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### ANNEX

## **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe**

### **Exceptional Assistance Measure regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina**

#### **1. IDENTIFICATION**

Action:	Support to reconciliation efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Action Reference:	NDICI CR 2024/04
Cost:	EUR 2 800 000 (European Union (EU) contribution)
Budget Line:	14 02 03 10
Duration:	Maximum 18 months. The authorising officer responsible may decide to extend this period twice by a further period of up to six months, up to a total maximum duration of 30 months, under the conditions laid down in Article 23(6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947.
Lead service:	FPI

#### **2. ACTION SUMMARY**

This 18-month exceptional assistance measure will support trust-building activities, such as community dialogues, that unpack and deal with the legacy of the past beyond criminal justice. It will support the existing network of civil society organisations increasing their ability to act for national unity and trust-building. This will be pursued through capacity building and targeted funding for locally driven initiatives. The action will also facilitate, intensify, and broaden the proactive involvement of a substantial number of municipalities, mayors, and their constituencies in efforts of enhancing social cohesion and reconciliation. It will contribute to inclusive local governance and cohesion across different ethnicities through support to small-scale community infrastructure projects with the contribution of youth clubs, women’s associations, mountain rescue associations, veterans and many more.

#### **3. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

##### **3.1 BACKGROUND**

As the European Union works to enhance Bosnia and Herzegovina’s political commitment to reform and its convergence with the EU as a candidate country, there

are political forces across the country that put its progress and unity at risk. Following the increase in nationalist rhetoric and destabilisation efforts in the country in 2022, the EU launched for the first time a crisis response initiative supporting and connecting local reconciliation initiatives in the country. This initial crisis response was able to initiate dialogue on shared interests among citizens and local leaders to create an environment conducive to peace. However, without external support these actors are constrained by the prevailing political dynamics. Their efforts will require further consolidation to gain traction on social cohesion at the local and national levels. Advancing reconciliation removes incentives for radical ethno-nationalist rhetoric and actions which also undermine and complicate the political processes required for the integration of the country in the EU.

### **3.2 RATIONALE FOR CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIONS UNDER THE RAPID RESPONSE PILLAR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT**

While efforts towards EU integration continue, the political unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains under pressure and impacted by the regional repercussions of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. The tensions in the relationships between political leaders of Republika Srpska and representatives of the international community indicate that the reconciliation between the different constituencies requires sustained support. Additionally, the regulation of the functioning and funding of the civil society organisations, especially in Republika Srpska, may hamper the emergence of a common space for reconciliation. The accumulation of these conditions constitutes an exceptional and unforeseen situation in the sense of Article 4(4)(a) of the NDICI Regulation. An adequate response cannot be provided under any other European Union Instrument due to the urgency with which the funds are required and due to available resources already being firmly committed.

Annex IV, paragraph 1, second paragraph, points (a), (f) and (q) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 specifically provides for the use of the NDICI rapid response pillar to (a) support, through the provision of technical and logistical assistance, for the efforts undertaken by international, regional and local organisations and by State and civil society actors in promoting confidence-building, mediation, dialogue and reconciliation, transitional justice, women's and youth empowerment, in particular with regard to community tensions and protracted conflicts; (f) support for reinforcement of State capacity - in the face of significant pressures to rapidly build, maintain or restore its core functions, and basic social and political cohesion, and (q) support for measures to promote the development and organisation of civil society and its participation in the political process, including measures to enhance the role of women in such processes and measures to promote independent, pluralist and professional media.

### 3.3 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risk	Risk level H/M/L	Mitigation measures
An accelerated deterioration of the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina may create obstacles to the establishment of the civil society network.	<b>M</b>	The implementing partners will be required to have a proven ability to work in politically challenging contexts and to have the necessary flexibility to assess the most relevant internal organisation options for civil society.
Selected communities, organisations or activists may be targeted by activities of several donors simultaneously.	<b>M</b>	The close coordination with other donors will be ensured during identification and implementation of individual initiatives.
Opportunities and preparedness for reconciliation evolves rapidly.	<b>M</b>	The implementing partner to be selected will be required to ensure the necessary flexibility to adjust all activities to a rapidly changing situation at community-level.
Selected communities, organisations or activists may be targeted/harassed by specific groups and/or individuals.	<b>M</b>	The close coordination with the civil society, as well as outreach at political level to advocate for maintaining a free space for civil society will be crucial to mitigate this risk.

## 4. OBJECTIVES

### 4.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the action is to enhance cohesion among social and community groups across ethnic lines in Bosnia and Herzegovina, by building trust and resilience to tensions, in line with the European Commission’s priority 5 regarding the need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to “create an environment conducive to reconciliation” in the Opinion on the application of Bosnia and Herzegovina for EU membership.

### 4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 4.2.1 Strengthen the coherence of civil society in the field of peacebuilding and their ability to contribute to a national policy for stronger interethnic cohesion;
- 4.2.2 Empower communities and local authorities to participate in reconciliation and confidence building initiatives, and strengthen their policy advocacy capabilities;
- 4.2.3 Increase public engagement and space for positive peacebuilding narratives.

## 5. ACTION COMPONENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

**The main expected results/outcomes** include:

**Expected Result (1):** Reconciliation efforts of the civil society are linked-up at the local, regional, national and international levels and their impact is amplified.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.1.1 Further identify and support reconciliation champions to lead on developing promising initiatives to strengthen cohesion among the social resilience of the communities to the divisive rhetoric about the past;
- 5.1.2 Bolster connections between communities of similar interest and contexts across Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- 5.1.3 Support coordination between donors and reconciliation actors at all levels, including with authorities;
- 5.1.4 Assist in the media communication on best practices and success stories of reconciliation, to contribute to a national policy and platform for peacebuilding.

**Expected Result (2):** Communities are empowered to implement reconciliation and confidence building initiatives.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.2.1 Facilitate dialogue platforms at community level;
- 5.2.2 Support locally owned initiatives to advance peacebuilding and dealing with the legacy of the past responding to the recognized community needs;
- 5.2.3 Identify and provide targeted support to larger scale opportunities for reconciliation, confidence building, and dialogue, where relevant bringing together communities from across the country and beyond.

**Expected Result (3):** Municipalities/local authorities are empowered to implement reconciliation and confidence building initiatives.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.3.1 Provide municipalities/local authorities with knowledge and other resources to develop their capacity for trust-building initiatives;
- 5.3.2 Support the emergence of a network of municipalities working on reconciliation and maintain a positive environment;
- 5.3.3 Facilitate the engagement of municipalities and citizens to support the formulation of measures at national level to advance an environment conducive to reconciliation.

**Expected Result (4):** Public engagement on reconciliation and dealing with the past is strengthened and a space for positive peacebuilding narratives emerges.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.4.1 Organise processes of deliberative democracy incorporate knowledge, priorities and proposals from citizens for a locally owned implementation of the European Commission's Key Priority 5 (KP5);

5.4.2 Implementation of “KP5 Labs” with thematic stakeholders and experts to produce a Roadmap for Action on KP5 to be presented to competent authorities, incorporating lessons learnt and initiatives from all project activities, including Phase 1.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **6.1 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES**

The Commission will ensure that the appropriate EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>1</sup>.

#### **6.1.1 Indirect management with a pillar assessed entity**

This action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the following criteria: knowledge of the civil society landscape in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the national, regional and local levels, and being able to leverage convening power to work with and link up actors at all levels in a complex political context. The implementation by this entity entails the creation of a civil society network, the mapping of communities and tailored assistance and the management of related communication campaigns and public engagement.

#### **6.1.2 Changes from indirect to direct management mode due to exceptional circumstances**

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entrusted entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modalities for grants (direct award). In that case, the award would be justified under Art 195(f) as it requires an entity with specific technical competence and specialisation, given the specific working environment and need for trust building and access to the concerned communities.

### **6.2 INDICATIVE BUDGET**

The total European Union contribution under this Financing Decision **will not exceed EUR 2 800 000**. A breakdown among components is provided hereunder, and is indicative.

#### **Indicative budget breakdown**

<b>Components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>	<b>Indicative third-party contribution, in currency identified</b>
Component 1:		
6.1.1 – Indirect management	2 800 000	N.A.
Total	2 800 000	N.A.

<sup>1</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://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.

### **6.3 ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The action shall be implemented under indirect management. It will be devolved and sub-delegated to the **European Union Delegation in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, with the support of the Commission for the conclusion of the contracts implementing the action.

### **6.4 PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS MONITORING AND REPORTING**

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final report. Each report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the Logframe matrix. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

### **6.5 EVALUATION**

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components.

The Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

### **6.6 AUDIT**

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

### **6.7 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY**

The 2021-2027 programming cycle has adopted a new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

It will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers,

grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

The 2022 “Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for external actions” reference document shall be used to establish the appropriate contractual obligations.

## **7. COMPLEMENTARITY, COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Complementarity and coordination will be sought with previous and ongoing crisis response projects. Particular emphasis will be given to ensure good coordination with other support initiatives by the EU, EU Member States and other donors.