



Brussels, 26.7.2024  
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**COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION**

**of 26.7.2024**

**on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of the Republic of Albania for 2024**

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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) 2018/1046 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 annual action plan in favour of the Republic of Albania for 2024, it is necessary to adopt an annual financing Decision, which constitutes the annual work programme, for 2024.
- (2) The envisaged assistance should comply with the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU.
- (3) The action plan provided for in this Decision should contribute to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in line with Commission Communication ‘The European Green Deal’<sup>3</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>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 330, 20.9.2021, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> COM(2019)640 final of 11 December 2019.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.

- (4) The Commission has adopted a Pre-Accession Assistance ('IPA III') Programming Framework<sup>5</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 annual action plan should support the Republic of Albania in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required to comply with Union values and to align progressively to Union rules, standards, policies and practices with a view to Union membership.
- (6) The objective of the action entitled "EU for Fight against Corruption" is to help reduce corruption in Albania through prevention, repression and awareness raising. The ultimate objective is to promote transparent and high-integrity Albanian institutions that enjoy citizens' trust and ensure a quality and incorruptible service. The objective of the action entitled "EU for Local Governance" is contribute to the improvement of local governance and local economic development. More specifically, its purposes are to improve the quality, coverage or access to the infrastructure and service of the local governments, to strengthen political dialogue among the local and central government on accession process and to strengthen local and central government accountability and transparency through proactive policy dialogue between central and local government and active participatory engagement of citizens. The objective of the action entitled "EU for Food Safety" is to support Albanian institutions in aligning and implementing EU legislation and best practices in the area of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy. The objective of the action entitled "EU for Forests" is the improvement of the quality of the environmental protection and contribution to actions and policies against climate change to accelerate the shift towards a low-carbon economy. The objective of the action entitled "EU for Employment and Social Inclusion" is to provide support to the Government's priorities towards advancing labour market policies and social welfare reforms that foster equal opportunities, decent work and the wellbeing of the population.
- (7) Pursuant to Article 62(1), point (c) of the Financial Regulation, indirect management may be used for the implementation of the action plan.
- (8) 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.
- (9) 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>6</sup> of the Financial Regulation and, if necessary, to appropriate supervisory measures in accordance with Article 154(5) of the Financial Regulation before a contribution agreement can be signed.

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<sup>5</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)8914 of 10 December 2021 on the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) Programming Framework for the period 2021-2027.

<sup>6</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.

- (10) It is necessary to allow for the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 116(5) of the Financial Regulation.
- (11) 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 the Financial Regulation.
- (12) The action plan provided for in this Decision is in accordance with the opinion of the IPA III Committee.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*  
*The action plan*

The annual financing Decision, constituting the annual work programme for the implementation of the Annual Action Plan in favour of the Republic of Albania for 2024, as set out in the Annexes, is adopted.

The action plan shall include the following actions:

- (a) EU for Fight against Corruption, set out in Annex I;
- (b) *EU for Local Governance*, set out in Annex II;
- (c) *EU for Food Safety*, set out in Annex III;
- (d) *EU for Forests*, set out in Annex IV;
- (e) EU for Employment and Social Inclusion, set out in Annex V.

*Article 2*  
*Union contribution*

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the action plan for 2024 is set at EUR 67 350 000 and shall be financed from the appropriations entered in the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

- budget line 15 02 01 01.01: EUR 13 850 000;

- budget line 15 02 02 01: EUR 53 500 000.

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 Annex(es), may be entrusted to the entities or persons referred to or selected in accordance with the criteria laid down in point 4 of the Annex(es).

*Article 4*  
*Flexibility clause*

Increases or decreases of up to EUR 10 million and not exceeding 20% of the contribution set in Article 2, first paragraph 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.

Done at Brussels, 26.7.2024

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