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COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 22.12.2011

**on a programme "Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood" to
be financed under Article 19 08 01 01 of the general budget of the European Union**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EC) n°1638/2006 of the of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)¹, and in particular Article 13 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The Joint Communications by the European Commission and the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy "A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean"² and "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood"³ which set the following priorities: (a) democratic transformation and institution-building, (b) a stronger partnership with the people, with specific emphasis on support to civil society, and (c) sustainable and inclusive growth and economic development.
- (2) The objectives of the proposed programme "Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood" are to respond to the pressing challenges that partner countries of the southern Mediterranean region are facing, and to support them in their transition phase towards democratic transformation. The proposed programme for the southern Neighbourhood will focus specifically on support related to democratic transformation and institution-building, such as, but not limited to it, to enhance independence and efficiency of judiciary, to promote good governance and prevention of corruption and money laundering, to contribute to strengthening and protecting human rights and to promote democratic values to the partner countries, notably their youth component, building on existing networks including those developed by the North-South Centre, the Pompidou Group, the Venice Commission and the Schools of Political Studies. It will be a multi-country programme with an umbrella approach that provides the flexibility for modulating assistance on the basis of progress by individual countries towards deep and sustainable democracy, applying the "more-for-more" principle.

¹ OJ L 310, 9.11.2006, p. 1-14.

² COM(2011)200 of 8 March 2011.

³ COM(2011)303 of 25 May 2011.

- (3) The approach will be similar to Council of Europe Facility for Eastern Partnership countries⁴ which began in March 2011 and covers, to a large extent, similar areas.
- (4) The present Decision constitutes a Financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget⁵ (hereafter 'the Financial Regulation') and Article 90 of Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget⁶ (hereafter 'the Implementing Rules').
- (5) The maximum contribution of the European Union set by the present Decision should cover any possible claims for interest due for late payment on the basis of articles 83 of the Financial Regulation and 106(5) of its Implementing Rules.
- (6) The Commission is required to define the term "substantial change" in the meaning of Article 90 (4) of the Implementing Rules to ensure that any substantial change in this Decision shall follow the same procedure as the initial decision.
- (7) The Member States (ENPI Committee) and the European Parliament will be informed after adoption of the Decision by the Commission in accordance with Article 13.4 of Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The programme "Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood", the text of which is set out in the attached Annex, is approved.

Article 2

The maximum contribution of the European Union to the programme "Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood" is set at EUR 4 000 000 to be financed from budget line 19 08 01 01 of the general budget of the European Union for 2011.

This maximum contribution shall also cover any possible interests due for late payment.

Article 3

Cumulated changes of the allocations to the specific actions not exceeding 20% of the maximum contribution of the European Union shall not be considered substantial, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objectives of the programme "Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood". This may include an increase of the maximum contribution of the European Union up to 20%.

⁴ C(2010)7560 of 08.11.2011.

⁵ OJ L 248 of 16.09.2002, p. 1-48.

⁶ OJ L 357 of 31.12.2002, p. 1-71.

The relevant authorising officer may amend the present Decision to introduce non substantial changes to the programme "Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood" in accordance with the principles of sound financial management.

Done at Brussels, 22.12.2011

For the Commission
Štefan FULE
Member of the Commission

ANNEX

Action fiche "Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood"