

**AGREEMENT**  
**ON FOOD SECURITY MECHANISMS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS**

HAVING IN MIND the wellbeing of the citizens of Western Balkan region and with the best intention to prevent deficiencies of essential agro-food products in the markets of the Open Balkan Initiative participants,

REAFFIRMING the solidarity as a defining principle of Open Balkan Initiative,

EXPRESSING willingness for strengthening regional cooperation and with the aim to contributing to food security mechanisms within Open Balkan Initiative and in a region as a whole,

IN ORDER TO determine ways for ensuring the constant trade to allow steady and uninterrupted supply of essential agro-food products within contracting parties' flows without any restriction

BEING AWARE OF and wishing to mitigate possible shortages of food supply to our region caused by the disruptions in production and transport due to the crisis situations;

INVITING the other Western Balkan participants to join this agreement in the spirit of inclusiveness, good neighboring relations and regional cooperation and with a view to improving the wellbeing of the citizens within the region,

IN ACCORDANCE with the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Veterinary, Food and Feed Safety and Phytosanitary in the Western Balkan, signed by the same Parties on December 21, 2021.

the Parties have agreed on the following:

**Article 1**

In line with the Agreement on cooperation in protection against disasters in the Western Balkans, the purpose of this Agreement is for the participants of Open Balkan initiative to assist one another in the event of interrupted supply chains due to consequences of global crisis, when one of the parties faces shortages in supplying the domestic market with essential agro-food products.

The Parties, as members of the Open Balkan Initiative, reaffirm the necessity of cooperation in preventing and mitigating potential shortages of essential agro-food products, generated from potential crisis situation either within the region or from one which affects the global market and reflects on the region.

## **Article 2**

The parties agree that there will be no bans on trading of essential agro-food products within the members of the Open Balkan Initiative.

The list of essential agro-food products is specified in Annex I of the Agreement.

From the date of the entry into force of this Agreement, the parties shall abolish all quantitative restrictions and measures having equivalent effect on imports of essential agro-food products specified in Annex I, originating from the Open Balkan Initiative members.

## **Article 3**

The Parties agree that there will be no re-export to third countries of traded essential agro-food products listed in Annex I, if they originated from one of the Parties.

## **Article 4**

For the purpose of monitoring the implementation of this Agreement, the Parties will establish a Joint Working Group in order to suggest improvements in face of the changing environment and detect and prevent possible misuses. This working group will be established within 30 days from the day of the entry into force of this Agreement.

The Working Group shall include representatives of Parties' official institutions responsible for agriculture, trade and custom and representatives of the chambers. The representatives should be, at the very least, at the level of the head of the department. Each party shall notify to the other parties the names of the representatives appointed to the Working Group. The parties may also appoint deputy representatives at any time, by notifying the other parties in writing.

## **Article 5**

The Parties agree that their competent authorities will work together to map their storage capacities for essential agro-food products.

The storage capacities should be fully mapped within 90 days from the day of the entry into force of this Agreement.

In order to develop cooperation in that field, the competent authorities of the Parties shall exchange the list of their mapped cereal capacities.

## **Article 6**

The Parties agree that their competent authorities will work together to develop a common policy plan for improving capacities for essential agro-food products storages within the Open Balkan Initiative within 90 days from the day of the entry into force of this Agreement.

#### **Article 7**

The Parties are committing to explore additional actions in mutual trade to deal with the provision of essential agro-food products during the crisis situations

The Parties are committing to review general and specific exception clauses in mutual trade to encourage cooperation in the crisis situations.

#### **Article 8**

The parties agree that their competent authorities will work together to develop FOOD SECURITY OBI ROADMAP/ACTIONPLAN 2030.

The document will address food security issues in the Western Balkans in general and in the Open Balkan Initiative in particular, such as the identification of risks and challenges to food security, focusing on the following initiatives to address effects of climate changes (drought, floods, fires etc.), digitalization and innovation in food industry and sustainability in the production of food across the region and agro-food value chain.

#### **Article 9**

The Parties agree to review at national level, as appropriate, regulations that have been identified as potentially challenging for the functioning of the food supply chain within the Open Balkan Initiative region.

#### **Article 10**

Disputes arising from the implementation of this Agreement shall be settled in negotiations between the competent authorities of the Parties.

#### **Article 11**

The Agreement shall not apply to the rights and obligations of the Parties arising from other international agreements to which they are contracting parties.

#### **Article 12**

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the receipt of the last written notification by which the Parties notify each other, through the Depositary, of the completion of the procedures as required by their domestic legislation for the entry into force of this Agreement.

The Republic of Serbia shall act as the Depositary of this Agreement.

This Agreement shall remain in force for a period of five (5) years. After this period, the Agreement shall automatically be extended for subsequent one-year periods.

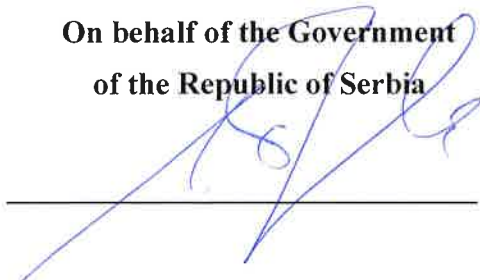
Each Party may withdraw from the Agreement at any time by notifying the other two Parties, in writing through the Depositary, no later than six (6) months prior to the date of the withdrawal. In such a case, the Agreement shall remain to be in force for the remaining two Parties.

This Agreement may be amended upon written mutual consent of all Parties.

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 Party.

Done in Belgrade, on the second of September, two thousand twenty-two.

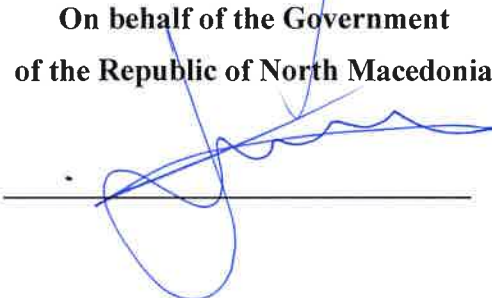
**On behalf of the Government  
of the Republic of Serbia**



**On behalf of the Council of Ministers  
of the Republic of Albania**



**On behalf of the Government  
of the Republic of North Macedonia**



## Annex 1

### List of essential agro-food products

Description	Tariff Code
Maize (corn)	1005
Wheat and meslin	1001
Wheat and meslin	1101
Milk and milk products	0401 to 0406
Cane or beet sugar and chemically pure sucrose, in solid form	1701
Sunflower-seed, safflower or cotton-seed oil and fractions thereof, whether or not refined, but not chemically modified	1512
Sunflower seeds	1206
Pasta, whether or not cooked or stuffed (with meat or other substances) or otherwise prepared, such as spaghetti, macaroni, noodles, lasagne, gnocchi, ravioli, cannelloni; couscous, whether or not prepared:	1902
Cereal groats, meal and pellets	1103
Edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruit or melons	0801 to 0814
Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	0701 to 0714
Meat and edible meat offal	0201 to 0210
Sausages and similar products, of meat, meat offal, blood or insects; food preparations based on these products	1601
Other prepared or preserved meat, meat offal, blood or insects	1602