



Brussels, 19.12.2018
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COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 19.12.2018

on the Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018

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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) 1046/2018 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) 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 action², and in particular Article 2(1) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to ensure the implementation of the Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018, it is necessary to adopt a annual financing Decision, which constitutes the annual work programme, for 2018. Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 establishes detailed rules on financing Decisions.
- (2) The envisaged assistance is deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU³.
- (3) In the framework of ongoing negotiations on EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities, agreed on substance but not on final language, it is not possible to adopt the multi-annual programming document, the Single Support Framework for 2018-2020. In its absence, four actions are proposed as Special Measures on the basis of Article 2(1), third paragraph, of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014.
- (4) The objectives pursued by the Special Measures to be financed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument⁴ are to enhance the efficiency of the use of energy and other resources at the central and local level in the Brest and Grodno regions of the Republic of Belarus; to support Belarus in implementing actions in key priority areas in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership

¹ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p.1.

² OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 95.

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 Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument (OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 27).

Summit; to contribute to the mobility and internationalisation of Belarusian professionals and to support their integration into European-wide professional networks; to contribute to the diversification of the media sector in Belarus, promoting an enabling, resilient and democratic environment.

- (5) The action entitled ‘EU4Belarus: Resource Efficiency Facility for Belarus’ will design, implement and enforce resources and energy efficiency policy more effectively for all relevant stakeholders; it will also enhance the potential for development of energy/resource efficient modernisation of public infrastructure and industrial enterprises and demonstrate the feasibility of energy efficiency gains in a systematic way. The action will be implemented under direct management through procurement of services and grants.
- (6) The action entitled ‘EU4Belarus: Partnership Facility’ will support the reform efforts undertaken by Belarus by supporting the design and implementation of strategic actions; it will also enhance the capacity and knowledge base of Belarusian public governmental institutions, state and semi-state enterprises in selected priority areas through transfer of knowledge and EU best practices and promote actions aiming at regional development and addressing gaps in services to citizens. The action will be implemented under direct management through procurement of services and supplies and through grants.
- (7) The action entitled ‘EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)’ will facilitate the establishment of professional contacts between Belarusian and EU-based companies/organisations/professionals and develop better mutual understanding between EU and Belarusian professionals, helping to see each other as reliable partners with the aim also to support business-academia links to boost research and innovation activities. The action will be implemented under direct management through procurement of services.
- (8) The action entitled ‘Enhancement of Professional Reporting and Free Flow of Information in Belarus’ will increase media professionals' capacities in quality reporting, supporting financial self-sustainability of non-state media for them to provide for their core activities, as well as to enhance the capacities of the entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus through advocacy and policy dialogue. The action will be implemented under direct management through grants.
- (9) 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.
- (10) 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.
- (11) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the European Neighbourhood Instrument Committee established under Article 15 of the financing instrument referred to in recital 4.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1
The measures

The Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018, as set out in the Annexes, are adopted.

The Measures shall include the following actions:

- (a) Annex I: EU4Belarus: Resource Efficiency Facility for Belarus;
- (b) Annex II: EU4Belarus: Partnership Facility;
- (c) Annex III: EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+);
- (d) Annex IV: Enhancement of Professional Reporting and Free Flow of Information in Belarus.

Article 2
Union contribution

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the Measures for 2018 is set at EUR 30 million, and shall be financed from the appropriations entered in the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

- (a) budget line 22 04 02 01: EUR 5 million;
- (b) budget line 22 04 02 02: EUR 25 million.

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

Article 4
Flexibility clause

Increases or decreases of up to EUR 10 million not exceeding 20% of the contribution set in 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 110(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, where 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.

Done at Brussels, 19.12.2018

For the Commission
Johannes HAHN
Member of the Commission