



Brussels, 16.10.2015  
C(2015) 7149 final

**COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION**

**of 16.10.2015**

**on the Annual Action Programme 2015 in favour of the Republic of Armenia to be  
financed from the general budget of the European Union**

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### on the Annual Action Programme 2015 in favour of the Republic of Armenia to be financed from the general budget of the European Union

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 2(1) thereof,

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002<sup>2</sup>, and in particular Article 84(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The Commission has adopted the Single Support Framework (SSF) for the period 2014-2017 for Armenia<sup>3</sup>, points 3.1, 3.2 and 4 of which provide for the following priorities: 1) Private sector development including labour market efficiency, 2) Public Administration Reform, and 3) Complementary support in favour of civil society.
- (2) The objectives pursued by the Annual Action Programme to be financed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument<sup>4</sup> are to 1) enhance the labour market efficiency and contribute to the employability of Vocational education and training (VET) graduates 2) support transparency and accountability of fiscal governance and 3) strengthen and build the capacity of civil society to effectively contribute to democratic decision making processes in Armenia.
- (3) The first action entitled "Better Qualifications for Better Jobs" will support labour market efficiency in Armenia and the employability of its VET graduates in particular. More specifically the action will improve the labour market intermediation and guidance services in order to ensure better access to employment for both men and women. It will also improve the employability of graduate students in a pilot sector (VET agricultural institutions). The action will be implemented under direct management through budget support, grants and service contracts.
- (4) The second action entitled "Public Finance Policy Reform Programme in Armenia" will support transparency and accountability of fiscal governance in Armenia. The specific objective of the action is to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of Armenia's Public Finance Management system. The action will be

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Decision C(2014)5101, 23.07.2014

<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument (OJ L77, 15.03.2014, p. 27).

implemented under direct management through budget support, grant, service contracts and under indirect management with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

- (5) The third action entitled "Civil Society Facility (Armenia)" will strengthen and build the capacity of Armenian civil society to contribute effectively to the democratic decision making process in Armenia. To this end it will improve organisational capacity of civil society organisations and their capacity to engage in policy formulation/monitoring. The action will be implemented under direct management through grants and service contracts.
- (6) It is necessary to adopt a financing decision the detailed rules of which are set out in Article 94 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012<sup>5</sup>.
- (7) It is necessary to adopt a work programme for grants the detailed rules of which are set out in Article 128(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and in Article 188(1) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012. The work programme is constituted by the Annex 1 (section 5.4.1), Annex 2 (section 5.4.1) and Annex 3 (sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2).
- (8) The Commission should entrust budget-implementation tasks under indirect management to the entities identified in this Decision, subject to the conclusion of a delegation agreement. In accordance with Article 60(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, the authorising officer responsible needs to ensure that these entities guarantee a level of protection of the financial interests of the Union equivalent to that required when the Commission manages Union funds.
- (9) The authorising officer responsible should be able to award grants without a call for proposals provided that the conditions for an exception to a call for proposals in accordance with Article 190 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 are fulfilled.
- (10) It is necessary to allow the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 92 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and Article 111(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.
- (11) Pursuant to Article 94(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, the Commission should define changes to this Decision which are not substantial in order to ensure that any such changes can be adopted by the authorising officer responsible.
- (12) The measure provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the European Neighbourhood Instrument Committee set up by Article 15 of the ENI Regulation.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

#### *Article 1*

#### **Adoption of the measure**

The Annual Action Programme 2015 in favour of the Republic of Armenia, as set out in the Annexes, is approved:

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<sup>5</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 362, 31.12.2012, p. 1).

The programme shall include the following actions:

- Annex 1: Better Qualifications for Better Jobs
- Annex 2: Public Finance Policy Reform Programme in Armenia
- Annex 3: Civil Society Facility (Armenia)

#### *Article 2*

##### **Financial contribution**

The maximum contribution of the European Union for the implementation of the programme referred to in Article 1 is set at EUR 30 million and shall be financed from:

- budget line 21 03 02 01: EUR 15 million
- budget line 21 03 02 02: EUR 15 million

of the general budget of the European Union for 2015.

The financial contribution provided for in the first paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.

#### *Article 3*

##### **Implementation modalities**

Budget-implementation tasks under indirect management may be entrusted to the entity identified in the attached Annex 2 (section 5.4.3), subject to the conclusion of the relevant agreement.

The section “Implementation” of the Annexes to this Decision sets out the elements required by Article 94(2) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.

Grants may be awarded without a call for proposals by the authorising officer responsible in accordance with Article 190 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.

*Article 4*

**Non-substantial changes**

Increases or decreases of up to EUR 10 million not exceeding 20% of the contribution set by the first paragraph of Article 2, or cumulated changes to the allocations of specific actions not exceeding 20% of that contribution, as well as extensions of the implementation period shall not be considered substantial within the meaning of Article 94(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objectives of the actions.

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

Done at Brussels, 16.10.2015

*For the Commission*  
*Johannes HAHN*  
*Member of the Commission*