

## **Annex 1 – Annual Action Programme 2012 for Belarus**

### **1. IDENTIFICATION**

Title/Number	Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts (MOST) – CRIS: ENPI/2012/23456		
Total cost	EU contribution: EUR 5 million		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Project approach – Direct Centralised		
DAC-code	400	Sector	Multi-sector/Cross-cutting

### **2. RATIONALE**

#### **2.1. Sector context**

People-to-people contacts are a priority area for the European Union's relations with Belarus. The Country Strategy Paper (CSP) and National Indicative Programmes (NIP) refer to the need for intensifying people-to-people contacts. The NIP 2012-2013 gives priority to the expansion of people-to-people contacts through increased university and research cooperation, youth exchanges and cultural cooperation. Council Conclusions on Belarus of 2009, 2010 and 2011 consistently reiterate the importance of facilitating people-to-people contacts.<sup>1</sup> Contacts between people and mobility of citizens are also key elements of the Eastern Partnership<sup>2</sup>.

Considering the limited engagement of Belarus with both the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership, a people-to-people exchange and mobility programme can bring to Belarus European practices and promote mutual understanding. Such a programme in the field of culture, science & technology and education & youth can address several problems relevant for Belarus: overcoming limited engagement, promoting the transfer of best practices, encouraging mutual understanding and eventually contributing to economic development<sup>3</sup>. This mobility programme shall also provide for the exchanges conducted under the European Dialogues.

#### **2.2. Lessons learnt**

The existing EU-funded programmes promoting people-to-people contacts such as Erasmus Mundus, Tempus and Youth in Action show that there is great interest and unmet need in Belarus in people mobility and exchanges. A survey conducted in 2008 to assess the impact of Tempus III (at that time it still had a separate mobility component) found out that exposure to an EU environment through Tempus, including cooperation with EU university staff and student mobility programmes, helped to produce changes in working and teaching practices, modernise curriculum content and make a considerable impact on career

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<sup>1</sup> Council Conclusions on Belarus: 17/11/2009 ([http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/111243.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/111243.pdf)), 25/10/2010 ([http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/117326.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/117326.pdf)), 31/01/2011 ([http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/119038.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/119038.pdf)).

<sup>2</sup> As set out in the Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit of May 7, 2009 ([http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf)).

<sup>3</sup> While the core sectors are the priority, other appropriate sectors may be also considered for exchange and mobility actions (e.g. social affairs, public health, information society, etc), depending on the demand from the Beneficiary

development<sup>4</sup>. Students said they benefited from exposure to EU teaching methods and concepts and from the chance to get to know another culture. They became more independent in their learning and improved their communication skills.

Another programme in a similar vein – the Tacis Regional NIS Managers' Training Programme (EuropeAid/114630/C/SV/Multi/71957) – was implemented in Belarus in 2003-2005. The programme allowed around 50 Belarusian company managers to undergo traineeships in Western companies. The respective Result-Oriented Monitoring report (MR-40749.06 – 31/05/05) points to overall effectiveness of the project in changing the participants' attitudes and mindsets, improving their careers and bringing change to their companies.

The current utilization of opportunities within the TAIEX instrument in Belarus points to a great demand for EU experience and best practices with regard to the sectors covered by this instrument.

### **2.3. Complementary actions**

To date, the priority of people-to-people contacts in EU-Belarus relations has been addressed mostly in the context of higher education-related programmes, such as Tempus and Erasmus Mundus, and the recent scholarship scheme Open Europe. These programmes serve the important objective of internationalization and modernisation of the higher education system. To date 539 Belarusian students and academics have benefited from an Erasmus Mundus mobility scholarship. Belarus is currently involved in 13 Tempus projects supporting Belarusian universities to improve their administrative and organisational structures / study programs, promote teacher trainings, student mobility, consultation with entrepreneurial world, cooperation with stakeholders. Belarusian researchers and research institutions also benefit from Marie Curie actions supporting research exchanges and transfer of knowledge. Each year, several hundred Belarusians are involved in the Youth in Action programme. The proposed Mobility Scheme intends to cover a larger (i.e. beyond the education and youth sectors) segment of Belarusian society.

Actions related to culture are funded under several programmes involving Belarus, in particular, Cross-Border Cooperation programmes, EU Culture Programme and Eastern Partnership Culture Programme. Actions related to research are funded under the Framework Programme 7 where Belarus' participation is rather limited. There are youth-related actions involving Belarus under Youth in Action. These actions are to be reinforced through the upcoming establishment of the Eastern Partnership Youth Programme. For education, Belarus has been invited to take part in the e-Twinning actions for schools (online community of schools) but hasn't taken this opportunity.

In terms of vocational education and training, the programme can be complementary to activities related to Belarus conducted by the European Training Foundation.

### **2.4. Donor coordination**

The EU Delegation in Minsk organises donor coordination consultations on a regular basis with EU Member States, as well as with all major donors active in Belarus, in order to adjust actions in the priority areas of assistance. Such coordination is organised in compliance with principles of the Paris Declaration and is aimed to ensure maximum aid effectiveness.

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<sup>4</sup> The Impact of Tempus III. The Impact of the Tempus Programme on Higher Education Development in the Tempus Partner Countries. A Survey; accessed at [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/tools/documents/tempus3\\_impact\\_study\\_en.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/tools/documents/tempus3_impact_study_en.pdf)

### **3. DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1. Objectives**

**Overall objective:** To enhance people-to-people contacts between the EU and Belarusian society for promoting the transfer of best practices and encouraging mutual understanding.

**Specific objectives:**

*Specific Objective 1:* To organize an exchange and mobility scheme between Belarus and the EU for different target groups in the culture, education & youth and science & technology sectors, including civil servants, researchers, students, representatives of NGOs, staff of relevant government and non-governmental organizations, private sector, etc., on various themes related to culture, education & youth and science & technology, and the exchanges conducted under the European Dialogue.

*Specific Objective 2:* To design and launch opportunity/counterpart search and networking mechanisms involving the target groups between Belarus and the EU.

#### **3.2. Expected results and main activities**

*Selected strategy to achieve the objectives:*

Considering limited engagement of Belarus with both European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership, a people-to-people exchange and mobility programme can bring to Belarus European practices and promote mutual understanding. Such programmes have played a significant role in overcoming separation and divergence of views over the past century as the prime method in the toolbox of public diplomacy.

Culture, education & youth and science & technology are the areas widely associated with the highest potential for interaction among people. The EU's intervention to facilitate mobility between Belarus and EU Member States will provide additional opportunities for engaging Belarus and increasing the exposure to EU practices. A combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches will help ensure the effectiveness of mobility arrangements. This means that on the one hand the participants will be offered certain options for exchanges, study tours, short internships, etc. and on the other hand, they will have to come up with their own ideas and proposals with regard to establishing contacts and developing relationships with their counterparts in the EU.

*Main activities:*

*Under Specific Objective 1:*

- To announce and manage the call for expression of interest for mobility actions;
- To disseminate information about the scheme to the target groups both in the EU and in Belarus;
- To organize the selection and monitoring process related to the implementation of the scheme;
- To organize the implementation of selected mobility actions;
- To ensure the necessary follow-up of completed mobility actions.

Under Specific Objective 2:

- To develop and put into operation online and offline mechanisms and fora for potential mobility seekers to search for opportunities, establish contacts, communicate and network;
- To identify and promote already existing mobility opportunities in the targeted sectors.

***Expected results:***

Under Specific Objective 1:

- A number of representatives of target groups from Belarus visited the EU on study tours, exchange visits, etc. in the field of culture, education & youth and science & technology. Several hundred mobility actions have taken place;
- Contacts between Belarusian participants and their EU counterparts established and/or developed. Each mobility action has resulted in the establishment and/or development of at least five professional contacts to be indicated (in a non-nominative way) in mobility reports;
- Understanding of the EU, its societies, best practices and values among Belarusian participants and the public at large improved.

Under Specific Objective 2:

- Mobility activities are implemented taking into account complementarity with other EU-funded programmes in the field of research, education, youth and culture;
- Operational mechanisms of opportunity/counterpart search and networking put in place;
- Existing mobility opportunities identified and promoted.

### **3.3. Risks and assumptions**

**Assumptions:**

- Project registration by Belarusian authorities is done within a reasonable period of time;
- A Steering Committee consisting of representatives of: the implementing organization, Delegation of the EU to Belarus and Belarusian government, is capable of agreeing and making decisions for the project to be implemented smoothly;
- Potential mobility seekers come up with a sufficient number of proposals;
- EU Member States are willing to facilitate visa procedures for the participants.

**Risks:**

- The state of political relations between the EU and Belarus may result in the Government of Belarus limiting or refusing organized mobility and exchange flows with the EU.
- The information does not reach the potential participants, in particular outside the capital. To mitigate this risk the project envisage the preparation of an information dissemination plan.

- There is a risk of overlap with existing EU funded mobility schemes. To mitigate this risk the Steering Committee will check all exchange proposals for potential funding overlaps before approval.
- Project-funded participants do not return to Belarus. This is a common and unavoidable risk in all mobility and exchange programs. The selection process can minimize this risk by making sure that the participants have sufficient motivation to return home.

#### **Sustainability:**

The call for expression of interest to be launched within the scheme will be predominantly based on the initiative of the applicants, which can ensure ownership necessary to improve the absorption of new knowledge by the participants. Networking mechanisms to be established within the framework of the project will help to maintain links established in the course of mobility actions. The range of cross-cutting issues which will be taken into account in the implementation of the project can also help ensure sustainability.

### **3.4. Cross-cutting Issues**

A number of cross-cutting issues will be addressed during the implementation of this project. In particular: 1) gender equality – a balanced representation of men and women in mobility actions will be ensured so that they could have equal chances of access to new knowledge and skills thereby increasing their capacities; 2) good governance – increased exposure to EU policies and practices in the course of mobility actions will enhance awareness of more open, participatory and accountable standards for the operation of public institutions.

### **3.5. Stakeholders**

Key stakeholders are, but not limited to, as follows:

Public sector: National and regional government bodies in the respective fields (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, State Committee on Science and Technology, Belarusian National Academy of Science, Ministry of Sport and Tourism, respective regional departments); local authorities; public organizations in the respective fields; educational and research establishments; media.

Private sector: Private companies involved in research and education; private culture and creative industries; media.

Civil society: Non-governmental organizations in the field of culture, research, youth and education. Visual and performing arts community.

Accordingly, target groups will cover civil servants, students, academics, researchers, journalists, representatives of the business community, artists, civil society activists, etc. The final beneficiaries can be broadly defined as the general public who will benefit from the dissemination of European best practices.

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

### **4.1. Method of implementation**

The mode for the implementation of this action is direct centralised management through a service contract to be awarded in an international restricted tender procedure.

The Contractor will provide technical assistance for the arrangement and implementation of the mobility scheme. Mobility actions will be financed from the contract's incidental expenditure budget line.

## **4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures**

### **Contracts**

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

Participation in the award of contracts for the present action shall be open to all natural and legal persons covered by the ENPI Regulation. Further extensions of this participation to other natural or legal persons by the concerned authorising officer shall be subject to the conditions provided for in article 21(7) of the ENPI Regulation.

## **4.3. Budget and calendar**

The total budget for this action is **EUR 5 million**, including evaluation, audit, visibility and contingencies.

The indicative **operational duration** of the project is **48 months** as from the entry into force of the respective Financing Agreement.

An international restricted tender procedure will be launched following the signature of the respective Financing Agreement (Belarus Annual Action Programme 2012) by the last party.

After the conclusion of the service contract the project will be implemented in two phases:

### **Phase 1: Inception**

In the Inception Phase of the project, the Contractor will make the necessary organizational arrangements to put in place a functional mobility scheme for the targeted sectors. This will include but will not be limited to the following activities:

- Mobilization of staff;
- Familiarization with the local context and the targeted sectors;
- Identification of existing mobility opportunities in the targeted sectors to ensure complementarity with the Mobility Scheme;
- Preparation of guidelines on how to respond to the call for expression of interest;
- Development of opportunity/counterpart search and networking mechanisms;
- Establishment of a trilateral Steering Committee (SC) consisting of representatives of the implementing organization, Belarusian authorities and the EU Delegation to Belarus. The role of the SC will be defined in compliance with Article 57(2) of the Financial Regulation.

### **Phase 2: Mobility Scheme**

The second phase is the main phase of the project in which a Mobility Scheme will be launched. Legal entities from the targeted sectors will be invited to submit their proposals for

small-group mobility actions for purposes such as study tours, exchange visits, participation in international events, networking, etc. in Member States of the European Union. Mobility actions would cover the cost of travel, accommodation, insurance and per diems.

This phase will include but will not be limited to the following activities:

- Announcing and managing the permanent call for expression of interest with several deadlines under the authority of the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus;
- Dissemination of information about the scheme to the target groups both in the EU and in Belarus<sup>5</sup>;
- Selection and monitoring process related to the implementation of the scheme;
- Implementation of selected mobility actions;
- Follow-up of completed mobility actions, if need be.

A Steering Committee consisting of representatives of the Belarusian authorities, the EU Delegation to Belarus and the Contractor, will be set up to oversee the implementation of the project as well as to examine and endorse mobility actions.

The selection and approval of the mobility scheme participants shall be done by the Steering Committee. The Contractor shall be appointed Secretary of the Steering Committee without voting rights for the selection and approval process.

To complement the Mobility Scheme, the Contractor will also offer to potential applicants the access to mechanisms for the search of already existing mobility opportunities and interested counterparts in the EU in the targeted sectors. Proposals submitted to the permanent call for expression of interest announced within the framework of the Mobility Scheme will be mostly based on pre-existing contacts with counterparts in the EU. Mobility actions can be in both directions: from Belarus to the EU and from the EU to Belarus.

#### **4.4. Performance monitoring**

The Delegation of the European Union to Belarus will carry out routine monitoring of the activities carried out by the Contractor. Such routine monitoring will include reviewing of feedback from participants of mobility actions.

Key indicators related to the achievement of the overall objective of the project will be in the appropriation of EU practices in the targeted sectors, establishment of networks, discussions of EU-inspired improvements, and use of other opportunities in EU programmes. The achievement of these indicators is expected to result from a functioning mobility scheme and networking mechanisms to be in place in parallel with the mobility scheme.

A range of sources and means of verification will be utilized to monitor performance on the above-mentioned indicators. These will include but will not be limited to as follows: reports from participants; sector coverage in the media; online and offline discussion forums; rate of participation in other EU programmes; project reports; visitors/users of search and networking mechanisms and events; attendance sheets.

#### **4.5. Evaluation and audit**

The project will be evaluated/audited in accordance with standard Commission procedures. Mid-term and/or final evaluation of the results achieved is envisaged.

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<sup>5</sup> Including through the website of the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus

#### **4.6. Communication and visibility**

Communication and visibility activities should follow the EU Communication & Visibility Manual<sup>6</sup> and also should be fully in line with the developments in the overall EU-Belarus relations. The project will aim, whenever possible and in line with EU's policy, for widespread dissemination of its achievements and results. On starting activities communication and visibility plans will be prepared and submitted to the EU Delegation for approval as per the EU Communication & Visibility Manual.

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<sup>6</sup> Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm)