



Brussels, 16.12.2021
C(2021) 9715 final

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 16.12.2021

**on the financing of the multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society
Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Turkey for 2021-
2023**

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

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on the financing of the multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Turkey for 2021-2023

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) No 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 multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society Facility and Media in favour of the Western Balkans and Turkey for 2021-2023, it is necessary to adopt a multiannual financing decision, which constitutes the multiannual work programme, for 2021-2022. Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 establishes detailed rules on financing decisions.
- (2) The envisaged assistance is to comply with the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU³.
- (3) Some of 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 an IPA III Programming Framework⁵ for the period 2021 – 2027, which identifies five thematic windows for the delivery of the specific objectives and thematic priorities of Regulation (EU) 2021/1529.
- (5) The objective pursued by the multiannual action plan is to provide assistance for actions in thematic window 1, in line with the IPA III Programming Framework: (1)

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 final

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

Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy; with some cross-cutting impacts in the other Windows: (2) Good governance, EU *acquis* alignment, good neighbourly relations and strategic communication; (3) Green agenda and sustainable connectivity; (4) Competitiveness and inclusive growth; and (5) Territorial and cross-border cooperation.

- (6) The objective of the action 1 entitled, “*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme Multi-country 2021-2023*” is to support a conducive environment for Civil Society, strengthen cooperation between CSOs and IPA beneficiary authorities/institutions and reinforce CSOs capacities and resilience as well as enhance the enabling environment and possibilities for free expression of media. The objective of the action 2 entitled, “*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Albania 2021-2023*” is to improve participatory and inclusive democratic governance, including in the implementation of policies and enforcement of legislations in line with EU standards at national and local level through effective monitoring and advocacy by CSOs and Media. The objective of the action 3 entitled, “*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2021-2023*” is to strengthen participatory democracy and the EU approximation process by empowering civil society to actively take part in decision making and by stimulating an enabling legal and financial environment for civil society and pluralistic media. The objective of the action 4 entitled, “*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Kosovo* 2021-2023*” is to enhance the enabling environment for civil society and media, strengthening capacities and effectiveness of civil society and media actors as well as improving the cooperation between civil society and public authorities. The objective of the action 5 entitled, “*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Montenegro 2021-2023*” is to support CSOs to contribute and monitor the reform and EU integration process in all fields relevant to accession, as well as improve the cooperation between governments and civil society. The objective of the action 6 entitled, “*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2023*” is to enhance the space and capacities of civil society and media to efficiently address and contribute to the key priorities for further democratisation of the society. The objective of the action 7 entitled, “*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Serbia 2021-2023*” is to build capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to monitor reform processes and participate in policy dialogue as well as supporting the implementation of the media strategy of Serbia, including media ethics. The objective of the action 8 entitled, “*EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Turkey 2021-2023*” is to foster a functioning pluralistic, participatory and representative democracy and the consolidation of a resilient civil society by promoting a culture of fundamental rights and dialogue.
- (7) It is appropriate to authorise the award of grants without a call for proposals and to provide for the conditions for awarding those grants.
- (8) Pursuant to Article 9(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1529, indirect management is to be used for the implementation of the action plan.
- (9) 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

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

funds by indirect management as provided for in Article 154(3) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

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) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 and, if necessary, to appropriate supervisory measures in accordance with Article 154(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 before a contribution agreement can be signed.

- (10) 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.
- (11) 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 Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.
- (12) 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) 2021/1529⁶,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The action plan

The multiannual financing decision, constituting the multiannual work programme for the implementation of the multi-country multiannual action plan in favour of the Western Balkans and Turkey for 2021-2023, as set out in the Annexes, is adopted.

The action plan shall include the following actions:

- (a) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme Multi-country 2021-2023, as set out in Annex 1;
- (b) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Albania 2021-2023, as set out in Annex 2;
- (c) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2021-2023, as set out in Annex 3;
- (d) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Kosovo* 2021-2023, as set out in Annex 4;
- (e) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Montenegro 2021-2023, as set out in Annex 5;
- (f) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2023, as set out in Annex 6;
- (g) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Serbia 2021-2023, as set out in Annex 7;
- (h) EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the Republic of Turkey 2021-2023, as set out in Annex 8.

⁶ The Member States have declared, recalling the Council Conclusions of 18 February 2008, that the adoption of this action plan does not prejudice the position of each individual Member State on the status of Kosovo, which will be decided in accordance with their national practice and international law.

Article 2
Union contribution

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the action plan referred to in Article 1 is set at EUR 218 500 000 and shall be financed from the appropriations entered in the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

- budget line 15 02 01 01.01: EUR 71 000 000 for year 2021, EUR 60 450 000 for year 2022 and EUR 87 050 000 for year 2023

The appropriations provided for in the first 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 2022 and 2023 as adopted by the budgetary authority.

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 4.2.3 of Annexes 1 and 8.

Article 4
Flexibility clause

Increases⁷ or decreases of up to EUR 10 million not exceeding 20% of the contribution set in Article 2, first paragraph, considering each financial year separately, or cumulated changes⁸ 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 Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, provided that they 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.

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

⁸ These changes can come from assigned revenue made available after the adoption of the financing Decision.

Article 5
Grants

Grants may be awarded without a call for proposals in accordance with the conditions set out in the Annexes. Grants may be awarded to the bodies referred to in the Annexes selected in accordance with point 4.2.1 of Annexes 1, 6, 7 and 8.

Done at Brussels, 16.12.2021

For the Commission
Olivér VÁRHELYI
Member of the Commission