

SUMMARY

Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018

1. Identification

Budget heading	22 04 02 01 (EUR 5.0 million) 22 04 02 02 (EUR 25.0 million)
Total cost	EUR 30 million of EU contribution
Basic act	Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument

2. Country background

The economy of Belarus remains characterised by the dominance of state-owned enterprises and its dependence on energy- and resource-intensive exports.

The current energy policy is aimed at development, modernisation and efficiency of the energy sector and diversification of resources. There is an overall weak capacity of local authorities to implement and enforce resource and energy efficient policies and a limited coordination with civil society and other key stakeholders in the policy making processes.

The Mobility Partnership signed by the EU, Belarus and seven EU member states foresees the facilitation of mobility of people. Despite a progressive opening of the country, Belarusian professionals in a variety of sectors are still insufficiently exposed to, and miss opportunities to work together with, their counterparts in the EU.

Belarusian non-state media is constrained, most operate from outside the country, are not financially self-sustainable and lack access to the distribution network controlled by the state. The new amendments to the Media law, will further toughen the situation. Other major challenges are; journalist access to public data, accreditation of journalists and regular detention of journalists.

3. Summary of the Measures

The present measures intend to provide a package of assistance in favour of Belarus for 2018. All actions are fully in line with the "Eastern Partnership 20 Deliverables by 2020" and cover all four priority sectors: economic development and market opportunities; strengthening institutions and good governance; connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate action and mobility and people-to-people contacts as well as complementary support to civil society.

The actions proposed within these measures are coherent with the national policy framework and developmental priorities of Belarus.

The measures are comprised of the following actions:

- **Action 1/ EU4Belarus: Resource Efficiency Facility for Belarus**

The action will help enhance the efficiency of the use of energy and other resources at the central and local level in the Brest and Grodno regions of the Republic of Belarus. It will support the design, implementation and enforcement of resources and energy efficiency policy more effectively for all relevant stakeholders; enhance the potential for development of energy/resource efficient modernisation of public infrastructure and industrial enterprises; and demonstrate the feasibility of energy efficiency gains in a systematic way. Apart from strengthening the capacity of central and local authorities in the area of resource and energy efficiency, a major part of the funds will be used to support demonstration projects in partnership with civil society in the pilot regions.

- **Action 2/ EU4Belarus: Partnership Facility**

The action will support Belarus in implementing commitments in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit. It will support the reform efforts undertaken by Belarus by supporting the design and implementation of strategic actions; enhance the capacity and knowledge base of Belarusian public governmental institutions, state and semi-state enterprises in selected priority areas through transfer of knowledge and EU best practices; and promote actions aiming at regional development and addressing gaps in services to citizens. Targeted policy recommendations, studies, trainings and exchange visits for selected ministries/state bodies will support reform implementation and specialised ad-hoc expertise and policy advice will support capacity building in joint key priority areas.

Action 3/ EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)

The action is building on the flagship project MOST and its continuation MOST II. The former has brought a lot of positive visibility and is appreciated by the Belarusians and EU Member States. The action will contribute to the mobility and internationalisation of Belarusian professionals and support their integration into European-wide professional networks through internships. This will facilitate the establishment of professional contacts between Belarusian and EU-based companies/organisations/professionals and develop better mutual understanding between EU and Belarusian professionals, helping to see each other as reliable partners.

- **Action 4/ Enhancement of Professional Reporting and Free Flow of Information in Belarus**

The action will contribute to the diversification of the media sector in Belarus, promoting an enabling, resilient and democratic environment. It will help increase media professionals' capacities in quality reporting, supporting financial self-sustainability of non-state media for them to provide for their core activities, as well as to enhance the capacities of the entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus through advocacy and policy dialogue. This will be done notably via capacity building activities of the entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus through advocacy and policy dialogue.

4. **Communication and visibility**

Each 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 and supported with a separate budget allocation as part of the programme.

The Delegation of the European Union to Belarus will closely monitor the use of the Communication and Visibility manual for EU external action by beneficiaries.

5. **Cost and financing**

EU4Belarus: Resource Efficiency Facility for Belarus	EUR 15 million
EU4Belarus: Partnership Facility	EUR 10 million
EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)	EUR 3 million
Enhancement of Professional Reporting and Free Flow of Information in Belarus	EUR 2 million
Total EU contribution to the measures	EUR 30 million

The Committee is invited to give its opinion on the attached Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018.