



Brussels, 13.12.2018
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COMMISSION DECISION

of 13.12.2018

**adopting a support programme to raise public awareness about
the EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies for the years 2018-2019
to be financed from the general budget of the Union**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 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,

Whereas:

- (1) The budgetary authority has earmarked specific funding in the 2018 budget under budget line 21.08.02 for activities to raise public awareness about the EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies.
- (2) In order to ensure the implementation of a support programme to raise public awareness about the EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies for the years 2018-2019, it is necessary to adopt a financing decision, which constitutes the multiannual work programme, for 2018-2019. Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 establishes detailed rules on financing decisions.
- (3) Article 58(2)(d) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 provides that tasks resulting from the Commission's prerogatives at institutional level, which is the case of activities promoting awareness about the policies of the European Union, may be implemented without a basic act.
- (4) The envisaged activities are deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU².
- (5) It is necessary to allow for the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 116(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.
- (6) In order to allow for flexibility in the implementation of the programme, it is appropriate to allow changes which should not be considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

¹ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p.1.

² 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.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The programme

The multi-annual financing decision, constituting the multi-annual work programme for the implementation of the support programme to raise public awareness about the EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies for the years 2018-2019, as set out in the Annex, is adopted.

Article 2

Union contribution

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the programme for 2018 and 2019 is set at EUR 4 904 112 and shall be financed from the appropriations entered in the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

EUR 2 404 112 shall be financed from the budget line 21.08.02 of the general budget of the EU for year 2018;

EUR 2 500 000 shall be financed from the budget line 21.08.02 of the general budget of the EU for year 2019.

The financial contribution(s) referred to in the first sub-paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.

The implementation of this Decision is subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2019, as adopted by the budgetary authority.

Article 3

Flexibility clause

The following changes shall not be considered substantial, within the meaning of Article 110(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objectives of the actions:

- (a) increases or decreases of not more than 20% of the maximum contribution set in the first paragraph of Article 2, and not exceeding EUR 10 million, considering each financial year separately;
- (b) cumulated reassignments of funds between specific actions not exceeding 20% of the maximum contribution set in the first paragraph of Article 2;
- (c) extensions of the implementation and closure period.

The authorising officer responsible may apply such non-substantial changes in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality.

Done at Brussels, 13.12.2018

For the Commission
Johannes HAHN
Member of the Commission

ANNEX

**to Commission Decision adopting a
Support programme to raise public awareness about the EU enlargement and
neighbourhood policies for the years 2018-2019**

Annual Work Programme
This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the
Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046

1 IDENTIFICATION

	Budgetary commitment □ 2018	Budgetary commitment □ 2019
Beneficiary	Public in the EU Member States and the enlargement and neighbourhood regions	
CRIS/ABAC commitment	2018/040-258	2019/041-173
Total cost	EUR 4 904 112	
	EUR 2 404 112	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 2019	31 December 2020
Final date for operational implementation	31 December 2022	31 December 2023
Programming and implementing unit	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, unit A2 Inter-institutional Relations and Communication	

2. CONTEXT

Over the past years, the Commission has strengthened the credibility of enlargement policy and enhanced its transformative power by ensuring a stronger focus on addressing fundamental reforms early in the enlargement process. The Commission has put particular emphasis on the three pillars of rule of law, economic governance and public administration reform. These three pillars are interlinked and progress in these areas will be key to determining when countries will be fully ready to join the EU.

The EU's enlargement policy contributes to mutual benefits of peace, security and prosperity in Europe. It reinforces 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 effectiveness of the Union.

The current enlargement agenda covers the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo¹, Montenegro, 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 EU citizens.

According to the Spring 2018 Eurobarometer survey, a relative majority of EU citizens (46%) are sceptical towards further enlargement of the EU in the coming years. The public expects to see tangible evidence of the effectiveness of EU enlargement and its transformational power for the countries concerned, as well as the added value for the EU as a whole. At the same time, disinformation operations are obstructing EU efforts in the enlargement region by disseminating EU hostile information. EU institutions, together with Member States, should address these issues by promoting an informed and facts-based debate to reduce the space for disinformation in the public discourse and by raising awareness for 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.

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

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. Moreover, there is a strong emphasis on two principles: the implementation of a differentiated approach to our neighbours, to respect the different aspirations of our partners and to better answer to EU interests and the interests of our partners; and an increased ownership by partner countries and Member States.

In the Eastern Neighbourhood region, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) provides the overarching policy framework for the relations between the EU and its Eastern partners, with 2019 marking the 10th anniversary of the EaP. In recent years the EU has substantially reshaped its

¹ 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.

approach to communication in the region through the development of a clearly defined narrative based on the tangible impact of the EU's actions on citizens across the EaP region. In this context, the '20 Deliverables for 2020' based on the four priority areas (stronger economy, stronger governance, stronger connectivity, stronger society) frames not only the EU's policy and cooperation but also the EU's communication in the region.

These efforts have resulted in some positive results in EaP citizens' perception of the EU: the latest opinion polls show that trust in the EU is growing, with 61% (up 4% since 2017) of EaP citizens considering the EU as the most trusted foreign institution. The polls also show that citizens in the region are increasingly aware of the tangible effects the EU's actions have on their daily lives, with 57% of EaP citizens (up 4% since 2017) being aware of the EU's financial support. These encouraging results need further support through strategic communication efforts.

The policy of the European Union towards the North African and Middle Eastern countries seeks to encourage political and economic reform in each individual country in due respect for its specific features (European Neighbourhood Policy) and regional cooperation among the countries of the region themselves and with the EU (Union for the Mediterranean). This policy frames not only the EU's cooperation, but also the EU's communication in the region. In recent years the EU has substantially reshaped its approach to communication in the region through the development of a clearly defined narrative based on the tangible impact of the EU's actions on citizens across the region.

These efforts have resulted in some positive results in Southern neighbourhood citizens' perception of the EU: the latest opinion polls (2017) show that the majority of respondents in both Maghreb (65%) and Mashrek (58%) say the EU has had a positive influence on socio-economic development in their country. Polls also show that 56% of citizens in the Maghreb and 49% of citizens in the Mashrek consider the EU as the most trusted foreign institution. However, in 2017 only a minority of respondents in Maghreb said that the European Union provided their country with financial support (33%), compared to a majority in Mashrek (52%). Improving these results needs further support through strategic communication efforts.

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 the Western Balkans Media Days, press trips to and from the regions, and communication training.

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

The programme will contribute to the promotion of the EU as a stronger global actor, and the communication of other corporate priorities of the European Commission such as security,

migration, jobs, growth and investment. It will thus supplement the European Commission's corporate communication actions, to which the Directorate-General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations is contributing funds from the Instrument for 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 services, including 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.

4. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the programme is to raise public awareness and to promote an informed public debate about the EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies.

The specific objectives are:

- to increase the 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;
- to contribute to addressing relevant issues related to disinformation, inter alia 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 in the framework of its communication strategy. These may include, but are not limited to:

- outreach and networking (e.g. organisation of 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 film festivals, book fairs, youth and sports events, video and writing competitions);
- concept, design and implementation of targeted communication campaigns;
- 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 designers, social media managers);
- production of different information tools and products, such as publications, audio-visual materials, EU branded promotional materials;
- opinion polling, focus groups and studies on awareness of and support for EU enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as EU values, policies and programmes;
- communication training for staff and implementing partners;
- assessment of information and communication actions (survey-based evaluations).

6. EXPECTED RESULTS

The main results expected 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 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 in order to ensure sustainability and multiplier effect.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of implemented activities and the achievement of objectives will be monitored and evaluated through quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks in line with the External Communication Network's Code of Conduct on measurement and evaluation of communication activities.

The indicators to measure the outputs of the activities include the following:

- number of outreach and visibility events and number of participants;
- number of press trips for journalists and number of participants;
- number of debates organised and number of participants;
- coverage in the national and local media;
- visibility of material on the web and social media;
- number of website hits, social media followers and engagement;
- opinion polls and surveys.

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 three objectives of the financing decision stated in section 4 above.

This programme shall be implemented through direct management by the European Commission.

The programme will be implemented in its entirety through procurement. The global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement is EUR 4 904 112 (EUR 2 404 112 in 2018 and EUR 2 500 000 in 2019).