



Brussels, 5.12.2022
C(2022) 9166 final

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 5.12.2022

**on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of the Republic of North Macedonia
for 2022**

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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 966/2012¹, 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)², and in particular Article 9(1) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to ensure the implementation of the annual action plan in favour of North Macedonia for 2022, it is necessary to adopt an annual financing Decision, which constitutes the annual work programme, for 2022. Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 ('the Financial Regulation') establishes detailed rules on financing decisions.
- (2) The envisaged assistance should comply with the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU³.
- (3) The actions provided for in this Decision contribute to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in line with the European Green Deal⁴ and the inter-institutional agreement.
- (4) The Commission has adopted a Pre-Accession Assistance ('IPA III') Programming Framework⁵ for the period 2021 – 2027, which identifies five thematic windows for

¹ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p.1.

² OJ L 330, 20.9.2021, p.1.

³ 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.

⁴ COM(2019)640 of 11.12.2019

⁵ Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)8914 of 10.12.2021 on the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) Programming Framework for the period 2021-2027.

the delivery of the specific objectives and thematic priorities of Regulation (EU) 2021/1529.

- (5) The objectives pursued by the annual action plan are to support the country's reforms in the areas of border and migration management, public administration, environment, health, social protection and gender equality and to enhance the EU accession process of North Macedonia.
- (6) The objective of the action entitled *EU for Improved Border and Migration Management* is to improve the security in the country and at its borders while supporting human rights and the free movement of people.
- (7) The objective of the action entitled *EU for Modern Public Administration* is improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the public administration of North Macedonia.
- (8) The objective of the action entitled *EU Integration Facility* is to enhance the EU accession process of North Macedonia, through backing-up the accession process in its entirety and improving the effectiveness and visibility of the EU funds invested in the country
- (9) The objective of the action entitled *EU for Modern Wastewater Systems* is to decrease water pollution along the Vardar river basin district, in North Macedonia, while supporting the transition to a green economy and addressing climate change.
- (10) The objective of the action entitled *EU for Improved Health, Social Protection and Gender Equality* is to improve the health and well-being of the citizens of North Macedonia and promote equal opportunities and social protection for all.
- (11) It is appropriate to authorise the award of grants without a call for proposals and to provide for the conditions for awarding those grants.
- (12) Pursuant to Article 9(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1529, indirect management may be used for the implementation of the action plan.
- (13) The Commission is to ensure a level of protection of the financial interests of the Union with regards to entities and persons entrusted with the implementation of Union funds by indirect management as provided for in Article 154(3) of the Financial Regulation.

To this end, such entities and persons are to be subject to an assessment of their systems and procedures in accordance with Article 154(4)⁶ of the Financial Regulation and, if necessary, to appropriate supervisory measures in accordance with Article 154(5) thereof before a contribution agreement can be signed.

To this end, the Commission, should be able to entrust the implementation to the IPA III beneficiary or the bodies designated by it subject to the conclusion of a financing agreement in accordance with Article 158 of the Financial Regulation.

⁶ 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.

- (14) 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.
- (15) In order to allow for flexibility in the implementation of the action plan, it is appropriate to allow changes which should not be considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of the Financial Regulation.
- (16) The action plan provided for in this Decision is in accordance with the opinion of the IPA III Committee set up by Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1529.

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 North Macedonia for 2022, as set out in the Annexes, is adopted.

The action plan shall include the following actions:

- *EU for Improved Border and Migration Management*, as set out in Annex I;
- *EU for Modern Public Administration*, as set out in Annex II;
- *EU Integration Facility*, as set out in Annex III;
- *EU for Modern Wastewater Systems*, as set out in Annex IV;
- *EU for Improved Health, Social Protection and Gender Equality*, as set out in Annex V.

Article 2
Union contribution

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the action plan referred to in Article 1 is set at EUR 72 500 000 and shall be financed from the appropriations entered in the following lines of the general budget of the Union for year 2022:

- budget line 15.020101.01: EUR 35 000 000;
- budget line 15.020201: EUR 37 500 000.

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 Annexes, may be entrusted to the entities or persons referred to or selected in accordance with the criteria laid down in point 4.3.1 of the Annex IV.

Article 4
Flexibility clause

Increases⁷ 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 Financial Regulation, provided that these changes do not significantly affect the nature and objectives of the actions.

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

Article 5
Grants

Grants may be awarded to the bodies selected in accordance with point 4.4.1 of the Annex II and point 4.3.1 of the Annex III and the Annex V.

Done at Brussels, 5.12.2022

For the Commission
Olivér VÁRHELYI
Member of the Commission

⁷ These changes can come from external assigned revenue made available after the adoption of the financing Decision.