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ANNEX

ANNEX

to the

Commission Decision

**on the financing of the annual work programme 2023 for information outreach on EU
external relations**

ANNEX

Legal Basis: Article 58 (2)(d) of 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 (the Financial Regulation).

Annual work programme 2023 for information outreach on EU external relations

1. INTRODUCTION

This annual work programme 2023 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 European Commission 2019–2024 - A stronger Europe in the world, Ursula von der Leyen²;
- Joint Communication from the Commission and the European External Action Service on Tackling COVID-19 disinformation – Getting the facts right, 10 June 2020³;
- 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 2022⁴;
- Council Conclusions on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI)⁵
- Special Report 09/2021 of the European Court of Auditors (“Disinformation affecting the EU – tackled, but not tamed”)⁶.

This work programme contains the actions carried out to inform the public to be financed and the budget breakdown for year 2023 as follows. The detailed budget breakdown per type of action is available under section 6:

- for procurement implemented under direct management by the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Delegations by region: EUR 13 322 707
- for procurement implemented under direct management by EEAS in headquarters: EUR 1 350 000
- for procurement implemented under direct management by the EEAS in Headquarters and Delegations: EUR 8 600 000

¹ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en_0.pdf

³ JOIN/2020/8 final.

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

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

⁶ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR21_09/SR_Disinformation_EN.pdf

- for activities co-delegated to the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology: EUR 1 841 117
- for procurement and other actions (inter-institutional agreement with the European Parliament) implemented under direct management by the Service for Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI): EUR 860 000
- for corporate IT costs: EUR 1 403 883

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 2023.

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 non-member countries, with international organisations and within the European Union when communicating 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-funded external actions under the “Neighbourhood and the World” 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
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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*)

<p>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 in the UK, B) at Headquarters to carry out autonomous or supporting activities, or to implement projects that benefit all 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.</p>

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

<p>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.</p>

Examples like communication campaigns and activities around food (in)security following Russia's invasion of Ukraine have shown that locally tailored and translated, contextualised and targeted communication by EU Delegations is key to ensure our messages and narrative about the EU's policies and assistance reach our audiences and influence their perceptions about the EU. Likewise, the Delegations' cooperation and joint communication activities with diplomatic missions of the EU MSs and like-minded countries has 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 Foreign and Security Policy and forms an integral part of the EU Delegations' activities, in line with the EEAS Communication principles and priorities and guidelines for the EU Delegations. In close coordination with EU Member States' diplomatic missions, the Delegations have 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 and its policies.

Overall, the Delegations' communication will focus on the relevance of our activities for people in third countries and employ a storytelling approach within communication campaigns, rather than showcasing benefits of isolated initiatives or projects. The EU Delegations are expected to design and carry out a range of communication and public diplomacy activities in close cooperation with the Stratcom divisions of the European External Action Service and in line with the EEAS Communication principles and priorities, adapted to local needs and challenges, taking into account the Delegations' capacities. Activities include, but are not limited to, areas such as the production and dissemination of audio-visual materials, development of digital communication products, production and dissemination of publications on priority themes, development of press and media 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 in this context particular attention will be given to the existing MENA region 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 situation and limitations related to the spread of COVID-19 virus as well as the consequences of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine.

All Delegations are requested to draft an annual work programme and prepare a multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy plan. They both serve as a planning tool for Delegations and form part of a report to EEAS Headquarter on past and planned activities, built in line with the "whole of Delegation" approach and taking into account all budgetary and human resources. 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. The EEAS Stratcom divisions (STRAT 1 and STRAT 2) are and will remain in the lead in this planning process. 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 themes 'EU in the World', 'Team Europe', 'Global Gateway' and others. This contribution may consist of the development of campaigns that communicate how people concretely benefit from the EU,

that make our actions relatable and are a way of improving understanding of what the EU does.

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

A coordinated approach, particularly on cross-cutting priorities will be further consolidated. The EEAS chairs regular communication meetings within the so-called coordination mechanism with RELEX family services, mostly in conjunction with DG COMM, DG ECHO, FPI, DG INTPA, DG NEAR, DG Trade, where other DGs are also associated. This coordinated approach aims at ensuring a more efficient planning and implementation of global campaigns both centrally and on the delegations` level, while concentrating on priority themes and activities.

Total budget: 13 322 707 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.

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 EUNIC network;
- support to the communication outreach activities of the CSDP missions and operations;
- provision of information through the EEAS website and those of the Delegations.

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

Total budget: 1 350 000 EUR

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

The appropriations for addressing foreign information manipulation and interference, including disinformation (FIMI) 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.

The Council Conclusions on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 July 2022) 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, as outlined in the concept paper: 1) situational awareness, 2) resilience building (including strategic communications, capacity building etc.), 3) disruption and regulation (including EEAS cooperation with DG CNECT on the Code of Practice on Disinformation), and 4) diplomatic and CFSP instruments (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 foster close international cooperation with key likeminded partners and to raise greater awareness of the phenomenon amongst specialised 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).

With regard to improving the capacity to monitor, analyse and assess, 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;
- development of internal and external training and relevant information/training materials;
- development 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 government, civil society, private industry and international organisations.

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 for 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 operations to build resilience to FIMI by employing specific strategic communication efforts;
- 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 of trainings, roundtables and similar capacity building formats, including the production of training material.

The recently established 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 integration of this new 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 23 272 707

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

FPI Framework Contract Policy Support Facility FPI/PSF/2019: 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 (EU, Euratom) N° 2018/1046.

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 EEAS⁷ 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 and EEAS services of 14/12/2010.⁸

⁷ Ares(2013)3719368 - 13/12/2013

⁸ Ares(2010)943776

3. GRANTS, PROCUREMENT AND OTHER ACTIONS MANAGED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (DG CNECT) – INFORMATION ABOUT EUROPEAN AFFAIRS IN FARSI

Legal basis

Article 58(2)(d) of the Financial Regulation⁹

Budget line

14 20 04 03

Description and objective of the implementing measure

A. Information about European Affairs in Farsi

The provision of quality information in Farsi with a clear and balanced approach on European and international policies remains important to enhancing knowledge of these issues among native Farsi speakers, as well as to providing regular and reliable information on European affairs and their impact on citizens.

The amount programmed by the Commission for the activities covered by this decision has since 2009 included a measure to promote the production and dissemination of European news in Farsi to Iran (currently subject of a contract with Euronews). A Euronews broadcasting television service in Farsi was launched in 2010 in response to the European Parliament Resolution of 10 May 2007 ([2006/2172\(INI\)](#)). As of 2017, Euronews introduced a new production model as a result of which the production and dissemination of the Farsi service became fully digital.

In July 2021 the Commission signed a new Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with Euronews for 2021-24, within the meaning of Art.195 of the financial regulation. Euronews is considered a ‘particular type of body on account of its technical competence, and high degree of specialisation’ for producing and broadcast programmes and reports on EU affairs, including activities and policies of the EU institutions, and in multiple languages. In 2023, the production of the Euronews Farsi service will be funded within this framework.

Total budget: EUR 1 841 117

Implementation mode

Implementation of the action concerning information on European affairs in Farsi will be done by direct management via a co-delegation (Type II) to the European Commission Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT) and will take the form of a specific grant agreement in the framework of the 3-year Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) signed by the European Commission with Euronews in 2021. The grant will take the form of reimbursement on the basis of unit costs, as currently authorised by the Commission decision C(2021)3578 of 27.05.2021, according to Article 181 of the Financial Regulation; or alternatively, on the reimbursement of a percentage of the eligible costs actually incurred if the conditions to apply unit costs are not met. The Commission may finance up to 95% of the eligible costs. The type of applicant targeted by the grant agreement is media outlet able to cover world news from a pan-European perspective.

⁹ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018.

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

Legal basis

Article 58(2)(d) of the Financial Regulation¹⁰

Budget line

14 20 04 03

A. European Union Visitors Programme

The budget line will also cover a direct contribution of EUR 560 000 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 agreement¹¹. 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 by the European Parliament and the European Commission, in 2023, 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, with a view to making them ‘ambassadors’ for the EU at home. In view of the possible continuation of COVID-19 restrictions, some of the study visits can take place virtually.

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. 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 300 000 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 von der Leyen Commission (notably A Stronger Europe in

¹⁰ OJ L 193, 30.07.2018.

¹¹ To be replaced by a Memorandum of Understanding currently under preparation

the World). They will reinforce the messages of the EU Global Strategy in key areas (e.g. human rights and climate change), the 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 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 Commission and EEAS corporate communication efforts.

Overview

- EUVP: EUR 560 000 – Inter-institutional agreement.
- FPI website and external communication, as well as hosting costs for FPI websites: EUR 300 000 (procurement, one contract per year under DG COMM FWC and annual hosting costs through a co-delegation arrangement with DG DIGIT).

Overall budget implemented by FPI under (A) and (B); EUR 860 000

Implementation mode

The funds will be implemented through direct management.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE IT

Legal basis

Article 58(2)(d) of the Financial Regulation¹²

Budget line

14 20 04 03

Amount

EUR 1 403 883

Description and objective of the implementing measure

EUR 1 403 883 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 systems¹³.

Total budget: EUR 1 403 883

¹² OJ L 193, 30.7.2018.

¹³ C(2020)6126, 10.09.2020.

Implementation mode

The implementation method of corporate communication will be direct management.

6. BUDGET SUMMARY

	BUDGET IN EUR
ACTION 1. ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY EEAS IN EU DELEGATIONS BY REGION OUT OF WHICH PROCUREMENT: 13 322 707	<i>13 322 707</i>
Action 2. ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY EEAS HQ OUT OF WHICH PROCUREMENT: 1 350 000	<i>1 350 000</i>
Action 3. Activities related to Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) Implemented by EEAS in EU Delegations and at HQ OUT OF WHICH PROCUREMENT: 8 600 000	<i>8 600 000</i>
Action 4. ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY DG CONNECT OUT OF WHICH GRANT: 1 841 117	<i>1 841 117</i>
Action 5. ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY FPI OUT OF WHICH <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROCUREMENT: 300 000• INTER-INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT: 560 000	<i>860 000</i>
Action 6. CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE IT OUT OF WHICH PROCUREMENT: 1 403 883	<i>1 403 883</i>
TOTAL UNDER BUDGET LINE 14 20 04 03	<i>27 377 707</i>