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C(2024) 2097 final

**COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION**

**of 2.4.2024**

**on the financing of the multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024-2025**

# COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

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## on the financing of the multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024-2025

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of 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<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 110 thereof,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III)<sup>2</sup>, and in particular Article 9(1) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to ensure the implementation of the multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024-2025, it is necessary to adopt a multiannual financing Decision, which constitutes the multiannual work programme, for 2024-2025.
- (2) The envisaged assistance should comply with the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures<sup>3</sup> adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU.
- (3) Some of the actions provided for in this Decision should contribute to climate mainstreaming in line with Commission Communication ‘The European Green Deal’<sup>4</sup> and in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p.1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/1046/oj>.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 330, 20.9.2021, p.1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1529/oj>.

<sup>3</sup> See [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://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.

<sup>4</sup> COM(2019)640 final of 11 December 2019.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 28, ELI: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree\\_interinstit/220/1222/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinstit/220/1222/oj).

- (4) The Commission has adopted a Pre-Accession Assistance ('IPA III') Programming Framework<sup>6</sup> for the period 2021 – 2027, which identifies five thematic windows for the delivery of the specific objectives and thematic priorities of Regulation (EU) 2021/1529.
- (5) The objectives pursued by the multiannual action plan are to provide assistance for actions in thematic window 1, in line with the IPA III Programming Framework: (1) Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy; with some cross-cutting impacts in other Windows: (2) Good governance, EU *acquis* alignment, good neighbourly relations and strategic communication; (3) Green agenda and sustainable connectivity; and (4) Competitiveness and inclusive growth.
- (6) The objective of the action 1 entitled, "*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme Multi-country 2024-2025*" is to strengthen participatory democracies and EU integration and approximation in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, through an enhanced contribution by civil society and media.
- (7) The objective of the action 2 entitled, "*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Albania 2024-2025*" is to enhance participatory democracy in Albania and support the EU integration process through the reinforcement of the role and capacities of civil society and media organisations.
- (8) The objective of the action 3 entitled, "*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2024-2025*" is to strengthen participatory democracy and the EU approximation and integration process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through an enhanced contribution by civil society and media.
- (9) The objective of the action 4 entitled, "*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Kosovo\* 2024-2025*" is to strengthen participatory democracy, social inclusion and cohesion as well as the EU integration and approximation process in Kosovo, through an enhanced contribution by civil society and media at local and central levels.
- (10) The objective of the action 5 entitled, "*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Montenegro 2024-2025*" is to strengthen participatory democracy in Montenegro and support the EU integration process through an enhanced contribution by civil society and media organisations.
- (11) The objective of the action 6 entitled, "*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of North Macedonia 2024-2025*" is to strengthen participatory democracy in North Macedonia and the EU integration and approximation process through reinforcing capacities and systematic contribution of civil society and media organisations.
- (12) The objective of the action 7 entitled, "*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Serbia 2024-2025*" is to strengthen participatory

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<sup>6</sup> Commission Implementing Decision of 10 December 2021 on the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) Programming Framework for the period 2021-2027, C(2021)8914.

\* 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.

democracies and the EU integration and approximation process in Serbia, through an enhanced contribution by civil society and media.

- (13) The objective of the action 8 entitled, “*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Türkiye 2024-2025*” is to strengthen participatory democracy and the EU integration and approximation process in Türkiye through a reinforced contribution by civil society and media.
- (14) It is appropriate to authorise the award of grants without a call for proposals and to provide for the conditions for awarding those grants.
- (15) Pursuant to Article 62(1), point (c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, indirect management may 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 Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.
- (17) To that end, such entities and persons are to be subject to an assessment of their systems and procedures in accordance with Article 154(4)<sup>7</sup> of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 and, if necessary, to appropriate supervisory measures in accordance with Article 154(5) of the same Regulation, before a contribution agreement can be signed.
- (18) It is necessary to allow for the payment of interest for late payment when due on the basis of Article 116(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.
- (19) In order to allow for flexibility in the implementation of the action plan, it is appropriate to determine the changes which should not be considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.
- (20) The action plan provided for in this Decision is in accordance with the opinion of the IPA III Committee, established under Article 17 (1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1529<sup>8</sup>.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*  
*The action plan*

The multiannual financing Decision, constituting the multiannual work programme for the implementation of the multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024-2025, as set out in the Annexes, is adopted.

The multiannual action plan shall include the following actions:

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<sup>7</sup> Except for the cases referred to in Article 154(6) of the Financial Regulation, where the Commission may decide, not to require an ex-ante assessment.

<sup>8</sup> The Member States have declared, recalling the Council Conclusions of 18 February 2008, that the adoption of this action plan does not prejudice the position of each individual Member State on the status of Kosovo, which will be decided in accordance with their national practice and international law.

- (a) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme Multi-country 2024-2025, set out in Annex 1;
- (b) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Albania 2024-2025, set out in Annex 2;
- (c) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2024-2025, set out in Annex 3;
- (d) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Kosovo 2024-2025, set out in Annex 4;
- (e) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Montenegro 2024-2025, set out in Annex 5;
- (f) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of North Macedonia 2024-2025, set out in Annex 6;
- (g) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Serbia 2024-2025, set out in Annex 7;
- (h) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Türkiye 2024-2025, set out in Annex 8.

*Article 2*  
*Union contribution*

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the action plan for 2024-2025 is set at EUR 132 400 000 and shall be financed from the appropriations entered in budget line 15.020101.01 of the general budget of the Union. The breakdown of planned annual instalments is as follows: EUR 39 450 000 for 2024, EUR 92 950 000 for 2025.

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

The implementation of this Decision is subject to the availability of the appropriations as provided for in the draft general budget of the Union for 2025, following the adoption of that budget by the budget authority or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

*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 relevant Annexes, may be entrusted to the entities or persons referred to or selected in accordance with the criteria laid down in point 4.4.3 of Annex 1 and 4.3.3 of Annexes 5 and 8.

*Article 4*  
*Flexibility clause*

Increases<sup>9</sup> or decreases of up to EUR 10 million and not exceeding 20% of the contribution set in Article 2, first paragraph, considering each financial year separately, or cumulated changes to the allocations of specific actions not exceeding 20% of that contribution, as well as extensions of the implementation and execution period shall not be considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, 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. Grants may be awarded to the bodies referred to in the Annexes selected in accordance with point 4.4.1 of the Annex 1 and 4.3.1 of the Annexes 7 and 8.

Done at Brussels, 2.4.2024

*For the Commission*  
*Olivér VÁRHELYI*  
*Member of the Commission*

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<sup>9</sup> These changes can come from external assigned revenue made available after the adoption of the financing Decision.