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ANNEX

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the special measure 2020 in favour of Belarus

Action Document for: EU4Belarus: Solidarity with the People of Belarus

MEASURE

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation and action programme/measure in the sense of Articles 2 and 3 of Regulation N° 236/2014.

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	EU4Belarus: Solidarity with the People of Belarus CRIS number: ENI/2020/042-952 financed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument	
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Belarus The action shall be carried out at the following location: countrywide	
3. Programming document	Not available (Special Measure)	
4. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDGs: 3: Good health and well-being, 4: Quality education, 8: Decent work and economic growth, 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	
5. Sector of intervention/ thematic area	Civil Society Support Economic Development Mobility and people-to-people contacts Health and well-being	DEV. Assistance: YES
6. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 24 000 000 Total amount of European Union (EU) contribution EUR 24 000 000	
7. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Modality Direct management through: - Grants Indirect management with - entrusted entities to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 5.3.2, 5.3.3. and 5.3.4	
8 a) DAC code(s)	15150 - Democratic participation and civil society	

	11420 – Higher education 25030 – Business development services 12220 - Basic health care				
b) Main Delivery Channel	2000 Non-governmental organisations and civil society 40000 - Multilateral organisations				
9. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective	
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
	Aid to environment	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Gender equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Trade Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective	
	Biological diversity	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Combat desertification	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Climate change mitigation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Climate change adaptation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Internal markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
		Digitalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID Response	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	Human Development				

SUMMARY

Belarus faces the most challenging chapter in its modern history. Following the presidential elections in August 2020, an unprecedented and sustained civic and political mobilisation took place across the country. This comes on top of a deteriorating economy already vulnerable due to combined impact of the global COVID-pandemic and a lack of structural reforms. The EU responded with the rapid mobilisation of an immediate support package for the victims of the oppression and the provision of core support to independent media and digital outlets. While this has allowed to cover immediate emergency needs, with the ongoing protests gradually transforming into a longer-term decentralised grass-roots movement for demanding change in Belarus, the current action provides longer term EU support in key areas, thus sending a strong signal of continued and sustained support to and solidarity with the people of Belarus.

With an overall objective to contribute towards reinforcing resilience to achieve civic empowerment and sustainable economic growth in the country, the action “EU4Belarus: Solidarity with the People of Belarus will support the following four strands:

i) **strengthen civic resilience:** by strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations and independent media for civic engagement and promotion of initiatives of local communities and citizen groups. The action will amongst others support and professionalise civic self-organising activities, support professional associations, provide support to independent media and the development of digital tools that bolster coordination and increase the security of active citizens;

ii) **support to youth resilience:** by fostering people-to-people contacts through increasing access to scholarships, stipends, professional exposure and re-training of young Belarusians, the action will provide hands-on support to academics, students and young professionals affected by the political crisis;

iii) **support to economic resilience:** by supporting the (re-)development of targeted Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) endure the economic downturn and save jobs and livelihoods. Through the provision of tailor-made support to targeted SMEs, especially women-led and in the region, the action will also seek to strengthen the cooperation between civil society and SMEs;

iv) **support to health resilience:** by strengthening the capacity of Belarusian society to respond to the still on-going COVID-19 public health emergency. In preparing for a possible second wave, the action will foresee the provision of key COVID-19 equipment, while strengthening stronger public participation at local level in the provision of health care.

Finally, the action aims to use the Team Europe approach to bring together EU and all EU Member States’ support for the people of Belarus under one visible common banner); thus demonstrating EU solidarity with the people of Belarus.

1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

1.1 Context Description

Since the beginning of 2020, Belarus has been facing a continuously worsening political crisis and weakening economic situation caused by external shocks such as suspension of oil deliveries by Russia and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the falsified Presidential elections whose results the EU does not recognise. The EU repeatedly condemned the disproportionate and unacceptable violence against the peaceful protesters and called to immediately release all those unlawfully detained. Among others, the EU is concerned about the reprisals and often dismissals of many students and academic staff of the State universities and employees of State-owned enterprises that participated in strikes and demonstrations.

The people of Belarus expressed their desire to exercise their fundamental democratic rights through a massive civic mobilisation and self-organisation. The pre-electoral period was also marked by protests and new forms of societal engagement, fuelled by the popular dissatisfaction with regime's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the country's economic and social challenges. An unprecedented mobilisation is redefining civic, political and social activism in Belarus. Young people, students and women are at the forefront of all these initiatives and often take leading role in emerging initiatives. Additionally, the pandemic gave a boost to the already growing popularity of independent media, particularly digital platforms.

The cumulative impact of the health and political crisis on the real economy has been substantial: gross domestic product contracted by 1.3% year-on-year in January-August 2020) particularly affecting SMEs, including through: i) decreased prospects for the IT sector (heavily affected by internet outages) and risks of delocalization of IT and services companies to neighbouring countries; ii) weakening trust in the rouble and the banking system; iii) growth of the fiscal deficit and need for significant reduction in the government budget.

In this context, the proposed action aims to strengthen resilience of the Belarusian people in the key areas of civic engagement, support vulnerable groups, target SMEs and provide additional resources to deal with negative health consequences due to COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2 Policy Framework (Global, EU)

New Council Conclusions on Belarus were adopted on 12 October 2020 in response to the developments following the 9 August falsified presidential elections and will frame the EU's cooperation with Belarus going forward. They highlight that the EU will scale down bilateral cooperation with the Belarusian authorities at central level, recalibrate EU financial assistance to Belarus in order to ensure it benefits the population at large by directing it to the maximum possible extent away from central authorities, while increasing its support for the Belarusian people and civil society. The current action has been designed in full alignment with these Council Conclusions. It builds on the urgent support to victims and independent media affected by August 2020 elections by providing medium-term support to Belarusian civil society, including youth, persons in vulnerable situations and independent media, as well as to private (SMEs) and health actors.

The Joint Communication “*Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020, reinforcing resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all*”¹ was adopted on 18 March 2020 and will guide the future cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries, including Belarus. The Joint Communication recognises that strengthening resilience is an overriding policy framework and sets out measures to foster sustainable development and deliver tangible results for society. In this context, investing in people is key in enhancing societal and economic resilience. It calls to provide increasing support for the employability of youth and for youth entrepreneurship, mobility, exchange programme for young professionals, and support to education reform including for example Torino process for vocational education and training; and strengthening teacher training, exchanging best practice and support the introduction of modern curricula and teaching and learning practices. The Joint Communication also emphasises the need to scale up action in areas that are critical for people’s health and wellbeing. It also underlines the key role played by SMEs as drivers of shared growth and innovation. It advocates that transparent, citizen-centred and accountable public administrations, free elections, the fundamental rights, promoting gender equality between men and women, together with engaged civil society, independent media are key ingredients for resilient, fair, inclusive, and democratic societies. To achieve this, it is important to build on the innovative civil society actions and engagement to date and to further support the capacity of Civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly the grass roots organisations and to develop strategic partnerships with key organisations.

1.3 Public Policy Analysis of the partner country/region

It is important to recall the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 which set out a new framework of EU cooperation with Belarus (see 1.2) to which the current action is fully aligned. In view of this, the current action will take stock of the public policy of the partner country but will do so with a view to be able to direct EU support to the maximum possible extent away from central authorities and towards non-state actors, local and regional actors.

The development of **civil society** in Belarus is hindered by the non-conducive environment and continuous crackdowns targeting CSOs and independent media, which lead to limiting civil society's own capacity to perform its role as a critical governance actor. The legal status and activities of CSOs are strictly regulated and the registration of an organisation is a complicated and arbitrary procedure. Most Belarusian CSOs are financially dependent on foreign funding and the state registration of foreign assistance is mandatory. Likewise, the media environment in Belarus restricts free speech and expression as well as does not ensure the safety of journalists and their ability to work without interference. The developing political crisis in Belarus further increased the pressure on civil society and independent media, whose financial sustainability was already impaired by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent economic fallout.

In 2019, the number of **youth** organisations has significantly decreased as they struggle to overcome the barriers posed by the government. Some CSOs had to shut down and continue to work without registration. The State authorities engage in formulation and implementation of youth policy only with government-organized non-governmental organization (GONGO). As an example, there is not one independent youth organisation representative in the Youth

¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/1_en_act_part1_v6.pdf

Parliament established under National Parliament in June 2020 and which counts 70 members. In addition, the Belarusian education system restricts fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of association, freedom to elect and be elected, and freedom of movement. The right to participate in the management of universities is restricted. Students and schoolchildren are subject to pressure from the administration of educational institutions, while access for male students is hampered by compulsory military service obligations.

As evidenced by the **SME Policy Index 2020**, during the last 3 years the Government of Belarus has been increasing its effort to promote private-sector development, strengthen the position of small and medium-sized enterprises and increase growth, employment and resilience. However, SMEs' contribution to value added and employment in the business sector remains limited, and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) continue to play a disproportionate role in the economy: In 2019 SMEs in Belarus accounted for only 29% of value added and employ 31% of the workforce, In contrast, state-owned enterprises employ 40% of the workforce but only account for 28% of total value added. This data shows the high untapped potential of SMEs.

According to the OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus, Belarus' support to the economy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic is the lowest in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region (0.71% of GDP) decreasing the possibilities for SMEs to act as a catalyst for growth, innovation and job creation.

In response to **COVID-19 pandemic**, Belarus has allocated 1.56 billion Belarusian Rubles (approximately EUR 592 million) to procure medical equipment, personal protective equipment and tests kits, ensure extra monthly allowances to health workers for working in infectious environment and cover the costs associated with rescue returning of Belarusian citizens to Belarus in conditions of border closure and quarantine. A large part of the measures consisted of deferrals. The authorities have taken some containment measures in response to the pandemic in April, however limited when compared to other countries in the region, restricting international travels and setting self-isolation rules for citizens and foreigners tested positive to the virus, as well as for first- and second-level contacts. While the authorities did not initially introduce systemic measures on physical distancing or teleworking, these measures have largely been implemented by people throughout the country with civil society filling the government void on risk communication.

1.4 Stakeholder analysis

CSOs including civic groups, volunteers, grassroots and local activists, independent unions (including student and trade unions) as well as independent media are among the key stakeholders in the implementation of the action, directly benefitting from the capacity building activities, legal, psychological and medical assistance as well as financial support allowing to establish and/or sustain operations.

Young people and faculty staff affected due to expression of their civil position in demanding for fair elections, end of violence will be targeted by the action.

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), business support organizations, business consultants and social entrepreneurs, business development services will be among the key stakeholders of the action. The SMEs are highly affected by the current crisis. The action shall build its interventions around the SMEs more in need in key affected sectors, targeting women and regional SMEs.

To strengthen health resilience, limited engagement with health authorities may be required.

The final beneficiaries are the people of Belarus in the pursuit of their democratic aspirations and the protection of fundamental rights. They will benefit from the enlarged space for active civic and political participation, access to reliable and balanced media content as well as in-country and external advocacy activities. The people of Belarus will also gain from an established country-wide dialogue to develop models for a peaceful transformation in Belarus, including political transition, constitutional debate and transitional justice, opportunities for learning, the creation of jobs and saving of livelihoods, as well as increased resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.5 Problem analysis/priority areas for support

The presidential elections in Belarus that took place on 9 August 2020 were declared neither free nor fair, and its results are not recognised by the European Union. Electoral fraud coupled with mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic, of the country's economic and social challenges, excessive violence against peaceful protesters has led to a significant social and political mobilisation. An unprecedented civic and political mobilisation is underway in Belarus, which leads to a gradual redefinition of civic, political and social values. A large number of isles of activism have emerged in the most unlikely areas, previously latent, social groups, such as the urban middle class, creative communities, IT sector, healthcare and education professionals and labour. Having resources and skills gained outside of the standard **civil society** sector, these groups are now the backbone of the protest movement. Further channelling their capacities, resources and energy for change is crucial for the transformation.

With the protests gradually transforming into a longer-term decentralised grass-roots movement for demanding change in Belarus, the activists and media need to be resilient in a repressive environment and an economy affected by the pandemic. In this context, a key priority is to enable traditional and new activists to develop sustainable capacity to respond to increased demand for services provided to citizens, consolidate and professionalise volunteer initiatives, address human and material consequences of repression, accommodate newcomers into the pro-democracy community. Furthermore, civil society and media need support enabling them to coordinate actions, communicate and engage the wider population and stakeholders, while also provide platforms for civic and political participation and dialogue conducive to transformation. Finally, civil society and media need to strengthen active citizenship and philanthropy, encouraging people to support reputable agents of change and media beyond one-time campaigns. Building on these and other efforts and adapting to the unfolding political crisis is critical. For this reason, this action aims to empower citizens and enable local civil society organisations, civic groups, and independent media to mitigate the effects of the political crisis and advance the democratic aspirations of the people of Belarus.

Young people, university and academic community were at the forefront of the post-election demonstrations. Students and faculty members of leading universities in Belarus, researchers and scientists held numerous actions of solidarity, while requesting the Belarusian authorities to stop violent actions against peaceful protesters, release detainees and political prisoners, recognize the election results. As a result, young people, faculty staff and academia have been a key target in the authorities' efforts to pacify the public and after elections and the ensuing

police brutality. Dozens of academics and faculty were fired for supporting the protests. Ensuring that this will not affect their longer term career opportunities will be important.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused many SMEs to lay off workers and reduce salaries therefore the overall employment, especially in the private sector, has been negatively affected. While state companies are being less affected by the crisis, SMEs, especially at regional level, risk to be obliged to reduce staff or to close down. According to the Economic Bulletin by *Sense Analytics* (October 2020) in September 2020, 64% of SMEs reported a decline in domestic demand, possibly linked with the collapse of consumer confidence, while 58% of SMEs reported a drop in revenues. Overall, the SME sector in Belarus remains challenging as SMEs face significant obstacles to grow. The engagement of SMEs in sectors strongly linked with innovation is very limited, with more than 80% of Belarusian SMEs engaged in trade, personal services, construction, and agriculture. Moreover, evidence suggests that micro and small companies tend to stay within these size categories rather than grow into small and medium-sized businesses. Business support infrastructure continues to be limited to a network of support organisations funded by government subsidies. Access to high-level business consultancy remains scarce and costly. Finally, despite the introduction of general support measures for the green economy, there is a need to promote environmental compliance and green business practices among SMEs. In addition, SMEs in Belarus lack finance and expertise and they are in dire need of strong advisory services. This need is particularly apparent outside of the capital Minsk.

According to the official COVID-19 statistics, at the beginning of October, nearly 80,000 infections and 851 deaths were reported. As the reliability of the official statistics is questionable, the real figures are likely substantially higher. Numerous initiatives at local levels took place to assist medical staff in fighting the pandemic. Spontaneous projects using internet-based crowd funding with contributions from national citizens and Belarusian diaspora provided significant help in procurement and distribution of essential material for personal protection and treatment of patients. In this context, and to deal with the negative consequences of a possible second wave, the action seeks to address critical issues emerging from the COVID-19 crisis and which relate to strengthening health and social services and community resilience in general.

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
Difficulties in reaching the target civic groups due to restrictive measures employed by the Belarusian authorities, such as the outage of the internet	H/M	Strengthen operational capacities of CSOs, including digital competences to work and communicate remotely, outreach to constituencies. Support alternative digital tools to bolster coordination even in the conditions of internet blocking.
Potential retaliation by authorities towards local EU grant beneficiaries	H/M	Risk mitigating strategies to be put in place, including engagement with trusted

		partners
Lack of absorption capacity for local partners, but also the implementing partners to support local partners in Belarus	M	Ongoing monitoring of the absorption capacity, selection but also diversification of implementing partners with each tested methodologies of supporting local partners in Belarus
Cash flow problems and cuts in foreign funding of CSOs	H/M	Re-granting through established CSOs, and – where possible - provision of core funding (i.e. operating support) to local CSOs.
Risk of economic instability and deterioration of business climate	H	Engaging SMEs in capacity building exercises; engaging policy dialogue to the maximum extent possible with business associations.
Insufficient proficiency of foreign languages among young Belarusians eligible for a scholarship	M	Organise preparatory language courses
Dropping out of students for reasons other than academic. Any study abroad experience for an extended period of time entails risks of personal anxiety and changes in plans.	M	Appointing a personal adviser (older student) for a small group of Belarusian students at each foreign university such effects can be reduced. Acceptable dropout rates can be established before the launch of the action, and intervention plans drafted in case they are exceeded.
Graduates not coming back to their home country after they finish their studies/ brain drain	H	Conditional scholarship with requirement to return to home country in case of positive political developments. Assistance in finding a job in Belarus. Possibilities for online learning to complement classical scholarships to be explored at the start of implementation.
Equipment delivered under the health component does not reach end beneficiaries	M/H	Strict monitoring and follow up of key deliveries to ensure that they reach the end users across the country
Assumptions		
1. The precarious political situation will not fundamentally alter.		

3 LESSONS LEARNT AND COMPLEMENTARITY

3.1 Lessons learnt

As for actions on supporting CSOs, independent media and active citizenship, a recent ‘Evaluation of EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement, Neighbourhood regions and Russia over the period 2007-2018’, indicated the following:

- Re-granting through key partners (financial support to third parties) has successfully increased outreach in the EaP, including by smaller, local organisations that operate in the local languages. The EU should consider further

encouraging grant beneficiaries to use this modality as the main purpose of the action.

- Core funding (i.e. operating support) is a critical element for increased sustainability of CSOs. In turn, if CSOs serve the needs of local communities, their credibility improves and opportunities for their financial sustainability may increase.

Particularly on media sector in Belarus, professional independent media (or entities that aspire to this status) faces uphill struggles to survive financially and counterbalance the state controlled media market. Core operating costs are significant; quality journalism, especially investigative journalism, is a resource-intensive and long-term activity. Such media outlets require skilled employees, expensive technical equipment and are in direct competition with private or state-owned media. Typically, such media have business models that involve subscriptions and/or advertising revenue, but will frequently be heavily reliant on donor support. Building financially sustainable media outlets and helping them to diversify revenues is a direct investment in democratic progress of the country.

In line with these lessons learnt, this action proposes also financial support to third parties with financial framework partnership agreements and core funding for CSOs and media as part of the action. It will support transitional changes, concentrating on strengthening medium to longer-term capacities of the pro-democracy civil society and media to democratise and engage citizens, as well as use narrow openings provided by domestic political events to fulfil their functional roles in society.

Experience of bilateral programmes: Open Europe Scholarship Schemes supported by EU in 2011 and 2013 shows that such kind of actions should include objectives in both offering scholarships for international degree programmes – as well as objectives for developing civil society in Belarus making the funds available for capacity-building measures in terms of mobilising and engaging the scholarship holders to contribute to the development of civil society in Belarus.

Analysis of selection process of previous Scholarship schemes also recommends that future Actions require documented civic engagement from all applicants, though this would significantly narrow the field of candidates. It also should be taken into account that the most active citizens oriented towards democratic values are not typically those with academic qualifications necessary for commencing advanced studies abroad and not all of them are proficient in foreign languages. Previous scholarship schemes also demonstrated that young women are more active in pursuing higher education than young men. Out of 300 scholarships, there was 37% men and 63% female scholarship recipients.

For what concerns SME support, ownership remains the key challenge in implementing EU development projects in Belarus. The scope of the programme shall be oriented on supporting SMEs to be resilient within a possible long-lasting crisis. Based on previous and current EBRD, WB, UNDP programme's successful performance, the approach should keep focusing on local SME outside main economic centres to truly empower these untapped regions. In addition, concentrating more the action's efforts at specific/niche sectors and geographic regions is expected to yield outcomes that are more prominent. In the specific, the Action shall focus on those segments more at risks. Youth entrepreneurship is as well a particularly important priority that should be targeted in the regions to assist in retaining. Considering the agility of the private sector, it is important to continue setting the emphasis on innovation and smart specialisation approaches at national and especially at regional level.

In the area of health, experience from the EU-funded health project called “BELMED” showed higher-than-expected interest in sub-granting schemes for CSOs. Such schemes may be replicated to foster grassroots initiatives in health and social domain at local and regional level. The ongoing ‘EU COVID-19 Solidarity Programme for the Eastern Partnership’ has been to get positive traction with authorities only in certain areas: activities related to national laboratories, infection prevention and control, case management are supported. In moving forward in supporting health resilience, this will need to be taken into account in seeking the right balance to support civil society where possible and the authorities only where needed.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

A first post-election donor coordination meeting on support to civil society and media in Belarus among EU Member States took place in October 2020 in Brussels. To ensure that the different initiatives in Belarus continue to be complementary, further donor coordination meetings could be envisaged, also involving key non-EU donors such as the UK and the US.

CSOs, independent media

Support to CSOs and independent media will follow-up and sustain the immediate EU emergency support provided in the aftermath of the August elections and the upcoming IcSP support providing direct and immediate support to Belarusian civil society actors including at community level. Additionally, implementing this action in cooperation with the strategic partner organisations will help to ensure complementarity with already ongoing support in this area and this way effectively correspond to the emerging medium and longer term societal needs.

This action will also take into account and seek complementarity with a number of initiatives to support civil society and independent media mobilised by the EU Member States in reaction to the developments in Belarus. Czech Republic, Estonia, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Romania, Sweden and many others provided assistance to civic and media actors.

Youth

The action will take into account and follow up on the below interventions:

- The so-called MOST (“bridge” in Belarusian) programme that allows Belarusian specialists undergo on-the-job training in the EU countries in order to gain advanced experience in various spheres.
- The regional EU4Youth programme which aims to increase the employability and participation of young people in society and the economy; support them to become active citizens and entrepreneurs, and to develop skills; enable youth organisations to participate in the policy dialogue.
- The Erasmus + Programme, supporting youth participation, education reforms, people-to-people contacts, mobility and exchanges. Since 2015, Belarus has been involved in 24 higher education capacity-building projects and has had over 200 bilateral projects providing international credit mobility (degree and non-degree) for nearly 3.500 student and staff academic exchanges.

- Scholarships and fellowships for academic year 2020/2021 to Belarusian students and academics offered by Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Czech Republic and several universities in expression of solidarity
- European Humanities University the Belarusian university-in-exile in Vilnius which promotes civil society development through Humanities and Liberal Arts and provides quality undergraduate and graduate courses to over 600 Belarusian students and a few dozen students from the wider region.

SMEs

The Action will be complementary the ongoing programmes Strengthening Private Initiative Growth in Belarus (SPRING) and Support to Business and Economic Development in Belarus and will follow up and expand the advisory services component of these actions by reaching out to SMEs in the regions as well as women-led enterprises. Furthermore, 6 MEUR will be made available under the NIP to support SMEs in access to credits through private banks.

Health

The action will complement the EU-funded and World Health Organisation (WHO)-implemented regional ‘EU COVID-19 Solidarity Programme for the Eastern Partnership’ which aims at mobilising an effective, rapid, and coordinated response to COVID-19 and strengthening the national capacity to effectively prevent, prepare for, detect and respond to public health emergencies. The action will also complement efforts through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and received assistance from Poland and Lithuania.

The US agency for International Development (USAID) has provided \$1.7 million to help Belarus respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Overall objective, specific objective(s), expected outputs and indicative activities

The action offers concrete and visible relief for, EU solidarity with, and EU support to the Belarusian people affected by the political, health and economic crises.

The **overall objective** of the action is to contribute towards re-enforcing resilience to achieve civic empowerment and sustainable economic growth in Belarus.

The **specific objectives** of the action are:

Specific objective 1: Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations and independent media for civic engagement and promote the initiatives of local communities and citizen groups;

Specific objective 2: Foster people-to-people contacts by increasing access to scholarships and stipends for studies and professional exposure and retraining in the EU;

Specific objective 3: Support (re-)development of SMEs to prevent lay-offs and foreclosure resulting from reduction in turn-over due to the economic downturn;

Specific objective 4: Improve health resilience and the capacity of Belarusian society to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Indicative activities

Expected outcomes and outputs per each specific project are divided into four different components with one specific objective respectively:

Civic resilience

Specific objective 1: Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations and independent media for civic engagement and promote the initiatives of local communities and citizen groups;

Expected outputs:

Output 1.1 Citizens and local civil society organisations, civic groups, volunteers and human rights activists have increased resilience and financial resources to continue activism and advocacy efforts and promote democratic transition. Indicative activities may include:

- Financial support to citizens and local civil society organisations, civic groups and human rights activists including to continue provision of care and services for their target communities.
- Support strengthening the resilience and countering burn-out for citizens and local civil society organisations, civic groups and human rights activists.
- Support efforts to promote civic engagement, consensus building, transitional justice, constitutional debate, and legal revisions (e.g. of election code).
- Support civic self-organising activities (incl. independent professional associations, student and trade unions) as well as crowd-funding and crowd-sourcing initiatives
- Provision of legal support services, psychological and medical aid to victims of repression, support to persons forced into exile (incl. re-allocation)
- Civic education initiatives, private schools, teachers' communities and associations, communities of parents, etc. develop capacities to provide quality, modern and propaganda-free education or courses.

Output 1.2: Independent media, bloggers, vloggers and journalists have strengthened financial and operational capacities to continue to provide independent news coverage, analysis and commentary. Indicative activities may include:

- Financial, infrastructure and capacity building support to independent media, bloggers, vloggers, and journalists, including those operating outside Minsk and in the regions, to continue to operate and provide independent news coverage, analysis and commentary.

Youth resilience

Specific objective 2: Foster people-to-people contacts by increasing access to scholarships and stipends for studies and professional exposure and retraining in the EU.

Expected outputs:

Output 2.1 Implementation of an academic programme for students (scholarships) and academic staff (teaching fellowships) and a mobility programme for youth. Indicative activities may include:

- Identification of European Universities wishing to participate in the programme (e.g. scholarships, fellowships as well as possibly online studies).
- Further support to the European Humanities University, including stipends and possible return to Minsk.
- Conclusion of contracts with the selected universities.
- Mobilisation of preparatory language courses for the students if needed.
- Launching, advertisement and management of the programme.
- Mobility scheme for Belarusian citizens notably for young professionals in the fields of science and technology, entrepreneurship and innovation, culture, education, health and others who were affected due to their democratic convictions.
- Support to establish a network of scholarship holders.

Economic resilience

Specific objective 3: Support (re-)development of SMEs to prevent lay-offs and foreclosure resulting from reduction in turn-over due to the economic downturn;

Expected outputs:

Output 3.1 Improved SME competitiveness, performance, productivity and generation of employment through qualified business advice targeting mainly local (rayon) level beneficiaries. Indicative activities may include:

- Provision of advisory support through international and local industry advisers; providing the advisory services of experienced international industry advisers from advanced economies on cost sharing basis;
- Assistance to qualified private SMEs to engage with local consultants on a cost sharing basis in the areas of strategy, marketing, development planning, reorganisation/restructuring, information and communications technologies, SME digitalisation, quality management, certification systems and advisably steps to achieve energy efficiency and circularity;

Output 3.2 Strengthened quality and supply of local business advisory services, reinforced institutional capacities of professional associations of consultants and intermediary business support organisations, primarily outside Minsk and in the regions. Indicative activities may include:

- Capacity-building activities primarily for regional consultants to increase the supply of business advisory services in the regions, to improve the quality of their services as well as strengthen the infrastructure of local institutions to deliver support services to SMEs;
- Dissemination of case-studies, lessons learnt and sector and management best practices through round tables, seminars or workshops and other events.

Health resilience

Specific objective 4: Improve health resilience and the capacity of Belarusian society to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Expected outputs:

Output 4.1 Health and first-line workers throughout the country have received qualitative protective gears and other COVID-19 items in line with WHO's disease commodity package (infection prevention and control) and have been trained in its use. Indicative activities may include:

- Provision of key equipment for health centres and laboratories, such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), test kits and intensive care unit (ICU) equipment, needed to fight the pandemic and protect first line health and social workers with concentration on regional and local level.
- Capacity building trainings to build expertise among staff.

Output 4.2 Improved quality of health care and social delivery services in COVID-19 context. Indicative activities may include:

- Trainings and support to social and public health specialists to improve services for vulnerable groups.
- Enhanced communication on COVID-19 related matters for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and older persons, adolescents and young people
- Support to local communities and self-help groups, including on coordination with and between regular health and social services

4.2 Intervention Logic

The proposed intervention would be most effective when focusing on direct support to local democratic initiatives, youth (teachers, students and professors), entrepreneurs and SMEs (especially located in regions), COVID-19 related assistance and public awareness campaigns. This is even more important taking into account the likely cut of state-financed programmes conditioned by current political situation and reform agenda.

To achieve Outputs 1.1 and 1.2, it is proposed to engage existing partnerships with established and trusted CSOs with recognised knowledge, local political awareness and experience in supporting civil society in Belarus. These partners have very specific experience and expertise in operating in and channelling support to local independent CSOs and civic groups in difficult environments where space for independent civil society actors and human rights defenders is unfavourable. This is essential to ensure a needs-based and flexible response, ensure maximum outreach as well as to any prevent negative effects on the beneficiaries in the highly restrictive environment. To this end, it is proposed to award a grant to the **European Endowment for Democracy**, and to launch an invitation to respond to an expression of interest to the CSOs with which the European Commission signed **financial framework partnership agreements** in 2019.

In order to support academics, students and youth to best achieve the Output 2.1, it is proposed to establish a dedicated scholarship program, including possible opportunities for online education at universities in EU countries, including the European Humanities University in Vilnius and a mobility scheme for primarily young professionals from the Belarusian civil society and its private sector representatives for internships/short term stays and/or possible online learning in the EU. In this context, it is proposed to seek expertise and management experience of one or more **Member State Agencies** to allow to tap into its network and oversee the implementation of this component.

As regards the Outputs 3.1 and 3.2 the proposed intervention would be most effective if focusing on direct support to local economic initiatives, entrepreneurs, social enterprises and SMEs, especially the ones bringing a unique added value to the national economy (IT, services). Building on the ongoing EBRD Small Business Support programme, through provision of competent consultancy from international and local market, pre-investment technical assistance services and improved access to finance, continuation and stepping up of this existing support program through an entrusted entity allowing more focus on SMEs from the region, women entrepreneurs and sectors particularly affected by the crisis such as IT.

Belarus has been particularly hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The country has benefited from substantial deliveries of personal protective equipment for first line health workers, in the framework of the regional 'EU COVID-19 Solidarity Programme for the Eastern Partnership' implemented by WHO which has been able to deliver these items to frontline health workers across the country. Building on this experience as well as other United Nations (UN) institutions in community development and working with community based NGOs involved in health throughout the country, the output 4.1 and 4.2 will be proposed to be managed benefiting from the expertise and **network of the UN**.

4.3 **Mainstreaming**

With an underlying objective to contribute towards reinforcing resilience to achieve civic engagement and sustainable economic growth in Belarus, all activities under this action will be designed and implemented in accordance with the principles of human rights, gender equality, good governance and the inclusion of socially deprived groups. These principles will be promoted consistently and coherently with the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020 – 2024. Given the inevitable effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the political crisis this action will give due regard to the rights-based approach and the rule of law. **Human rights** principles will be central in the implementation of the action. All interventions will be delivered to those who are at most risk of being disproportionately affected by the current developments. In general, actions will pursue to support commitments made by the EU in its Gender Action Plan II. Actions under the programme shall be implemented in a way that maximises the contribution to **gender equality**, empowering girls' and women's organisations, women and girls' human rights, participation, economic empowerment, equal access to financial services, as well as support to women entrepreneurs. The action shall also take into account that male students are less active than their female counterparts in pursuing higher education, though more affected by political repressions in Belarus. As for the business advisory services they will be delivered in a non-discriminatory manner by applying a gender perspective making sure that women and men have the same opportunities to access the advisory services. The evaluation and monitoring framework of the action will consider gender-disaggregated indicators. The intervention logic of this action will support CSOs develop according to their own vision, mission and mandates, as long as respect for fundamental EU values is ensured. As evident aspect of sustainable local and

territorial development, **environmental-friendly** initiatives will be primarily targeted in the context of business advisory services.

4.4 Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This intervention is relevant for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of SDG(s) SDG 3 Good health and well-being, SDG 4: Quality education, SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth while also contributing to SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

5.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

5.3 Implementation modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures².

5.3.1 Grants: (direct management)

5.3.1.1 Grant(s): direct award(s) to the framework partners

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Grants to framework partners for capacity development of CSOs are proposed to achieve the outputs (1.1 and 1.2) indicated under Specific Objective 1. The grants will focus on one or more of the sub-outputs of outputs (1.1 and 1.2).

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Potential applicants for the grants will be international civil society organisations with a very specific experience and expertise in operating in and channelling support to local independent CSOs and civic groups in difficult environments where space for independent civil society actors to operate is unfavourable. These entities will be selected among organisations signatories of the Framework partnership agreements

² www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

'Strategic partnerships for capacity development of civil society organisations in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood', EuropeAid/164964/DH/FPA/Multi, launched in 2019.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to CSOs to be selected using the following criteria:

Organisations with a very specific experience and expertise in operating in and channelling support to local independent CSOs and civic groups in difficult environments where space for independent civil society actors to operate is unfavourable, and that have signed a financial framework partnership agreement with the EU following the call for proposals "Strategic Partnerships for Capacity Development of Civil Society Organisations in the Eastern Partnership" launched in 2019. Based on an assessment of their respective expertise and specialisation in thematic terms, an invitation will be launched to respond to an expression of interest, grants will be negotiated and concluded through direct award(s).

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified in line with Article 195 (c) of the Financial Regulation for actions regarding bodies that have a de jure or de facto monopoly. Given the context of the current political crisis in Belarus and the sensitivity to support independent civil society and democracy related work in this context, the organisations which have signed a financial framework partnership agreement with the EU following the call for proposals "Strategic Partnerships for Capacity Development of Civil Society Organisations in the Eastern Partnership" have a de facto monopoly to implement the outcomes 1.1. and 1.2.

5.3.1.2 Grant: direct award to the European Endowment for Democracy

(a) Purpose of the grant

Grants are proposed to achieve the outputs (1.1 and 1.2) indicated under Specific Objective 1

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Potential applicants for the grants will be international civil society organisations with a very specific experience and expertise in operating in and channelling support to local independent CSOs and civic groups in difficult environments where space for independent civil society actors to operate is unfavourable

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, a grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to the European Endowment for Democracy (EED).

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified in line with

Article 195 (f) of the Financial Regulation for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals. For the reasons detailed below, the EED has been identified as the most suitable entity.

The European Endowment for Democracy is a private Belgian foundation established in 2013 through a decision of the EU Council. Its mandate is to fill in gaps in civil society support wherever EU instruments are not able to support entities or actions. The EED is able to provide financial support to CSOs and non-political civic groups even in the most unfavourable political environments. The specificity and sensitivity of supporting independent civil society and democracy related work in the context of the current political crisis in Belarus requires a body with appropriate competence and mandate. In this respect, the EED offers credibility and reliability thanks to their particular institutional set-up, being steered by representatives of the European Parliament, of the EU Member States, of the European External Action Service and of the civil society of the Neighbourhood countries.

5.3.2 *Indirect management with (an) EU Member State Entity(ies)*

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria : extensive experience on working in the sector of education and youth, proven experience in public policy advice, managing technical assistance projects in the EU Eastern Neighbourhood countries, operational capacity, value added, transparency, absence of conflict of interest.

The implementation by this entity entails actions contributing to achieve specific objective 2.

5.3.3 *Indirect management with international organisation*

A part of this action, may be implemented in indirect management with an entity which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- Broad experience in the field of SME and private sector development;
- Existing network of offices and partners in Belarus;
- Professional skills and experience in providing advice and consultancy to SMEs;
- Capacity to manage larger and complex EU programmes,
- Capacity to access and transfer EU experiences.

The implementation by this entity entails actions contributing to achieve specific objective 3

5.3.4 *Indirect management with international organisation*

A part of this action, may be implemented in indirect management with an entity which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- Broad experience in the field of public health and social domain expertise, work with civil society and provision of social activities;
- Existing network of offices and partners in Belarus;
- Professional skills and experience in procurement and implementation of pilot activities in regions;
- Capacity to manage larger and complex EU programmes,
- Capacity to access and transfer EU experiences.

The implementation by this entity entails actions contributing to achieve specific objective 4.

5.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

5.5 Indicative budget

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
Objective 1: Strengthen the role of civil society organisations and independent media to promote and assist the democratic movement and initiatives of local communities and citizen groups		
- Grants (direct management) – cf section 5.3.1	8 000 000	N/A
Objective 2: Increase access to scholarships and stipends for studies and professional exposure and retraining in the EU		
- Indirect management with MS Organisation, - cf. section 5.3.2	8 000 000	N/A
Objective 3: Support (re-)development of SMEs to prevent lay-offs and foreclosure resulting from reduction in turn-		

over due to the economic downturn		
- Indirect management with international organisation- cf. section 5.3.3	4 000 000	N/A
Objective 4: Improve health resilience and the capacity of Belarusian society to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency		
- Indirect management with international organisation- cf. section 5.3.4	4 000 000	N/A
Evaluation (cf. section 5.9) Audit/ Expenditure verification (cf. section 5.10)	N.A.	N.A.
Communication and visibility (cf. section 5.10)	N.A.	N.A.
Total	24 000 000	

5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

All contracts, as well as activities related to evaluation, audit, communication and visibility, will be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

Given the diverse nature of the action, involving support to civil society and media, youth, SME and health support a Steering Committee will be set up per each component/objective of the action to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy. The project Steering Committees shall meet regularly. The composition of the project Steering Committees will be decided at the start of implementation of each of the different components.

5.7 Performance and Results monitoring and reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the Logframe matrix (for project modality).

SDGs indicators and, if applicable, any jointly agreed indicators as for instance per Joint Programming document should be taken into account.

Reports shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

5.8 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term and final evaluations may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision.

5.9 Audit

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision.

5.10 Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation.

The Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Action (or any succeeding document) shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

The main communication objective is to bring together EU and all EU Member States' support for the people of Belarus under one visible common banner (using Team Europe approach); thus demonstrating EU solidarity with the people of Belarus.

The Communication and Visibility activities shall be implemented in accordance with the EU communication and visibility requirements in force.

The financing of the communication and visibility shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision.

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX FOR EU4 – THE PEOPLE OF BELARUS

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact (Overall Objective)	The overall objective of the action is to contribute towards re-enforcing resilience to achieve democratic change and sustainable economic growth in Belarus.	Democracy Index score (1-10)	2.48 (authoritarian - 2019)	>4 (2024)	Economist Intelligence Unit (Reports by the EU Delegation)	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome(s) (Specific Objective(s))	<p>Specific Objective 1. Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations and independent media for civic engagement and promote the initiatives of local communities and citizen groups;</p> <p>Specific Objective 2. Foster people-to-people contacts by increasing access to scholarships and stipends for studies and professional exposure and retraining in the EU.</p> <p>Specific Objective 3. Support (re-) development of SMEs to prevent lay-offs and foreclosure resulting from reduction in turn-over due to the economic downturn.</p>	<p><i>1. CSO enabling environment</i></p> <p><i>2. Number of students successfully completed academic programmes financed by the EU action, desegregated by sex.</i></p> <p><i>Number of professional mobilities, including teaching fellowships, desegregated by sex financed by the EU action</i></p> <p><i>3. Number of assisted enterprises which have not undergone foreclosure, which have not laid-off employees and report an increase in turnover one-year after the projects.</i></p>	<p>forthcoming (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p>	<p>Increase</p> <p>>160 at the end of the action</p> <p>660</p> <p>To be determined at the start of the implementation</p>	<p>CSO Monitor prepared by ECNL as of 2020 for the EaP</p> <p>Project reports</p>	<p>EU funds are able to reach intended beneficiaries in Belarus</p> <p>Potential scholarship and mobility seekers come out with sufficient interest. EU MS are willing to facilitate visa procedures for the participants.</p>

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
	Specific Objective 4. Improve health resilience and the capacity of Belarusian society to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency.	<p><i>Number of assisted enterprises report an increase in number of employees after the project.</i></p> <p><i>4. Number of institutional facilities with COVID-19 preparedness and response strengthened.</i></p> <p><i>Number of CSOs/local communities/self-groups supported.</i></p>	<p>0 (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p>	To be determined at the start of the implementation		<p>Procurement procedures will be successful.</p> <p>Key equipment will be accepted by the health centres.</p> <p>Health institution workers committed to undertaking trainings.</p>
Outputs	<p>Output 1.1 Citizens and local civil society organisations, civic groups and human rights activists have increased resilience and financial resources to continue activism and advocacy efforts and promote democratic transition.</p> <p>Output 1.2: Independent media, bloggers, vloggers and journalists have strengthened financial and operational capacities to continue to provide independent news coverage, analysis and commentary.</p>	<p>Number of Belarusian CSOs receiving EU support through grants or Financial Support to Third Parties financed through this action allowing them to continue activism, advocacy support and promote democratic transition</p> <p>Number of independent media outlets and similar stakeholders receiving EU support through grants or Financial Support to Third Parties financed through this action allowing them to continue to provide independent news coverage, analysis and commentary</p>	<p>0 (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p>	<p>Target number of CSOs to be determined at the start of implementation</p> <p>Target number to be determined at the start of implementation</p>	<p>Project reports</p> <p>EUD Political reports on CSO capacity and independent media coverage</p>	

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
	Output 2.1 Implementation of an academic programme for students (scholarships) and academic staff (teaching fellowships) and a mobility programme for youth.	Programme to run scholarships, teaching fellowships and mobility scheme	No programme in place	Programme in place and operational	Project reports. Monitoring made by the EU Delegation.	
	Output 3.1 Improved SME competitiveness, performance, productivity and generation of employment through qualified business advice targeting mainly local (rayon) level beneficiaries.	<p>Number of SMEs assisted through EU-financed advisory services in Belarus</p> <p>Number of SMEs outside of Minsk assisted through EU-financed advisory services</p> <p><i>Number of women-led SMEs assisted through EU financed advisory services projects</i></p> <p><i>Percentage of assisted SMEs that report an increase in number of employees after having received EU assistance</i></p>	<p>0 (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p>	<p>Target number/percent ages to be determined at the start of implementation</p>	<p>Project reports.</p>	
	Output 3.2 Strengthened quality and supply of local business advisory services, reinforced institutional capacities of professional associations of consultants and intermediary business support organisations, primarily outside Minsk and in the regions.	<p><i>Number of business advisory companies in Belarus assisted through the EU action</i></p> <p><i>Number of business advisory companies outside of Minsk assisted through the EU action</i></p> <p>Percentage of business advisory companies trained with EU assistance who report significant improvement in their performance (increased staff, and/or increased turnover)</p>	<p>0 (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p> <p>0 (2020)</p>	<p>Target number and percentages to be determined at the start of implementation</p>	<p>Monitoring made by the EU Delegation.</p>	

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
	Output 4.1 Health and first-line workers throughout the country have received qualitative protective gears (PPEs) and other COVID-19 items in line with WHO's disease commodity package (infection prevention and control) and have been trained in its use.	Number of key COVID-19 items (e.g. PPE, test kits and intensive care unit) provided.	0 (2020)	To be determined at the start of implementation	Project reports Monitoring made by the EU Delegation	
	Output 4.2 Improved quality of health care and social delivery services	Local perception on quality of care	N/A	To be determined at the start of implementation	Project reports Local perception surveys	