



RE: 18th EUSAIR GOVERNING BOARD MEETING - 6 October 2022 - OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS

Midhat Džemić

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Dear all

We would like to thank to the colleagues from Italy and Croatia for their contributions, with which we agree fully, and in order to make things simpler, we shall avoid producing one more document and below just add several additional comments:

#### **ON REVISION**

Few ideas on required changes in the Communication (COM(2014) 357 final):

Proposal of new text: The general objective of the Strategy is to promote sustainable economic and social prosperity in the Region through growth and jobs creation, and by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity, while preserving the environment and ensuring healthy and balanced ecosystems.

With regard to the Chapter 2.1 Title Challenges – it will require some changes (for example brain drain, disrupted food supply chains and food security crisis, digital connectivity doesn't meet the growing needs)

With regard to the Chapter 2.2 Title Opportunities – we propose to add food security crisis, unexploited rural areas, employment of young people, improvement of position of women, development of tourism (all mentioned to be treated in integrated way), and specially inclusion of two new countries and potentials this bring.

#### **On Action Plan itself:**

We are proposing the adding of two new pillars:

- Social
- Sustainable rural development

And adding of several cross-cutting themes:

- Enlargement (very well explained in the Italian paper),
- Gender equality (our Agency for Gender Equality offers to coordinate this theme in the Region),
- Youth (as part of civil society) involvement,
- Fight against corruption,
- Security in light of recent geo-political events.

*In connection with possible embedding exercises in future, we think that the future AP should encompasses also the priorities set in the IPA III Programming Framework. In this regard, we are proposing several priorities, that should be obviously discussed within each TSG.*

#### **TSG 2, transport**

We would like to see as priority of the future action plan the construction of road /railway corridor - South-east – north-west, as priority flagship.

Bearing in mind the IPA III Programming Framework the theme of digital connectivity and „digital transformation of businesses and public services (with a special focus on e-Government, e-Procurement and e-Health in coordination with the other windows) has a great impact on growth, productivity, innovation, services, fight against fraud and corruption and ultimately on people lives. Digital Connectivity needs to be secure and resilient, mitigating risks in networks and preserving citizens' privacy and integrity. As

recalled in the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, digitalisation represents an opportunity as well as a challenge for many sectors of the economy and societies in the region. Digital services represent an increasing share of exports from the Western Balkans. It is important to include the IPA III beneficiaries in the EU's efforts to embrace technological change and to avoid a widening digital gap between them and the EU.“ Besides mentioned above „the importance of cybersecurity and resilience will continue growing in the future. Operators of essential services in key sectors such as healthcare, transport, energy, banking, digital infrastructure and water supply should have the necessary capacities to take appropriate security measures based on EU values and principles. As candidates or potential candidates, the Western Balkan and Turkey should adopt the EU 5G toolbox mitigating risks in the networks. It is particularly important to reduce the digital gap between rural and urban areas.“

#### *TSG 2, Energy*

We think that (citation from the PF) „Strong emphasis will be put on energy market integration (including within the framework of the Energy Community Treaty), decarbonisation and just transition, increased digitalisation of the system and smart grids, demand-side and supply-side, energy efficiency, including modernisation of district heating, and energy security. Data and electronic communication technologies can support the decarbonisation of the energy system. Decarbonisation is a key pillar of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, in line with the aims of the European Green Deal. While promoting renewables-based power generation remains the medium term priority, in regions heavily dependent on coal, whenever there is no technologically and economically feasible low-carbon alternative, gas could play a role as transition fuel for a fast reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and for curbing air pollution, while bringing also benefits in terms of energy diversification and providing flexibility to the electricity grid that can help integrate variable renewable generation capacities. In order to accelerate the clean energy transition and avoid lock in effects and inefficient investment, the most effective and appropriate way forward should be identified with each partner, taking into account the specific circumstances.“

#### *TSG 3 (environment and climate change)*

Our understanding is that the TSG 3 scope of activities should be increased in a way to become closer to the findings of the IPA III PF, i.e. „The challenging financial effort to bring water, wastewater and solid waste management infrastructure in line with EU standards requires innovative financing mechanisms and the application of cost-recovery and polluter-pays principles. Investments should also contribute to mitigate and adapt to climate change in order to shift to a low-carbon and climate resilient development path.“

Additionally, „focus on reversing environmental degradation, promoting conservation of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, monitoring and ultimately improving the quality of air, soil, sea and water, abating levels of industrial and chemical pollution, as well as properly disposing of waste, including hazardous and extractive waste. Particular emphasis will be placed on transboundary issues and on the sustainable production and utilisation of natural resources, including the critical raw materials needed for the green and climate-neutral economy in line with green and circular economy principles; energy efficiency, renewable and clean energy projects will be promoted in line with EU targets and policies.“

#### **New pillar – Sustainable rural development**

As it was said in the IPA III PF, „Major efforts are still necessary for food safety, animal welfare and the transition towards sustainable food systems, being increasingly important in view of the necessary alignment with the EU food safety acquis and the EU Farm to Fork Strategy, which is at the heart of the EU Green Deal aiming to make food IPA III will also contribute to ensuring food security in the region, improve the life of rural residents through the economic and social development of rural areas and to build resilience to adverse effects of climate change.„

All mentioned „will help tackling the existing structural challenges in the sector, such as low productivity and innovation, lack of diversification, labour-intensive subsistence farming, land fragmentation, difficulties in accessing financial credit to increase investments, as well as lack of proper advisory services and modern technology, poor quality rural infrastructure.“

In particular, actions funded under this Window should aim to improve market orientation and competitiveness of the agri-food sector, improve the sector's response to social demands for safe, healthy, nutritious food and animal welfare and enhance farmers' position in the food chain. The actions will also be channelling investments in farm buildings and technologies, processing and marketing with the view of meeting EU food safety, animal welfare and environmental standards, diversification of activities and development of rural business with a view to foster engagement of women from rural areas. IPA III will also facilitate business development and employment in rural areas and encourage young farmers. Moreover, IPA III will contribute to adapting agricultural production, processing and marketing of products to climate change effects and sustainable and renewable energy production, building resilience of the sector to address adverse climate change effects, as well as sustainable integrated management of soil, water and air. Finally, the IPA III programmes will enhance social capital in rural areas and together with the 'support for institution building' help ensure the application of good governance standards of a modern public administration in the structures for agriculture and rural development. „

#### **New pillar - Social pillar**

Full support for Croatian paper, nothing to add

*I will be representative of BiH in the WG for Revision (supported by Mr Prica) and also in the WG for Youth Consultation (assisted by my colleague from the Office Ms Naida Dilić).*

**Finally, all colleagues that have not submitted their contribution and nominations are kindly asked to do it as soon as possible (hope it stays we need the revision?).**

Best

**Midhat Džemić**

Šef odsjeka za koordinaciju programa u oblasti  
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**Subject:** R: 18th EUSAIR GOVERNING BOARD MEETING - 6 October 2022 - OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS

**Importance:** High

Dear BiH Presidency, dear EUSAIR GB colleagues,

On behalf of the Italian NCs,

please find attached:

- proposal of amendments to the operational conclusions of the 18th EUSAIR GB meeting;
- comments on Background document with Roadmap v.3;
- positions on needs for new pillars/topics to be addressed;

The Italian representative in the NC WG on Revision will be Mrs Rossella Rusca ([rossella.rusca@gmail.com](mailto:rossella.rusca@gmail.com)).

Our comments and inputs on the draft Concept Note on Youth Consultation will be provided in due time.

Best regards

Simona

**Simona Mameli, PhD**

*Policy Officer*

Head of Section - Regional Cooperation  
Unit for the Adriatic and the Western Balkans  
Directorate General for Europe and International Trade  
Policy

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**Da:** [Olga.Abram@gov.si](mailto:Olga.Abram@gov.si) <[Olga.Abram@gov.si](mailto:Olga.Abram@gov.si)> **Per conto di** [eusair.point.svrk@gov.si](mailto:eusair.point.svrk@gov.si)

**Inviato:** lunedì 17 ottobre 2022 17:24

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**Oggetto:** 18th EUSAIR GOVERNING BOARD MEETING - 6 October 2022 - OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS

**MITTENTE ESTERNO.** Prestare attenzione nell'apertura di eventuali link e/o allegati.

Dear EUSAIR Governing Board members,

on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Presidency of EUSAIR, please find enclosed the operational conclusions of the 18th EUSAIR Governing Board meeting.

Kind regards.

Facility Point Lead Partner Team

**EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR)**

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