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COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 3.11.2022

**on the financing of the 2022 annual action plan part I in favour of the Regional South
Neighbourhood**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046¹ of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, EU No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, EU No 283/2014 and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, and in particular Article 110 thereof,

Having regards to Regulation (EU) 2021/947² of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe and amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009, and in particular Article 23(2) and 43 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to ensure the implementation of the 2022 annual action plan part I in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood, it is necessary to adopt an annual financing Decision, which constitutes the annual work programme, for 2022. Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 ('the Financial Regulation') establishes detailed rules on financing decisions.
- (2) The envisaged assistance is deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU³.
- (3) The actions provided for in this Decision contribute to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in line with the European Green Deal⁴ and the inter-institutional agreement.
- (4) The Commission has adopted the Multiannual Indicative Programme for the period 2021-2027⁵, which sets the following priorities: (1) human development, governance and rule of law; (2) strengthen resilience, build prosperity and seize the digital transition; (3) peace and security; (4) green transition; and (5) support to the main drivers of regional integration.

¹ OJ L 193, 30.07.2018, p. 1.

² OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1–78.

³ www.sanctionsmap.eu. 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, the OJ prevails.

⁴ COM(2019)640 final of 11.12.2019.

⁵ Commission Implementing Decision on adopting a Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2017 for Regional South C(2021) 9399

- (5) The objectives pursued by the annual action plan to be financed under the Neighbourhood geographic programme of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 should contribute to the green and circular economy in the Southern Mediterranean countries through a regional approach; to contribute to the economic empowerment of women; to enhance the protection of biodiversity and protected areas; to promote young Mediterranean voices and develop a youth guarantee system; and to enhance EU cooperation with the Southern Neighbourhood on security, while underscoring both external and internal aspects of security.
- (6) The first action entitled ‘Support to Green and Circular Economy in the Southern Neighbourhood’, aims at supporting the green and circular economy in the region by focusing on three levels of intervention: 1) the macro level with the promotion of relevant policies, legislation and green standards to policy makers; 2) the meso level by providing institutional support to ecosystem enablers notably through the provision of green skills and by targeting the existing small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) business community via intermediaries such as business support organisations; and 3) the micro level through the provision of technical assistance to SMEs in their transition towards green and circular economy solutions and by enhancing their access to green finance.
- (7) The second action entitled ‘Al Kawa – Supporting Women Economic Empowerment in the Southern Neighbourhood’ aims at supporting the economic empowerment of women and girls focusing on the nexus between financial inclusion, access to finance and digitalisation, by 1) fostering dialogue and exchanges among relevant actors, in line with European and regional best practices; and 2) supporting the development of skills at different levels, notably digital and financial skills.
- (8) The third action entitled ‘Advancing Climate Adaptation in the Southern Mediterranean (ACA-MED)’ is to promote the green transition and increase environmental and climate resilience of economies and communities in the region, leading to improved quality of life for men and women by 1) enhancing knowledge, climate governance, policies and action plans at national and central level for successful implementation of NDCs and NAPs and to facilitate access to climate finance for adaptation; and 2) increasing local authorities’ access to climate finance to implement climate change adaptation investments.
- (9) The fourth action entitled ‘Bolstering Mediterranean biodiversity and MCPAs for nature (SEMPA Project)’ aims at protecting the biodiversity of the Mediterranean Sea, by supporting the implementation of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region⁶, as well as continuing the support to Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) implementation, with a particular focus on biodiversity.
- (10) The fifth action entitled ‘2022 Security Package’, will be composed of three distinct components: 1) region-wide support to the EU Southern Neighbourhood to improve anti-corruption policies and operational outcomes, notably the prevention, reporting and prosecution of acts of corruption and the seizure and management of assets; 2) the sixth phase of the EuroMed Justice programme, which strengthens the strategic and operational cooperation in judicial criminal matters in order to contribute to the protection of the EU neighbouring countries’ citizens against criminal activities, while respecting the rule of law and human rights; and 3) the second phase of the

⁶ [21ig25_27_2511_eng.pdf\(unep.org\)](#)

EU4MonitoringDrugs programme focusing on the enhancement of the capabilities of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partners to contribute to strategic analyses of contemporary drug markets.

- (11) The sixth action entitled ‘2022 Youth Package’ is composed of two specific components: 1) Young Mediterranean Voices, which will support the cooperative engagement of citizens of the two shores of the Mediterranean in public affairs, political participation as well as local and regional transformative initiatives, targeting young women and men, empowering them to assume an active and visible role in addressing social challenges with intercultural values and principles; and 2) Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) programme, which will operate as a Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) supporting, on a demand-driven basis, the institutions / stakeholders in the MENA region that are willing to develop innovative options in order to reengage NEET youth (population aged 15-29) in education, training and the labour market.
- (12) The seventh action entitled ‘Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) Neighbourhood East and South’ aims at achieving better and more resilient public governance systems in the NDICI neighbour countries by increasing the knowledge and application of European principles of good governance in the areas of policy development and coordination, public service, human resource management, accountability, service delivery and public finance management within the overall framework of the Principles of Public Administration.
- (13) In accordance with Article 43 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/947, the action plan is of regional nature, fostering regional cooperation with Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus⁷, Egypt, Georgia, Israel⁸, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Palestine⁹, Syria¹⁰, Tunisia and Ukraine. The action plan’s objective and design fulfil the criteria for Official Development Assistance established by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), as per the requirements of Article 3(3) of the Regulation (EU) 2021/947, contributing to the sustainable development of partner countries, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by supporting the external dimension of the EU policies through the promotion of coherent sector approaches, and an enhanced regulatory convergence. Due to the action plan’s nature and the importance to ensure complete regional coverage, the eligibility of the action plan extends exceptionally, as appropriate, to the following countries from the Union for the Mediterranean and countries bordering the Southern Neighbourhood, as their participation constitutes a substantial element to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of Union financing or to foster regional or trans-regional cooperation: the first, second and fifth actions may involve Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mauritania, Montenegro, Türkiye, Chad,

⁷ In line with the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and in light of Belarus’s involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU has stopped engaging with Belarusian authorities. However, it continues to engage with and even step up support to the Belarusian civil society including within the framework of this regional programme.

⁸ See Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards on [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XC0719\(03\)&from=en](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XC0719(03)&from=en).

⁹ This designation shall not be construed as a recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

¹⁰ Co-operation with the Government of Syria suspended since 2011.

Mali, Niger, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Iraq; the sixth action may involve: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Türkiye and Mauritania.

- (14) It is appropriate to authorize the award of grants without a call for proposals, and to provide for the conditions for awarding those grants.
- (15) Pursuant to Article 26(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947, indirect management is to be used for the implementation of the action plan.
- (16) The Commission is to ensure a level of protection of the financial interests of the Union with regards to entities and persons entrusted with the implementation of Union funds by indirect management as provided for in Article 154(3) of the Financial Regulation. To this end, such entities and persons are to be subject to an assessment of their system and procedures in accordance with Article 154(4) of the Financial Regulation¹¹ and, if necessary, to take appropriate supervisory measures in accordance with Article 154(5) thereof before a contribution agreement can be signed.
- (17) It is necessary to allow for the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 116(2) of the Financial Regulation.
- (18) In order to allow for a flexibility in the implementation of the action plan, it is appropriate to allow changes which should not be considered substantial for the purpose of Article 110(5) of the Financial Regulation.
- (19) The action plan provided for in this Decision is in accordance with the opinion of the Committee established under Article 45 of Regulation (EU) 2021/947.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1
The action plan

The annual financing Decision, constituting the annual work programme for the implementation of the 2022 annual action plan part I in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood, as set out in the annexes, is adopted.

The action plan shall include the following actions:

- Support to Green and Circular Economy in the Southern Neighbourhood as set out in Annex I;
- Al Kawa – Supporting Women Economic Empowerment in the Southern Neighbourhood as set out in Annex II;
- Advancing Climate Adaptation in the Southern Mediterranean (ACA-MED) as set out in Annex III;
- Bolstering Mediterranean biodiversity and MCPAs for nature (SEMPA Project) as set out in Annex IV;
- 2022 Security Package as set out in Annex V;
- 2022 Youth Package as set out in Annex VI;
- Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) Neighbourhood East and South as set out in Annex VII.

¹¹ Except for the cases of Article 154(6) of the Financial Regulation, where the Commission may decide, not to require an ex-ante assessment.

Article 2
Union contribution

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the 2022 annual action plan part I is set at EUR 77 000 000, and shall be financed from the appropriations entered in the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

- Budget line 14.020110: EUR 72 000 000;
- Budget line 14.020111: EUR 5 000 000.

The appropriations provided for in the first paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.

Article 3
Methods of implementation and entrusted entities or persons

The implementation of the actions carried out by way of indirect management, as set out in the Annexes, may be entrusted to the entities or persons referred to or selected in accordance with the criteria laid down in points 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 of Annex I, point 4.3.2 of Annex II, point 4.3.1 of III, point 4.3.1 of Annex IV, point 4.3.1 of Annex V, point 4.3.2 of Annex VI and point 4.3.1 of Annex VII.

Article 4
Flexibility clause

Increases¹² or decreases of up to EUR 10 million and not exceeding 20% of the contribution set in the first paragraph of Article 2, or cumulated changes to the allocations of specific actions not exceeding 20% of that contribution, as well as extensions of the implementation period shall not be considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of the Financial Regulation, provided that these changes do not significantly affect the nature and objectives of the actions.

The authorising officer responsible may apply the changes referred to in the first paragraph. Those changes shall be applied in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality.

Article 5
Grants

Grants may be awarded without a call for proposals in accordance with the conditions set out in the Annexes. A grant may be awarded to the body referred to in Annex VI.

Done at Brussels, 3.11.2022

For the Commission
Olivér VÁRHELYI
Member of the Commission

¹² These changes can come from external assigned revenue made available after the adoption of the financing Decision.