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⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance.

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II

*(Information)*INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES
AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Non-opposition to a notified concentration**(Case M.10985 – BMHC / ALD / JV)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2023/C 105/01)

On 23 January 2023, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the internal market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾. The full text of the decision is available only in English and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- in the merger section of the ‘Competition policy’ website of the Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/>). This website provides various facilities to help locate individual merger decisions, including company, case number, date and sectoral indexes,
- in electronic form on the EUR-Lex website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en>) under document number 32023M10985. EUR-Lex is the online point of access to European Union law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.

Non-opposition to a notified concentration**(Case M.11024 – GEODIS INTERNATIONAL / TRANS-O-FLEX EXPRESS)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2023/C 105/02)

On 17 February 2023, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the internal market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾. The full text of the decision is available only in English and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- in the merger section of the ‘Competition policy’ website of the Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/>). This website provides various facilities to help locate individual merger decisions, including company, case number, date and sectoral indexes,
- in electronic form on the EUR-Lex website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en>) under document number 32023M11024. EUR-Lex is the online point of access to European Union law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.

Non-opposition to a notified concentration**(Case M.11014 – ABU DHABI PORTS COMPANY / NOATUM HOLDINGS)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2023/C 105/03)

On 13 March 2023, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the internal market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾. The full text of the decision is available only in English and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- in the merger section of the ‘Competition policy’ website of the Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/>). This website provides various facilities to help locate individual merger decisions, including company, case number, date and sectoral indexes,
- in electronic form on the EUR-Lex website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en>) under document number 32023M11014. EUR-Lex is the online point of access to European Union law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.

III

(Preparatory acts)

COUNCIL

POSITION (EU) No .../2023 OF THE COUNCIL AT FIRST READING**with a view to the adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement****(Kosovo *)****Adopted by the Council on 9 March 2023**

(2023/C 105/04)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

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

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure ⁽¹⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾ lists the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of the Member States and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement. The composition of the lists of third countries set out in Annexes I and II to that Regulation should be, and should remain, consistent with the criteria set out in that Regulation. References to third countries in respect of which the situation has changed as regards those criteria should be transferred from one Annex to the other, as appropriate.
- (2) The criteria which should be taken into account when determining, on the basis of a case-by-case assessment, the third countries whose nationals are subject to, or exempt from, the visa requirement are laid down in Article 1 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1806. Those criteria include illegal immigration, public policy and security, economic benefit, in particular in terms of tourism and foreign trade, and the Union's external relations with the relevant third countries, including, in particular, considerations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the implications of regional coherence and reciprocity.

(*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

⁽¹⁾ Position of the European Parliament of 28 March 2019 (OJ C 108, 26.3.2021, p. 877) and position of the Council at first reading of 9 March 2023 (not yet published in the Official Journal). Position of the European Parliament of ... (not yet published in the Official Journal).

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (OJ L 303, 28.11.2018, p. 39).

- (3) Kosovo has met the requirements of its roadmap towards a visa-free regime. On the basis of an assessment of a variety of criteria as listed in Article 1 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1806, it is appropriate to exempt holders of passports issued by Kosovo from the visa requirement when travelling to the territory of the Member States. The exemption from the visa requirement will ensure that the whole Western Balkan region is subject to the same visa regime.
- (4) Kosovo should thus be transferred from Part 2 of Annex I to Part 4 of Annex II to Regulation (EU) 2018/1806. The exemption from the visa requirement should apply only to holders of biometric passports issued by Kosovo in line with the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). That exemption should not apply until the date from which the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), established by Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽³⁾, starts operations or until 1 January 2024, whichever date comes first.
- (5) Without prejudice to the position of Member States on the status of Kosovo, in the period prior to the date on which the exemption from the visa requirement effectively applies, it is important that readmission agreements or arrangements, as applicable, be concluded with the Member States that do not yet have such an agreement or arrangement. Once concluded, Kosovo is to fully implement those agreements or arrangements while respecting the principle of *non-refoulement* enshrined in the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951, as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967.
- (6) Kosovo has made significant progress in all blocks of Chapter II of its roadmap towards a visa-free regime. To ensure that migration is managed well and to ensure a secure environment, Kosovo should seek to further align its visa policy with that of the Union.
- (7) The exemption from the visa requirement is dependent upon the continued implementation of the requirements of the roadmap towards a visa-free regime with Kosovo. The Commission is to actively monitor the implementation of those requirements and the alignment of visa policy through the suspension mechanism under Regulation (EU) 2018/1806. The Union can suspend the exemption from the visa requirement in accordance with that mechanism, provided that the conditions set out therein are met.
- (8) This Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* in which Ireland does not take part, in accordance with Council Decision 2002/192/EC ⁽⁴⁾; Ireland is therefore not taking part in the adoption of this Regulation and is not bound by it or subject to its application.
- (9) As regards Iceland and Norway, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Agreement concluded by the Council of the European Union and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning the latter's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* ⁽⁵⁾, which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point B, of Council Decision 1999/437/EC ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 September 2018 establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and amending Regulations (EU) No 1077/2011, (EU) No 515/2014, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2016/1624 and (EU) 2017/2226 (OJ L 236, 19.9.2018, p. 1).

⁽⁴⁾ 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⁾ OJ L 176, 10.7.1999, p. 36.

⁽⁶⁾ Council Decision 1999/437/EC of 17 May 1999 on certain arrangements for the application of the Agreement concluded by the Council of the European Union and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning the association of those two States with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 176, 10.7.1999, p. 31).

- (10) As regards Switzerland, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* ⁽⁷⁾, which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point B, of Decision 1999/437/EC read in conjunction with Article 3 of Council Decision 2008/146/EC ⁽⁸⁾.
- (11) As regards Liechtenstein, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Protocol between the European Union, the European Community, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein on the accession of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* ⁽⁹⁾, which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point B, of Decision 1999/437/EC read in conjunction with Article 3 of Council Decision 2011/350/EU ⁽¹⁰⁾.
- (12) As regards Cyprus, and Bulgaria and Romania, this Regulation constitutes an act building upon, or otherwise relating to, the Schengen *acquis* within, respectively, the meaning of Article 3(1) of the 2003 Act of Accession and of Article 4(1) of the 2005 Act of Accession,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 is amended as follows:

- (1) in Part 2 of Annex I, the following text is deleted:

‘— Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999’;

- (2) in Part 4 of Annex II, the following text is added:

‘Kosovo * (**) (***)

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

(**) The exemption from the visa requirement shall only apply to holders of biometric passports issued by Kosovo in line with the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

(***) The exemption from the visa requirement shall apply from the date on which the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), established by Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 September 2018 establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and amending Regulations (EU) No 1077/2011, (EU) No 515/2014, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2016/1624 and (EU) 2017/2226 (OJ L 236, 19.9.2018, p. 1), starts operations or from 1 January 2024, whichever date comes first.’

⁽⁷⁾ OJ L 53, 27.2.2008, p. 52.

⁽⁸⁾ Council Decision 2008/146/EC of 28 January 2008 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, of the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 53, 27.2.2008, p. 1).

⁽⁹⁾ OJ L 160, 18.6.2011, p. 21.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Council Decision 2011/350/EU of 7 March 2011 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol between the European Union, the European Community, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein on the accession of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*, relating to the abolition of checks at internal borders and movement of persons (OJ L 160, 18.6.2011, p. 19).

Article 2

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

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in the Member States in accordance with the Treaties.

Done at ...,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

Statement of the Council's reasons: Position (EU) No .../2023 of the Council at first reading with a view to the adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (Kosovo *)

(2023/C 105/05)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 4 May 2016, the Commission submitted a proposal ⁽¹⁾ for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council aimed at deleting the reference to 'Kosovo (*)' in Annex I (visa requirement) and at inserting the same reference in Annex II (visa free) to what is now Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾. In its final report on the implementation of the visa liberalisation roadmap ⁽³⁾, the Commission confirmed that Kosovo had met the requirements, on the understanding that by the day of the adoption of the proposal by the European Parliament and the Council, Kosovo would have ratified the border/boundary agreement with Montenegro and strengthened its track record in the fight against organised crime and corruption.
2. In July 2018, the Commission issued a report ⁽⁴⁾ which concluded that Kosovo had met those two remaining benchmarks, as a result of its ratifying the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro.
3. On 28 March 2019, the European Parliament adopted its first-reading position, by endorsing the Commission proposal. The original rapporteur, Ms Tanja Fajon (S&D, SI), was replaced in 2022 by Mr Thijs Reuten (S&D, NL).
4. In the Council, the preparatory bodies put the examination of the Commission proposal on hold in 2016, in view of the fact that the two remaining benchmarks had to be fulfilled *before* any new discussion on the file. Further discussions were also held in 2018 and 2020.
5. In 2022, the Commission agreed to report in writing on the further progress made by Kosovo. In so doing it responded to the Council's long-standing request. The Commission non-paper titled 'Factual update on key developments in the areas of main interest for Member States' concluded that Kosovo had continued to consolidate progress across key areas identified in the visa liberalisation roadmap and, consequently, the basis for the Commission's 2018 recommendation to exempt holders of Kosovo passports from visa requirements in respect of short stays remained fully valid.
6. Following the presentation of the Commission non-paper, work was resumed on the file in the Council. At its meeting on 30 November 2022, the Permanent Representatives Committee adopted a mandate to enter into negotiations with the European Parliament ⁽⁵⁾.
7. The negotiations started soon thereafter. After a first technical meeting held on 12 December 2022, a political trilogue was convened on 14 December 2022 in Strasbourg. The two co-legislators reached a deal by finding a compromise on the few outstanding issues identified at technical level.
8. On 20 December 2022, the Permanent Representatives Committee analysed the final compromise text with a view to agreement and confirmed it ⁽⁶⁾.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

⁽¹⁾ 8670/1/16 REV 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 303, 28.11.2018, p. 39.

⁽³⁾ 8764/16.

⁽⁴⁾ 11295/18 + ADD 1 REV 1.

⁽⁵⁾ 15462/22.

⁽⁶⁾ 16276/22.

9. On 12 January 2023, the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE Committee) confirmed the political agreement, and on 13 January 2023 the LIBE Chair sent a letter to the Chair of the Permanent Representatives Committee confirming that, should the Council approve the Regulation at first reading, after legal-linguistic revision, the Parliament would approve the Council's position in its second reading.
10. Ireland is not taking part in the adoption of the Regulation and is not bound by it or subject to its application, as it constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis*, in which Ireland does not take part.
11. As regards Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis*.
12. As regards Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania, the Regulation constitutes an act building upon, or otherwise relating to, the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the respective Acts of Accession.

II. OBJECTIVE

13. The Regulation aims at transferring the reference to 'Kosovo*' from Annex I (list of countries subject to visa requirement) to Annex II (list of countries visa exempted) in Regulation (EU) 2018/1806. As a consequence, holders of Kosovo biometric passports will enjoy visa-free travel for short stays (i.e. up to 90 days in any 180-day period) in the European Union.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE COUNCIL'S POSITION AT FIRST READING

14. The European Parliament and the Council conducted negotiations with the aim of concluding an agreement on the basis of a position of the Council at first reading that the Parliament could approve without amendments at its second reading. The text of the Council Position at first reading fully reflects the compromise reached between the two co-legislators, assisted by the European Commission.
15. The Council Position at first reading seeks to reconcile the objective of making holders of Kosovo passports visa-free with a number of concerns related to the migratory and security risks.
16. In that perspective, the date of implementation of visa liberalisation has been linked to the entry into operation of the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), in order to take full advantage of the new EU IT system, which has as one of its objectives to contribute to a high level of security and to prevent illegal immigration by a thorough assessment of visa-exempted travellers, prior to their arrival at external border crossing points.
17. Acknowledging that the calendar for the entry into operation of EU IT systems is subject to revision, the Council Position at first reading makes clear that visa liberalisation will apply in any case from 1 January 2024 at the latest, should the start of operations of ETIAS be further delayed.
18. The Council Position at first reading further insists on two points. Firstly, the importance of Kosovo's cooperation on readmission, notably via the conclusion of agreements or arrangements in this area with Member States, where these do not exist already, and this in full compliance with the principle of *non-refoulement*. This invitation is without prejudice to the positions of Member States on the status of Kosovo. Secondly, the Council Position at first reading stresses the importance of the alignment of Kosovo's visa policy with that of the Union, in order to prevent irregular migration towards the Schengen area.

IV. CONCLUSION

19. The Council's Position at first reading fully reflects the compromise reached in the negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council, facilitated by the Commission.
 20. This compromise is confirmed by the letter that the Chair of the LIBE Committee addressed to the Chair of the Permanent Representatives Committee on 13 January 2023. In that letter, the Chair of the LIBE Committee indicates that he will recommend to the members of his Committee, and subsequently to the plenary, that they accept the Council's position at first reading without amendments in the Parliament's second reading, subject to verification by the lawyer-linguists of both institutions.
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IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

COUNCIL

Notice for the attention of the persons and entity to whom measures provided for in Council Decision 2011/235/CFSP, as implemented by Council Implementing Decision (CFSP) 2023/646 and in Council Regulation (EU) No 359/2011, as implemented by Council Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/645 concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons, entities and bodies in view of the situation in Iran apply

(2023/C 105/06)

The following information is brought to the attention of the persons and entity that appear in the Annex to Council Decision 2011/235/CFSP ⁽¹⁾, as implemented by Council Implementing Decision (CFSP) 2023/646 ⁽²⁾, and in Annex I to Council Regulation (EU) No 359/2011 ⁽³⁾, as implemented by Council Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/645 ⁽⁴⁾ concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons, entities and bodies in view of the situation in Iran.

The Council of the European Union has decided that those persons and entity should be included on the list of persons and entities subject to restrictive measures provided for in Decision 2011/235/CFSP and in Regulation (EU) No 359/2011.

The attention of the persons and entity concerned is drawn to the possibility of making an application to the competent authorities of the relevant Member State(s) as indicated on the websites in Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 359/2011, in order to obtain an authorisation to use frozen funds for basic needs or specific payments (cf. Article 4 of the Regulation).

The persons and entity concerned may submit a request to the Council before 1 January 2024, together with supporting documentation that the decision to include them on the above-mentioned list should be reconsidered to the following address:

Council of the European Union
General Secretariat
RELEX.1
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175
1048 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

Email: sanctions@consilium.europa.eu

The attention of the persons and entity concerned is also drawn to the possibility of challenging the Council's decision before the General Court of the European Union, in accordance with the conditions laid down in Article 275, second paragraph, and Article 263, fourth and sixth paragraphs, of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 100, 14.4.2011, p. 51.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 80 I, 20.3.2023 p. 7.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 100, 14.4.2011, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 80 I, 20.3.2023 p. 1.

Notice for the attention of the data subjects to whom the restrictive measures provided for in Council Decision 2011/235/CFSP and Council Regulation (EU) No 359/2011 concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons, entities and bodies in view of the situation in Iran apply

(2023/C 105/07)

The attention of data subjects is drawn to the following information in accordance with Article 16 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

The legal bases for this processing operation are Council Decision 2011/235/CFSP ⁽²⁾, as implemented by Council Implementing Decision (CFSP) 2023/646 ⁽³⁾, and Council Regulation (EU) No 359/2011 ⁽⁴⁾, as implemented by Council Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/645 ⁽⁵⁾.

The controller of this processing operation is the Council of the European Union represented by the Director-General of Directorate-General for External Relations (RELEX) of the General Secretariat of the Council and the department entrusted with the processing operation is RELEX.1 that can be contacted at:

Council of the European Union General Secretariat
RELEX.1
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175
1048 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

Email: sanctions@consilium.europa.eu

The Data Protection Officer of the Council can be contacted at:

Data Protection Officer

data.protection@consilium.europa.eu

The purpose of the processing operation is the establishment and updating of the list of persons subject to restrictive measures in accordance with Decision 2011/235/CFSP, as implemented by Implementing Decision (CFSP) 2023/646, and Regulation (EU) No 359/2011, as implemented by Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/645.

The data subjects are the natural persons who fulfil the listing criteria as laid down in Decision 2011/235/CFSP and Regulation (EU) No 359/2011.

The personal data collected includes data necessary for the correct identification of the person concerned, the statement of reasons and any other data related to the grounds for listing.

The legal bases for the handling of personal data are the Council Decisions adopted under Article 29 TEU and Council Regulations adopted under Article 215 TFEU designating natural persons (data subjects) and imposing the freezing of assets and travel restrictions.

Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest in accordance with Article 5(1)(a) and for compliance with legal obligations laid down in above-mentioned legal acts to which the controller is subject in accordance with Article 5(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

Processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest in accordance with Article 10(2)(g) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 100, 14.4.2011, p. 51.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 80 I, 20.3.2023, p. 7.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 100, 14.4.2011, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 80 I, 20.3.2023, p. 1.

The Council may obtain personal data of data subjects from Member States and/or the European External Action Service. The recipients of the personal data are Member States, the European Commission and the European External Action Service.

All personal data processed by the Council in the context of EU autonomous restrictive measures will be retained for 5 years from the moment the data subject has been removed from the list of persons subject to the asset freeze or the validity of the measure has expired or, if a legal action is brought before the Court of Justice, until a final judgment has been handed down. Personal data contained in documents registered by the Council are kept by the Council for archiving purposes in the public interest, within the meaning of Art. 4(1)(e) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

The Council may need to exchange personal data regarding a data subject with a third country or international organisation in the context of the Council's transposition of UN designations or in the context of international cooperation regarding the EU's restrictive measures policy.

In the absence of an adequacy decision, or of appropriate safeguards, transfer of personal data to a third country or an international organisation is based on the following condition(s), pursuant to Article 50 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725: the transfer is necessary for important reasons of public interest; the transfer is necessary for the establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims.

No automated decision-making is involved in the processing of the data subject's personal data.

Data subjects have the right of information and the right of access to their personal data. They also have the right to correct and complete their data. Under certain circumstances, they may have the right to obtain the erasure of their personal data, or the right to object to the processing of their personal data or to ask for it to be restricted.

Data subjects can exercise these rights by sending an e-mail to the controller with a copy to the Data Protection Officer as indicated above.

Attached to their request, the data subjects must provide a copy of an identification document to confirm their identity (ID card or passport). This document should contain an identification number, country of issue, period of validity, name, address and date of birth. Any other data contained in the copy of the identification document such as photo or any personal characteristics may be blacked out.

Data subjects have the right to lodge a complaint with the European Data Protection Supervisor in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 (edps@edps.europa.eu).

Before doing so, it is recommended that data subjects first try to obtain a remedy by contacting the controller and/or the Data Protection Officer of the Council.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾

20 March 2023

(2023/C 105/08)

1 euro =

Currency			Exchange rate	Currency			Exchange rate
USD	US dollar		1,0717	CAD	Canadian dollar		1,4669
JPY	Japanese yen		140,77	HKD	Hong Kong dollar		8,4038
DKK	Danish krone		7,4450	NZD	New Zealand dollar		1,7106
GBP	Pound sterling		0,87560	SGD	Singapore dollar		1,4354
SEK	Swedish krona		11,1564	KRW	South Korean won		1 401,82
CHF	Swiss franc		0,9928	ZAR	South African rand		19,7861
ISK	Iceland króna		150,10	CNY	Chinese yuan renminbi		7,3739
NOK	Norwegian krone		11,4210	IDR	Indonesian rupiah		16 453,38
BGN	Bulgarian lev		1,9558	MYR	Malaysian ringgit		4,8076
CZK	Czech koruna		23,988	PHP	Philippine peso		58,281
HUF	Hungarian forint		399,21	RUB	Russian rouble		
PLN	Polish zloty		4,7045	THB	Thai baht		36,513
RON	Romanian leu		4,9233	BRL	Brazilian real		5,6183
TRY	Turkish lira		20,3838	MXN	Mexican peso		20,3003
AUD	Australian dollar		1,5978	INR	Indian rupee		88,4900

⁽¹⁾ Source: reference exchange rate published by the ECB.

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(Announcements)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Call for proposals**GR/002/23****EUIPO Academic Research Programme****(2023/C 105/09)****1. Objectives and description**

The EUIPO through the second edition of the ARP has an ambition to further develop the ties with academia in order to foster research not only in IP-related areas of interest to the Office but also in innovation in the field of information technologies.

The EUIPO ARP will target research in economics, law, technology, and management through two custom designed lots in the scope of the 2023 call for proposals, namely on IP and information technologies.

The concept of the programme aims to ensure that:

- the programme produces research of relevance to the EUIPO and its stakeholders;
- academics perceive the programme as focused on high-quality projects and based on fair and transparent selection rules;
- the programme is expected to foster the creation, around the EUIPO, of a vibrant community of high-level scholars (of IP but also of different disciplines) across Europe;
- the program should raise the interest of the academic community in topics relevant to the Office;
- the programme is highly visible in the academic community and beyond.

The result of a project supported by this call for proposals will be a study of the relevant subject (as defined in the call), within the timeline and budget specified in the proposal.

A control mechanism, consisting of interim online meetings, will be set up to monitor the progress of the research and to ensure that is in line with the project description submitted at the call for proposals. At least one meeting will be held during the first 3 (three) months after the signature of the grant agreement. Depending on the results of the initial progress meeting and the duration of the research project additional meetings may be summoned.

An ARP workshop will be organised at the EUIPO not later than 11 months from the signature of the grant agreement. The cost for the travel and accommodation of the participants will be covered by the EUIPO.

All awarded projects must present the results of their research at the workshop.

A period of no less than 1 (one) month, from the end of the workshop until the deadline to submit the final research paper will be established to allow the researches to incorporate any suggested feedback or adjustments resulting from the discussions during the workshop.

The final payment of the grant will be conditional on the validation of the final research paper.

The EUIPO ARP targets research in economics, law, technology and management.

The 2023 call for proposals focuses on topics related to IP (Lot 1) and information technologies (Lot 2) as set out below.

Lot 1 – IP

Proposals are invited in the following areas/themes:

1. trade marks as an indicator of innovation and other economic activity;
2. designs as an indicator of innovation and other economic activity;
3. the use of IPRs by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to overcome barriers to growth.

Preferences will be given to research proposals aiming at showing economic, societal or political implications of findings. The studies should preferably focus on subjects related to trade marks and designs, although other topics, like geographical indications, SMEs, customer approaches or IP training and education, could also be in scope.

Lot 2 – Information technologies

Proposals are invited in the following areas/themes.

1. Natural language processing (NLP). In this field, projects related to the following areas will be appreciated.
 - Research focus on Question and Answering (Q&A) systems. The system may have a model feed with a corpus of legal text. This model should be able to extract a concise answer to the users queries from the texts the model has been fed.
 - Research in text summarisation. Given a long or complex piece of text, the system should be able to return a summary of this.
 - Research in text adaptation. Given a piece of technical/legal/financial text, the system should be able to adapt this into plain language, which every non-technical person could understand.
 - Research in information extraction. Given a document, for instance a PDF, it should be able to extract the relevant required information (name of the user, trade mark denomination, goods and services, opposed goods and services, etc.).
 - Research in text similarity. Given two pieces of (short) text (perhaps questions), the model should be able to tell us if they have a very similar meaning, that is, they are duplicated but worded in a different way.
 - Research on the assembly of search engines focused on small pieces of text (goods and services). The final system should be able to assemble and retrieve texts found by semantic and syntactic search engines.
2. Image processing. In this field, projects related to the following areas will be appreciated.
 - Research in building an optical character recognition (OCR) program able to identify non-standard font of characters.
 - Research in detecting anomalies in industrial designs. Given an image or set of images of an industrial design, it should detect whether there is an anomaly in this/these picture/s according to EUIPO Guidelines for examination of registered Community designs.
 - Research in image captioning. Given a picture (a company logotype), it should be able to create either a caption or a set of tags that describes that image.
 - Research in image segmentation. Given an image, it should be able to identify the different objects that appear in it.
 - Research in image search engines. Given a set of images, real or drawn, and a new image that a user introduces, the model should be able to retrieve a set of images shorted by visual similarity to the one introduced by the user.

3. Reinforcement learning. In this field, all research that can apply a reinforcement learning system to the ones described in the two previous fields.

Preference will be given to research proposals on new technologies such as artificial intelligence (i.e. machine learning, data analytics, etc.) applied to IP, including demonstration of the technology in the relevant environment, prototyping and system level demonstration. The studies should preferably focus on subjects related to trade marks and designs, although other topics, like geographical indications, SMEs, customer approaches or IP training and education, could also be in scope.

DISCLAIMER: for both Lot 1 and Lot 2, any research/topic request needs to be connected to at least one of the three general areas mentioned above. The selection of the final topics by the EUIPO will be on the topics of the major interest for the Office (even if they are connected to only one of the three areas).

The assessment of each proposal will be based on objective, transparent and standard predefined criteria (e.g. quality of the proposal, capacity of the candidates, expected impact, credibility of the budget proposal) as defined in Chapter II down below.

Projects that present the highest relevance for the Office will be considered. This includes, for example, projects that generate relevant empirical evidence for decision makers in policy and business, different relevant IP-focused projects, or data-related initiatives, as well as the SME programme.

For more details please refer to Chapter I of the Guidelines for applicants.

2. Eligibility

2.1. Eligible applicants

This call is opened only to academic researchers affiliated to universities or research institutions (public or private) located in one of the 27 EU Member States. They are eligible for the programme, regardless of their nationality (being however resident in the EU).

The researchers can be PhD candidates, postdoc researchers, faculty members or any other type of researchers in the academic field.

An application may be submitted by one applicant or by several applicants. Only one proposal per researcher per call will be evaluated.

Public entities that receive funds or support from the EUIPO by means of other financing measures such as cooperation programmes, and which aim to pursue the same objectives as this call, are not eligible (e.g. national and regional IP offices or international organisations).

2.2. Eligible activities

Research studies on topics related to IP and information technologies, as defined in the topic description of the call for proposals.

The maximum duration of projects is 12 months from the signature of the grant agreement.

For more details please refer to Chapter II of the Guidelines for applicants.

3. Exclusion & selection criteria

Applicants must not be in a situation that will exclude them from participation and/or from award as defined by the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union.

Applicants must have the financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed activities.

Please refer to Chapter II of the Guidelines for applicants for further details on the supporting documents to be provided.

4. Award criteria

The award criteria for assessing eligible proposals are allocated out of a total of 100 on the basis of the following weighting:

Award criteria	Minimum score	Maximum score
Excellence	20	40
Impact	15	30
Quality and efficiency of the implementation	15	30
Overall (pass) scores	50	100

To be considered for funding, proposals must score:

— at least 50 points overall

and

— at least the minimum points in each of the criteria

For more details please refer to Chapter II of the Guidelines for applicants.

5. **Budget**

The total budget available for the co-financing of actions under this call for proposals is estimated at **EUR 80 000** (Lot 1: EUR 60 000 and Lot 2: EUR 20 000). This amount will be spread over two budget annuities and the availability of funds corresponding to the budget 2024 will be subject to the adoption of the budget by the Office's budgetary authority.

The minimum and maximum grant per project and per lot will be **EUR 10 000 to 20 000**. The EUIPO reserves the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

The Office expects to fund up to three proposals under Lot 1 and up to two proposals in Lot 2.

The Office reserves the right not to distribute all available funds.

6. **Deadline for submission of applications**

The application package is available on the internet at the following address: <https://euiipo.europa.eu/ohimportal/en/grants>

Applications must be submitted to the EUIPO using the online application form (e-Form) no later than **May 2nd 2023 at 13:00** (local time).

No other method of submission of an application will be accepted.

Applicants shall ensure that all the documents requested and mentioned in the e-Form are provided.

Applications which do not include all the stipulated annexes and which are not submitted before the deadline will not be considered.

For more details please refer to Chapter IV of the Guidelines for applicants.

7. **Full details**

The detailed conditions of this call for proposals can be found in the guidelines for applicants at the following internet address: <https://euiipo.europa.eu/ohimportal/en/grants>

Applications must comply with all the terms of the guidelines and be submitted on the forms provided.

8. **Contact**

For any further information please contact the following mailbox: grants@euiipo.europa.eu

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