COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 24.10.2019

on the financing of the annual action programme in favour of Uzbekistan for 2019
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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 action, and in particular Article 2(1) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) In order to ensure the implementation of the annual action programme in favour of Uzbekistan for 2019, it is necessary to adopt an annual financing decision, which constitutes the annual work programme for the year 2019. 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 TFEU.

(3) The Commission has adopted the Country Strategy Paper for Uzbekistan and the National Multiannual Indicative Programme for the period 2014-2020, which prioritises rural development. This priority remains valid following the Midterm Review of the MIP.

(4) The objectives pursued by the annual action programme to be financed under the Development Cooperation Instrument are to contribute to the economic development of Uzbekistan and to its integration with the international community.

2 OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 95.
3 www.sanctionsmap.eu. 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, the OJ prevails.
4 Commission Decision on the adoption of the National Indicative Programme between the European Union and Uzbekistan C(2014)7507final of 21/10/2014
The action entitled “Skills Development for Employability in Rural Areas of Uzbekistan” aims to enhance the living standards in rural areas, by equipping Uzbek women and men with relevant skills for the needs of a sustainable, diversified and modernised agriculture.

The action entitled “Facilitating the Process of Uzbekistan’s Accession to the World Trade Organisation” aims to contribute to the economic development of Uzbekistan, by creating a trade environment that is in conformity with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules, thus accompanying the country’s WTO accession process.

The action entitled “EU contribution to the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan” aims to address environmental, social and economic insecurities in the most vulnerable areas of the Aral Sea region, by bringing innovative solutions in addressing the environmental issues, improving the access of affected rural population to basic services, and reducing poverty.

Pursuant to Article 4(7) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 indirect management is to be used for the implementation of the programme.

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 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.

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.

In order to allow for flexibility in the implementation of the programme, 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.

The actions provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Development Cooperation Instrument Committee established under Article 19 of Regulation (EU) 233/2014.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

**Article 1**

The programme

The annual financing decision, constituting the annual programme for the implementation of the annual action programme 2019 in favour of Uzbekistan, as set out in the Annexes, is adopted.

The programme shall include the following actions:

(a) “Skills Development for Employability in Rural Areas of Uzbekistan”, set out in Annex I;

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7 Except for the cases of Article 154(6) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, where the Commission may decide, not to require an ex-ante assessment.
(b) “Facilitating the Process of Uzbekistan’s Accession to the World Trade Organisation”, set out in Annex II;

(c) “EU contribution to the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan”, set out in Annex III.

Article 2

Union contribution

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the programme for the year 2019 is set at EUR 20 200 000, and shall be financed from the appropriations entered in the following line of the general budget of the Union: budget line 21.020300.

The appropriations provided for in the first paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.

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 I, II and III, may be entrusted to the entities or persons referred to or selected in accordance with the criteria laid down in point 5.4.1 of Annexes I, II and III.

Article 4

Flexibility clause

Increases or decreases of up to EUR 10 000 000 not exceeding 20% of the contribution set in the first paragraph of Article 2, or cumulated changes\(^8\) to the allocations of specific actions not exceeding 20% of that contribution, as well as extensions of the implementation period shall not be considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, provided that these changes 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.

Done at Brussels, 24.10.2019

For the Commission

Neven MIMICA

Member of the Commission

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\(^8\) These changes can come from assigned revenue made available after the adoption of the financing decision.