COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION


on the Annual Action Programme 2014 and 2015 part 1 in favour of Central Asia to be financed from the general budget of the European Union
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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

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 action¹, and in particular Article 2(1) thereof,


Whereas:

(1) The Commission has adopted the Multiannual Indicative Programme for the period 2014-2020³, point 3.1 of which provides for the following focal sector: "Sustainable regional development". Under this focal sector one finds the following priority areas for Regional cooperation: energy, environment/water and socio-economic development.

(2) The objectives pursued by the Annual Action Programme to be financed under the Development Cooperation Instrument⁴ are to: i) support and further develop a dedicated regional high capacity and high quality connectivity network for education and research purposes and thus to contribute to the modernisation of the sector in the Central Asia region; ii) contribute to sustainable regional development and economic growth by providing funding for key infrastructures in Central Asia and addressing investment needs in critical areas for social economic development and increasing population living standards.

(3) Action entitled "Central Asia Research and Education Network 3 (CAREN3)". The general objective of this intervention is to maintain and further develop a high-capacity Internet network for research and education communities in Central Asia, providing the region with a gateway to global research and education collaboration whilst seeking long-term project sustainability through co-funding by Central Asian partner countries.

(4) Action entitled "Investment Facility for Central Asia 2015 (IFCA)". This action promotes investments in the sectors energy, environment, support to SMEs and social

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¹ OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 95.
² OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1
³ C(2014)5653
infrastructure. The facility thus contributes to the realization of projects aiming to reduce unemployment and poverty and to advance the economy in a sustainable way.

(5) This Decision complies with the conditions laid down in Article 94 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union5.

(6) The Commission should entrust budget-implementation tasks under indirect management to the entities identified in this Decision, subject to the conclusion of a delegation agreement. In accordance with Article 60(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, the responsible authorising officer has ensured that these entities guarantee a level of protection of the financial interests of the Union equivalent to that required when the Commission manages Union funds. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is currently undergoing the assessment under Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. In anticipation of the results of this review, the responsible authorising officer deems that, based on the entity's positive assessment under Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 and on the long-standing and problem-free cooperation with them, budget-implementation tasks can be entrusted to this entity. For the Investment Facility for Central Asia, other possible entrusted entities are public bodies or bodies governed by private law with a public service mission (Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), will undergo the ex ante assessment in accordance with Article 61(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 related to financial instruments. In anticipation of the results of this review, the responsible authorising officer deems that, based on the long-standing and problem-free cooperation with them, budget-implementation tasks can be entrusted to these entities.

(7) It is appropriate to acknowledge that grants may be awarded without a call for proposals by the responsible authorising officer who ensures that the conditions for an exception to a call for proposals according to Article 190 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.

(8) The maximum contribution of the European Union set by this Decision should cover any possible claims for interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 92 of Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 and Article 111(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.

(9) The Commission is required to define the term "non-substantial change" in the sense of Article 94(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 to ensure that any such changes can be adopted by the authorising officer by delegation, or under his or her responsibility, by sub-delegation (hereinafter referred to as the 'responsible authorising officer').

(10) The measures provided for in this Decision is in accordance with the opinion of the Development Cooperation Committee set up by the basic act referred to in Recital (2). HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

**Article 1**

Adoption of the measure

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The Annual Action Programme 2014 and 2015 part 1 in favour of Central Asia, as set out in the annexes, is approved.

The programme shall include the following actions:

– Annex 1: Central Asia Research and Education Network 3 (CAREN3);

**Article 2**

**Financial contribution**

The maximum contribution of the European Union authorised by this Decision for the implementation of the programme is set at EUR 30 000 000 to be financed for an amount of EUR 10 000 000 from budget line 21.021000 of the general budget of the European Union for 2014 and for an amount of EUR 20 000 000 from budget line 21.020300 of the general budget of the European Union for 2015.

The implementation of this decision is subject to the availability of the appropriations following the adoption of the general budget of the European Union referred to in the first paragraph or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

**Article 3**

**Implementation modalities**

Budget-implementation tasks under indirect management may be entrusted to the entities identified in the attached Annexes, subject to the conclusion of the relevant agreements.

Section 4 of the Annexes referred to in the second paragraph of Article 1 sets out the elements required by Article 94(2) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.

Grants may be awarded without a call for proposals by the responsible authorising officer according to Article 190 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012. Where known at the moment of the adoption of this Decision, the reasons for this as well as the potential beneficiaries shall be identified in the attached Annexes.

The financial contribution referred to in Article 2 shall also cover any possible interests due for late payment.

**Article 4**

**Non-substantial changes**

Increases or decreases of up to EUR 10 million not exceeding 20 % of the contribution referred to in the first paragraph of Article 2, or cumulated changes to the allocations of specific actions not exceeding 20 % of that contribution shall not be considered substantial, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objectives of the actions.

The responsible authorising officer may adopt these non-substantial changes in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality.
Done at Brussels, 16.12.2014

For the Commission
Neven MIMICA
Member of the Commission