

AGREEMENT

between the European Union and the Republic of Albania

on the participation of the Republic of Albania in "Creative Europe": the Union programme for the cultural and creative sectors

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, hereinafter referred to as "the Commission", on behalf of the European Union,

of the one part, and

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA, hereinafter referred to as "Albania",

of the other part,

Whereas:

- (1) A Framework Agreement has been signed on 22 November 2004 between the European Community and the Republic of Albania¹ which establishes the general principles for the participation of Albania in Union programmes. Article 5 of the Framework Agreement provides that the specific terms and conditions, including financial contribution, with regard to the participation of Albania in each particular programme will be determined by the Commission and the competent authorities of Albania.
- (2) "Creative Europe": the Union programme for the cultural and creative sectors was established by Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013²,
- (3) Entities established in Albania should be entitled to participate in recurrent activities which need to start before the entry into force of this Agreement. As a consequence, costs incurred for such activities, the implementation of which starts in 2014, may be considered eligible under the same conditions as those applicable to costs incurred by entities established in Member States provided that this Agreement enters into force before the end of the action concerned.

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Programme

Albania shall participate in "Creative Europe": the Union programme for the cultural and creative sectors, (hereinafter called "the Programme"), in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Framework Agreement of 22 November 2004 between the European Community and the Republic of Albania on the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Albania in Community programmes, and under the terms and conditions referred to in Articles 2-5 of this Agreement.

¹ OJ L 192, 22.7.2005, p.2.

² OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p.221.

Article 2

Terms and conditions of participation in the Programme

Albania shall participate:

- (a) in the Culture Sub-programme;
- (b) in the Cross-sectoral Strand of the Programme, with the exception of the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility, as mentioned in article 14 and in accordance with article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013;
- (c) in the MEDIA Sub-programme from the first day following the written confirmation from the responsible Commission service(s) that Albania meets the conditions set out in Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010³ and in accordance with article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013.

The participation of Albania in the activities of the Programme shall be in conformity with the objectives, criteria, procedures and deadlines defined in Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013.

The terms and conditions applicable for the submission, assessment and selection of applications, and for the implementation of actions by eligible entities from Albania shall be the same as those applicable to eligible entities from the Member States of the European Union.

Albania shall establish the appropriate structures and mechanisms at national level and shall adopt all other necessary measures for national coordination and organisation of activities to implement the Programme in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Regulation establishing this programme. In particular, Albania undertakes to establish a Creative Europe Desk in accordance with article 16 of the Regulation and the guidance provided by the Commission.

To participate in the Programme, Albania shall pay every year a financial contribution to the General Budget of the European Union in accordance with Article 3 below.

The financial contribution of Albania in respect of its participation and implementation of the Programme shall be added to the amount earmarked each year in the General Budget of the European Union for commitment appropriations to meet the financial obligations arising out of different forms of measures necessary for the execution, management and operation of the Programme.

One of the official languages of the European Union shall be used for the procedures related to requests, contracts and reports, as well as for other administrative aspects of the Programme.

Article 3

Financial contribution

The rules governing the financial contribution of Albania are set out in Annex I.

³ OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p.1.

Article 4
Reporting and evaluation

Without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Commission and the European Court of Auditors in relation to the monitoring and evaluation of the Programme, the participation of Albania in the Programme shall be continuously monitored on a partnership basis involving the Commission and Albania. Albania shall submit to the Commission relevant reports and take part in other specific activities provided for by the European Union in that context.

The rules concerning financial control, recovery and other antifraud measures are laid down in Annex II.

Article 5
Final provisions

This Agreement shall apply for the duration of the Programme. Nevertheless, should the European Union decide to extend the duration without any substantial change within the Programme, this Agreement shall also be extended correspondingly and automatically if no Party denounces it within one month following the entry into force of a legal act extending the Programme.

The European Union and Albania may terminate activities under this agreement at any time upon twelve months' notice in writing. Projects and activities in progress at the time of termination shall continue until their completion under the conditions laid down in this agreement, as well as the contractual arrangements applying to these projects and activities and the provisions of the annexes.

The Annexes shall form an integral part of this Agreement.

This Agreement may only be amended in writing by common consent of the parties.

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the written notification by which Albania notifies the Commission through diplomatic channels that its internal legal requirements for its entry into force have been fulfilled. It shall take effect from 1 January 2014.

Done at Brussels On 20.06.2014

*For the Commission,
on behalf of the European Union,*



Androulla Vassiliou

*Commissioner for Education,
Culture, Multilingualism and Youth*

Done at Tirana On 16.06.2014

*For the Government of
the Republic of Albania,*



Mirela Kumbaro Furxhi

*Minister of Culture
of the Republic of Albania*



ANNEX I

RULES GOVERNING THE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF ALBANIA TO "CREATIVE EUROPE": THE UNION PROGRAMME FOR THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS

The annual financial contribution to be paid by Albania to the General Budget of the European Union to participate in the Culture Sub-programme and the Cross-sectoral Strand of the Programme (with the exception of the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility as mentioned in article 14 and in accordance with article 8(4) of the Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013), shall be EUR 55 000.

As from the 1st of January of the year of the written confirmation by the responsible Commission service(s) that Albania meets the conditions set out in Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010, Albania shall pay an annual contribution of EUR 95 000 to participate in the MEDIA Sub-programme. Albania's contribution for the first year of participation may be amended in writing by common consent of the parties. For the subsequent years Albania shall pay the full amount.

Travel costs and subsistence costs incurred by representatives and experts of Albania for the purposes of taking part as observers in the work of the committee referred to in Article 23 of Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 or other meetings related to the implementation of the Programme shall be reimbursed by the Commission on the same basis as and in accordance with the procedures currently in force for representatives of the Member States of the European Union.

The maximum amount of financial support to be allocated by the Programme to the activities of the Creative Europe Desk shall not exceed 50 percent of the total budget for those activities, and will not exceed two thirds of the financial contribution of the country as specified in this Annex I.

Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the General Budget of the European Union shall apply to the management of the contribution of Albania.

When this Agreement enters into force and at the beginning of each subsequent budgetary year, the Commission shall send Albania a call for funds corresponding to its contribution of the costs covered by this Agreement.

That contribution shall be paid in euro to a euro denominated bank account of the Commission.

Albania shall pay its contribution to the annual costs no later than three months after the date of the call, provided that the call for funds is sent by the Commission before 1 March, or at the latest one month after the call for funds is sent if later. Any delay in the payment of the contribution shall give rise to the payment of default interest by Albania on the outstanding amount from the due date. The interest rate shall be the rate applied by the European Central Bank to its main refinancing operations, as published in the C series of the Official Journal of the European Union, in force on the first calendar day of the months in which the deadline falls, increased by 3.5 percentage points. If the delay in the payment of the contribution is such that it may significantly jeopardise the implementation and management of the Programme, and in the absence of payment 20 working days after a formal letter of reminder has been sent by the Commission to Albania, participation of Albania in the Programme for the relevant year will be suspended.

ANNEX II

FINANCIAL CONTROL, RECOVERY AND OTHER ANTIFRAUD MEASURES

I. CONTROLS AND ANTIFRAUD MEASURES BY THE UNION

1. In accordance with the financial regulation applicable to the General Budget of the European Union, and with the other rules referred to in this Agreement, the contracts and grant agreements concluded with beneficiaries of the Programme established in Albania shall provide for financial or other audits to be conducted at any time during the implementation of the contract or the grant agreement and for a period of 5 years, starting from the date of payment of the balance, except for grants of an amount equal or lower than EUR 60 000 for which this period shall be limited to 3 years. The financial or other audits shall be conducted on the premises of the contractors and their subcontractors and on the premises of the beneficiaries and their contractors and subcontractors by Commission agents or by other persons mandated by the Commission.
2. Commission agents and other persons mandated by the Commission shall have appropriate access to sites, works and documents and to all the information required in order to carry out such audits, including in electronic form. This right of access shall be stated explicitly in the contracts and grant agreements concluded to implement the instruments referred to in this Agreement. The European Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the Commission.
3. Within the framework of this Agreement, the Commission/OLAF (the European Anti Fraud Office) shall be authorised to carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections on territory of Albania, in accordance with the procedural provisions of Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996⁴.

These checks and inspections shall be prepared and conducted in close collaboration with the competent authorities of Albania designated by the authorities of Albania, which shall be notified in good time of the object, purpose and legal basis of the checks and inspections, so that they can provide all the requisite help.

If the authorities of Albania concerned so wish, the on-the-spot checks and inspections may be carried out jointly with them.

Where the participants in the Programme resist an on-the-spot check or inspection, the authorities of Albania, acting in accordance with national rules, shall give Commission/OLAF inspectors such assistance as they need to allow them to discharge their duty in carrying out an on-the-spot check or inspection.

The Commission/OLAF shall report as soon as possible to the authorities of Albania any fact or suspicion relating to an irregularity which has come to its notice in the course of the on-the-spot check or inspection. In any event the Commission/OLAF shall be required to inform the above-mentioned authority of the result of such checks and inspections.

⁴ OJ L 292, 15.11.1996, p.2.

II. INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION

1. For the purposes of proper implementation of this Annex, the competent authorities of Albania and European Union authorities shall regularly exchange information and, at the request of one of the Parties, shall conduct consultations.
2. The competent authorities of Albania shall inform the Commission without delay of any fact or suspicion which has come to their notice relating to an irregularity in connection with the conclusion and implementation of the contracts and grant agreements concluded in application of the instruments referred to in this Agreement.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES AND PENALTIES

Without prejudice to application of the criminal law of Albania, administrative measures and penalties may be imposed by the Commission in accordance with the financial regulation applicable to the General Budget of the European Union.

IV. RECOVERY

Decisions taken by the Commission within the scope of this Agreement which impose a pecuniary obligation on persons other than States shall be enforceable in Albania. The enforcement shall be governed by the rules of civil procedure in force in the State in the territory of which it is carried out. The enforcement order shall be appended to the decision, without other formality than verification of the authenticity of the decision, by the national authority which the Government of Albania shall designate for this purpose and shall make known to the Commission. When these formalities have been completed on application by the Commission, the latter may proceed to enforcement in accordance with the national law, by bringing the matter directly before the competent authority. The legality of the Commission decision shall be subject to control by the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Judgments delivered by the Court of Justice of the European Union pursuant to an arbitration clause in a contract and a grant agreement within the scope of this Agreement shall be enforceable on the same terms.

V. DIRECT COMMUNICATION

The Commission shall communicate directly with the participants in "Creative Europe", the Union programme for the cultural and creative sectors established in Albania. They may submit directly to the Commission all relevant information and documentation which they are required to submit on the basis of the instruments referred to in this Agreement and of the contracts and grant agreements concluded to implement them.



EUROPEAN UNION - BASHKIMI EVROPIAN

DELEGATION TO ALBANIA
DELEGACIONI NE SHQIPERI
Acting Head of Delegation
Zëvendës Shef i Delegacionit

Tirana, 17 JUN 2014
CR/sth ARES(2014) 4884300

**NOTE TO ROB VAN-IERSEL
PROGRAMME MANAGER, DG EAC E.2**

Subject: Agreement for Albania's participation in the "Creative Europe" programme

Please find attached two copies of the agreement for Albania's participation in the "Creative Europe" programme, signed by the Albanian Minister of Culture.

I would be grateful if you could have them countersigned by Commissioner Vassiliou and send back one copy to the EUD within 30 June 2014.


CLIVE RUMBOLD

Encs: 2



Ares(2014) 1980977
Date 17/06/14

REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRIË
MINISTRIA E KULTURËS

Date / /2014

European Commission
Mr Rob Van-Iersel
DG EAC
Unit E.2 Creative Europe Programme-Culture
Rue Joseph II -70, 1/115
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Subject: Agreement for Albania's participation in the "Creative Europe" programme

Dear Mr Van Iersel:

Thank you for your email June 13, 2014 whereby you enclosed the agreement between the Republic of Albania and the European Union on the participation of the Republic of Albania in the "Creative Europe" programme.

I am delighted to send you in reponse the signed agreement. Please find enclosed herein two copies of the agreement signed as requested by the Albanian Minister of Culture, Mrs Mirela Kumbaro Furxhi.

We look forward to a fruitful cooperation.

Best regards,

Albi Alla

Director for EU Integration, IPA Funds Management and Regional & International Cooperation