



EN

THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Special Measure in favour of the people of Belarus for 2022

Action Document for EU4Belarus: Supporting societal resilience and human capital development

ANNUAL MEASURE

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plan/measure in the sense of Article 23(4) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

<p>1. Title OPSYS Basic Act</p>	<p><u>EU4Belarus: Supporting societal resilience and human capital development</u> Annual measure in favour of the people of Belarus for 2022 OPSYS business reference: NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2022/ACT-61309 ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1038191 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe).</p>
<p>2. Team Europe Initiative</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>3. Zone benefiting from the action</p>	<p>The action shall be carried out partly in Belarus, in bordering countries and other EU Member States.</p>
<p>4. Programming document</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</p>	
<p>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</p>	<p>Main SDG: SDG 16 “Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions” Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: SDG 4 “Quality Education” SDG 8 “Decent work and economic growth”</p>

	SDG 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”			
8 a) DAC code(s)	11420 - Higher education (30%) 43081 - Multisector education/training (30%) 15150 - Democratic participation and civil society (40%)			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	Non-governmental organisations and civil society - 20000			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women’s and girl’s empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective
Digitalisation		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags digital connectivity		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
digital entrepreneurship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
digital skills/literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<u>Connectivity</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	Yes	No	/
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Migration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduction of Inequalities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUDGET INFORMATION

12. Amounts concerned	Budget line: 14.020111 Eastern Neighbourhood Total estimated cost: EUR 25 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 25 000 000
------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

13. Implementation modalities (type of financing and management mode)	Project Modality Direct management through: - Grants Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.2
------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1.2. Summary of the Action

Almost two years after the falsified presidential election of August 2020, Belarus continues to be gripped by a political and human rights crisis, characterised by widespread repression, a crackdown on civil society and independent voices and, more recently, the Belarusian authorities' support for the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In this context, the European Union has significantly increased its support to the people of Belarus – namely, civil society, independent media, youth, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and the health and cultural sectors – with an aim to reinforce the resilience of Belarusian society and its capacity to achieve democratic changes in Belarus.

Given the lengthening of the political crisis and of the brutal repression in the country, the EU's support needs to focus on medium to long term assistance, in order to sustain and strengthen the remaining civil society in Belarus and in exile, and to preserve and develop Belarus's human capital potential – thus laying the foundations for a prosperous future democratic Belarus, in the event of a political transition.

To this end, the Special Measure for 2022 ‘EU4Belarus: Supporting societal resilience and human capital development’ has the overall objective to reinforce the resilience and capacity of Belarusian society to achieve democratic changes in Belarus. It will support the following two specific objectives:

- **Strengthen the capacity and resilience of civil society organisations and activists to promote democratic changes and human rights in Belarus in a changing context**, by assisting their adaptation to a new working environment and their operation under new circumstances, and by reinforcing their capacities through organisational development, coalition-building, policy development, and improved coordination and strategic planning.
- **Support Belarusian students and professionals in accessing modern quality education, training and learning opportunities**, by facilitating contacts between Belarusian and EU-based professionals and organisations through a new phase of the successful MOST programme, and providing support to scholarships, advanced training and learning for Belarusian citizens.

Stronger civil society and access to modern education will contribute to peace, justice and stronger institutions, quality education, decent work and economic growth, gender equality and empowering women and girls in future democratic Belarus.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

Almost two years after the falsified presidential election of August 2020, Belarus continues to be gripped by a political and human rights crisis. Widespread repression by the Lukashenka regime has resulted at the time of writing in the detention of more than 1200 political prisoners and the liquidation or forced self-liquidation of some 650 organisations from across all sectors of civil society. This comes in addition to tens of thousands of arrests for participation in peaceful protests since mid-2020. Moreover, in 2021, more than 110 journalists were detained of whom 25 still remain in prison, and the authorities blocked access to over one hundred news and media sites. Independent trade unions have also been targeted and their representatives arrested. Numerous human rights defenders (HRDs) and organisations faced serious threats and attacks, resulting in disruption of their operations and imprisonment of many individual HRDs. Transnational threats also affect the security of Belarusian human rights defenders in exile. The result is the effective decimation of independent voices in Belarus, with countless civil society actors forced into exile abroad.

The year 2021 saw Belarus’s relations with the European Union deteriorate considerably, from an already low ebb. The forced and unlawful landing of an intra-EU Ryanair flight in Minsk on 23 May 2021 not only resulted in the detention of blogger Raman Pratasevich, but also endangered European aviation safety. A sustained hybrid attack on the European Union’s external border through stirring the state-sponsored artificial migration crisis for political gains, showed scant regard for the plight of some of the world’s most vulnerable individuals. Finally, since 24 February 2022, the Lukashenko regime’s support for the Russian military troops stationed on Belarusian soil has made the regime an accomplice of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine that has demonstrated a denial of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and intensified subservience to the geopolitical objectives of the Russian Federation.

In response to the ongoing human rights abuses by the Belarusian authorities, its activities facilitating illegal border crossings as well as in response to their complicity in the Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the European Council has progressively imposed a series of sanctions on individuals and entities linked to the Lukashenka regime, as well as on key sectors of the Belarusian economy.

Since the fraudulent presidential elections, the European Union has also recalibrated its bilateral financial assistance away from the Belarusian authorities and significantly increased its support to the Belarusian people. This support – targeting civil society organisations, independent media, human rights defenders, youth, SMEs, and the health and cultural sectors – has largely been conceived as short-term assistance, in response to an immediate emergency situation.

This emergency assistance will continue to be relevant in the context of the invasion of Ukraine, which poses a number of challenges to Belarusian civil society and to the EU’s support to the people of Belarus. These challenges include the necessity to adapt to increased needs, since many Belarusian civil society actors which initially fled to Ukraine following the repression of the Lukashenka regime, have now been forced to relocate a second time, as well as to numerous obstacles to project operations – namely due to the secondary impact of restrictions on Belarusian financial transactions.

Given the lengthening of the political crisis and of the brutal repression in the country, an additional focus on medium- to long-term assistance is now required. Belarusian civil society organisations (CSOs), human rights defenders, media outlets, students and teachers, SMEs, and professionals from numerous fields that were forced to flee to neighbouring countries must adapt to the sad reality that their relocation no longer seems likely to be merely temporary. In this regard, the European Union and its partners must adjust their future support accordingly, to focus on organisational development and strategic planning, coalition building and improved coordination, the development of sustainable funding models, and the implementation of longer-term programmes, while still addressing protection needs and security concerns of Belarusian civil society actors in the country or outside.

It is also important that if organisations’ stay in exile grows ever longer, a renewed emphasis is placed on strengthening links between Belarusian society abroad and in the country and on preservation and development of human capital in Belarus and in exile. The Special Measure for 2020 directed resources to the greatest possible extent to Belarus-based organisations. The Special Measure for 2021 introduced a number of components aimed among others at Belarusian beneficiaries in exile, in response to a changing context where many civic actors were forced to flee the country. In contrast, the Special Measure for 2022 will seek how these two working methods can be combined. Projects adopting a so-called ‘hybrid’ approach, with a parallel presence both inside and outside Belarus, will be favoured throughout the Action, allowing implementing partners to benefit from the greater security, freedoms, and connections with international partners offered by being located abroad, while also maintaining a firm grounding in the country itself. In the context of a protracted crisis, preserving this link will be essential, for the purpose of both sustaining the independent Belarusian civic space and its good work in general, and of preparing the foundations for a future democratic Belarus, in the event of a political transition.

2.2. Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

Since the falsification of the 2020 presidential election in Belarus, the European Union has substantially increased its support to Belarusian civil society, which continues to operate in increasingly difficult circumstances. In the context of the military aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation, with the support of the Lukashenka regime (as recognised by the European Council Conclusions of February 2022¹), the strategic goal of supporting the people of Belarus in their aspirations for freedom and independence for their country is more relevant than ever.

¹ European Council conclusions on Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, 24 February 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54495/st00018-en22.pdf>.

The political crisis in Belarus is threatening to dismantle earlier achievements in human development and gender equality. While some progress on gender equality has been achieved in Belarus, deep-rooted inequalities still persist. There is a gender gap at the level of entrepreneurship and higher education. In 2018 the number of women among entrepreneurs was significantly lower than the number of men (31.5% and 68.5%, respectively). The barriers of female entrepreneurship in Belarus are associated with the burden of household duties and childcare; hindered access to technical and business education; lack of managerial experience and industry knowledge.

In 2018 Gross Enrolment rate were 87.43% (95.09% of girls; 80.18% of boys). In 2017, 75.8% of tertiary graduates are women and 24.2% are men. At the same time, women do not succeed to monetize their education as men do. The gender pay gap persist, in addition there is a vertical segregation with a majority of leadership positions being held by men. It is crucial that all EU support for the people of Belarus address existing gender gaps and supports the objective of a gender-equal society and elimination violence against girls and women. In line with the EU Gender Action Plan III, actions under the Special Measure shall be implemented in a way that maximises the contribution to gender equality, empowering girls' and women's organisations, human rights, participation, and economic empowerment, as well as support to professionals both women and men.²

This programme targets civil society as well as human capital development (namely education and training).

Civil society

The main priorities for Belarusian CSOs, civic activists, human rights defenders (HRDs) and independent journalists (further in the document – activists³) at this time are to ensure their safety, to maintain organisational and financial stability in the context of forced liquidation and/or relocation abroad, and to preserve and develop institutional and human resource capacities going forward. With the civil society environment continuing to deteriorate in Belarus, and the war in Ukraine creating additional challenges, the needs of democratic Belarusian civil society can be divided into emergency (short term) needs, stabilisation (short to medium term) needs, and development (medium to long term) needs.

- **Emergency needs (short term):** support for victims of repression and their family members in Belarus and abroad (including immediate financial assistance, legal advice, medical treatment, psychological assistance and rehabilitation, physical and digital security), support for relocation of activists and their family members (including assistance with visa procedures and legalisation, adaptation and socialisation in the country of relocation);
- **Stabilisation needs (short/medium term):** support and training in project management, security/holistic protection issues, fundraising and civic education, as well as grants to implement activities in the thematic area of their expertise;
- **Development needs (medium/long term):** assistance focused on CSOs' organisational development and strategic planning, encouragement and facilitation of coalition-building and improved coordination (including between organisations based in Belarus and those now located abroad), empowerment to implement longer-term programmes.

Human capital development (education and training)

Belarusian students and the academic and teaching community were one of the most visible groups in the protests after the 2020 election. Repressions against students and the academic community resulted in 40 political prisoners, the dismissal of 155 university teachers, the expulsion of 264 students, and more than 1,500 recorded instances of pressure on students (deprivation of scholarships, deprivation of dormitories,

² All data of this Action Document retrieved from Eurostat statistical databases.

³ Activist in the document should be read in a broad sense and include civic activists, human right defenders, journalists, etc.

reprimands, preventive conversations, etc.)⁴. Since the end of 2021 there has been a second wave of mass dismissals and bans on the profession in education, which has affected secondary school teachers, university professors and researchers.

General problems in the education system include state monopolisation, excessive regulation and bureaucratisation, limited autonomy and freedom of educational institutions and teachers, and insufficient adaptation to the modern context (including poor educational materials, ill-adapted curricula, and weak development of innovative and modern forms of education, especially for distance education). Humanities, civic education, as well as history and culture are more and more replaced by ideological concepts.

Because of the high level of state and ideological control over higher and secondary education, it is extremely difficult to count on the transformation of education through cooperation with state-controlled institutions. However, the liquidation of CSOs and the closure of EU-supported education programmes has resulted in a dramatic decrease in alternative education sources. In this context, it is necessary to support opportunities for Belarusians to benefit from high quality education abroad, and to foster the development of alternative educational opportunities and institutions (including, for example, the elaboration of alternative educational programmes). In addition, further strengthening of the European Humanities University (EHU) through scholarship-based contribution is essential to consolidate the university's institutional development and to strengthen its reputation for providing a high-quality learning and teaching experience. Scholarship-based funding will also help to attract more donors and students from other countries. The EHU could feasibly constitute a model higher education institution for the future democratic Belarus, allowing for the transfer of established practices and European standards to the educational system of Belarus in the event of a political transition. Moreover, there is a need to support strategic thinking in the sphere of education reform. All these efforts should be seen as a basis for a transformed educational system in Belarus, to be replicated following a democratic transition. Building synergy between numerous projects and initiatives is therefore essential.

Belarusians beyond the education system, in particular those employed by public bodies and state-owned enterprises and who expressed their civic position in 2020, also continue to undergo repression, including pressure at the workplace and dismissals. Some of them stay in Belarus with limited job opportunities while others have to flee the country. At the same time, Belarusian companies that have relocated abroad report a lack of specialists and skilled labour migrating from Belarus. This concurrent demand from Belarusian professionals for job opportunities, and from Belarusian businesses abroad for skilled labour, should be jointly addressed. There is a need to support the training and retraining of Belarusian professionals from across all spheres of Belarusian society. This includes not only civil society activists, HRDs, journalists but also other professionals who were forced to leave Belarus or stay without a job in the country as a result of the ongoing repressions, and who require assistance to find employment and continue their professional development.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action.

1. Civil society organisations and activists

Despite the suppression of CSOs and activists within Belarus, activities still continue within the country and abroad. A number of CSOs are able to maintain their activities inside Belarus, with some having managed to avoid liquidation or having registered under a new name. Some estimates state that up to 150-200 CSOs are still registered within Belarus, while many have members and personnel located in exile in different countries. Additionally, new informal bodies spontaneously self-created on the basis of the multi-story apartment building, the yard or neighbourhood, with the aim to assist the members of the particular community. Due to

⁴ <http://bolognaby.org/index.php/124-news-and-events-ru/839-ts-sk-na-akadem-yu>

repressions, many CSOs and activists relocated to Ukraine; however, after the outbreak of the war, most of them had to move to another country once again.

Relocated CSOs can experience problems in adapting to their new environment, including opening bank accounts and managing financial transactions, issuance of visas to staff and volunteers, psychological adaptation after being forced to leave their home country, as well as conforming to new legal requirements. All these issues affect the proper functioning of organisations and the well-being of activists.

Due to their insertion into a completely changed environment, it is important that CSOs develop or upgrade their institutional capacities as well as the skills and competences of their staff, particularly in the areas of strategic planning, project management, fundraising, organisational development, protection and security (both online and offline) and gender mainstreaming. This should allow them not only to proceed with their activities, but also to develop new and innovative initiatives in changed circumstances. Further improvement in coordination and cooperation between various civil society actors would strengthen the basis for future democratic processes in the country.

The process of liquidation of CSOs in Belarus is still on-going. As such, support will need to cater to differing sets of needs. For example, those CSOs and activists who only recently relocated will require short-term emergency assistance, while those who already received such assistance, will require support to stabilise and develop in the medium to long term. This stabilisation and development assistance should be mostly focused on organisations with a clear vision and developed capacities and reputations in the implementation of activities to support a future democratic transition in Belarus.

2. Students, university professors, school teachers and researchers

Numerous Belarusian students who were subjected to repression or expelled from university in Belarus wish to continue their education in a free and democratic environment, and should be assisted to do so. Many repressed university professors, school teachers and researchers are now banned from their profession and left without a source of income. This will likely result in depleted capacities and a lack of innovation in the education sector, as passionate professionals are forced into other countries or other lines of work. These individuals, who were primarily repressed for their civic opinions, have a role to play in the continuation of Belarusians' education abroad and in the development of alternative institutions and resources for a future democratic Belarus.

3. Alternative educational and research institutions and initiatives inside and outside Belarus

The liquidation of CSOs and the closure of EU-supported education programmes resulted in dramatic decrease in the availability of alternative education and research initiatives. Those re-established in EU countries or still functioning in Belarus require additional financial and expert support in order to continue their provision of education free from the ideological control of the Lukashenka regime, to apply and pilot modern approaches to education, and to prepare the basis for future reforms in the Belarusian education sector. It is also important to build sustainable coalitions and networks among these stakeholders, to facilitate cooperation and the sharing of best practices.

4. Professionals

Professionals in all sectors of the economy who expressed their civic position in 2020 continue to experience pressure in the workplace and dismissals. Many people are leaving the country as they do not feel secure there, and are faced with a lack of job opportunities and livelihoods after relocation. It is important to make opportunities available for training and retraining, to increase individuals' employability prospects, and to maintain future democratic Belarus's human capital going forward. Belarusian professionals in many of

sectors should be given opportunities to work together with their counterparts in the EU, and be exposed to the best European practices. Professional exchanges will be relevant not only for professional development and training per se, but also as a means of communicating European Union values and fostering people-to-people contacts and cooperation between citizens of the EU and democratic Belarus. In the long run, it is vital that Belarus maintains its human capital, in order to be able to implement reforms and ensure a prosperous economy when democratic changes happen.

2.3. Lessons Learned

The EU has been supporting civil society and the people of Belarus for many years, stepping up this assistance significantly in the wake of the falsified presidential election in 2020 and the subsequent repressions. As Belarusian civil society faces an increasingly restrictive environment inside the country, and many CSOs have been forced to relocate abroad, the EU has sought to ensure that initiatives both inside and outside Belarus are supported. Going forward, particular attention will be given to so-called ‘hybrid’ projects, which have a parallel presence inside Belarus and abroad. These initiatives can benefit from the additional security and operational freedoms that come with being located abroad, while continuing to have a tangible impact for the Belarusian people still within Belarus and maintaining a better appreciation of developments on the ground. Having been operating in a rapidly changing (and especially, deteriorating) environment for almost two years, all projects are used to reassessing the situation to make sure they remain relevant and well targeted. This will be especially important in the event of further reorientations necessitated by the impact of the war in Ukraine, or a further shrinking of the space for civil society in Belarus.

Demand for professional exchanges with the EU remains high among Belarusian professionals, as evidenced by the success and widespread recognition of the ongoing MOST (‘Bridge’) programme. A flexible approach to the format and length of mobility schemes needs to be adopted to facilitate wider participation of Belarusian professionals, while comprehensive support in searching for potential partners in Europe will also be highly relevant. In terms of the monitoring and reporting system for post-mobility results, including over longer term, this needs to be further developed to further support the visibility of the programme, as well as to promote knowledge sharing.

With regards to scholarships and learning, the first year of implementation of the Support to Advanced Learning and Training (SALT) scheme under the Special Measure for 2020 shows that there is a big demand for scholarships to study in EU universities: more than 1000 applications were received for only 161 full cycle scholarships covering living and travel costs while tuition fees are financed by participating EU Member States. The inclusion of representatives of Belarusian CSOs into the selection committee contributed to improved transparency of the selection process and a minimum number of complaints was received during this process. Among the scholarship holders, some complaints were received following delays to the receipt of stipends. To mitigate the inconvenience to students, better communication is required to keep them updated on the entire process, from admission to the transfer of stipends into their accounts.

Promotion of training and retraining opportunities will require additional communication efforts to reach the target audience of repressed professionals, including through professional and alumni networks. Limited knowledge of foreign languages, as well as a lack of free time and incomes remain the main obstacles for adults to pursue training/retraining opportunities, suggesting that additional support beyond the simple provision of training may be required. Coordination and networking between different educational initiatives is greatly needed to avoid duplication and to facilitate synergies.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to reinforce the resilience and capacity of Belarusian society to achieve democratic changes in Belarus.

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are to:

1. Strengthen the capacity and resilience of civil society organisations and activists to promote democratic changes and human rights in Belarus in a changing context.
2. Support Belarusian students and professionals in accessing modern quality education, training and learning opportunities.

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

- 1.1. contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1): Civil society organisations and activists abroad and in Belarus have adapted to a new working environment and are operational under new circumstances.
- 1.2. contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1): Civil society organisations and activists have strengthened their capacities through organisational development, coalition-building, policy development, and improved coordination, security and strategic planning.
- 2.1. contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2): Professional contacts are facilitated between Belarusian and EU-based professionals and organisations (MOST programme).
- 2.2. contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2): Scholarships, advanced training and learning opportunities are provided for Belarusian citizens.

3.2. Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Emergency assistance for CSOs and activists – including their family members - in need of immediate financial support, legal advice, medical treatment, psychological assistance and rehabilitation, physical and digital security, support for the relocation (such as assistance with visa procedures, legalisation, adaptation and integration in the country of relocation). Elaborate and implement a gender-sensitive approach.

Activities related to Output 1.2:

- Assistance to CSOs and activists in project management, including gender mainstreaming, security/holistic protection issues, fundraising, and civic education.
- Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) to implement actions of their expertise.
- Assistance in long-term strategic planning to facilitate dialogue between democratic voices from the EU and Belarus, with an aim of developing policy reforms for implementation after a future democratic transition.

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Mobility schemes and peer-to-peer learning for Belarusian professionals to EU Member States.
- Follow-up activities to support transfer of knowledge, enhance the professional skills and competences of participants, and contribute to the broader economic impact of the programme.

- Communication campaigns.

Activities related to Output 2.2:

- Further implementation of Joint academic programme with EU Member States to students affected by politically motivated repressions. The indicative modus: EU Member States offer opportunities for free access to national universities and other higher educational institutions, while the programme complements support for living cost, travel and possibly language training.
- Support to Belarusian university professors, school teachers and researchers, including inter alia guest academic positions, teaching assignments and lectures abroad; professional training and retraining, including language courses which would allow for improved access to international opportunities for employment and professional development.
- Support to Belarusian university professors, school teachers and researchers to undertake collective research projects and participate in international research programmes.
- Further development of lifelong learning, including methodological aspects, existing and new IT facilities and technologies for distance learning.
- Support to alternative educational and research institutions and initiatives inside and outside Belarus.
- Provision of training and retraining opportunities, including through distance learning opportunities, for professionals who lost their source of income due to political repression. If the situation allows, a scheme of unemployment vouchers for professionals participating in training and re-training activities could be piloted, to assist with covering living costs while individuals pursue learning and professional development opportunities.
- Support to coordination, networking and mutual cooperation between different initiatives and stakeholders in educational sector, including with an aim to support the educational activities of civil society within Belarus.

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project). The EIA screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project). The CRA screening concluded that this action is of no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

Gender equality is a core value of the EU and a universally recognised human right, as well as an imperative to well-being, economic growth, prosperity, good governance, peace and security.

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that the project implementers will consider gender issues. This implies that gender equality is a significant objective of the action. The actions will be coherent with the EU Gender Action Plan III. The evaluation and monitoring framework of the action will consider gender-disaggregated indicators. Actions under the programme shall be implemented in a way that maximises the contribution to gender equality, empowering girls' and women's organisations, women and girls' human rights, participation, economic empowerment, equal access to financial services, as well as support to women entrepreneurs. The action shall also take into account that male

students are less active than their female counterparts in pursuing higher education, though more affected by political repressions in Belarus.

Human Rights

With an underlying objective to contribute towards reinforcing resilience to achieve civic engagement and promote mobility for those hardest affected by the current political events, all activities under this action will be designed and implemented in accordance with the principles of human rights, gender equality, good governance and the inclusion of socially deprived groups. These principles will be promoted consistently and coherently with the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024⁵. Human rights principles will be central in the implementation of the action. All interventions will be delivered to those who are at most risk of being disproportionately affected by the current developments, and will follow anti-discriminatory approach. The Action is in line with the human rights-based approach⁶ and principles and contributes to implement the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (2004, revised in 2008)⁷. Coordination will be ensured with the Thematic Programme on Human Rights and Democracy relevant actions.

Disability

NA

Democracy

NA

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

NA

Disaster Risk Reduction

NA

3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category ⁸	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
3	The target groups/beneficiaries fail to cooperate with each other and build up strong	M	M	Activities will be aimed at strengthening networking and cooperation between organisations operating on identical issues in order to build up hubs/platforms.

⁵ EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, November 2020.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/46838/st12848-en20.pdf>.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-cooperation_en

⁷ EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), 2008.

⁸ The risk (category) can be related 1-to the external environment; 2-to planning, processes and systems; 3-to people and the organisation; 4-to legality and regularity aspects; 5-to communication and information.

	and viable sectoral responses.			Contracting authority monitors implementation of activities closely and provides assistance in a case such coordination needs to be improved.
1	Difficulties of travel for Belarus citizens due to political decisions. The state of political relations between the EU and Belarus is not conducive to the implementation of the mobility scheme; the public authorities limit or restrict the implementation of the mobility and exchange flows with the EU.	H	H	Flexible approach to the implementation of mobility schemes including mixed online and offline format, cooperation with Belarusian diasporas and professionals in exile.
3	Insufficient proficiency of foreign languages among young Belarusians eligible for a scholarship.	M	M	Organise preparatory language courses.
1	Belarusian students and researchers are not accepted to EU MS Universities due to wrong interpretation of EU sanctions.	M	M	Consultations with EU Member States to avoid misinterpretation of the sanction provisions.
3	Part of CSOs in Belarus are reluctant to participate in activities due to security reasons. Activists face reprisals because	M	M	Explanations of secure digital financial and operational channels will be provided to the participants. Confidentiality policy and procedures are implemented, including secure communications via encrypted means.

	of their work on human rights and democracy issues, as well as their cooperation with the EU.			
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--

External Assumptions

- EU Member States keep allocating places for and covering tuition costs of Belarusian students.
- Financial absorption capacity of implementing partners and security of channelling financial assistance to CSOs remains relatively stable. CSOs continue building experience in managing donor funding.
- Movement between Belarus and EU countries is not significantly hampered or restricted.
- The precarious political situation will not fundamentally alter.
- Military actions do not escalate in the region and Belarus is not involved in it.
- Digital tools, applications and connections between Belarus and other countries are functioning.

3.5. Intervention Logic

If the proposed intervention focuses on direct support to local democratic initiatives, alternative educational and research institutions and initiatives, students, university professors, school teachers, researchers and professionals, the provided support will be most effective. This is even more important taking into account the likely reduction in state-financed programmes conditioned by the current political situation and reform agenda.

In the area of support to civil society, if the political situation does not alter significantly and the implementing partners maintain the absorption capacity, the action will contribute to the emergency needs, stabilisation and development of CSOs and activists abroad and in Belarus, and in doing so will assist a future democratic transition in Belarus when political conditions are favourable. Capacity building in project management and grants to implement activities in their area of expertise will ensure that the operational capacities are not lost and their work brings benefits to Belarusian society in general. Assistance focused on CSOs’ organisational development and strategic planning, encouragement and facilitation of coalition-building and improved coordination will harness civil society’s potential to become an active player for democratic changes in Belarus in the future. Provision of these activities, will, in turn, strengthen organisational capacities, coalition-building, policy development, improve coordination and strategic planning and work for achieving Specific objective 1.

To achieve Outputs 1.1 and 1.2, it would be important to engage with established and trusted CSOs with good knowledge and experience in working in Belarus, local political awareness, and experience in supporting Belarusian civil society organisations. These partners have very specific experience and expertise in operating and channelling support to local independent CSOs and civic groups in difficult environments where space for independent civil society actors and human rights defenders is unfavourable or even dangerous. This is essential to ensure a needs-based and flexible response, ensure maximum outreach, as well as to prevent any negative effects on the beneficiaries in the highly restrictive environment. To this end, a mixed approach is proposed for the implementation modalities to achieve Outputs 1.1 and 1.2. to award a grant to trusted civil society and implementing partners, and additionally to launch an invitation for CSOs with which the European Commission has signed financial framework partnership agreements to respond to an expression of interest.

In the area of education and people-to-people contacts, if mobility schemes and peer-to-peer learning for professionals are implemented, and travelling from Belarus to EU countries is possible and not hampered by

the political situation and/or by military actions, the professional contacts between Belarusian and EU-based professionals will be facilitated.

In addition, if joint academic programme with EU Member States is further supported, scholarships to study at EHU as well as research and fellowship grants are provided, support to the development of lifelong learning and alternative education is ensured, the availability of advanced and lifelong learning opportunities for Belarusians will be enhanced contributing to achieve Outcome 2. This will be possible, provided that the EU Member States continue to keep allocating places for and covering tuition costs of Belarusian students, travelling to EU countries is allowed and digital tools, applications and connections between Belarus and other countries are functioning.

Altogether, successful implementation of both objectives would contribute to preservation and development of Belarusian human capital inside and outside the country and in long run will be essential to reinforce the resilience and capacity of Belarusian society to achieve democratic changes in Belarus.

3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To reinforce the resilience and capacity among the Belarusian people affected by the political crisis to achieve democratic changes in Belarus.	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	1. Strengthen the capacity and resilience of civil society organisations to promote democratic changes and human rights in Belarus in a changing context.	1. Number of CSOs and activists that restored their activities	0	100-150	Project reports	CSOs and activists still are able to function under difficult conditions.
Outcome 2	2. Support is provided to scholarships, advanced training and learning for Belarusian citizens.	2.1. Share of alumni who confirm that mobility scheme improved their professional experience, disaggregated by sex. 2.2 Share of students successfully completed academic programmes financed by the EU action, disaggregated by sex. 2.3. Share of alumni who confirm that teaching/research stipends/fellowships benefited their career, disaggregated by sex.	0 0 0	75% 80% 75%	Project reports Data retrieved from the previous stages of project implementation	Digital tools, applications and connections between Belarus and other countries are functioning. Military actions do not escalate in the region and Belarus is not involved in it. EU Member States keep allocating places for and covering tuition

		2.4 Number of published analytical papers prepared by research grantees.	0	20		costs of Belarusian students.
		2.5 Share of alumni who confirm that distance learning courses benefited their career.	0	75%		
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	1.1 CSOs and activists abroad and in Belarus have adapted to a new working environment and are operational under new circumstances.	1.1. Number of CSOs and activists (disaggregated by sex) that get financial/legal/psychological/relocation support, which makes them operational under new circumstances.	0	200-400	Project reports	Environment does not deteriorate further due to external factors.
Output 2 related to Outcome 1	1.2 Civil society organisations and activists have strengthened their capacities through organisational development, coalition-building, policy development, and improved coordination, security and strategic planning.	1.2.1. Number of CSOs and activists which receive trainings in capacity building on various subjects (fundraising, project management, protection/security issues, etc.)	0	100-200	Project reports	CSOs and activists do not lose enthusiasm to participate in their activities.
		1.2.2. Number of CSOs and activists which receive grants to implement activities.	0	Up to 50	Applications and reports about granting	CSOs and activists work together having similar vision about democratic changes in Belarus.
		1.2.3. Number of CSOs and activists that participate in various coalitions.	0	100-200	Meetings of coalitions Capacity building activities	
		1.2.4. Number of CSOs and activists that participate in capacity building of	0	Up to 100	Recommendations developed by coalitions	

		strategic planning/coordination of coalitions				
		1.2.5. Number of policy reform recommendations after democratic transition.	0	Up to 5		
Output 1 related to Outcome 2	2.1 Professional contacts were facilitated between Belarusian and EU-based professionals and organisations (MOST programme).	2.1.1. Number of participants of mobility schemes, disaggregated by sex. 2.1.2. Number of co-authored publications, co-patents, joint production, projects etc.	0 0	500 100	Project reports Data retrieved from MOST management interface Qualitative assessment of applicants feedback	Movement between Belarus and EU countries is not significantly hampered or restricted. Digital tools, applications and connections between Belarus and other countries are functioning. Military actions do not escalate in the region and Belarus is not involved in it. EU Member States keep allocating places for and covering tuition costs of Belarusian students.

Output 2 related to Outcome 2	2.2. Scholarships, advanced training and learning opportunities were provided for Belarusian citizens.	2.2.1 Number of students enrolled to the EHU on annual basis supported by the EU, disaggregated by sex	0	300	Project reports EHU Trust Fund reporting	Movement between Belarus and EU countries is not significantly hampered or restricted. Digital tools, applications and connections between Belarus and other countries are functioning. Military actions do not escalate in the region and Belarus is not involved in it. EU Member States keep allocating places for and covering tuition costs of Belarusian students.
		2.2.2 Number of students enrolled to the EHU on annual basis supported by the EU, disaggregated by sex	0	55		
		2.2.3 Number of teaching/research stipends/fellowships, desegregated by sex financed by the EU action	0	50		
		2.2.4 Number of research grants	0	20		
		2.2.5 Number of professionals completed distance learning courses, disaggregated by sex	To be updated based on call in 2022	150		

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Republic of Belarus.

4.2. Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3.1 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3. Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures⁹.

4.3.1. Direct Management (Grants)

a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Grants will contribute to achieving Specific Objective 1. 1

b) Type of applicants targeted

Potential applicants for the grants will be civil society organisations.

4.3.2. Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity

4.3.2.1 Indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity¹⁰

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with a pillar assessed entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- International organisation(s)
- Presence in the country/region
- Experience in the country/region
- Continuation of the existing programme
- Specific expertise in managing mobility programmes
- Logistical and management capacity

⁹ www.sanctionsmap.eu Please 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 between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

¹⁰ The signature of a contribution agreement with the chosen entity is subject to the completion of the necessary pillar assessment.

This implementation by this entity entails activities proposed for achieving Specific Objective 2 (Output 2.1).

4.3.2.2 Indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with a pillar assessed entity, which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the following criteria:

- EUMS agency(s) or international organisation(s)
- Presence in the region
- Aid effectiveness consideration
- Operational capacity, value added, and absence of conflict of interest
- Extensive experience in working in the education sector
- Managing technical assistance projects in the EU Eastern Neighbourhood countries.

This implementation by this entity entails activities proposed for achieving Specific Objective 2 (Output 2.2).

4.3.3. Changes from indirect to direct management (and vice versa) mode due to exceptional circumstances

In case implementation modality by indirect management as described in 4.3.2 cannot be implemented due to circumstances outside of the Commission’s control, these parts of the action may be implemented through a grant under direct management with a civil society organisation.

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions.

The Commission’s authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.4	
Objective 1: Strengthen the capacity and resilience of civil society organisations to promote democratic changes and human rights in Belarus in a changing context composed of	10 000 000
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	N.A.

Objective 2: Support Belarusian students and professionals in accessing modern quality education, training and learning opportunities composed of	15 000 000
Indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity – cf. section 4.3.2	15 000 000
Grants – total envelope under section 4.3.1	10 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	Will be covered by another Decision
Communication and visibility – cf. section 6	Will be covered by another Decision
Totals	25 000 000

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

Given the diverse nature of the action, involving support to independent non-state media, youth, entrepreneurs and companies and culture, a Steering Committee will be set up for each component/objective of the action to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy. The project Steering Committees shall meet regularly. The composition of the project Steering Committees will be decided at the start of implementation of each of the different components.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its Outputs and contribution to the achievement of its Outcomes, and if possible at the time of reporting, contribution to the achievement of its Impacts, as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

During the identification of this action, adequate premises were created for monitoring system at portfolio level. Reporting frequency will be agreed at contract level, together with project based logframes, keeping in mind the full portfolio will be implemented in direct management. Sufficient resources are allocated from this action for monitoring, evaluation and learning oriented activities. Preparation of the monitoring, evaluation and learning plans will complete individual risk assessment matrices and capacity assessment of implementing partners to meet the monitoring, evaluation and learning requirements in the context of the specific activities. Steering committees will be foreseen as part of the governance of the individual activities (at project level).

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision).

The Commission shall form a Reference Group (RG) composed by representatives from the main stakeholders at both EU and national (representatives from the government, from civil society organisations (private sector, NGOs, etc.) levels. If deemed necessary, other donors will be invited to join. The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least one month in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation exercise and missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another financing Decision.

5.3. Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

All entities implementing EU-funded external actions have the contractual obligation to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the [Communication and Visibility Requirements of 2018](#) (or any successor document). This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU Member States. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and EU Delegation fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before implementation starts. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

Security issues or local political sensitivities may make it preferable or necessary to limit communication and visibility activities. In such cases, the target audience and the visibility tools, products and channels to be used in promoting a given action will be determined on a case-by-case basis, in consultation and agreement with the European Union. Partial confidentiality of the Action will be ensured whenever needed (e.g. to ensure the necessary confidentiality of some individual cases).