and Iceland on supplementary rules in relation to the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa, as part of the Internal Security Fund, for the period 2014 to 2020 is approved on behalf of the Union.

The text of the Agreement is attached to this Decision.

Article 2

The President of the Council shall designate the person or persons empowered to proceed, on behalf of the Union, to the notification provided for in Article 19(2) of the Agreement, in order to express the consent of the Union to be bound by the Agreement.

Article 3

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council
The President*