



Brussels, 18.9.2019  
C(2019) 6642 final

**COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION**

**of 18.9.2019**

**on the Individual measure for Support to Independent Media in the Southern  
Neighbourhood through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED)**

## COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 18.9.2019

### **on the Individual measure for Support to Independent Media in the Southern Neighbourhood through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED)**

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018] on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 110 thereof,

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 of the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action<sup>2</sup> and in particular Article 2(1) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to ensure the implementation of the 'individual measure for Support to Democratisation in the Southern Neighbourhood through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED)', it is necessary to adopt an annual financing decision, which constitutes the annual work programme for 2019. Article 110 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1046 establishes detailed rules on financing decisions.
- (2) The envisaged assistance is deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU<sup>3</sup>.
- (3) The Commission has adopted the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) Regional South Strategy Paper (2014-2020) and Multinannual Indicative Programme (2018-2020)<sup>4</sup> which sets out the following sector priorities: building resilience and promoting stability, fostering inclusive and sustainable economic development and job creation, promoting connectivity and the sustainable use of natural resources and support for capacity development/ institution building of regional bodies.
- (4) The objective pursued by the measure to be financed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument<sup>5</sup> is to provide complementary funding to the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) to enable the EED to provide additional grants for civil society and independent media in the Southern Neighbourhood.

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 77, 15.03.2014, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu) Please 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 between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

<sup>4</sup> C(2018) 6362 of 5 October 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument (OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 27).

- (5) The latest observations from the field report that in contexts of conflict, heightened repression, staunch restrictions and broader deficit in intelligent public conversations, the situation of independent civil society and media continues to deteriorate across the Southern Neighbourhood region. The level of urgency of the situation implies the need to commit funds as soon as possible in order to safeguard the very existence of the surviving independent voices and to encourage the emergence of new independent media.
- (6) The action entitled ‘Support to Independent Media in the Southern Neighbourhood through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED)’ aims to provide complementary funding to the European Endowment for Democracy (EED). The action will target in particular countries with an increasingly repressive environment by providing essential support to independent civil society and media organisations in a landscape which has made it increasingly difficult for such organisations to operate freely. In addition the action will have a particular focus on mainstreaming youth into planned actions with the aim to of giving young people a voice in political, social and economic decision-making.
- (7) It is appropriate to authorise the award of grants without a call for proposals, pursuant to Article 195 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1046 to the European Endowment for Democracy (EED). The EED is one of the rare actors in the landscape of the organisations providing financial support in the Neighbourhood region to activists who cannot benefit from financial support from the donors community through traditional funding channels due to their size, legal status (e.g. non-registered entities or individuals), geopolitical context (e.g. civil war situation) etc. The specificity and sensitivity of this particular type of intervention requires a body with appropriate technical competence and mandate.
- (8) It is necessary to allow the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 116(5) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1046.
- (9) In order to allow for flexibility in the implementation of this measure, it is appropriate to allow changes which should not be considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1046.
- (10) The measure provided for in this Decision does not fall within the categories of measures for which the prior opinion of the Committee is required. The European Parliament and the European Neighbourhood Instrument Committee established under Article 15 of the financing instrument referred to in recital 3 should be informed of this Decision within one month following its adoption.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

#### *Article 1*

##### The measure

The individual measure for Support to Independent Media in the Southern Neighbourhood through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), as set out in the Annex, is adopted.

The measure shall include the following action:

Annex: individual measure for Support to Independent Media in the Southern Neighbourhood through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED).

## *Article 2*

### Union contribution

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the measure for 2019 is set at EUR 3.79 million and shall be financed from the appropriations entered in the following budget line of the general budget of the Union:

- budget line 22.040101: EUR 3.79 million.

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

## *Article 3*

### Flexibility clause

Increases<sup>6</sup> or decreases of up to EUR 10 million not exceeding 20% of the contribution set in the first paragraph of Article 2, or cumulated changes 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 within the meaning of Article 110(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, where 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.

## *Article 4*

### Grants

A grant may be awarded without a call for proposals pursuant to Article 195 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 to the body referred to in point of 5.3.1 (b) of the Annex.

Done at Brussels, 18.9.2019

*For the Commission*

*Johannes HAHN*

*Member of the Commission*

---

<sup>6</sup> These changes can come from external assigned revenue made available after the adoption of the financing Decision.



## ANNEX

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the on the Individual measure for Support to Independent Media in the Southern Neighbourhood through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED)

### Action Document for Support to Independent Media in the Southern Neighbourhood through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED)

#### MEASURE

This document constitutes an annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation and action programme/measure in the sense of Articles 2 and 3 of Regulation N° 236/2014.

<b>1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number</b>	Support to independent media in the Southern Neighbourhood through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) CRIS number: ENI/2019/042-213 financed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument	
<b>2. Zone benefiting from the action/location</b>	Southern Neighbourhood Region The action shall be carried out at the following location: Southern Neighbourhood Region	
<b>3. Programming document</b>	Regional South Strategy Paper (2014-2020) and Multiannual Indicative Programme (2018-2020).	
<b>4. SDGs</b>	16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.	
<b>5. Sector of intervention/ thematic area</b>	Priority sector n°1 : Building Resilience and Promotion of Stability	DEV. Assistance: NO <sup>1</sup>
<b>6. Amounts concerned</b>	Total estimated cost: EUR 4 000 526 Total amount of EU contribution: EUR 3 790 000 This action is co-financed in joint co-financing by:	

<sup>1</sup> Official Development Assistance is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective.

	- EED for an amount of EUR 210 526			
<b>7. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)</b>	Project Modality <b>Direct management</b> through: Grants			
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	15150 - Democratic participation and civil society			
<b>b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	50000 Other			
<b>9. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
	Aid to environment	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>10. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagship</b>	N/A			

## SUMMARY

The main objective of the action is to contribute to a sustainable democratisation and to the social development in Southern Neighbourhood countries by supporting pro-democracy, civil society activists and independent media. The Commission aims to enable this support by providing complementary funding to the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) to provide additional grants for civil society and independent media in the Southern Neighbourhood<sup>2</sup>. The actions will in particular target countries with an increasingly repressive environment by providing essential support to independent civil society and media organisations in a landscape, which has made it increasingly difficult for such organisations to operate freely. In addition, the action will have a

<sup>2</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine\*, Syria and Tunisia.

\*This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

particular focus on mainstreaming youth into planned actions with the aim to of giving young people a voice in political, social and economic decision-making. The EED was set up following a decision of the EU and is a private law foundation under Belgian Law, autonomous from the European Union, whose main purpose is to provide direct grants to organisations that work to promote democracy and human rights through specific flexible procedures.

The present contribution of EUR 3.79 million will be dedicated to provide additional grants responding to demand-driven requests for support from actors relevant to the evolving local context. This will enable civil society and independent media to react quickly to changing environments and to take advantages of "windows of opportunity". The present contribution, funded by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), will be implemented under direct management through the award of an action grant to the EED and covering the period running from September 2019 until August 2023.

## **1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS**

### **1.1 Context Description**

A thriving civil society empowers citizens to express their concerns, contributes to policy-making and holds authorities to account. It can also help ensure that economic growth becomes more inclusive. Key to making any of this happen is the guarantee of the freedoms of expression, association and assembly. This challenge of fostering civil society and pluralism is felt throughout the Southern Neighbourhood but is particularly acute for countries engaged in fast political change or where repressive political regimes continue to stifle pluralism and diversity.

In such a context, the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) has the vocation to support those values and objectives, and to complement existing EU co-operation instruments by funding actors of change and fostering democratic transition in the Neighbourhood region through rapid and flexible assistance. The complementary nature of EED grants is important to be underlined in this context as the identified added value of the EED lies in supporting politically sensitive action proposals, that traditional donors consider difficult to fund or where a repressive environment has started to restrict civil society-oriented actions or external funding.

The EED was set up following the December 2011 ‘Declaration on the Establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy’ by the Council<sup>3</sup>, which declared that it shall operate as an autonomous International Trust Fund. It was formally established in June of 2012 with the support of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission and the EU Member States. In line with the Declaration that the Endowment shall have legal personality under the law of one of the Member States, the EED was registered as a *Fondation d'utilité publique* under Belgian Law and is governed by its own statutes and governing bodies. Although its Board of Governors is composed of members designated by or representatives of all Member States, nine members of the European Parliament (MEPs), of a member designated by representative(s) of European External Action Service (EEAS) and a member designated

---

<sup>3</sup> Council Conclusion of the Establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy, Presidency, 20 December 2011, 18764/11.

by the European Commission, the EED is formally autonomous from the European Union.

The EED's governance structures have operated smoothly since the start of operations of the EED. According to the EED statutes, the focus of the EED was initially, although not exclusively, on the Neighbourhood. In a meeting of the Board of Governors on 3 December 2014, the Board of Governors of the EED formally lifted the geographic limits of EED's work and decided that the Endowment would implement and finance a limited number of activities outside of the European Neighbourhood.

The EED receives operating grants under European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) funding since its establishment in 2012. These annual operating grants allow the functioning of the EED with regards to covering the EED running costs (human resources, travel, equipment, country consultants, outreach events, etc.) in order to allow its direct financial support to the final beneficiaries in the region.

From 2016 onwards, the Board of Governors decided that the allocation of funds and key priorities for the EED operations and especially those outside the Neighbourhood area shall be determined in the EED General Guidelines.

The EED General Guidelines, as approved by the EED Board of Governors in December 2015 states that the Endowment ensures, insofar as possible, a geographical balance of engagement and funding between the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood. In addition, EED grants can be provided for actions beyond the European Neighbourhood, especially the "neighbours of the neighbours", depending on needs, available funds and EU political priorities.

Irrespective of decisions allowing the Foundation to operate in other regions, and in particular in the Western Balkans and Turkey, the present support will cover specific situations in the Southern Neighbourhood region, where a consensus exists that space for civil society and independent media has been shrinking significantly in recent years, and even in the few last months. In line with the strong EU's commitment to support civil society for democratic reforms in the region, the present support will cover Southern Neighbourhood countries where the current environment complicates the use of well-established EU instruments, notably the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), or, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). The current deterioration of independent civil society and media actions in certain countries of the Southern Neighbourhood region demand for the EED's specific added value of reaching out to alternative actors and organisations, in particular beyond the ones accepted by governments and local authorities.

It is important to maintain the complementarity of those two mechanisms, EU instruments and the EED's flexible support to beneficiaries, in a very distinct focus. The present action grant to EED must complement the work executed through regional programmes and not replace it.

Support for the EED's functioning in the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood region, the Western Balkans and Turkey is provided by a parallel contribution to the EED financing its operating costs.

The EED has been successful in attracting funding from its Member States, with the number of contributors rising from 11 in 2013 to 23 by the end of 2017. However, there is a rising tendency for contributions to be earmarked for specific geographic or thematic themes, in particular focusing on the Eastern Neighbourhood, which has



reduced the flexibility of the EED operational model, and posed challenges in ensuring the balance of activities between the South and East. Hence, this additional action grant also adds to correcting the current imbalance from actions in the East towards the South.

## **1.2 Policy Framework (Global, EU)**

The events of 2011 in the Neighbourhood, in particular in the Southern Mediterranean prompted a rapid response from the European Union. The Joint Communications on a *Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity for the Southern Neighbourhood* and on *A New Response to a changing neighbourhood* issued in March and in May 2011<sup>4</sup> reaffirm the crucial importance of striving for deep and sustainable democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law as fundamental pillars of the renewed European Neighbourhood Policy and of the partnership with Neighbourhood countries. The Joint Communications sent a clear message of solidarity to the peoples of the Neighbourhood, assuring them that their democratic aspirations and their fight for human rights will be heard and supported, as confirmed by the “ENP Review “A Stronger Partnership for a Stronger Neighbourhood”<sup>5</sup>” adopted in November 2015.

As a consequence, the European Commission and the High Representative jointly proposed to support the establishment of a European Endowment for Democracy, to support political actors striving for democratic change in their countries (especially political movements and non-registered Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), social partners, bloggers, etc.). One year later, the Joint Communication on *Delivering on a new European Neighbourhood Policy*<sup>6</sup> reaffirmed the EU's support to democratisation and human rights, including through its "more for more" approach, by which only those partners willing to embark on political reforms and to respect the shared universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law would be offered the most rewarding aspects of the EU policy. Democratic aspirations will be supported in those countries and societies that are going through a period of transition or are struggling for their democratic aspirations by advancing towards higher standards of human rights, and placing a strong emphasis on human rights within the political dialogue.

The action is also in line with the EU policy on election observation in partner countries. The EU deploys Election Observation Missions (EOM) to some countries in the Southern Neighbourhood, most recently in Lebanon, Jordan and Tunisia. The EOMs' longer-term objectives aim at improving the overall election framework and the context in which elections are held, among others supporting independent civil society and media organisations in a democratic landscape. The recommendations issued by EOMs can be instrumental to empowering civil society and media in electoral contexts. More broadly, they can be a crucial element in the deepening of democracy. Special attention could be given to actions addressing EU EOM recommendations where relevant.

## **1.3 Public Policy Analysis of the partner region**

The EED received political support from EU Member States, through a political Declaration endorsed in December 2011 by the Committee of Permanent

---

<sup>4</sup> COM(2011) 200, 8 March 2011 and COM(2011) 303, 25 May 2011 respectively.

<sup>5</sup> SWD(2015) 50, 18 November 2015

<sup>6</sup> JOIN(2012) 14, 15 May 2012.

Representatives (COREPER)<sup>7</sup>. In that Declaration, the objective was set for the EED to foster and encourage deep and sustainable democracy in transition countries, focusing initially, but not exclusively, on the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy. Subsequently a working group was established by EU Member States, representatives of the European Parliament, European Commission and EEAS to draft the EED statutes. The statutes were approved by the Working Group on 20 June 2012, which was subsequently noted by COREPER<sup>8</sup>.

The proposed action is also in line with the EU Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan: chapter I.b ("invigorating civil society")<sup>9</sup>, and more particularly objective 8 "Empowering Civil Society Organisations defending the rights of women and girls" and chapter II (Addressing Human Rights Challenges) particularly Objective 14 "Promoting gender equality, women's rights, empowerment and participation of women and girls" that includes empowerment objectives for young women and men. This initiative is in line with the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) II<sup>10</sup>, which establishes gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) as an essential means for achieving peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.

In general, EED actions are well aligned with existing EU Human Rights Guidelines. For the specific proposed action for the South, the **EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders** in 2004<sup>11</sup>, which were updated in 2008, are the most relevant. The guidelines set out the EU's role and aspirations for cooperation with human rights defenders, and propose practical means of assisting at-risk activists. The EU's political commitment to support human rights defenders is also complemented by the **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights** (EIDHR) which provides dedicated financial assistance to organisations providing support to the work of human rights activists.

#### 1.4 Stakeholder analysis

The direct beneficiary of this action is the European Endowment for Democracy. The Foundation's main purpose is providing direct grants to pro-democracy activist and/or organisations struggling for democratic transition in the European Neighbourhood and beyond, through specific flexible procedures.

The direct beneficiaries of the Endowment's activities include:

- pro-democratic movements and other pro-democratic actors in favour of a pluralistic multiparty system on democratic ground;
- social movements and actors;
- civil society organisations;
- emerging leaders, independent media and journalists (including bloggers, social media activists, etc.),
- non-governmental institutions, including foundations and educational institutions functioning also in exile; provided that all the beneficiaries adhere to core democratic values, respect international human rights standards, gender equality,

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st18/st18764.en11.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134628.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134628.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu\\_action\\_plan\\_on\\_human\\_rights\\_and\\_democracy\\_en\\_2.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_action_plan_on_human_rights_and_democracy_en_2.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603256/EPRS\\_STU\(2017\)603256\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603256/EPRS_STU(2017)603256_EN.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu\\_guidelines\\_hrd\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_guidelines_hrd_en.pdf)

women's rights, empowerment and participation of women and girls and subscribe to principles of non-violence and non-discrimination.

The EED supports groups and individuals, who seek to employ innovative, as well as traditional, means of communication and public expression to raise public awareness, assist observance of fundamental freedoms and human rights and consolidate democracy. These actions are carried out on the basis of assessments of requests for help.

## **1.5 Problem analysis/priority areas for support**

A number of Southern Neighbourhood countries continue to have restrictive legal frameworks and challenging operating environments for the protection of freedom of assembly and association and much remains to be done across the region to ensure that this freedom is fully guaranteed in law and in practice and to secure the necessary space for civil society to play its crucial role.

For example, with regards to Egypt and Algeria, restrictive legislation and operating environments prevent civil society and independent media outlets from developing and functioning at a full capacity and having access to international support.

Young people represent more than half of the population in the Arab region but are not, or are rarely, involved in decision-making processes, even where democratic mechanisms are in place. Arab youth face difficult circumstances, including the battle against poverty, struggle with political repression and emigration and the slow progress in advancing gender equality and women's rights. It is therefore essential to offer opportunities that help them to participate actively in shaping their future, based on hope and a belief that their societies and communities can develop, also through political reform, allowing youth to be part of decision-making and ensuring that their voice is heard.

Lately, freedom of expression, civil society activity and peaceful demonstrations have increasingly been countered by repression and continue to be severely curtailed. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in future focus countries particularly refer to the "shrinking space" which is available for them to operate and increasing obstacles being placed on their ability to receive funding from outside the country concerned.

Recent observations from the field report that in contexts of conflict, like in Syria, heightened repression, like in Egypt, subtle yet staunch restrictions, like in Jordan and Lebanon, and broader deficit in intelligent public conversations across the Southern Neighbourhood region, the situation of non-manipulative media and independent media producers has deteriorated rapidly.

In Algeria, the 2012 Association Law (Law 12-06) implemented since 2014 contains several provisions that restrict the operation of associations. In parallel, Algeria was supposed to organise presidential elections announced for April 2019 but since the 22nd February 2019, Algerians have joined in street protests across the country against the fifth term of the president Bouteflika and more recently for the change of the political system. In this context, civil society groups and organisations would request more flexible support.

Other Southern neighbourhood countries have imprisoned a significant number of civil society activists and have adopted restrictive laws for international support to civil society and for the operation of civil society. The operations of independent media

producers and the emergence of start-ups is jeopardized, not only structurally but on basis of individual risks. In such an environment, the EED and its flexible approach to support to civil society is crucial to ensure, in complementarity with EU existing mechanisms, that civil society, independent media voices and activists still receive support and can sustain their activities despite the severe repression.

Flexible support from the EED will allow groups in these countries to receive continued support and survive despite the difficult environment. The EED has until now actively adapted to the deteriorating conditions and harsh restrictions by finding new ways to continue effectively supporting civil society and has the flexibility to adapt its support to the distinctive needs of activists, including through protecting their identity where required and providing the support in a discreet and safe manner.

Mobilising youth and supporting independent media including encouraging start-ups will be a particular focus to be mainstreamed into planned actions and amongst other objectives aiming at focusing on promotion of youth civic engagement, awareness rising on democratic principles and participation, fostering youth leadership and entrepreneurship as well as capacity building and empowerment of youth from disadvantaged communities.

A complementary approach is aimed for this action to ensure alignment with the Single Support Framework Documents in place for the period 2018 to 2020.

## 2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased instability at country/regional level affects the implementation of the programme.</li> </ul>	M	Priority of EU and international aid is to assist in its efforts to mitigate the situation. Situation to be closely monitored.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support given to political actors, media outlets, journalists and emerging leaders is a highly sensitive issue. Even if the EED is autonomous entity acting independently of the EU, the latter has to continue to be systematically informed and aware of the possible <b>political consequences</b> that could result from the action of the EED.</li> </ul>	H	Headquarters and Heads of EU Delegations should continue to be kept systematically informed of EED action and training activities in order to ensure coherence and efficiency between their respective actions. Heads of Delegations in particular should be alerted when EED interventions may raise concerns and questions from partner authorities, in order to be able to respond to the latter in a proper way.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shrinking space for civil society, media and journalists, as well as youth activists in the targeted countries</li> </ul>	H	Throughout the implementation of the programme, the situation of independent civil society and media activism will be regularly monitored, in order to be able to

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety and security concerns affecting individual beneficiaries.</li> </ul>	L/M	<p>adapt to changing circumstances.</p> <p>The EED has well-established and tested mechanisms to ensure the personal security of individual grantees. Operations will be adapted to respond quickly to risky circumstances or events to avoid interruption of activities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among the added values of the EED is its ability to act swiftly and to offer dedicated and rapid funding in risky environments. However, sound financial management requires a <b>minimum level of procedural and regulatory conditions</b> and transparency, which are applied by the EED. In addition, any EU funds to the EED should be delivered and managed according to EU financial rules. The principles of sound financial management may therefore limit the flexibility and swiftness expected.</li> </ul>	M	<p>Close co-operation between the EED and European Commission allows efficient sharing of information about financial procedures and requirements. EED staff demonstrates to be strictly observing applicable legal and financial rules. Audit, expenditure verification and evaluation are also valuable tools of mitigation</p>
<b>Assumptions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The political environment in the Southern Neighbourhood region will not deteriorate to the extent that even the EED can no longer function there.</li> <li>• Politically the EED will continue to be seen as an autonomous body, which is not an EU institution although acting at “arm's-length” distance from the EU.</li> </ul>		

### 3 LESSONS LEARNT AND COMPLEMENTARITY

#### 3.1 Lessons learnt

The EED was established as an organisation to support functioning democracy, and has provided grants in all countries of its mandate (Neighbourhood countries): as of 1 August 2018, the EED has funded 641 initiatives. 234 initiatives from the Southern Neighbourhood (particularly Tunisia, Egypt and Syria) and in total EUR 16.3 million and 296 initiatives from the Eastern Neighbourhood (particularly Ukraine and Azerbaijan), totalling EUR 18 million.

The benefit of the EED democracy support approach has been proven during its support to democracy activists in the region. Identified EED benefits, as endorsed by recent EED independent evaluations, include:

The EED is mandated to act as a “gap filler” providing value added compared to other donors through emergency funding, broad eligibility criteria (including individuals, unregistered organisations), support to emerging actors, core funding of NGOs, small size of grant, and support in politically sensitive environments. Support has been provided to democracy actors on the ground in politically sensitive environments and during times of crisis and war, and to local democracy actors who do not have the elaborate administrative infrastructure to manage European grants and reporting requirements.

Demand for support under the EED has been high. Between the launch of the application process in August 2013 and 1 August 2018, 4,673 requests for funding have been received (an average of approx. 80/month): 2,395 from the Eastern and 1,404 from the Southern Neighbourhood countries (plus 450 for the “Neighbours of the Neighbours” and around 400 for other regions)

Crucial funding in various emergency situations has been provided within short period of time from the moment the EED received the request for support / needs were expressed to the EED. 12% of all EED grants were approved in this way, for example to provide solar panels to the Aleppo Media Centre just before the siege in Syria, in the aftermath of the Euromaidan protests, or following increased repression of activists in Russia.

The EED contributes also to build capacities of democracy actors by providing coaching and trainings on subjects such as financial management, strategic planning or application to EU grants. To increase the awareness of democracy support issues, the EED organises and co-hosts democracy-related discussions, as well as closed-door co-ordination meetings on sensitive countries, with partner organisations. Such events contribute to the exchange of best practice and latest developments in democracy support in the EU Neighbourhood, as well as increased co-operation with other democracy support actors.

Effective working relationships have been established with the European Commission services and the European External Action Service (EEAS). Strong co-operation and exchange of information exists with EU Delegations across the neighbourhood, and regular contact is made while assessing applications to co-ordinate support and actions towards activists.

However, there is a regional imbalance. While, as stipulated in its General Guidelines, the EED is to ensure a balanced approach to funding the Eastern Partnership and Southern Neighbourhood, at present the majority of funding comes from Member States whose democracy support priorities are focused on the Eastern Partnership countries.

In the EED Board of Governors Meeting in June 2018, the general increase of earmarked funds to the Eastern Neighbourhood has been identified as problematic. The requirement of either less earmarking in general, or more earmarked funds for the South have been agreed to constituting a practical solution to equilibrate this current imbalance.

### **3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor co-ordination**

A full-term evaluation of the period 2013-16<sup>12</sup> concluded that the EED has successfully contributed to filling gaps and managed to complement existing EU instruments. Further, it noted that the EED has been responsive to the needs of the supported pro-democracy actors, already effectively supported pro-democracy actors and activities in the EU

---

<sup>12</sup> Full Term Evaluation of the European Endowment for Democracy: 7 April 2017

neighbourhood countries and the “neighbours of the neighbours”. In some cases, it concluded, very significant results have been realised.

In this context, the EED is not aiming to replace existing mechanisms supporting democratic transition financing Decisions but to offer additional support to those to whom the existing instruments are not able to provide assistance due to time, administrative or other constraints. In the delivery of its activities, in line with its statutes, the EED strives to avoid duplication and to ensure coherence, synergy, complementarity and added value with the activities carried out under EU financial instruments which are already providing very valuable outputs. These include, in particular, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) including the Civil Society Facility (CSF), the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) including the Civil Society Organisations and the Local Authorities (CSO-LA) thematic programme.

The EED pays due attention to ensure good complementarity with EU actions, information and consultations with EU Delegations on general action, trainings activities and holds regular informal consultations within the framework of selection of beneficiaries. The EED maintains close and regular contact with EU Delegations and European Commission services in the implementation of its work as part of donor coordination and ensuring the value added of EED funds.

The EED Secretariat has prioritised, ensuring added value and avoiding duplication from the very beginning of its operations. All proposals are intensely scrutinised on this point to identify the added value of EED funding and explain why a proposal is not or cannot be funded by other donors. Good relations with other donors have been established as a prerequisite for implementing this role. In this regard, EED systematically and regularly consults other donors and grant-making organisations, including through donor co-ordination meetings.

All EU Member States have declared their political and technical support to EED. Member States are regularly encouraged to highlight to their embassies in the region, about the EED mandate and how EED can play a role to complement that of bilateral donors in the countries of EED operations. EED organises regular consultation meetings with Member States Embassies, including during missions to the countries of operation.

## **4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

### **4.1 Overall objective, specific objective(s), expected outputs and indicative activities**

The main objective of the action is to foster and encourage democratisation and deep and sustainable democracy in the Southern Neighbourhood countries by supporting pro-democracy civil society activism.

The action will aim to enable and ensure local pro-democracy civil society actors to emerge, operate and adapt their actions to respond to the changing local context, more specifically where the space for civic action is shrinking, and to strengthen and maintain civil society and independent media across the Southern Neighbourhood. Furthermore, the action will seek to ensure the survival and continued operation for civil society and human rights groups who are operating in challenging and repressive environments.

Following the sustainable approach of the EED so far, youth will be focused on through a mainstreaming approach in order to:

- reach out to activists targeting the youth and youth-led initiatives based on a truly demand driven approach that acknowledges and adapts to the situation and real needs of young people;
- support the outreach to a growing audience of media consumers, primarily young Arabs, who are manipulated through disinformation campaigns and low-quality mainstream media failing in keeping people informed and engaged for democratic reforms;
- conduct dedicated outreach to remote areas to address young people who otherwise do not have any access to information and knowledge about the opportunities to receive support; and
- engage with young people with an open mind approach, both regarding the type of activities and young people who should be considered for support.

Equal gender representation in the activities supported by this action is aspired whenever the circumstances allow, as well as the promotion of equal rights for men and women in democratic procedures.

The result of the action is to ensure in countries where the space for civil society is shrinking the continuation of existing civil society groups and the emergence of new, young and progressively thinking civil society actors, with an increased outreach and advocacy capacity to ensure government accountability, and strengthened capacities to act as catalysts for more inclusive, just and stable societies.

### **Indicative Activities**

The present action will provide to direct financial support to the EED for actions in the Southern Neighbourhood region over a period running from September 2019 until August 2023. Those actions should target the local civil society and independent media landscape with a particular focus of mainstreaming youth and their specific demands into those actions. Around 75 Grants will be provided by the EED to beneficiaries ranging from approximately 3,000 EUR to 300,000 EUR (no formal limits) and an indicative average of 80,000 EUR each. The EED grants have a maximum duration of 24 months, and the approximate average grant duration will be 14 months. In particular, assistance is foreseen to groups who are in need of flexible support to enable their pro-democracy work, including through:

- the provision of emergency funding to civil society organisations to respond to specific urgent needs;
- the core and bridge funding to enable civic activists to respond more quickly in a changing and often unpredictable political environment as well as to consolidate the development of emerging institutions, with a particular focus on independent media outlets;
- support to new civil society initiatives, grassroots movements and individuals who are developing innovative ways to approach a volatile social situation, promoting locally driven agendas in order to ensure civil societies' active participation in political processes;
- support to youth organisations and movements, including in projects that help combat violent extremism, gender inequalities as well as all other forms of discrimination;



- support to the emergence and consolidation of new civic groups who are ready to and capable of operating in the new repressive environment and the increased risks this involves;
- support to a new generation of civic activists as they face difficulties accessing mainstream donor support due to their registration situation or weak technical capacities;
- support to specific activities such as advocacy campaigns that respond to a window of opportunity or an evolving local context.
- In addition to grants, some activities could take the form of seminars, studies, conferences, publications, networking events, workshops, training and visibility activities, capacity building for beneficiaries etc.

The EED shall deliver its support activities in the most flexible and effective manner in order to reflect the situation, the operating environment and the needs of its beneficiaries. All the activities of the Endowment shall be carried out on a not-for-profit basis and they shall be implemented in a spirit of pluralism and in a non-partisan manner towards its beneficiaries.

#### **4.2 Intervention Logic**

With a view at reaching the objectives and implementing the activities as described in section 4.1, the present contribution will be delivered through one action grant awarded to the EED and covering the period running from September 2019 until August 2023

#### **4.3 Mainstreaming**

Given that the primary aim of the Endowment is the fostering of democratisation, respect for human rights and good governance will be part of the objectives to be achieved when targeting civil society, independent media through a mainstreamed youth approach.

Supporting civil society and media also includes ensuring gender equality and increasing the participation of women in social, political and economic life. In some countries, legislative provisions enacted with the aim of ensuring a more balanced composition of parliaments have encountered resistance in practice and therefore have not had the desired effect. Voices of civil society activists from the ground during the EED Strategic Reflection Meeting from June 2018 also presented the situation of gender and women's rights in countries such as Egypt. It was highlighted that despite the existence of legislation protecting women, there is no political will to implement these laws. Even though the government is trying to portray itself as gender sensitive, it has increased repression of feminist organisation and members if the non-conformist sexual orientations. It was underlined that the state institutions relentlessly persecute sexual and gender minorities by unlawful arrests and tortures.

In achieving its objectives, the EED will also pay specific attention to young people who are key actors in the Neighbourhood. Support to young activists will be promoted and, where possible, mainstreamed and prioritised in all activities for civil society and an independent media in this action.

EED-funded projects will adhere to the EU Rights-Based Approach<sup>13</sup> where possible and relevant to its democracy support work, noting that it provides support to civil society organisations direct, and does not engage with governments.

Due attention will also be given to activists with disabilities and/or activists striving for the defence of people with disabilities rights. In addition, attention should also be focusing on responding to the needs and challenges faced by groups living outside the capitals and in remote areas. Due attention will also be given to conflict sensitivity and economic and social standards.

#### **4.4 Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

This programme is relevant for the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16, "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

### **5 IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **5.1 Financing agreement**

In order to implement this action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner countries.

#### **5.2 Indicative implementation period**

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 55 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

#### **5.3 Implementation modalities**

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>14</sup>.

##### **5.3.1 Grants: (direct management)**

###### **(a) Purpose of the grant**

The action will be implemented under direct management through the award of one action grant to the EED awarded for the period from September 2019 until August 2023. The main purpose of the action shall be to redistribute the grant (financial support to third parties) as described in section 4 above. In this context, the EED will be responsible for receiving, evaluating and selecting requests for financial support and awarding the financial support to the selected beneficiaries.

---

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/142682.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/142682.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu) Please 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 between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

Satisfactory implementation may be assessed by the Commission through different means, which include: narrative and financial progress and final report(s); evaluation(s) including external evaluation; expenditure verification report(s); financial and/or system audit(s) including external audit(s); financial verification mission(s). The Commission will recourse to some of these tools, choice of which will depend on previous year(s) assessment results and on specific risk assessments. In case of poor performance, the Commission may reduce the amount of a payment instalment or not award it.

(b) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to EED.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because the EED is one of the rare actors in the landscape of the organisations providing financial support in the Neighbourhood region to activists who cannot benefit from financial support from the donors community through traditional funding channels due to their size, legal status (e.g. non-registered entities or individuals), geopolitical context (e.g. civil war situation) etc. The specificity and sensitivity of this particular type of intervention requires a body with appropriate technical competence and mandate. In this respect, the EED offers trustful credibility and reliability thanks to its particular institutional set-up, having been established by an EU decision and being steered by representatives of the European Parliament, of the EU Member States, of the European External Action Service and civil society experts. This unique position, combined with a good track-record despite their short existence, with efficient award procedures (that are nevertheless compliant with the general principles applicable to the use of public funds) and with a standing good reputation, makes the EED an adequate vehicle for providing financial support to local beneficiaries at a micro- or mini-scale, allowing beneficiaries such as non-registered associations, political movements, individual activists, bloggers etc. to benefit from the donors community funding where this would not be possible through more traditional funding channels. The EED has also the further advantage of being "European-labelled".

#### 5.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provision.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the implementation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

#### 5.5 Indicative budget

	<b>EU contribution</b>	<b>Indicative third party contribution</b>	<b>Total</b>

	(in EUR)	(in EUR)	(in EUR)
<b>5.3.1 – Grant (direct award)</b>	<b>3,790,000</b>	<b>210,526</b>	<b>4,000,526</b>

## **5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities**

This action will be managed by Commission Services (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) and, where relevant, in close collaboration with other relevant EU institutional stakeholders (European Parliament, EEAS, EU Member States).

## **5.7 Performance and Results monitoring and reporting**

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner 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 (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the Logframe matrix (for project modality) or the partner's strategy, policy or reform action plan list (for budget support).

SDG indicators and, if applicable, any jointly agreed indicators as for instance per Joint Programming document should be taken into account.

The Commission may undertake additional project 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).

## **5.8 Evaluation**

Having regard to the content of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components. An EU strategic evaluation of the action grant is foreseen. It will have a focus on the countries where EED carries out its actions.

Since an evaluation is not foreseen, the Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation of certain components for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner countries and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner countries, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

## **5.9 Audit**

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 for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

## **5.10 Communication and 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.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country (for instance, concerning the reforms supported through budget support), contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Action (or any succeeding document) shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

However, in view of the nature of the operations that the EED manages, and in particular the risks for those who benefit from the EED grant support and its other activities towards target groups and individuals, visibility may, where or when relevant, be reduced vis-à-vis media and political decision makers or adapted in the light of specific situations.

## APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY)

On the basis of this indicative logframe matrix, a more detailed logframe(s) will be developed at contracting stage linked to this AD. The indicative logframe matrix will evolve during the lifetime of the Intervention. The activities, the expected outputs and related indicators are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the Intervention as agreed by the parties (the European Commission and the implementing partner/s).

	<b>Results chain: Main expected results</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Sources of data</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
<b>Impact (Overall Objective)</b>	The main objective of the action is to foster and encourage democratisation and deep and sustainable democracy in Southern Neighbourhood countries of political transition where societies struggle for democratisation.	Contribution to greater degree of democratisation and political pluralism.	Reports from EU Delegations, UN organisations and Human Rights NGOS.	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Outcome(s) (Specific Objective(s))</b>	The result of the action is to support pro-democracy civil society activism and independent media across the region. To strengthen and maintain civil society and independent media in the Southern region, in particular in countries with restrictive legislation and environment for civil society to operate, ensuring the survival and continued empowerment of civil society, independent media outlets and human rights groups which are operating in challenging and repressive environments. In doing so, particular focus will be given to support young and progressive voices for more political, social and economic decision-making.	Greater freedom of action for supported human rights defenders, increased space for civil society activity, more young emerging actors, and media outlets with a pro-democracy mindset.	Sources of verification are the official communication and reports from the EED.	Undemocratic developments in the targeted countries do not impede fostering or sustaining democratisation and deep and sustainable democracy. Changes in the environment do not hinder the implementation of grantees' activities. Grantees are successful in mitigating and/or addressing risks.
<b>Outputs</b>	EED mechanism of financial support is providing direct grant support to beneficiaries, as well as the implementation of the other activities that the EED performs as part of its mandate.	Number of grants awarded to civil society and media activists, and human rights defenders in Southern Neighbourhood countries with restrictive legislation and environment for civil society to operate.	Sources of verification are the official communication and reports from the EED.	The political environment in the region will continue to enable EED actions in their territories.

