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C(2024) 7796 final

ANNEX

**ANNEX**

**to the**

**Commission Decision**

**on the financing of the annual work programme 2025 for information outreach on EU  
external relations**

## ANNEX

**Legal Basis:** Article 58 (2)(d) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509<sup>1</sup> of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (the Financial Regulation).

### **Annual work programme 2025 for information outreach on EU external relations**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This annual work programme 2025 for information outreach on EU external relations concerns expenditure under the budgetary item 14 20 04 03 – **information policy and strategic communication for external action**.

On the basis of the objectives and tasks resulting from the Commission’s institutional prerogatives, as provided for by Article 58(2) (d) of the Financial Regulation and following further guidance on the implementation of these tasks by the following documents:

- Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029 - Europe’s choice, Ursula von der Leyen<sup>2</sup>;
- European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP, December 2020)<sup>3</sup>
- A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence - For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security, 21 March 2022<sup>4</sup>;
- Council Conclusions on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI, 18 July 2022)<sup>5</sup>;
- European Parliament resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation<sup>6</sup>;
- European Parliament resolution of 1 June 2023 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation<sup>7</sup>;
- Special Report 09/2021 of the European Court of Auditors (“Disinformation affecting the EU – tackled, but not tamed”)<sup>8</sup>;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/947 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.09.2024)

<sup>2</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648\\_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029\\_EN.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A790%3AFIN>

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11429-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0064\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0064_EN.html)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0219\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0219_EN.html)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR21\\_09/SR\\_Disinformation\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR21_09/SR_Disinformation_EN.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/947/oj>

This work programme contains the actions carried out to inform the public to be financed and the budget breakdown for year 2025 is as follows. The detailed budget breakdown per type of action is available under section 5:

- for procurement implemented under direct management by the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Delegations by region: EUR 13 491 258
- for procurement implemented under direct management by EEAS in Headquarters: EUR 3 054 877
- for procurement implemented under direct management by the EEAS in Headquarters and Delegations, addressing foreign information manipulation and interference, including disinformation: EUR 8 600 000
- for procurement and other actions (inter-institutional agreement with the European Parliament) implemented under direct management by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI): EUR 1 145 000
- for corporate IT costs: EUR 1 530 172

The objectives set out below are designed to support the information and communication activities of the European Union’s external action, as well as to address the issue of foreign information manipulation and interference, including disinformation. Early adoption of the decision is intended to ensure the availability of the budgetary funds at the beginning of 2025.

The overall objective is to support proactive information, communication and public outreach activities and to increase the visibility and understanding of the European Union’s external action in third countries, within the European Union and with international organisations, when communicating on themes having a strong international dimension. In addition, issues related to foreign information manipulation and interference, including disinformation, are addressed. When working with partners implementing EU funding in line with Regulation (EU) 2021/947 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument<sup>10</sup>, the “Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions”, adopted in 2022, will apply.

## **2. PROCUREMENT CONCERNING ACTIONS ON INFORMATION OUTREACH ON EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

### **Legal basis**

Article 58(2)(d) of the Financial Regulation

### **Budget line**

14 20 04 03

**Subject matter of the contracts envisaged (*communication activities by EU Delegations and EEAS Headquarters, including addressing foreign information manipulation, interference, and disinformation*)**

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<sup>10</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/947/oj>

The funds under this line are used to finance information activities carried out in the area of external relations, covering all areas of External Action under EU competence. The funds will be used: A) in EU Delegations for public diplomacy, information, communication and outreach activities, including activities related to EU citizens' rights programme in the UK, B) at EEAS Headquarters to carry out autonomous or supporting activities, or to implement projects that benefit all or several Delegations and are therefore better managed centrally, as well as C) to specifically address the issue of foreign information manipulation and interference, including disinformation. The latter actions can be carried out at Headquarters and in Delegations.

#### **A. Public Diplomacy, Communication and Outreach Activities in EU Delegations**

As the EU Delegations represent the EU as a whole and coordinate political work with EU Member States, their visibility in the media, on online platforms and vis-à-vis local stakeholders has significantly increased in recent years and will continue to do so. Examples like communication campaigns and activities around food insecurity following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine have shown that locally tailored and translated, contextualised and targeted communication by EU Delegations is key to ensure that our messages and narrative about the EU's policies and assistance reach local audiences and influence their perceptions about the EU. Likewise, the Delegations' cooperation and joint communication activities with diplomatic missions of the EU Member States and like-minded countries increased and needs to be further supported in line with the Team Europe approach.

Enhancing communication and public diplomacy capacity is a priority of the Global Strategy for the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy and forms an integral part of the EU Delegations' activities. In close coordination with EU Member States' diplomatic missions, the EU, including Delegations, has developed a joined-up and coherent approach to communicating EU values and interests and addressing foreign information manipulation and interference, including disinformation, targeting the EU, its policies and values.

Overall, the Delegations' communication will focus on the relevance of EU activities for people in third countries and employ a storytelling approach within communication campaigns, rather than showcasing benefits of isolated initiatives or projects, in line with the approach to communication activities under the Global Gateway initiatives<sup>11</sup>. In the neighbourhood and Western Balkans regions, communication on Global Gateway initiatives should also refer to the Economic and Investment Plans where relevant. The EU Delegations are expected to make active use of the EU-Alumni platform (<https://alumni.europa.eu/>) to integrate their communication and public diplomacy activities, which should be designed in close cooperation with the Stratcom divisions of the European External Action Service and relevant Commission Services, and adapted to local needs and challenges, taking into account the Delegations' capacities.

Activities will foster the "whole of Delegation approach" by promoting synergies with other existing actions with the purpose of multiplying impact. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- areas such as the production and dissemination of audio-visual materials,

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<sup>11</sup> [Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank The Global Gateway](#)

- development of digital communication products, production and dissemination of publications on priority themes and campaigns,
- development of press and media products and relations including the organisation of visits for groups of journalists,
- organisation of information events in local communities,
- production of information and promotional material,
- dissemination through and monitoring of social media,
- support for the information activities of opinion leaders consistent with the Union's political priorities,
- general outreach and public and cultural diplomacy actions.

Many of these activities will be organised thematically in a campaign-led approach and implemented by the EU Delegations and their partners. Regional media outreach across major languages remains a priority, and given the crisis in the Middle East and its impact for the EU regional presence particular attention will be given to the existing Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) regional strategic communication hub for the Arabic speaking media. Other similar hubs may be considered for the future. The activities will take into account priority issues, such as the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

For press and information activities funded under this work programme, Delegations are requested to draft an annual work plan, which serves as both a planning tool for Delegations and forms part of a report to EEAS Headquarter on past and planned activities. The EEAS Stratcom divisions are and will remain in the lead as concerns the planning process for the above activities funded under this work programme. The planning and reporting is not required to cover activities funded via other sources, for which the relevant Commission services are and will remain in the lead. To the extent possible, the Delegation's annual work programme should contribute to communication activities on the EU's corporate communication priorities, in particular under the theme Global Europe. Where appropriate, cooperation with Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations is foreseen. This contribution may consist of the development of campaigns that demonstrate how people concretely benefit from the EU, making our actions more relatable and increasing the understanding of what the EU does globally.

Activities may also be carried out by external contractors as appropriate.

In coordination with Commission services, EEAS Headquarters provide guidance to the Delegations about the political priorities of the EU in bilateral, regional and global contexts, as well as inform on relevant communication tools and techniques to better steer their public outreach activities. A coordinated approach, particularly on cross-cutting priorities will be further consolidated, in particular via the regular communication meetings within the coordination mechanism with RELEX family services, mostly in conjunction with DG COMM, DG ECHO, FPI, DG INTPA, DG NEAR, DG TRADE, where other Commission services dealing with an external dimension are also associated. This coordinated approach aims at ensuring a more efficient planning and implementation of global activities and campaigns both centrally and on the delegations' level, while concentrating on priority themes and activities.

**Total budget: 13 491 258 EUR**

## **B. Public Diplomacy, Communication and Outreach Activities at EEAS Headquarters**

The communication and outreach activities designed and carried out in Headquarters will continue to play a key role. These activities will be guided by EEAS Communication principles and priorities and other agreed political priorities for priority regions, relevant horizontal issues and priority areas, including in public, economic and cultural diplomacy.

Communication instruments and tools will be developed as appropriate to reflect a modern and innovative approach with key performance indicators to be applied where possible. Activities may also be carried out by external contractors as appropriate and include support to local partners.

These strategic communication and public diplomacy activities may comprise the following:

- development of information material and communication campaigns delivered online and offline;
- production and distribution of publications on priority themes;
- production and dissemination of audio-visual material, such as videos, web-documentaries, info-clips etc.;
- development and delivery of full-fledged campaigns, both online and offline, including with Member States and various international partners;
- organisation of press visits and press events including visits for groups of journalists;
- organisation of conferences, exhibitions and public diplomacy and outreach events.
- production of publication and general communications material;
- information activities for opinion leaders that are consistent with the Union's strategic priorities;
- support for translations and local adaptations of strategic communication products.
- organisation of wide-range of cultural diplomacy activities, including with the EU National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) network;
- support monitoring and analytical capabilities to facilitate well-calibrated communications efforts;
- support to the communication outreach activities of the CSDP missions and operations;
- provision of information through the EEAS website and Delegations' websites and social media accounts;
- support the creation and development of networks capable of multiplying and reinforce EEAS strategic communication, and in particular the EU-ALUMNI platform.

The above list is not exhaustive as regards the nature of communication and information activities to be undertaken.

**Total budget: 3 054 877 EUR**

## **C. Addressing foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), including disinformation**

The appropriations for addressing foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), including disinformation for an amount of EUR 8 600 000 will be earmarked for the purpose of countering such threats. Activities shall be undertaken in line with the approaches set out in the Strategic Compass (2022), the European Democracy Action Plan

(December 2020) and other relevant political documents mentioned in the introduction.

The Council Conclusions on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (adopted by the Council on 18 July 2022<sup>12</sup>) give additional impetus to the work of the EEAS on this file. Preventing, deterring and responding to FIMI is conducted across four dimensions of the FIMI Toolbox (endorsed by the Council on 14–15 December 2023<sup>13</sup>): 1) situational awareness, 2) resilience building (including strategic communications, capacity building etc.), 3) disruption and regulation (including EEAS cooperation with Commission services on the Code of Practice on Disinformation), and 4) measures related to EU external action, including CFSP and diplomatic responses (such as public attribution, the potential development of new instruments to impose costs on FIMI actors).

Specific focus will be given to activities directed at improving the EU's capacity to monitor, analyse and expose FIMI, to further improve international cooperation with key likeminded partners and to raise greater awareness of the phenomenon amongst priority audiences, media and the wider EU and international public as put forward by the European Court of Auditors Special report (Special Report 09/2021 "Disinformation affecting the EU: tackled but not tamed", June 2021<sup>14</sup>).

With regard to improving the capacity to monitor, analyse and assess, as well as respond to these threats, activities may comprise, among others:

- public exposure of foreign information manipulation and interference, both within and outside the EU and analysis of and research on existing and emerging threats for the EU in the realm of foreign information manipulation and interference, with response options for countering these;
- ensure the crucial and necessary data analytics infrastructure;
- development of internal and external training and relevant information/training materials;
- further refinement of the framework to collect systematic evidence of foreign disinformation, information manipulation and interference, supported by an appropriate technological infrastructure and coherent reporting standards and in close exchanges with stakeholders from partner governments, civil society, private industry and international organisations;
- supporting and facilitating the work of the FIMI Information Sharing and Analysis Centre.

With regard to resilience and capacity building to address foreign information manipulation and interference amongst specialised audiences and the wider EU and international public, activities may comprise the following:

- organisation of conferences and other outreach events, closed and public, including regular events in the framework of, e.g. the Rapid Alert System points of contact from EU Member States and international partners, the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism and under the EU-US Trade and Technology Council;
- following the adoption of Strategic Compass, support to CSDP missions and

<sup>12</sup> [Council conclusions on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference \(FIMI\) 18 July 2022](#)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/68967/europeanconclusionconclusions-14-15-12-2023-en.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> [Special report No 9/2021 Disinformation affecting the EU: tackled but not tamed 2021/C 215/06](#)

operations to build resilience to FIMI;

- delivery of strategic communication campaigns, both digital and offline. Production and adaptation of communication products to specialised and regional audiences, including as appropriate the promotion of products through advertising etc.;
- further strengthening of international partnerships with international organisations and key stakeholders, e.g. NATO, G7, UN;
- communication and awareness raising projects, including those conducted by the strategic communication officers of EU Neighbourhood countries and Western Balkans;
- development and delivery of trainings, roundtables and similar capacity building formats, including the production of training material.

The network of 27 Strategic Communication Officers in EU Delegations in the East and South Neighbourhood and Western Balkans will be instrumental in strengthening Delegations' capacities for coordinated action to better understand and address foreign information manipulation and interference, assuring the further integration of this work strand into the daily strategic communication activities.

**Total budget: 8 600 000 EUR**

**Overall budget implemented by EEAS under (A), (B) and (C) EUR 25 146 135**

### **Type of contract and type of procurement and indicative timeframe for launching the procurement procedure**

Delegations' contracts: throughout the year

EEAS Framework Contract - Digital Communication and Information Services: throughout the year

### **Implementation mode**

The implementation method of the activities is through direct management. The operational expenditure will be implemented by means of procurement procedures in line with Title V of the Financial Regulation.

The activities in EU Delegations and at EEAS HQ level will be carried out by the EEAS on the basis of a service level agreement (SLA) between the FPI and the EEAS<sup>15</sup> allowing the EEAS to carry out information and communication activities on behalf of the Commission within the framework established by the administrative arrangement between Commission services and EEAS services of 14/12/2010.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ares(2013)3719368 - 13/12/2013

<sup>16</sup> Ares(2010)943776



### 3. PROCUREMENT AND OTHER ACTIONS MANAGED BY FPI – EUROPEAN UNION VISITORS PROGRAMME AND FPI EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

#### Legal basis

Article 58(2)(d) of the Financial Regulation<sup>17</sup>

#### Budget line

14 20 04 03

#### **A. European Union Visitors Programme**

The budget line will also cover a direct contribution of EUR 750 000 to the European Parliament for the European Union Visitors Programme (EUVP), which is a unique framework for introducing the EU institutions to key contacts from third countries, selected by the EU Delegations. The EUVP, which is maintained jointly with the European Parliament, is a long-running inter-institutional arrangement established initially as ‘Programme communautaire d’invitation de ressortissants américains’ by an ‘administrative regulation’ co-signed by the president of the European Parliament and the president of the European Commission in 1974 and subsequently prolonged every year by tacit agreement<sup>18</sup>. It has become a firmly anchored part of the EU’s public diplomacy outreach and is much appreciated by Delegations and the European Parliament. Within the limits of the available total budget allocated, in 2025, the EUVP will provide approximately 300 participants with the opportunity to participate in tailor-made study visits to the European Commission and the European Parliament on a specific policy area or theme. They receive first-hand information on the EU’s values, functioning, activities, policies and perspectives during their visit.

The events organised by the EUVP team, a growing EUVP social media community as well as post-visit interactions with alumni serve to gauge the increase of information about the EU.

The expenses related to the EUVP programme pertain to the reimbursement of expenses incurred by persons invited by the institutions in the framework of physical or virtual visits and events organised in the framework of the programme. The reimbursement of these expenses is managed by the European Parliament by way of direct management based on a 50%-50% co-financing mechanism between the two institutions. The allotted funds can also be used to cover information and communication activities related to the EUVP.

#### **B. FPI external communication**

EUR 395 000 will be used for service contracts ensuring the maintenance of FPI’s web presence, web-hosting and other associated outreach activities in support of FPI’s mandate, including through social media.

The FPI external communication activities will focus on contributing to the implementation of the political guidelines of the new von der Leyen Commission. They will reinforce the messages of the EU Global Strategy in key areas (e.g. human rights and climate change), the

<sup>17</sup> OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024

<sup>18</sup> To be replaced by a Memorandum of Understanding currently under preparation

EU's strategic responsibility as a global actor and, in line with the Strategic Compass, as a strong partner on peace, security and defence, economic and cultural diplomacy.

FPI's external communication will target audiences in the EU and beyond. FPI's communication activities will serve to demonstrate to EU citizens the EU's positive role in promoting peace and stability in the world, delivering targeted messages on EU policies and external action.

Besides ensuring that FPI's web presence is user-friendly and relevant, and integrated with the new Commission web-architecture, as well as social media and other outreach activities, FPI will seek to further reinforce the visibility and recognition of its actions, and contribute to the EU's corporate communication efforts.

#### **Overview**

- EUVP: EUR 750 000 – Inter-institutional agreement.
- FPI website and external communication, as well as hosting costs for FPI websites: EUR 395 000 (procurement, one contract per year under DG COMM framework contract and annual hosting costs through a co-delegation arrangement with DG DIGIT).

**Overall budget implemented by FPI under (A) and (B); EUR 1 145 000**

#### **Implementation mode**

The funds will be implemented through direct management.

### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE IT**

#### **Legal basis**

Article 58(2)(d) of the Financial Regulation<sup>19</sup>

#### **Budget line**

14 20 04 03

#### **Description and objective of the implementing measure**

EUR 1 530 172 are allocated to central corporate IT activities implemented by DG DIGIT, in line with the Communication on the guidelines on financing of the IT corporate systems<sup>20</sup>.

**Total budget: EUR 1 530 172**

#### **Implementation mode**

The implementation method of corporate communication will be direct management.

<sup>19</sup> OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024

<sup>20</sup> C(2020)6126, 10.09.2020.

**5. BUDGET SUMMARY**

	<b>BUDGET IN EUR</b>
<b>ACTION 1. ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY EEAS IN EU DELEGATIONS BY REGION</b> <b>OUT OF WHICH PROCUREMENT: 13 491 258</b>	<i>13 491 258</i>
<b>Action 2. ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY EEAS HQ</b> <b>OUT OF WHICH PROCUREMENT: 3 054 877</b>	<i>3 054 877</i>
<b>Action 3. Activities related to Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) Implemented by EEAS in EU Delegations and at HQ</b> <b>OUT OF WHICH PROCUREMENT: 8 600 000</b>	<i>8 600 000</i>
<b>Action 4. ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY FPI</b> <b>OUT OF WHICH</b> • <b>PROCUREMENT: 395 000</b> • <b>INTER-INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT: 750 000</b>	<i>1 145 000</i>
<b>Action 5. CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE IT</b> <b>OUT OF WHICH PROCUREMENT: 1 530 172</b>	<i>1 530 172</i>
<b>TOTAL UNDER BUDGET LINE 14 20 04 03</b>	<i>27 821 307</i>