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ANNEX

**to Commission Decision adopting a
support programme to raise public awareness on EU enlargement and neighbourhood
policies for 2020**

Annual work programme
This document constitutes the annual work programme within the meaning of Article 110(2)
of the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046)

1 IDENTIFICATION

Beneficiary	Public in the EU Member States and the enlargement and neighbourhood regions
CRIS/ABAC commitment	2020/041-777
Total cost	EUR 2 500 000
Budget line	Budget line: 21.08.02
Management mode	Direct management by the European Commission
Final date for contracting	31 December 2021
Final date for operational implementation	31 December 2024
Programming and implementing unit	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, unit A2 Interinstitutional relations and communication

2. CONTEXT

Over the past years, the Commission has strengthened the credibility of its enlargement policy and improved its transformative power by ensuring a stronger focus on addressing fundamental reforms early in the enlargement process. The Commission has put particular emphasis on three strands (i) rule of law, (ii) economic governance and (iii) public administration reform. These three strands are interlinked and progress in these areas will be key to determining when countries are ready to join the EU. In February 2020, the Commission adopted proposals to improve the accession process¹, and at the EU-Western Balkans Summit on 6 May 2020², EU leaders reaffirmed the EU's determination to intensify further its engagement with the region and welcomed the Western Balkan partners' pledge to carry out necessary reforms thoroughly and vigorously.

The EU's enlargement policy contributes to mutual benefits of peace, security and prosperity in Europe. It strengthens the EU's political and economic strength and has a powerful transformative effect on the countries concerned. A well-prepared accession process ensures enlargement is not at the expense of the EU's effectiveness.

The current enlargement agenda covers the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Turkey. The accession process is rigorous, built on strict but fair conditionality, established criteria and the principle of own merit. This is crucial for the credibility of enlargement policy, for providing incentives to enlargement countries to pursue far-reaching reforms and for ensuring the support of the Europeans.

According to the autumn 2019 Eurobarometer survey³, overall a very slight majority of Europeans (44%) are in favour of the EU further enlarging to include other countries in the future. However, in 12 out of 28 Member States, most respondents are against new countries joining the EU. The public expects to see real evidence of the effectiveness of the EU accession process and its transformative power for the countries concerned, as well as the benefits for the EU as a whole. At the same time, disinformation is obstructing EU efforts in the enlargement region by disseminating EU hostile information. EU institutions, together with Member States, are addressing these issues by promoting an informed and facts-based debate to reduce the space for disinformation in the public arena and by raising awareness of disinformation activities in the region.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) governs the EU's relations with 16 of the EU's closest eastern and southern neighbours. To the South: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine**, Syria and Tunisia; and to the East: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Russia takes part in cross-border cooperation activities under the ENP but is not a part of the ENP as such.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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

¹ European Commission Communication from February 2020, COM(2020) 57 final, on "Enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans".

² EU-Western Balkans Zagreb Summit Declaration of 6 May 2020:

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/05/06/zagreb-declaration-6-may-2020/>

³ Standard Eurobarometer 92 Autumn 2019, November 2019:

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/standard/yearFrom/1974/yearTo/2019/surveyKy/2255>

The ENP translates the EU's intention to build on common interests with partner countries and a commitment to work jointly in priority areas, including in promoting democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as improving economic development, the investment climate and social cohesion.

The European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy ('the High Representative') published a Joint Communication titled 'Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy'⁴ in November 2015. The revised ENP strongly emphasises two assumptions:

1. The implementation of a differentiated approach towards neighbours, to respect the different aspirations of partners and to better answer to EU interests and the interests of partners.
2. An increased ownership by partner countries and Member States. Strengthening the state and societal resilience of the EU's partners is a priority in the face of threats and pressures they are experiencing, including the challenges associated with mobility and migration.

In the Eastern neighbourhood region, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) complements the ENP and provides the policy framework for the relations between the EU and its Eastern partners. In recent years, the EU has substantially reshaped its approach in the region by developing a clearly defined policy framework based on the real impact of the EU's actions on individuals across the EaP region. In this context, the '20 Deliverables for 2020', based on four priority areas (stronger economy, stronger governance, stronger connectivity, stronger society), were endorsed by the EU Member States and the six Eastern partners⁵. This framed not only the EU's policy and cooperation but also the EU's communication in the region. In 2019, the initiative celebrated its 10th anniversary, which was marked by a broad consultation with stakeholders across the EU and EaP. Based on these contributions, a Joint Communication was adopted⁶ in March 2020, providing for the long-term policy objectives of the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020 and setting out the measures that aim to strengthen resilience, foster sustainable development and deliver tangible results for society, which will be reflected in future communication activities. The May 2020 Council Conclusions endorsed⁷ the Joint Communication.

This strengthened and coordinated approach has already led to a better understanding of and increased credibility for the EU among people across the EaP. According to 2019 opinion polls, more than half of all people (52%) in the Eastern neighbourhood have a positive image of the EU (up 7% since 2016), compared to just 10% who have a negative perception. A significant proportion of the population (34%) are neutral towards the EU, which suggests substantial scope for further people the EU's position. 67% of the people believe that EU relations with their country are good (up 4% since 2016). Trust towards the EU has also grown in recent years reaching 58% of the population, making it the most trusted institution among the UN, NATO and the Eurasian Economic Union. However, across the region the level of people's awareness of EU support remains low.

⁴ Joint Communication on Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/joint-communication_review-of-the-enp.pdf

⁵ Joint Staff Working document Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020 Focusing on key priorities and tangible results of 9 June 2017:

https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/swd_2017_300_f1_joint_staff_working_paper_en_v5_p1_940530.pdf

;endorsed during the 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit that took place in Brussels on 24 November 2017:

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14821-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

⁶ Joint Communication on Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all of 18 March 2020: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/1_en_act_part1_v6.pdf

⁷ Council Conclusions on Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 of 11 May 2020:

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/43905/st07510-re01-en20.pdf>

In the Southern Neighbourhood, the policy of the EU towards the North African and Middle Eastern countries seeks to encourage political and economic reform as well as to support regional cooperation among the countries of the region themselves and with the EU through the Union for the Mediterranean initiative. In 2020, the Barcelona Process marked 25 years of cooperation in areas such as economic and social development, environmental protection and climate change, energy, migration, terrorism and extremism, as well as promoting dialogue between cultures. 2020 is also a pivotal year for the Africa-EU relations to achieve the ambition of forging an even stronger partnership. The Joint Communication ‘Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa’⁸, which identifies five key areas for deepened future cooperation between Europe and Africa, (i) green transition and energy access, (ii) digital transformation, (iii) sustainable growth and jobs, (iv) peace and governance, (v) migration and mobility, has a direct impact on our communication approach to North Africa and the Southern Neighbourhood as a whole. A Joint Communication for the Southern Neighbourhood is under preparation and is expected to be adopted in the first quarter of 2021.

In the Southern Neighbourhood, according to the latest opinion polls, 63% of people in the Maghreb believe that relations between their country and the EU are good, compared to 67% in the Mashrek countries. 52% of those asked in the Maghreb, and 61% in the Mashrek, feel the EU has a positive influence on the development of their country, while both regions see EU financial support as being effective (60% Maghreb and 78% Mashrek). In more general terms, 46% in the Maghreb have a positive image of the EU, compared to 50% in the Mashrek, while only 18% in the Mashrek have a negative image and 14% in the Maghreb.

The EU remains, along with its Member States, one of the biggest aid and investments contributor in its neighbourhood and on the world stage. Nonetheless, the combined efforts of the EU and its Member States are at times not recognised due to the lack of visibility and understanding in the eyes of the final beneficiaries, namely the people from partner countries, as well as within the EU.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME

This programme sets out a range of measures to support the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations in raising public awareness about its policies, in line with the European Commission’s institutional prerogatives and in line with its policy and communication priorities.

In particular, it will provide the public with information about the enlargement process and the neighbourhood policy, as well as the countries involved, in order to stimulate an informed and facts-based debate on the political, economic and social impact of the two EU policies.

It will also contribute to addressing the issue of disinformation by raising awareness of relevant issues in the region, through communication activities such as press trips to and from the regions, and training.

The programme will also support the promotion of the European Commission’s corporate priorities (“a European Green Deal”, “an economy that works for people”, “a Europe fit for the digital age”, “promoting our European way of life”, “a stronger Europe in the world”, and “a new push for European democracy”)⁹. It will therefore complement and strengthen the European Commission’s corporate communication actions, to which the Directorate-General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations is allocating funds from the Instrument for

⁸ Joint Communication Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa of 09 March 2020: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-eu-africa-strategy-join-2020-4-final_en.pdf

⁹ Commission Work Programme 2020 “A Union that strives for more” of 29 January 2020: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/cwp-2020_en.pdf

Pre-Accession and the European Neighbourhood Instrument through a separate financing decision.

To that end, when executing the programme, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations will ensure coordination with other Commission departments, including the Directorate-General for Communication and European Commission Representations, as well as the European External Actions Service and the EU Delegations and Offices in the region.

The programme will support tools and channels that have proven particularly successful, including visibility events, stakeholder and media outreach, digital content production and online and social media. In the light of the specific communication context linked to the global COVID-19 pandemic, priority will be given to digital means of communication, including online events.

In terms of target audiences, in addition to addressing the general public in the EU Member States and in the enlargement and neighbourhood regions, the awareness raising measures will address, where relevant, specific stakeholders and opinion multipliers, such as journalists, business organisations, civil society representatives, academia and think tanks, as well as youth representatives.

4. OBJECTIVES

The programme's overall objective is to raise public awareness and to promote an informed public debate about the EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies among target audiences both within and outside the EU.

The specific objectives are:

- to increase public knowledge and understanding of the enlargement process and the neighbourhood policy priorities, including the countries involved;
- to stimulate a public debate among the target audiences about the policy related developments;
- to inform the target audiences about the objectives and the impact of the EU pre-accession funds and neighbourhood policy instrument; and
- to contribute to addressing relevant issues related to disinformation by raising awareness for disinformation activities in the regions concerned.

5. ACTIVITIES

The programme will support a wide range of activities implemented by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations under its communication strategy. These may include:

- outreach and networking (e.g. organisation of online and physical visibility events, seminars, conferences, fairs, study visits, and workshops, including events for specific target groups, e.g. media, business, youth, think tanks and digital influencers);
- cultural diplomacy (e.g. logistical support to online and physical film festivals, book fairs, youth and sports events, video and writing competitions);
- concept, design and implementation of targeted communication campaigns, including production of content and social media material;
- media relations and media rebuttal (e.g. media monitoring, production of media materials, press events, training for journalists, press and media trips);

- online and social media activities (e.g. webmasters, content managers, graphic and web designers, social media managers);
- production of different information tools and products, such as publications, audiovisual materials, EU branded promotional materials;
- opinion polling, focus groups and studies on awareness of and support for EU enlargement and the ENP, as well as EU values, policies and programmes;
- communication training for staff and implementing partners (e.g. developing programmes and training materials, providing trainers and logistics);
- assessment and evaluation of information and communication actions (e.g. survey-based evaluations).

6. EXPECTED RESULTS

The main expected results are:

- factual information about the European enlargement and neighbourhood policies is available and disseminated to target groups through relevant channels;
- debate among target groups is stimulated and facilitated;
- capabilities of staff and implementing partners to communicate about European enlargement and neighbourhood policies are increased;
- better awareness of disinformation activities in the region;
- effective contacts and partnerships with relevant actors are established to ensure sustainability and a multiplier effect.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of activities and the achievement of objectives will be monitored and evaluated through quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks in line with the European Commission’s Communication Network Indicators matrix ⁽¹⁰⁾:

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	RESULTS	IMPACT
NETWORKS	Number of contacts: visitors, event participants, calls, emails, etc. [counting]	Overall usefulness of the contact [survey]	Number of people having a more positive opinion of the EU as a result of the contact [Eurobarometer, survey]
EVENTS	Number of attendees: physical and online [counting]	Overall usefulness of the event for attendees [survey]	Percentage of attendees having a more positive opinion of the EU as a result of the event [survey]
PUBLICATIONS	Number of readers / listeners of the publication [web analytics, Office of Publications orders]	Overall usefulness of publication for readers [survey]	Number of readers having a more positive opinion of the EU as a result of a publication [survey]
MEDIA RELATIONS	Number of online views of media releases [web analytics]	Percentage of media items published in tier(s) 1-6 in a sample of EU related media coverage [media monitoring]	Percentage of people perceiving that they are well informed about the political priorities of the EU [Eurobarometer, survey]
VIDEOS / PHOTOS	Number of views, embeds and downloads [Audiovisual portal, web analytics, social media metrics, global counting]	Overall usefulness of the video for the viewer [survey]	Number of viewers having a more positive opinion of the EU as a result of the video [survey]
SOCIAL MEDIA	Number of impressions [social media metrics]	Number of engagement: shares, likes, clickthroughs, comments [social media metrics]	Percentage of people reached having a more positive opinion of the EU as a result of engaging with EU social media content [survey,

⁽¹⁰⁾ <https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/corp/comm/Evaluation/Pages/Do-You-Need-Methodological-Guidance.aspx>

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	RESULTS	IMPACT
			for corporate campaigns]
WEBSITES	Number of visits [web analytics]	Conversion rate: downloads, registrations, form completed, etc. [web analytics]	Number of visitors having a more positive opinion of the EU as a result of the web visit [survey, rating widget]
INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS	Reach: number of contacts made during the campaign [audited circulation and audience analytics]	Recall: number of people who can recall a campaign message [survey]	Change of opinion: percentage of people having a more positive opinion of the EU as a result of the campaign [Eurobarometer, survey]

8. ASSUMPTIONS

The expected results are based on the assumption that the public and media remain interested in the EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies and are willing to engage in the debate on the related developments.

9. IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The procurement procedures will contribute to all four objectives of the Financing Decision as stated in Section 4 above.

The European Commission will implement this programme through direct management.

The whole programme will be implemented through procurement. The global budget reserved for this procurement is EUR 2 500 000.