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ANNEX 22

Of the Commission Implementing Decision on the 2019 Annual Action programme for the Partnership Instrument

Action Document for
Global Exchange on Religion in Society

1 KEY IDENTIFICATION DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the Action</th>
<th>Global Exchange on Religion in Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country/region/global</td>
<td>Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector of intervention</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Indicative budget | Total: EUR 1 500 000  
EC contribution: EUR 1 500 000 (100%)  
Other contributions: NA |
| Duration and target start date of implementation | 24 months – 1st quarter 2020 |
| Method of implementation | Direct management – Procurement |
| DAC code(s) | 99810 |
| Markers | General policy objective | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
| Participation development/good governance | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ |
| Aid to environment | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Gender equality | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Trade Development | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| RIO Convention markers | | | |
| Biological diversity | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Combat desertification | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Climate change mitigation | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Climate change adaptation | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
2 RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

2.1 Action summary

In an increasingly fractured and multipolar world, the EU needs to strengthen its position in order to guarantee its prosperity, security and values. Addressing the issue of the place of religion in society is crucial in this respect. The global conversation on the place of religion in society has very often been reduced to the narrative of the clash of civilisations. Extreme forces have exploited and fuelled this narrative. Yet religion can play and is already playing a positive role in building inclusive societies, where everybody can find their place and where people of different faiths – and none – coexist peacefully.

Through this action, the European Union (EU) proposes to set up an international exchange platform to connect positive experiences of coexistence among people of different faiths, and none, in societies across the globe. The platform will connect people inside and outside the EU. The exchange platform will facilitate the spread of best practices on promoting respect for one another and fostering social inclusion, to create transnational networks of actors from different faith traditions. It will also help these actors scale up their activities and reach out to a larger audience.

By doing so, the action will aim at empowering actors who are already playing a positive role within their own societies, and at amplifying their voice. It will thus contribute to making these societies more resilient – a key goal of the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy. The action will also create a network of like-minded social actors, inside and outside the EU: it will represent a public diplomacy investment for the European Union.

2.2 Background/Context/Rationale for PI funding

Religion plays an important role in nearly every society around the world, contributing in a wide variety of ways – both positively and negatively – to many of the key issues in contemporary global affairs. In recent decades, the public conversation has often focused on religion as a source of social tensions between groups or individuals of different faith. The presence of “the other” has commonly been described as a source of existential danger or as something that compromises one’s sense of religious or cultural authenticity and identity. However, historic evidence and ongoing experiences from Europe and from around the world demonstrate that different ethnic, religious and belief groups as well as non-believers can live in peaceful coexistence. Such peaceful coexistence enriches society economically as well as culturally. Research shows that the coexistence of different groups and individuals in society becomes easier when they work collectively towards broadly shared goals. The proposed exchange platform will aim at connecting different experiences of civic engagement across religious boundaries, from all around the world.

Through the creation of the Global Exchange on Religion in Society, the EU has the potential to explore a specific model for engagement with religion. This approach recognizes religion as an important social force throughout the world, while emphasizing the importance of engaging religion and religious actors alongside other relevant and non-religious stakeholders (e.g. social, political economic) necessary for addressing the issue at hand. Such a model does not require endorsing specific religions or specific interpretations of religion, as a preferred solution to global problems. It focuses on the practical contribution of individuals and organisations to their societies: it aims at empowering those who work for positive change and for social inclusion in a religiously diverse environment.

The goal of the Global Exchange on Religion in Society is to contribute to social inclusion and societal resilience by setting up a global community-based initiative on the place and space of religion in society. The target groups are community actors (faith based or not) from across the religious landscape. Their selection will be calibrated according to their respective role in their societies and communities, rather than their nationality, ethnic origin, faith or no faith affiliation.
The Global Exchange will provide the space for a global network of such community actors to (1) allow their voices to be heard; (2) allow a cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiential learning between the participants, who will share and learn best practices regarding how religion and credible religious voices can promote social inclusion, respect for diversity, and a shared sense of citizenship; and (3) where tension or identity politics are at play, identify approaches from the grass-roots level to build bridges and help communities focus on what they have in common, while respecting everyone’s specificity.

The scope and purpose of the Global Exchange touch upon a number of EU priorities as defined in the EU’s Global Strategy, related to peace and security, democracy and respect for Human Rights, fundamental freedoms and the Rule of Law, respect for justice, solidarity, equality, non-discrimination, pluralism and respect for diversity.

As outlined in the Global Strategy, societal resilience is a key challenge: the EU should nurture resilience by increased outreach to cultural organisations, religious communities, social partners and human rights defenders, and by deepening our work on education, culture and youth to foster pluralism, coexistence and respect. Management of religious diversity, while important in itself, also helps build resilience.

The initiative will provide feedback that will help inform other policy areas such as peacebuilding, reconciliation and post-conflict dialogues, the EU’s integrated approach to conflicts and crises, and policy to promote tolerance and respect for diversity.

This action is aligned with the Partnership Instrument (PI) Regulation, namely with its Objective 1: "Supporting the Union's bilateral, regional and inter-regional co-operation partnership strategies by developing collective approaches and responses to challenges of global concern”.

In particular, the project contributes to the PI Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2018-20 priority "Peace and security” and mainstreams the following cross-cutting issues: Public and Cultural Diplomacy, Multilateralism (building alliances) contributing to a global order based on international law, EU principles and values (democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality, including gender equality, and solidarity); societal resilience.

2.3 Lesson learnt

The action is proposed as a follow-up to the pilot Policy Support Facility (PSF) action “Contextualizing Islam in Pluralistic Societies: Towards an International Exchange Platform on the place of religion in today's societies” (running from 15/12/2017 to 15/03/2019). In the framework of the pilot PSF action, the UK-based NGO “Lokahi Foundation” undertook a scoping study, three workshops and two pilot Exchanges with EU and non-EU participants, to test the general approach and the types of activities that could be carried out under this initiative. The pilot project showed great interest from all participants in the potential establishment by the EU of an exchange mechanism to explore how resources from religion can be mobilised to promote coexistence between people in diverse societies.

The pilot project has generated three main outcomes:

- Contributed to improving understanding and the visibility of the EU’s work on religion and foreign policy;
- Contributed to the EU’s work at the intersection of religion and social inclusion, which has been met with positive feedback by the workshop and pilot participants;
- Generated proposals for specific platform activities and therefore informed the programming exercise for the action implementation, which will tentatively start at the beginning of 2020 under the PI AAP 2019-phase II.
2.4 Coherence and complementarity

The EU is already engaged in a number of programmes dealing with religion and religious actors – from inter-religious dialogue to preventing violent extremism, from actions on freedom of religion and belief to “Article 17” dialogues with confessional and non-confessional leaders. This action will build on such experience, while investing in a different form of engagement with religion. Coherence and complementarity with other EU-funded actions will be ensured. These include ongoing projects by DEVCO, JUST, EAC and HOME.

The Global Exchange responds directly to the recognition on the part of the EU and its Member States that religion plays a vitally important role in nearly every society around the world, contributing in a wide variety of ways – both positively and negatively – to many key issues in contemporary global affairs. The Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy is an expression of this recognition. The network aims to equip participants and their respective ministries to more effectively analyse religious dynamics and engage religious actors in the pursuit of shared policy objectives. This is also underscored by the EEAS Secretary General’s instructions to senior management to increase the religious literacy of policy-making and the EU’s ability to navigate the religion-political landscape both at Headquarters and in Delegations. The annual Heads of Delegations discussion meeting in September 2018 initiated the discussion at their level on the role of religious and cultural actors as an integral part of any civil society, shaping world views and thereby foreign policy. The Global Exchange inserts itself in this context.

With its broader focus on ‘religion and society’, as well as its particular target groups both inside and outside Europe, the Global Exchange on Religion in Society will complement and avoid duplicating other EU policy initiatives, such as:

- Initiatives under Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, focused on the consultation of confessional and non-confessional leaders inside Europe: the Exchange will focus on the interaction of community-based actors, selected for their experience in the field instead of their religious affiliation per se.

- Initiatives on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB): the mandates of the EU Special Representative and the Commission’s Special Envoy on the promotion of FoRB focus on non-EU countries. This initiative will establish a two-way exchange of best practices on how to live together, between countries inside and outside the European Union.

- Initiatives on preventing/countering violent extremism, which already recognise the need to use the positive force of religion and engagement with religious leaders: the Global Exchange will not focus primarily on addressing radicalisation, but on connecting positive experiences where religion has helped create not only resilience, but thriving communities across any religious landscape. By doing so, it will also indirectly contribute to countering radicalisation.

- Activities financed under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) by DG DEVCO in non-EU countries, and DG JUST initiatives focused on EU Member States: this Exchange will involve community-based actors from both inside and outside Europe.

The broader “religion and society approach” (as distinct from “inter-faith engagement” or “religious engagement”) aims at reducing the chances of activities being perceived as endorsing or promoting particular religions, religious leaders, or ways of believing. This approach can help understand religious tensions in their broader context, where other social factors may have a more relevant role than religion itself. Conversely, this approach also makes possible to add a religious engagement or religious outreach component to work focused on issues that might not be explicitly religious. In short, the religion and society approach helps “right-size” the role of religion in particular issues.
The Global Exchange will aim at facilitating the cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiential learning between participants with respect to best practices on the role of religion in promoting societal pluralism. It will be a dynamic forward-looking exercise that will help inform policy in areas such as our general policy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Integrated Approach and mediation and conflict prevention. In addition to the promotion of peaceful coexistence, it will also contribute to raising the awareness of the religious dimension of foreign policy in the EU.

An Advisory Board formed of experts in the field should be established, to provide expert guidance on the Exchange activities, with a particular eye to their impact and sustainability. The Advisory Board will liaise with relevant EEAS and COM services to ensure the Exchange's coherence with EU policies and its sustainability beyond the current mandate.

The awarding of micro-grants in support of ideas and projects conceived during the Exchanges, and the establishment of an alumni network, are also aimed at promoting sustainability of the project.

2.5 EU added value

The Global Exchange on Religion in Society aims to benefit its participants as well as to contribute to the EU's foreign policy goals, as defined in the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy.

1. Impact for participants. Each session of the Global Exchange should be topic specific and focus on a practical issue, around which participants will gather with relevant experience from the field. Participants will share their experiences and learn from other participants, but also participate in field visits to organisations and institutions. Participants will learn specific skills (from project design to content production for social media), and become part of a global network of peers. Feedback from participants should be used to fine-tune activities as the Global Exchange unfolds.

2. Impact for the European Union. The creation of an alumni network should contribute to the EU’s public diplomacy activities. The EU will reach out to foreign civil society organisations and leaders with whom we do not currently engage. The Global Exchange should empower individuals and organisations sharing the EU goal to promote coexistence in diverse societies. The initiative will contribute to strengthening societal resilience outside the European Union. At the same time, the Global Exchange on Religion in Society will involve participants from inside the European Union, investing in social inclusion and pluralism within the EU’s borders. The strong link between the internal and the external dimension represent an additional strength of this approach.

Additional benefits include:

- Learning practical lessons about living together, proactively connecting positive experiences from inside and outside Europe.
- Active acknowledgment of the positive role that religion and religious responses can play in the politics of inclusion both in Europe and globally. This can be seen as an antidote to those who want to use religion to polarise and to exclude.
- Increasing the EU’s credibility externally by showing its willingness to look at its own track record of pluralism and social inclusion of all people of faith and none.
- More diverse insights should also help inform policy initiatives in the field of mediation and conflict resolution – not least where religion and religious leaders have become “part of the problem.”
2.6 Cross-cutting issues

Rule of law, good governance, human rights, gender equality and adhering to the highest standards of conduct, discipline and accountability are crosscutting issues for this project and will be directly targeted.

The action also mainstreams the following PI crosscutting issues: multilateralism, fostering the building of partnerships and alliances in a global context, global order based on international law; EU principles and values and resilience.

3 ACTION DESCRIPTION

3.1 Objectives

The overall objective of the action is to enable and enhance greater cooperation between religious actors and broader civil society, across a broader range of issues with a focus on both “religious” and “non-religious” areas of policy concern.

The specific objectives of this action are:

SO 1 facilitate the cross-fertilisation of ideas and experimental learning between participants with respect to best practices on the role of religion in promoting respect for diversity and fostering social inclusion.

SO 2 create transnational networks of religious actors from different faith traditions working in the same professional sector (e.g. education, community development, conflict resolution).

SO 3 provide these actors with ideas and skills to help them scale up their activities and reach out to a larger audience.

The planned results of the action will be:

R 1 a contribution to the global conversation on the role of religion as a positive force for promoting respect for diversity, coexistence and social inclusion; a more active participatory and inclusive sense of citizenship across boundaries of belief and worldviews.

R 2 an alumni network of participants in the Exchange, sharing a similar understanding of the positive role religions can play towards social inclusion, conflict resolution and civic engagement.

R 3 greater diffusion of inclusive religious ideas: this will be achieved thanks to improved communication skills for the participants in the Exchange, and thanks to increased visibility for positive experiences of coexistence.

These results will be achieved by implementing the following indicative activities:

- exchange visits for civil society and religious actors, which should include both dialogues among participants and field visits to relevant projects and institutions;
- virtual meet-ups and exchange programmes;
- the creation of a transnational network of social media content creators focused on religion and social inclusion;
- potential “track 2” spin-off dialogues focused on identifying new solutions for overcoming complex challenges at the intersection of religion and society.
Some of the activities will aim at strengthening communication skills for individuals who deal with
issues of faith and social inclusion, to raise awareness about positive, practical experiences of
coexistence among people of different faiths (and none).

Each session of the Exchange should involve 20-25 participants and focus on a specific topic. The
location of the Exchange should be relevant to the selected topic. At least two sessions should be held
each year for two years.

Participants will have the opportunity to engage with questions about the place of religion in society
and discuss issues such as:

- everyday coexistence in diverse societies;
- gender, religion and social equity;
- diversity and inclusion of minorities;
- integration and mutual learning;
- citizenship, belonging and religious identity;
- religion and freedom of expression.

Participants will be selected through two channels: 1. An open application process, with the call for
applications circulated through a dedicated webpage and relevant professional networks; 2. A
nomination process supervised by the Advisory Board, which will invite organisations identified as
conducting high-quality work in the field of religion and social inclusion, as well as EU Delegations,
EU institutions and Member States, to put forward the names of individuals from their own networks.

Participation in the Global Exchange on Religion in Society will not be based on religious affiliation:
the Exchange will be open to people of all faiths and none, based on their experience concerning a
selected range of issues that lie at the intersection of religion and society. Participation will be
calibrated so as to have geographical diversity. Participants will be selected primarily on the basis of
their respective roles in their communities, rather than their nationality per se.

The Global Exchange will represent a public diplomacy investment for the European Union. Some of
the EU's foreign policy goals can only be achieved by engaging with civil society actors outside the
EU's borders: these goals include fostering more resilient societies outside the EU, thus contributing to
global peace and security. The Exchange will create a network of like-minded civil society actors, and
enable these actors to better contribute to social inclusion and peaceful coexistence in their societies.

3.2 Stakeholders

Primary target groups include community-based actors (faith-based or not), representatives of civil
society organisations, practitioners, experts and academics, and religious leaders whose work is
focused on how religion can contribute to social inclusion in diverse societies. This includes
intellectuals and civil society leaders who emphasise living together alongside peoples of diverse
faiths as fellow citizens.

3.3 Risk assessment and management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk description</th>
<th>Risk level (High, Medium, Low)</th>
<th>Mitigating measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Platform misperceived as a primarily Countering Violent Terrorism (CVE) activity</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Outreach to officials in HQ and delegations, and public diplomacy activities to disseminate the 'religion and society' approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-focus on religious actors/leaders and issues</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Outreach and public diplomacy activities will emphasise the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Communication and EU visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation.

Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action¹, which came into force on 1 January 2018, shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

Sustaining impact beyond each physical exchange is planned to be achieved through the creation of self-sustaining virtual groups as well as a possible alumni network among former participants and stakeholders. This will in turn help underpin the EU’s visibility and public diplomacy efforts in this field.

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Method of implementation

Procurement (direct management)

(a) The programme will be implemented via one service contract.

(b) Indicative timing: the call for tenders will be launched in third Quarter 2019 under a suspensive clause prior to the adoption of this decision. This is justified because advancing on this file as fast as possible is of fundamental importance to deliver on the policy commitment of HRVP Federica Mogherini. The action will also be announced at a public conference organised on 6 September 2019 by HRVP Federica Mogherini.

4.2 Indicative budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Implementation</th>
<th>Amount in EUR million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procurement (direct management)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

An Advisory Board should be established, composed of experienced figures from a range of sectors (e.g. academia, civil society, business, current or former government officials) known for their expertise, experience, and track record with respect to the intersection of religion and social inclusion. The Advisory Board should provide strategic guidance to the Global Exchange on Religion in Society, help identify or recommend thematic priorities for the various sessions of the Exchange, and potentially play a role in selecting Exchange participants. Members of the Advisory Board will be selected by the Contracting Authority, in consultation with relevant EU services.

4.4 Performance monitoring

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this Action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing entity’s responsibilities. To this end, the implementing entity shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the Action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports.

Every 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. The progress and final reports shall provide quantified and qualitative data in relation to the logical framework indicators which will include relevant indicators from the list of core and corporate indicators.

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 Action 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).

4.5 Evaluation and audit

For this Action, the Commission may carry out interim and/or final/ex-post evaluation(s) via independent consultants contracted by the Commission based on specific terms of reference.

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.

As the “N+1” rule applies for contracting under this decision, external evaluations and audits, as well as additional external monitoring referred to under section 4.4. above, will be funded from sources other than those allocated to this specific Action.