



Management Plan 2017

DG NEAR

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of DG NEAR is to take forward the EU's neighbourhood and enlargement policies. In line with the mission of the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Mr Johannes Hahn, DG NEAR's role is to develop and strengthen the neighbourhood policy to promote stability at Europe's borders. DG NEAR also supports the countries with an accession perspective in implementing the political and economic reforms necessary for meeting the obligations of EU membership and supports the process of accession negotiations. The work of DG NEAR is strongly linked to President Juncker's political priorities. In particular, it contributes to the following priorities:

- A Stronger Global Actor (*general objective 1*)
- Towards a European agenda on Migration (*general objective 2*)
- A Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy (*general objective 3*)
- Jobs growth and investment (*general objective 4*)

DG NEAR contributes to these four general objectives by working towards seven specific objectives laid out in its Strategic Plan 2016-2020. In the framework of the **European Neighbourhood Policy**, DG NEAR is working with regions characterised by a very unstable environment both politically and economically and affected by the refugee crisis. In 2017, the roll-out of the revised ENP will continue to aim at **increased stability in the neighbourhood in political, economic, and security related terms** (*specific objective 1*). In 2017, a joint communication will report on developments in the neighbourhood and progress achieved in the implementation of the 2015 ENP review, while a mid-term evaluation of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) will be completed. A new agreement is expected to be concluded with Armenia, while negotiations will be launched with Azerbaijan. New partnership priorities will continue to be pursued, including with countries such as Algeria and Egypt.

DG NEAR will continue to work towards a **strengthened Eastern Partnership**, to **support regional cooperation between southern neighbours, including through the Union for the Mediterranean**, and to **promote cross border cooperation between Member States and partner countries** (*specific objective 2*). In 2017, an Eastern Partnership summit will assess the progress made on the implementation of the priorities agreed during the 2015 Riga summit. Focus will be on the key priorities and deliverables identified by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in the Joint Staff Working Document "Eastern Partnership – Focusing on key priorities and deliverables" under the four support areas i.e. economic development, good governance, connectivity/energy efficiency and mobility/people-to-people contacts as well as the cross-cutting areas of civil society, gender equality and strategic communication. A high level regional conference will also bring together Eastern Partnership (EaP) stakeholders to discuss freedom of expression.

In addition to continued support to civil society forums in the Eastern Partnership and Southern Neighbourhood, support to **civil society** will be stepped up through the establishment of six large scale funding schemes in EaP countries to develop the capacity of civil society organisations to constructively engage with governments at grassroots, local and national level.

The EU's **Enlargement policy** helps to improve the **quality of people's lives** through integration and cooperation in many areas, helps make Europe become safer and more prosperous and increases the weight of the EU on the international scene. DG NEAR pursues the objective to **make the enlargement countries more ready to join the EU, in particular as regards the fundamental areas of rule of law, public administration reform and economic development, as well as reaping benefits of closer integration with the EU before accession**

and ensuring continued progress in the accession negotiations where relevant (*specific objective 3*). A mid-term evaluation of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) will be finalised in 2017, along with three thematic evaluations in the key areas of public administration reform, support to economic governance, and social protection.

Through its Enlargement policy, DG NEAR seeks to **improve connectivity within the Western Balkans and with the EU, and to improve good neighbourly relations among partners with an Enlargement perspective with a view to overcoming the legacy of the past** (*specific objective 4*). In 2017 the Commission will adopt a connectivity investment package to be endorsed at the Western Balkans summit in Italy in July. In addition, our partners are expected to ensure the implementation of connectivity reform measures to open markets, remove barriers to integration and create a transparent regulatory environment. This in turn will foster regional cooperation and political stabilisation of the region.

DG NEAR's work contributes towards the EU's support for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to implementing the EU's Gender Action Plan 2016-2020. In relation to the GAP, DG NEAR instructed Delegations and operational units to conduct gender analysis, select one of the GAP thematic priorities for focusing their future interventions and report on their actions. Detailed guidelines have been adopted, including for programming, and implementation has begun. DG NEAR also contributes in the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019, with a focus on fully implementing the Rights-Based Approach in its financial assistance.

The **migration crisis** will remain a central challenge in 2017. DG NEAR is playing a pivotal role in addressing the migration crisis, in particular by driving forward policies and programmes aimed at **stemming the influx of irregular migrants to the EU and by addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration in Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries** (*specific objective 5*). In 2017, DG NEAR will work hand in hand with partners and neighbouring countries which are most affected through short term measures, such as helping governments cope with migration and refugee flows, and boosting long term prospects including education for refugees and improving livelihoods. DG NEAR will in particular monitor the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016, including the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan on Migration, meeting of the remaining benchmarks under the visa liberalisation roadmap, and continuing implementation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. DG NEAR will also contribute to improving cooperation and stepping up consultation with the countries on the Western Balkans route and providing financial assistance where appropriate.

The EU's **energy security** depends on the energy security of its neighbours. In this respect, DG NEAR promotes the external dimension of the Energy Union in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries, and aims at **increased energy security and more effective climate policies in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries. Especially in the Eastern neighbourhood, the region with highest per capita energy consumption in the world, energy efficiency investments are key to their energy, and broader security.**

Increased energy connectivity between the EU and Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries (*specific objective 6*) **is also important.** In 2017, DG NEAR will help work towards this objective by assisting candidate countries with alignment to EU standards as well as through their participation in the Energy Community. A strengthened energy dialogue will also be pursued with Neighbourhood partners, through the implementation of the revised ENP, with a particular focus on developing new national and regional actions on energy efficiency and climate change.

Increased prosperity in the EU is also to be achieved by expanding opportunities for EU companies, investors, and consumers beyond its borders. DG NEAR contributes

to this through **increased economic and trade opportunities between the EU and Enlargement/Neighbourhood countries** (*specific objective 7*). In 2017, policy actions will include securing a mandate and initiating negotiations of a modernised Customs Union with Turkey, monitoring the Stabilisation and Association Agreements with the Western Balkans countries, as well as delivering financial assistance to DCFTA countries (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and supporting the DCFTA negotiations in Morocco and Tunisia. Furthermore, 2017 will see the establishment of the External Investment Plan (EIP) as a comprehensive framework to promote private sector development and increased investments in the neighbourhood countries through the improved blending platform (NIF) and the introduction of a new private sector guarantee.

DG NEAR will not only continue to leverage investments but it will also continue its policy dialogue across the Neighbourhood and Enlargement countries through close collaboration with international finance institutions active in our partner countries.

Increasingly, strategic communication and visibility of EU action is a critical component of our work.

PART 1. MAIN OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR

General objective 1 – A Stronger Global Actor

Specific objective 1: Increased stability in the Neighbourhood in political, economic, and security related terms

The central objective of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as revised in 2015 is stabilisation. The 2016 Global Strategy confirmed this strategic approach with its emphasis on resilience. In 2017, the roll-out of the revised ENP will continue to be co-led by DG NEAR and the EEAS based on the four priorities of the review: good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights; economic development for stabilisation; security and migration and mobility. There will be close cooperation with Member States as well as IFIs and IOs throughout the process. In this framework, DG NEAR will contribute to developing new partnerships with ENP countries, including revised Association Agendas with Georgia and Moldova; new agreements and Partnership Priorities with Armenia and Azerbaijan; agreeing partnership priorities with Belarus, Algeria and Egypt and implementing Partnership Priorities and compacts agreed with Lebanon and Jordan.

Through the Support Group for Ukraine, DG NEAR will continue contributing to the implementation of the reform and stabilisation process in Ukraine, including support to internally displaced people (IDP) following the conflict in Donbass.

With ENI funding – both through ongoing and new programmes - DG NEAR will continue working with public institutions, the business community, young people and civil society organisations in the partner countries to accompany the necessary reforms and deliver results that matter for people's daily lives. In particular, TAIEX and Twinning will continue to play a decisive role in implementing reform processes in a sustainable and pragmatic way. In 2017, the mid-term external evaluation of the ENI instrument will be completed and DG NEAR will prepare possible follow up actions.

Particular attention will be given to Neighbourhood countries affected by the refugee crisis. DG NEAR will continue implementing the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis as well as the Compacts for Lebanon and Jordan and will continue implementing activities under the North Africa window of the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in Africa.

Relevant general objective: A Stronger Global Actor

Specific objective: Increased stability in the Neighbourhood in political, economic, and security related terms

Related to spending programmes: ENI

Main outputs in 2017:

All new initiatives and REFIT initiatives from the Commission Work Programme

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
EU Strategy for Syria	Adoption	First-half of 2017

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Joint Communication (JC) on developments in the neighbourhood and implementation of the ENP review	Adoption Decide planning reference: 2016/EEAS+/004	March/April 2017
New agreements with Armenia and Azerbaijan	Agreement with Armenia concluded and signed Launch of negotiations on new agreement with Azerbaijan	Armenia: to be signed by the end of the year Azerbaijan: Throughout 2017
Contribute to formal adoption of partnership priorities with Egypt and Algeria. Participate in exploration of opportunities for Partnership priorities with other Neighbourhood South countries not directly affected by internal armed conflicts.	Prepare Partnership Priorities with Israel and Palestine and launch talks	Throughout 2017
Syria Conference	Includes follow-up on commitments pledged at London Conference	To take place most likely in April 2017
Syria Core Donors Group	Regular meetings main donors including UN	Throughout 2017
Monitoring of political situation in Syria	Preparedness in case of political transition	Throughout 2017
Revive bilateral relations with Morocco after a year (2016) marked by tensions revolving around EU Court of Justice's decision on EU-Morocco free trade agreement on agricultural and fisheries products	Depending on outcome of appeal to ECJ ruling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume political dialogue with Morocco (EEAS in the lead) • Engage discussions on multi-annual programming for the 2018 – 2020 period • Engage discussions on Partnership Priorities 	Throughout 2017
Roll out of the Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council on "Strengthening EU support for Tunisia"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue the implementation of the financial and non-financial provisions of the joint communication • Inter-service group on Southern Mediterranean 	Throughout 2017 Throughout 2017 March/April 2017 for the first ISG
Palestine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on Area C (CGEA) • Signature of International Declaration with UNRWA 	Throughout 2017
ENI mid-term evaluation for	Completion	End 2017

MTR 2014-2020	Decide planning reference: 2017/NEAR+/002	
Multiannual programming process and joint programming (2017-2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiannual (2017-2020) programming process with 4-5¹ Neighbourhood South countries is launched and completed • Multiannual (2017-2020) programming process with 4 Neighbourhood East countries and 1 regional is completed • Multiannual (2018-2020) programming process with Ukraine is launched and completed • Multiannual (2018-2020) programming process with Azerbaijan is launched • Multiannual (2018-2020) regional programming process for Neighbourhood South and East is launched 	Throughout 2017
ENI annual programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017 ENI country action programmes and regional programmes adopted • Relevant Special Measures adopted (including Ukraine, and possibly Libya) 	Throughout 2017
New security-related actions for the Southern Neighbourhood in the fields of integrated border management, monitoring drugs markets and contribution to NATO's Building Integrity Programme (€ 11 million)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of action point 7 on capacity-building for the EU neighbouring countries of the June 2016 Warsaw EU-NATO Declaration • Preparation and adoption of new action 	June/September 2017
Strategic framework for supporting Security Sector Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to the roll-out of the ENP review for the Security Chapter • Support to the implementation of the joint EC/EEAS Communication on Sector Security Reform (2016) • Participation of DG NEAR in the Task Force of the Security Union 	Throughout 2017
Strengthening the capacities of civil society in the Southern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and adoption of new regional actions aimed at engaging a partnership with civil society for equality and rights (€ 15-21 million) 	September 2017

¹ Depends on a pending decision on the revision or extension of Libya's programming document

Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up of a mechanism for structured dialogue with civil society at regional level Organisation of the annual Civil Society Forum 	Throughout 2017 May 2017
Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument - TAIEX	TAIEX events contributing to the implementation of AA/DCFTA and to current or future agreements implying approximation with EU laws and norms (East and South)	Throughout 2017
Thematic evaluation on social protection (2007-2013) The objective of the evaluation is to assess the EU support provided in external action for social protection during the period 2007-2013.	Completion Decide planning reference: 2016/NEAR/002	November 2017
Thematic evaluation on the support to SME competitiveness The evaluation will assess the performance, good examples and lessons learned from the past assistance in the area of SME competitiveness in the enlargement and neighbourhood countries. It should serve to provide evidence and advice in designing future EU assistance.	Completion Decide planning reference: 2016/NEAR/003	April 2017

Specific objective 2: Strengthened Eastern Partnership; support regional cooperation between southern neighbours, including through the Union for the Mediterranean; promote cross border cooperation between member states and partner countries

The **Eastern Partnership (EaP)** will remain a key element of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). In line with the ENP review and the sectoral priorities agreed at Riga in 2015, our focus will be on coordination of priority projects in the key strategic areas of: Economic development and market opportunities; strengthening institutions and good governance; connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change; and, mobility and people-to-people contacts. To maximise impact and to deliver tangible results for citizens, we will take a more focused approach, targeting 20 key deliverables for 2020 ("20 for 2020").

In 2017, DG NEAR and the EEAS will work to further invigorate regional cooperation in the Southern Neighbourhood and give priority where appropriate to the **Union for the Mediterranean** in its regional cooperation efforts.

Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) is an important element of the EU policy towards its neighbours in the East and South. A new package of ENI CBC programmes, totalling € 1 billion, was adopted in December 2015. This prioritises projects supporting sustainable economic development along the EU's external borders, thus reducing differences in living standards and addressing common challenges across these borders.

Relevant general objective: A Stronger Global Actor		
Specific objective: Strengthened Eastern Partnership; support regional cooperation between southern neighbours, including through the Union for the Mediterranean; promote cross border cooperation between member states and partner countries		Related to spending programmes: ENI
Main outputs in 2017:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Eastern Partnership Summit 2017	Reaching of key deliverable milestones by November Summit, as part of the "20 deliverables for 2020" Summit held	November 2017
Progress on agreement on key connectivity priority projects along the core transport and energy network	Political commitment at Ministerial level Financial mechanisms agreed with countries and IFIs	November 2017
Six large scale funding schemes (1 per EaP country) to develop the capacity of CSOs to constructively engage with governments at grassroots, local and national level, as well as to support technical expertise in key sectors	Number of funding schemes in place	Throughout 2017
Eastern Partnership Civil Society Fellowships	20 fellows complete their training and have improved skills to generate evidence-based policy input to advance the quality of public debate on crucial policy issues within the Eastern Partnership.	Throughout 2017
Regular multi-stakeholder policy dialogue through the Civil Society Forums	Continued support to the EaP Civil Society Forum and its National Platforms, and to Neighbourhood South Civil Society Forum	Throughout 2017
Regional high level conference on Freedom of Expression, building on the event organised in 2015 by the Latvian presidency	Conference held	Second half of 2017 with preparatory work during the course of the year

Support to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)	Support the UfM sector policy dialogue with partner countries; Provide institutional support to the UfM; Qualitative assessment of commitments made in declarations adopted at the Ministerial Meetings of the Union for the Mediterranean and of progress reports presented at these meetings.	Throughout 2017
2017 ENI Multi-country Programmes	2017 Programmes adopted by the Commission	Throughout 2017
Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LA) thematic instrument	2017 Country-Based Support Schemes implemented in neighbourhood and enlargement countries (in line with DEVCO-NEAR Service Level Agreement)	Throughout 2017
European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)	2017 Country-Based Support Schemes implemented in neighbourhood and enlargement countries (in line with DEVCO-NEAR Service Level Agreement)	Throughout 2017
Cross-border Cooperation (CBC)	Two Financing Agreements signed with Partner Countries participating in the two ENI CBC Programmes adopted in 2016, covering the period 2014-2020 (PL-RU and LT-RU).	Throughout 2017
Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX)	Number of TAIEX activities.	Throughout 2017

Specific objective 3: The enlargement countries are more ready to join the EU, in particular in the fundamental areas of rule of law, fundamental rights, public administration reform and economic development, reaping the benefits of closer integration with the EU before accession.

DG NEAR will continue to support the enlargement process with candidate countries and potential candidates. DG NEAR will ensure this by fostering and monitoring progress with regard to alignment with the Copenhagen political and economic criteria, alignment with EU standards and legislation under the 35 chapters of the acquis and as well as with regard to the development of adequate capacities to implement the acquis. DG NEAR will also ensure the monitoring of the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA) with the Western Balkans. The Commission will continue to report as appropriate to EU Member States on the relevant progress.

DG NEAR will prepare a guidance note and start preparations for the next Enlargement package 2018, which will be the first package to be adopted in spring. The guidance to be provided will, inter alia, cover the links with the Economic Reform Programmes and include the final stage of the recalibration exercise.

As the migration crisis is putting a major strain on Turkey and the Western Balkans, DG NEAR will continue to provide substantial support in 2017 to these countries. DG NEAR will in particular monitor the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016, including the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan on Migration, the visa liberalisation roadmap, as well as continuing implementation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. DG NEAR will also contribute to improving cooperation between and stepping up consultation with the countries along the Western Balkans route and provide financial assistance where appropriate.

DG NEAR will enhance its assistance and monitoring tools to ensure that the agreed Roma integration priorities in the field of education, employment, health, housing and civil documentation are implemented, at central and local levels, and supported when required by IPA funds. Through the organisation of the Second Roma Award for Western Balkans and Turkey, DG NEAR will contribute to empowerment of Roma CSOs.

DG NEAR will take forward on-going work with negotiating countries (Serbia, Montenegro and Turkey) to progress on accession negotiations, including preparation of the necessary documents and reports. DG NEAR will follow up on its conditional recommendation to open accession negotiations with Albania and will intensify its technical engagement with the country in the area of rule of law. DG NEAR will take forward the preparation of the Commission's opinion on the application for EU-membership submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina in February 2016. DG NEAR will monitor the fulfilment by the authorities of the political agreement and implementation of the urgent reform priorities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In Kosovo, DG NEAR will monitor and assist the authorities to be able to deliver on the objectives of the European Reform Agenda.

These policy-related objectives will be supported through actions financed by IPA. In 2017, the Mid-term review of strategy papers for IPA beneficiaries will also be completed to make sure our financial assistance programmes can be adapted to evolving circumstances and to best help to deliver on reforms. In 2017, the mid-term external evaluation of the IPA II instrument will be completed and DG NEAR will prepare possible follow up actions.

DG NEAR will contribute to a balanced approach to relations with Turkey and, as a result of its close monitoring of developments in Turkey, conduct a comprehensive

reflection on pre-accession funding to further increase its support to the rule of law, notably fundamental rights, and to civil society.

Relevant general objective: A Stronger Global Actor		
Specific objective: The enlargement countries are more ready to join the EU, in particular as regards the fundamental areas of rule of law, public administration reform and economic development, reaping benefits of closer integration with the EU before accession and ensuring continued progress in the accession negotiations where relevant.		Related to spending programmes: IPA I and IPA II
Main outputs in 2017:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
<p>Preparations for the Enlargement package 2018:</p> <p>The guidance to be provided will, inter alia, cover the links with the Economic Reform Programmes and include the final stage of the recalibration exercise. The package will also provide substantial guidance on the reform process.</p>	<p>Guidance note issued and process launched.</p>	<p>Preparatory work throughout 2017 Guidance note issued by September</p>
<p>Accession negotiations:</p> <p>This includes preparing screening reports, opening and closing Benchmark Reports, and Draft Common Positions (DCP), as well as monitoring progress in fulfilling the rule of law interim benchmarks for Serbia and Montenegro in view of preparing non-papers (twice a year) to the Member States and interim benchmark reports (IBAR).</p>	<p>Ongoing work with negotiating countries to progress on accession negotiations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montenegro/Serbia: prepare and present DCPs and benchmark assessment reports to COELA on chapters where the necessary conditions have been fulfilled (opening, interim or closing benchmarks) • Turkey: no chapter currently under discussion in Council 	<p>Throughout 2017</p> <p>Several reports/DCPs per year, as necessary</p>
<p>Contribution to Kosovo-Serbia normalisation</p>	<p>Support to the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue process</p> <p>In 2017, support expected on the implementation of agreements on telecommunications and energy.</p>	<p>Throughout 2017</p>
<p>Commission Opinion on the merits of Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for EU membership</p>	<p>Preparatory work</p> <p>This will include: in-depth analysis of detailed answers from BiH on all areas of the EU acquis and necessary follow up; deployment of a large number of</p>	<p>Throughout 2017; final adoption likely to be in 2018.</p>

	expert missions; comprehensive stakeholder consultation and – possibly drafting of the opinion itself.	
Reform Agenda for Bosnia and Herzegovina	Monitoring in close coordination with International Financing Institutions of the implementation of the BiH Reform Agenda.	Throughout 2017
Albania: follow-up to the Commission's conditional recommendation to open accession negotiations	Monitoring fulfilment of conditions in Albania; Report as appropriate to the Council on Albania's progress on the required reforms.	Throughout 2017
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – follow-up on Commission's conditional recommendation	Fulfilment by the authorities of the political agreement and implementation of the urgent reform priorities, which would allow Commission report back to Council on its recommendation.	Throughout 2017
Kosovo - implementation of the SAA and European Reform Agenda	Implement the SAA through organisation of Sub Committees, SA Committee etc. and monitor and assist the authorities to be able to deliver on the objectives of the European Reform Agenda.	Throughout 2017
Coordination of the Economic Reform Programmes (ERP) exercise for the Enlargement countries and preparation of new guidance note for the 2018 ERP exercise.	2017 assessments and draft council conclusions adopted Guidance note adopted and circulated to partners	By end 2017, according to schedule fixed in 2016. Adoption and circulation of guidance note to partners before 1 June 2017
Preparation and adoption of comprehensive public administration reform (PAR) programmes and public financial management reform programmes (PFM) to support the development of horizontal capacities to implement the acquis.	Number of countries in which PAR and PFM strategies and/or action plan are prepared/updated in line with the Principles of Public Administration	At least 4 countries.
Monitoring the Stabilisation and association agreements (SAAs) and the implementation of structural reforms in the Western Balkans	SAA Council, Committee, and Sub-committee / Special Groups meetings taking place with the Western Balkans. Preparing, participating in and reporting on these meetings.	All Western Balkans partners: 1 SA Council 1 SA Committee 7 Sub-committees + PAR Special Group (and, for Kosovo, a normalisation Special Group)
Support to the Western Balkan Integrative	Ongoing work to design a specific plan of actions, including financial support	End 2017

Internal Security Governance		
Deployment of Europol Liaison Officers	Action grant to Europol adopted to deploy liaison officers in the region helping the beneficiaries in improving police intelligence, operations and cooperation	End 2017
Support to P/CVE in the Western Balkans	Support to the deployment of DG HOME Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) in the WB Implementation of small pilot actions on preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) Call for proposals launched under the PVE window of the 2017 Civil society Facility	End 2017
Support to the follow-up of EU-OSCE/ODIHR Electoral Recommendations in the Western Balkans	Implementation of new action	Thoroughout 2017
Enhanced political support and monitoring of progress on Roma integration, including better targeted IPA assistance	4 th round of Roma integration Seminars to be organised in MK*, SER, BiH, KOS* First seminar in TR. Second Roma Award organised in March 2017. Implementation of commitments in Chapter 23 (SER, ME) and the Seminar conclusions monitored in Sub-committees, Peer reviews. Second Roma Award organised in Roma dimension better included in national IPA programs and revised ISPs, as appropriate; multi-country IPA programme addressing urgent priorities	Throughout 2017
Launch of modernisation of the EU-Turkey Customs Union	Support DG TRADE in securing agreement on proposed mandate and initiate negotiations. Decide planning reference: 2015/TRADE+/035	Negotiations initiated by mid-2017
EU-Turkey Statement implementation, including Joint Action Plan on Migration and visa liberalisation roadmap	Monitor with HOME and Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) the EU-Turkey Statement, including the Joint Action Plan on Migration and the and visa liberalisation roadmap	Throughout 2017 Periodical reports
High level event on	Event held	November 2017

freedom of expression in Western Balkans		with preparatory work during the course of the year
Enhanced capacities of civil society organisations in the Western Balkans and Turkey Implementation of Civil Society Facility (CSF) and media Programmes	Around 13 new regional thematic networks of CSOs funded (€ 16 million) Tender for regional TA to CSOs launched Annual monitoring event of the EU Guidelines for support to civil society development Mid-term evaluation of the CSF	December 2017 Throughout 2017 Autumn 2017 Throughout 2017
Thematic evaluation on support to Economic Governance in enlargement The evaluation should serve to provide advice and evidence in future EU assistance on economic governance. It will assess the performance, good examples and lessons learned from the pre-existing assistance in areas related to economic governance in the enlargement countries.	Completion Decide planning reference: 2016/NEAR/001	June 2017
Thematic evaluation on Public Administration Reform The evaluation should serve to provide advice and evidence in future EU assistance on PAR	Completion Decide planning reference: 2016/NEAR/006	December 2017
IPA II mid-term evaluation for MTR 2014-2020	Completion Decide planning reference: 2017/NEAR+/001	End 2017
IPA II Multi-annual and Annual programmes	2017 IPA II country action programmes adopted	Throughout 2017
Strategy papers for IPA beneficiary countries	Carry out Mid-term review (for BiH: extension of country strategy paper until 2020)	Complete mid 2017
Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument - TAIEX	A number of key enlargement policy documents call for a pro-active and sequenced role for TAIEX to help the countries concerned meet: i) the operational conclusions of SAA meetings; ii) the recommendations of the enlargement package in line with the recalibrated reporting methodology; and, iii) progress in fulfilling the opening/interim accession negotiations benchmarks, as well as in	Throughout 2017

	monitoring their implementation. TAIEX, in close cooperation with geographical units, will map these needs to establish a comprehensive overview of activities to meet them.	
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Specific objective 4: Enlargement – Improved connectivity within the Western Balkans and with the EU. Improved good neighbourly relations among Enlargement countries with a view to overcoming the legacy of the past.

Connectivity is at the very heart of the Commission's efforts to support integration among the individual countries and between the Western Balkans and the EU. The efforts in the framework of the 'Berlin process' and the Western Balkan 6 cooperation also serve to drive forward the countries' European perspective. They also contribute to building bridges in the region, developing good neighbourly relations and promoting peace and reconciliation.

The connectivity agenda is therefore an essential element of DG NEAR's contribution to the Commission's objective of the EU as a stronger global actor.

This is a long-term process, but in 2017 the Commission will adopt a connectivity investment package to be endorsed at the Western Balkan summit in Italy in July. In addition, the Western Balkans are expected to ensure the implementation of connectivity reform measures to open markets, remove barriers to integration and create a transparent regulatory environment.

Significant funding and co-financing will be provided through the Western Balkans Investment Framework in order to support investments boosting jobs and growth and promoting connectivity in the region. This will be complemented by loan-financing from International Financial Institutions. The Western Balkan partners and their National Investment Committees must ensure that the single project pipelines become credible planning and prioritisation mechanisms to ensure that the countries have the budgetary resources and fiscal space to take up the necessary loan financing to get all the projects implemented on time.

The EC will also support the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY), by training young and active prosecutors in the region on war crime matters and by supporting ICTY outreach activities, and events to solidify its legacy. This should further smooth the transfer of war crime investigation and prosecution to the national jurisdictions of the countries.

Relevant general objective: A Stronger Global Actor		
Specific objective: Improved connectivity within the Western Balkans and with the EU. Improved good neighbourly relations among Enlargement countries with a view to overcoming the legacy of the past		Related to spending programmes: Multi-country IPA I and IPA II
Main outputs in 2017:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
2017 connectivity financial assistance package endorsed at the Western	Connectivity package endorsed, including confirmation of progress on the connectivity reform measures on transport and energy; progress	July 2017

Balkans Summit in Italy	in completing the Core transport network and the Core transport corridors; progress in implementing the Projects of Energy Community Interest.	
Western Balkans 6 Ministerial meetings to confirm progress on the implementation of connectivity reform measures for transport and energy, youth agenda and launch of the WB internal market	Meetings organised Initialling, then Signature, of Transport Community Treaty. Establishment / funding of the Transport Community Secretariat.	Jan-June 2017
2017 IPA II Multi-country Programmes prepared in line with national and regional needs	Programmes adopted by the Commission, including elements concerning the ICTY.	Throughout 2017, with ICTY Legacy events completed by December 2017
IPA I and II implementation/ budgetary execution	Benchmarks for KPIs on contract and payment are met.	December
Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX)	Continued organisation of TAIEX regional events to assist enlargement countries in improving and consolidating good neighbourly relations through events of common interest (energy, transport, connectivity, migration, judicial and police cooperation, etc.) and political relevance. TAIEX will continue to promote events aimed at regional reconciliation and overcoming the legacy of the past in the Western Balkans.	Throughout 2017

General objective 2 – Towards a New Policy on Migration

Specific objective 5: Stem the influx of irregular migrants to the EU, by addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration in Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries. Promote mobility and mutually beneficial migration.

The **current migration crisis** is a challenge of global dimensions. DG NEAR will work hand in hand in 2017 with partners and neighbouring countries which are most affected combining short term measures, for example assisting forcibly displaced and host communities to increase resilience and self-reliance and prevent secondary displacement, with measures boosting long term prospects, including education for refugees.

DG NEAR is engaged in dialogues on migration and mobility with the Neighbourhood Countries as a follow up to the reviewed ENP, including as part of broader regional processes (La Valletta Summit and follow up, Rabat Process, etc.).

DG NEAR will continue mobilising tools such as the **EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis** and **the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in Africa** and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey.

Relevant general objective: Towards a New Policy on Migration		
Specific objective: Stem the influx of irregular migrants to the EU, by addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration in Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries. Promote mobility and mutually beneficial migration.		Related to spending programmes: IPA and ENI
Main outputs in 2017:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Implementation of EU-Turkey Statement, and visa liberalisation roadmap	Positive Commission reports/findings on implementation	Throughout 2017 Periodic reports
Alignment with "acquis" by candidate countries and potential candidates	Monitoring of negotiations and alignment by candidate countries and potential candidates with EU standards and acquis related in particular to chapter 23 and 24.	Throughout 2017
Visa liberalisation process for Kosovo	Monitoring of the implementation of the remaining benchmarks of 2012 visa liberalisation roadmap	In 2017
Annex to the Mobility Partnership with Belarus	Finalisation	Second half of 2017 (DG HOME in the lead)
Ukraine Visa Liberalisation Process (VLAP)	Continued monitoring of benchmarks notably in the area of Anti-Corruption and provision of guidance on VLAP- relevant national legislation. (DG HOME in the lead).	Throughout 2017
Support to Georgia VLAP implementation	Support to the continuous implementation of the VLAP benchmarks, in particular in the fields of migration and organised crime	Throughout 2017
Continue implementation of Facility for Refugees in Turkey	Contract all remaining allocated funds under NEAR responsibility with IFIs and as bottom-up projects under the EUTF; monitor and evaluate running programmes; ensure strong visibility; hold periodic Steering Committee meetings	Throughout 2017
EU regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis	Implementing initiatives including the ones mentioned in the Communication on the Central	Throughout 2017

Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa – North Africa	Mediterranean Route	
Implementation of the Lebanon and Jordan 'Compacts'	Implementation report jointly drafted by the partner country and the EU	End 2017
Support migration management in Ukraine	Start of implementation of €28 million programme "Support for Migration Management and Asylum Management in Ukraine"	First semester 2017
Support to Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to respond to the refugees and migration crisis	Implementation of ongoing contracts; preparation of additional support; contracting of additional support	Throughout 2017
Support to the deployment of EU guest officers at the borders.	Implementation of ongoing contracts; preparation of additional support taking into consideration possible phase in of EBCG operations; contracting of additional support taking into consideration possible phase in of EBCG operations	Throughout 2017
Support to DG HOME in negotiating the Status agreement for the possible deployment of the EBCG Agency in Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Support to DG HOME during the negotiations	First semester 2017 (estimate)

General objective 3 – A Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy

Specific objective 6: Increased energy security and more effective climate policies in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries as well as increased energy connectivity between the EU and these countries.

DG NEAR will help work towards this objective by assisting candidate countries with alignment to EU standards as well as through their participation in the Energy Community. A strengthened energy dialogue will also be achieved with neighbourhood partners, through the implementation of the reviewed ENP. Given the high level of intensity of energy use of NEAR regions, particular emphasis will be given to Energy Efficiency, in line with the EU's 'Energy Efficiency First' principle. Energy efficiency is also a key theme of the enhanced collaboration with the IFIs, launched in 2015. Furthermore, activities will be aligned with the implementation needs stemming from the Paris Climate Agreement.

Relevant general objective: A Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy		
Specific objective: Increased energy security and more effective climate policies in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries as well as increased energy connectivity between the EU and these countries.		Related to spending programmes: IPA and ENI
Main outputs in 2017:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Further integration of the Energy Community Treaty in the Western Balkans	Level of Enforcement of existing Energy Community Acquis (through Berlin Process connectivity reform measures)	By the time of the Summit in Italy, the level of enforcement of these connectivity reforms should allow investments in energy projects.
	Application of the EU's Security of Supply Regulation, as well as elements of the 2016 Winter Package, to the Energy Community	Once these texts are approved, this will be transposed in the EnC countries, allowing them to apply to those countries as well as between the EU and EnC Contracting Parties.
Alignment with "acquis" by candidate countries	Outputs related to negotiations and alignment by candidate countries with EU standards, acquis on related chapters (Energy etc.) and Energy Community Treaty obligations. High Level Energy Dialogue with Turkey, in Brussels.	Serbia and Montenegro, in particular, should make further progress to full alignment

ENP review roll-out – Priority actions on Energy and Climate Change Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened energy dialogue with Neighbourhood partners. • Action Plan developed as follow-up to the first EaP Ministerial on Environment and Climate Change • Euronest Parliamentary Assembly (Committee on Energy Security) kept regularly informed of technical assistance and policy dialogue • Regional and sub-regional measures further developed 	Throughout 2017
Enlargement – Priority actions for Energy Efficiency and Renewable energy	Contracting and implementation of new regional programme supporting renewable energy and energy efficiency in the Western Balkans	November 2017
Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) projects	Progress towards the 20% target of EU-budget climate-related	Throughout 2017
ENP review roll-out – Priority actions on Energy Development of enhanced collaboration with IFIs on- energy efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU4Energy national work plans are developed for the newly established programme. • Contracting and implementation of Energy Efficiency / Renewable Energy instruments in Western Balkans • New regional actions for the Southern Neighbourhood on energy security and climate change, mitigation and adaptation (€ 19 million) are launched • Identification of key investments in energy efficiency in the East is part of the enhanced collaboration with IFIs 	November 2017 2017 September 2017
ENP review roll-out: actions related to climate policy	New regional programmes on climate action and green economy formulated	December 2017
Energy Efficiency	Adoption of 2017 Special Measure on Energy Efficiency for Ukraine	2017
TAIEX and Twinning	Requests in support of Paris Agreement implementation addressed. Continued and enhanced use of the TAIEX instrument to assist candidate countries in aligning to and implementation of EU standards and legislation/acquis.	Throughout 2017

General objective 4 – A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment

Specific objective 7: Increased prosperity in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries and in the EU through increased economic and trade opportunities between the EU and these countries.

DG NEAR will contribute to this specific objective through a variety of policy-related actions. These include securing a mandate and initiating negotiation of a **modernised Customs Union with Turkey**, establishing a new comprehensive framework to promote economic development and private investment in our partner countries through the **External Investment Plan**, monitoring the **Stabilisation and Association Agreements** with the countries of the Western Balkans, as well as ensuring **financial assistance to Morocco and Tunisia to accompany them in the DCFTA negotiations**. In all its regions, DG NEAR will work very closely on aligning policies as well as investments with IFIs.

Relevant general objective: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment		
Specific objective: Increased prosperity in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries and in the EU through increased economic and trade opportunities between the EU and these countries.		Related to spending programmes: IPA and ENI
Main outputs in 2017:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Modernised EU-Turkey Customs Union: Support DG TRADE in securing agreement on proposed mandate and initiate negotiations.	Negotiations initiated Decide planning reference: 2015/TRADE+/035	By mid-2017
Coordination of the Economic Reform Programmes (ERP) exercise for the Enlargement countries and preparation of new guidance note for the 2018 ERP exercise.	2017 assessments and draft council conclusions adopted Guidance note adopted and circulated to partners	2017 assessments and draft council conclusions adopted according to schedule fixed in 2016. Adoption and circulation of guidance note to partners before 1 June 2017
External Investment Plan (EIP) - establish a framework to promote private investment in Neighbourhood countries; leverage substantial public funds from the EU, its Member States (MS) and other donors.	Secretariat and web portal set-up (following adoption of the EIP by the co-legislator).	Operational by end 2017

Monitoring the Stabilisation and association agreements (SAA) with Western Balkans countries	SAA Council, Committee, and sub-committee meetings taking place with the Western Balkans. Preparing, participating in and reporting on these meetings	For all WB: 1 annual SAA Council 1 annual SA Committee 7 Sub-committees + PAR Special Group (and, for Kosovo, a normalisation Special Group)
Alignment with economic criteria and economic related "acquis" chapters by candidate countries and potential candidates	Continued support to negotiations and alignment by candidate countries and potential candidates to EU standards and acquis on related chapters (free movement of goods, services, capital, public procurement, company law, intellectual property rights, competition, financial services, taxation, employment, enterprise and industrial policy, research, consumer protection, customs, etc)	Throughout 2017
Pursue technical support to economic and public institutions' reforms in Southern Neighbourhood countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support to ongoing economic, business climate and institutional reforms in countries like Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan; • Contribute to economic diversification in countries like Algeria and Libya; • Support economic diplomacy efforts by DG GROW in countries like Tunisia; • Continued support to the private sector through different means (encouraging private-public economic dialogues, support easier access to finance for SMEs, support upgrading of production and mainstreaming of EU technical and SPS regulations by providing technical expertise, etc.) 	Throughout 2017
Pursue technical support to economic and public institutions' reforms in Eastern Neighbourhood countries including through close cooperation and strategic dialogue with IFIs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted reforms programs in key policy areas, including the business climate, private sector development, access to finance, governance, anti-corruption, • Annual meetings with WB and IFC, EBRD and EIB for Neighbourhood East, • Strategic discussions on pipeline of blending projects 	Throughout 2017

Foster deeper economic integration in the Western Balkans aiming to achieve an internal market	Action Plan endorsed at Prime Ministers' level at Trieste Summit Assistance and monitoring of implementation in close cooperation with partner organisations (e.g. CEFTA, RCC, WB)	July 2017
Support economic growth, private sector development and investments at regional level in the Southern Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and adopt new regional actions to improve economic governance, SME reform and access to finance (€ 7 million) • Contribute to the design of new NIP operations and to the set-up of an investment windows under the External Investment Plan • Implement the EU Initiative for Financial Inclusion under NIP 	June/September 2017 Throughout 2017 Throughout 2017
DCFTA with Morocco and Tunisia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued participation in EU's awareness raising and negotiation efforts in relation to DCFTA with Morocco and Tunisia. • Ensure implementation of financial assistance to accompany the DCFTA negotiations. 	Throughout 2017
DCFTA Facility for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine	The two DCFTA Facilitation programmes with the EIB and the EBRD will generate approximately 13,750 sub-loans. Improve technical and SPS standards leading to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs in the DCFTA signatory countries.	Throughout 2017
Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (EDIF) funding in the Western Balkans	SME funding of €28 million made available under EDIF for the Western Balkans	July 2017
Regional Energy Efficiency Programme (REEP) and Green for Growth Fund (GGF) funding in the Western Balkans	Funding of additional €50 million contracted for energy efficiency activities within SMEs, residential and public buildings as well as for small renewable energy projects.	February 2017
Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument - TAIEX	TAIEX events contributing to the implementation of AA/DCFTA and to current or future agreements implying approximation with EU laws and norms (East and South)	Throughout 2017

PART 2. MAIN ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR

A. Human resource management

The HR Modernisation project implemented according to the Communication on Synergies and Efficiencies of April 2016 makes changes to the way that HR services are delivered. HR services will be delivered by an Account Management Centre (AMC) inside DG HR. Each DG will have an HR Business Correspondent, responsible for defining HR strategy and taking HR decisions, in consultation with the management of the DG, as well as ensuring that the DG gets the HR service it needs, in cooperation with the AMC. DG NEAR will move to the new way of working in 2017. DG NEAR will receive support from AMC4 which will serve the following group of DGs: DEVCO, ECHO, FPI, NEAR and TRADE (TRADE for staff in Delegations only).

With a view to reaching the **female representation rate** of 40% target set for 2019 DG NEAR will continue to monitor the rate of female representation in middle management. In 2016 the representation rate for DG NEAR fluctuated between 35% at the beginning of the year to 33% in December. DG NEAR will continue to actively encourage (in its vacancy notices) applications from eligible female staff for middle management positions. DG NEAR selection panels will continue to monitor appropriate gender balance in the pre-selection and selection phases of middle management selection procedures.

DG NEAR works closely with the other external relations services and the EEAS and already cooperates closely with them on human resource management and staffing issues. With a view to enhancing the existing synergies and professionalisation of the services, DG NEAR will together with the other stakeholders explore the possibilities of implementing a mobility policy with and between the Commission service concerned and the EEAS.

As part of its talent management policy DG NEAR will provide training and mentoring possibilities for potential managerial colleagues so that they are better prepared to participate in middle management selections including preparation for the Assessment Centre phase of the selection procedure.

The 2016 staff engagement index for DG NEAR (all staff) stands at 58% (6 percentage points below the Commission average). The breakdown for the index is 64% for staff in HQ and 53% for staff in EU Delegations. A 2017 **staff engagement action plan** containing revised and additional concrete actions will be adopted in 2017 to address the issues raised in the results on the 7 questions which make up the staff engagement index.

DG NEAR will monitor, via the Commission Staff Survey, and other in-house initiatives, the satisfaction rate amongst staff in these 7 areas and take additional remedial actions where necessary to bridge the gap between with the Commission average and the DG NEAR results.

In parallel DG NEAR will, in cooperation with the other external relation DGs and the EEAS, explore reasons for and solutions to the particular issues which affect all staff groups in the DGs EU Delegations.

In the DG NEAR 2016 staff survey results DG NEAR scored an average of 49% on the 11 well-being questions (some 8 percentage points below the Commission average). However the results for staff HQ are equal to the Commission average of 59% whilst those for staff in EU Delegations are at 42%.

DG NEAR will continue to promote working conditions which are conducive to achieving a better work life balance namely promoting teleworking opportunities – both structural and occasional.

To deliver on its overall human resource objective of effectively deploying resources, ensuring a competent and engaged workforce led by a gender balanced management, in 2017 DG NEAR will focus on 3 organisational management issues, namely:

- Increase gender balance in middle management representation in DG NEAR, as well as in support staff for middle and senior management, in particular Deputy Heads of Unit and assistants;
- Promote a more holistic approach to staff wellbeing in line with the Commission's fit@work strategy;
- Address the core issues which contribute to the staff engagement index namely ensuring that all DG NEAR staff has the tools, training and information they need to do a good job and feel valued for the contribution they make to DG NEAR and the EU project.

Objective: The DG deploys effectively its resources in support of the delivery of the Commission priorities and core business, has a competent and engaged workforce, which is driven by an effective and gender-balanced management and which can deploy its full potential within supportive and healthy working conditions.

Main outputs in 2017:

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Increase in female representation in middle management positions	Percentage of women in middle management	38% by end 2017
Increase number of women appointed to first time middle management functions.	Number of first time appointments	Appoint 1 woman to first time management position by end 2017
Promote an appropriate work life balance for staff	Staff request appropriate working conditions (part-time, flexitime and teleworking) to match their particular work life balance considerations	12% of colleagues in HQ teleworking by end 2017 (compared to 10% now)
		100% of eligible requests for part-time working validated
Promote awareness of fit@ work campaign including mental and physical health & wellbeing activities	Staff attend and participate in activities which increase staff understanding of the importance of mental and physical health to their overall well being	Organise minimum 6 fit@work workshops on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ergonomics • Physical health • Nutrition • Social-psychological issues • Mental Health
Roll out the 2017 Staff Engagement Action Plan tackling the staff engagement issues raised in the 2016	Adoption of the 2017 Action Plan by DG NEAR Senior Management	Adoption of Action Plan foreseen for April 2017

<p>Staff survey namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared DG NEAR vision and purpose • Effective internal communication • Managing Performance • Enhancing 'people' management skills • Working conditions & work /life balance • Career advice, career paths, opportunities & mobility • Training & training budget. <p>Take 'temperature' mid-year on the 7 areas contributing to overall staff engagement</p>		
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B. Financial Management: Internal control and Risk management

The Authorising Officer by Delegation should have reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions including prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities.

The three objectives indicated below are the objectives of the Strategic Management Plan for the period 2016-2020. Main outputs, indicators and targets have been indicated for these three objectives. While objective 1 relates to the legality and regularity of underlying transactions (what we do), objective 2 deals with the cost effectiveness of the system and sound financial management (how we do it). Objective 3 is about the effectiveness of the anti-fraud policy of the DG.

<p>Objective 1: Effective and reliable internal control system giving the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and the regularity of the underlying transactions.</p>		
<p>Main outputs in 2017:</p>		
<p><i>Output</i></p>	<p><i>Indicator</i></p>	<p><i>Target</i></p>
<p>The control system is in place and provides management with the necessary controls and information as to</p>	<p>-Instructions available on the Intranet. -Training and awareness raising provided to staff.</p>	<p>-All staff aware of the current guidance and instructions. -All financial transactions checked following the DG's</p>

<p>determine reasonable assurance on the transactions.</p> <p>Instructions regarding procedures are available to staff. Training is undertaken where necessary.</p> <p>Also, all financial transactions should be checked following the DG's instructions and Guidance on the matter.</p> <p>All possible controls are implemented and functioning well. Problems are reported when found and solutions found.</p>	<p>-Staff is in place and following instructions.</p> <p>-Reporting on ineligible expenditure and problems/issues detected by the controls in place (see also indicator on ineligible expenditure below).</p> <p>- NEAR MAP as near to finalisation as possible.</p>	<p>instructions and Guidance.</p> <p>-All controls are in place and functioning well.</p>
<p>Risk management as part of the control system is implemented and functioning</p>	<p>-Risk assessment of contracts in MIS is undertaken on a yearly basis, control plans are established.</p> <p>-Risk management is implemented in the DG, action plans are established and followed up for the risks identified.</p>	<p>-All contracts are risk assessed in MIS on a yearly basis. Control plans regarding these contracts are approved.</p> <p>-Risks are identified and reported upon, twice a year in the DG, action plans are also established and followed up with the same frequency.</p> <p>-Risk register of the DG which is kept up to date.</p>
<p>Reporting of deviations. The Non-compliance events and exceptions are reported on, their causes analysed and mitigating measures proposed when possible.</p> <p>Also the cases of "Passer-Outre" are recorded and reported on.</p>	<p>-Reporting on Non-compliance events and exceptions is undertaken on a regular basis.</p> <p>-The causes of Non-compliance events and exceptions are analysed and mitigating measures are proposed when possible.</p>	<p>-A report on Non-compliance and exceptions will be made, at a minimum, on a yearly basis. Analysis of the causes of these deviations will also be made on a yearly basis and mitigating measures proposed.</p>
<p>The Reporting system is in place and gives a true and fair view of</p>	<p>-Quality of reports and respect of deadlines for reports. EAMR and KPI</p>	<p>-All the necessary reports (see list in Internal Control Strategy) are produced in time and are of</p>

the activities.	system in place and functioning.	good quality.
The Annual Audit Plan that has been approved is being implemented.	-1- % implementation of the Annual Audit Plan: year N -2-% implementation of the Annual Audit Plan: year N-1 -3-% implementation of the Annual Audit Plan: year N-2.	-1-At least 60% -2-At least 85% -3-At least 95%
The controls in place are effective and detect ineligible expenditures, be it by ex-ante controls or by audits.	DG NEAR will use two sub set of indicators: -1- Ineligible amounts identified by ex-ante controls, in relation to DG NEAR annual overall spending. -2- Ineligible amounts identified by audits as a % of the audited amount.	-1- Target 2% for ineligible amounts by ex-ante controls (in relation to total spending of the DG). -2- Target of 2% for ineligible amounts identified by audits (in relation to the amounts audited).
The action plans to audit recommendations from the Court of Auditors, the IAS and recommendations from the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers are being implemented.	Number of critical and very important recommendations overdue for more than 6 months, whose action plan has not been fully implemented yet.	No critical or very important audit recommendations overdue for more than 6 months after the date established in the action plan.
The residual error rate is calculated on a yearly basis for the DG as whole and has a coverage of at least 90% of the DG expenditures. The figures provided are accurate and based on a sound methodology.	Residual error rate Recommendations by the IAS and the Court	Benchmark for the DG < 2% through implementation of effective and efficient control systems. Amount at risk at closure is calculated. The recommendations by the Court and the IAS as regards the RER rate are implemented.
The Estimated overall amount at risk is calculated each year.	Estimated overall amount at risk	The amount at risk is contained.

Objective 2: Effective and reliable internal control system in line with sound financial management.

Main outputs in 2017:

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
<p>-Execution of payments and commitments in DG NEAR are following forecasts.</p> <p>-The RAL (RAC+RAP) is correctly managed.</p> <p>-Pre-financing is cleared regularly.</p> <p>-Expired contracts are closed.</p> <p>-Payments are made on time.</p>	<p>-1-Accuracy of initial annual financial forecast for payments.</p> <p>-2- Accuracy of initial annual financial forecast for contracts.</p> <p>-3- RAL absorption period.</p> <p>-4- Reduction of Old Pre-financing.</p> <p>-5- Expired Contracts as a % of the contract portfolio.</p> <p>-6- Reduction of Old RAL.</p> <p>-7- % of payments paid within the EC internal target of 30 days.</p>	<p>1-Between 90% and 110%</p> <p>2-Between 90% and 110%</p> <p>3-Not more than 4 years</p> <p>4-Decrease by 25% at least</p> <p>5-Not more than 15%</p> <p>6-Decrease by 25% at least</p> <p>7-At least 66% (This percentage is based on historical figures and is also used as a benchmark in the key performance indicators).</p>
<p>The cost effectiveness of controls is assessed on a yearly basis.</p>	<p>Cost effectiveness of Controls</p>	<p>Costs of controls are under 5% of the DG overall spending.</p>
<p>The Internal Control Principles are assessed on an annual basis in Delegations and at Headquarters.</p> <p>Internal Control weaknesses are detected and mitigating measures proposed.</p>	<p>Assessment of Internal Control Principles.</p> <p>Reporting on Internal Control Principles.</p>	<p>The Internal Control Principles are assessed annually, through different means (KPIs in the EAMR, Survey or Desk review).</p> <p>An Internal Control Principles report is drafted annually.</p>
<p><u>Safeguarding of information</u></p> <p>- Documents should be registered and filed according to the defined rules</p> <p>- Access to confidential documents should be restricted</p> <p>- Single files for decisions and contracts should be created and shared</p>	<p>Application of the rules as regards registration, filing and archiving</p> <p>Create limited files in Ares/NomCom for restricted and confidential documents</p> <p>Create single files in Ares/NomCom with access to both HQ and EU-Delegations for decision and contract files (decision to be taken)</p>	<p>100% of documents registered, filed and archived according to the instructions</p> <p>100% of confidentiality of documents ensured</p> <p>100% of non-confidential decision and contract files converted into single shared files</p>

between HQ and Delegations		
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Objective 3: Minimisation of the risk of fraud through application of effective anti-fraud measures, integrated in all activities of the DG, based on the DG's anti-fraud strategy (AFS) aimed at the prevention, detection and reparation of fraud.

Main outputs in 2017:

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Minimisation of the risk of fraud through application of effective anti-fraud measures, integrated in all activities of the DG, based on the DG's anti-fraud strategy (AFS) aimed at the prevention, detection and reparation of fraud.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1- Updated anti-fraud strategy of DG NEAR, elaborated on the basis of the methodology provided by OLAF. -2- Fraud awareness is increased for target population(s) as identified in the DG's AFS. -3- Regular monitoring of the implementation of the anti-fraud strategy and reporting on its result to management. -4- The number of cases/suspected frauds reported to OLAF in 2017 and the number of cases closed. -5- Amounts recovered following recommendations of an OLAF investigation. -6- Cases referred to EDES further to OLAF investigations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1- The AFS will be updated every two years; the next update will be made by the end of 2017. -2- The target is to raise the anti-fraud awareness of over 10% for the whole of DG NEAR follow up of recently completed anti-fraud questionnaire; and, other training/awareness raising initiatives. -3- Implementation of the AFS will be reported upon twice a year as part of the Management Report to the Commissioner, or as part of an equivalent management report. -4- Ensure the application of fraud awareness within the control system, demonstrated by the reporting of suspected cases of fraud to OLAF.

C. Better Regulation

The main planned outputs linked to the Better Regulation objective in the Strategic Plan are listed in Part 1 under the relevant specific objective. They are presented in the tables under the headings "All new initiatives and REFIT initiatives from the Commission Work Programme" and "other important items".

D. Information management aspects

Concerning Document Management, the year 2017 will focus on the full electronic signatory in ARES for all documents that do not require a handwritten signature.

Concerning Information Management, in order to avoid duplication of files and to improve the flow of information on decisions and actions between HQ and Delegations, DG NEAR will create single decision and contract files with access granted to both HQ and Delegations.

Objective: Information and knowledge in the DG is shared and reusable by other DGs. Important documents are registered, filed and retrievable.

Main outputs in 2017:

Output	Indicator	Target
Electronic filing of registered documents in Ares	Number of registered and filed documents in Ares	100%
Full electronic signatory in ARES	Number of purely e-signatories in Ares	50% i.e. all internal notes (up to two pages)
Single decision and contract files created with shared access for HQ and Delegations	Number of shared files	100% of non-confidential files

E. External communication activities

Better communication on the objectives and the results of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the enlargement process will be a priority for DG NEAR.

Improved public diplomacy will help explain better the rationale of EU policies and the positive impact of concrete EU actions in the neighbouring countries. Similarly, effective communication on how the enlargement process works and its implications for citizens' lives remains essential for ensuring public support. Both require a joint effort of the EU and its Member States, as well as of the governments and civil society in the partner countries.

The external communication activities of the DG will support the ten political priorities of the Commission as defined in the Political Guidelines, in particular priority number 9 "A Stronger Global Actor", as well as the other priorities relevant for the DG. Cooperation and synergies with other DGs will be sought where relevant.

Objective: To increase knowledge and understanding of the European Neighbourhood Policy, including the use and objectives of EU funds for the neighbourhood

Main outputs in 2017:

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Press trips for EU journalists to the neighbourhood region	Number of participants	55
	Cost per contact	n/a
	Indirect audience reach:	n/a

	audience of the media covering the event who might have seen the articles – Opportunities to see (OTS)	
	Number of participants who declare the event met their expectations	>60% of participants
	Useful contacts made	>40% of participants
	Likelihood to share the info	>50% of participants
	Better understanding of the policy/related funding	>50% of participants
Training seminars on EU visibility and communication for beneficiaries in the neighbourhood	Number of participants	115
	Cost per contact	n/a
	Event met expectations	>65% of participants
	Likelihood to share the info	>50% of participants
OPEN Neighbourhood Regional Programme: campaigns, events and polling to improve perceptions of the EU in Neighbourhood countries	Number of visits to EU Neighbours website	>480,000
	Number of people reached on Facebook	(Average reach per post) East: pending feedback from contractor South: pending feedback from contractor
	Number of impressions - Twitter	pending feedback from contractor
	Fan engagement rate	pending feedback from contractor Facebook Twitter
	Number of subscribers to news alerts	>7,600
	Number of people reached through events	>1,500
	Number of young people becoming part of Young European Neighbours network	>130
Objective : To increase knowledge and understanding of the enlargement policy, including the use and objectives of EU pre-accession funds		
Main outputs in 2017:		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Press trips for EU journalists to the	Number of participants	85
	Cost per contact	n/a

enlargement region	Indirect audience reach: audience of the media covering the event who might have seen the articles – Opportunities to see (OTS)	n/a
	Number of participants who declare the event met their expectations	>60% of participants
	Useful contacts made	>40% of participants
	Likelihood to share the info	>50% of participants
	Better understanding of the policy/related funding	>50% of participants
Training seminars on EU visibility and communication for beneficiaries in the enlargement region	Number of participants	115
	Cost per contact	n/a
	Event met expectations	>65% of participants
	Likelihood to share the info	>50% of participants
Youth Conference during the WB6 summit in Italy (in line with Vienna Summit Conclusions)	Number of participants	150
	Cost per contact	n/a
	Event met expectations	>60% of participants
	Useful contacts made	>50% of participants
	Likelihood to share the info	>50% of participants
	Better understanding of the policy/related funding	>50% of participants
Western Balkans Media Days	Better opinion of the EU/its institutions	>35% of participants
	Number of participants	300
	Cost per contact	n/a
	Event met expectations	>60% of participants
	Useful contacts made	>50% of participants
	Likelihood to share the info	>50% of participants
	Better understanding of the policy/related funding	>50% of participants
Better opinion of the EU/its institutions	>35% of participants	
Series of policy events with stakeholders in the EU Member States	Number of participants	500
	Cost per contact	n/a
	Event met expectations	>60% of participants
	Likelihood to share the info	>25% of participants
	Better understanding of the	>50% of participants

	policy/related funding	
	Better opinion of the EU/its institutions	>20% of participants
Study visits of EU stakeholders to enlargement region	Number of participants	50
	Cost per contact	n/a
	Event met expectations	>50% of participants
	Useful contacts made	>40% of participants
	Likelihood to share the info	>50% of participants
	Better understanding of the policy/related funding	>40% of participants
	Better opinion of the EU/its institutions	>25% of participants

Objective: Dissemination of information through DG NEAR website and social media

Main outputs in 2017:

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
DG NEAR website*	Number of visits	1,500,000
	Number of unique visitors	1,000,000
	Number of page views	3,000,000
	Top pages viewed by users	n/a
	Pages per visit	n/a
DG NEAR social media (Facebook and Twitter)	Number of people reached	Facebook / average reach by post: 60,000
	Number of impressions	Twitter: 1,000,000 (overall)
	Fan engagement rate:	Facebook: 3% / Twitter: 1% (Average number of engagements by post Facebook: 1450 / Twitter: 36)

*Online surveys are foreseen in the future after the digital transformation project has been finalised.

For external communication overall spending:

Annual communication spending (based on estimated commitments):	
Baseline (2016):	Target (2017):
EUR 22,655,000	EUR 22,950,000

F. Example(s) of initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities of the DG

In 2017, DG NEAR will be looking to undertake a number of initiatives to improve and enhance the work of the Directorate-General. Such initiatives include notably:

- **External Investment Plan**

On 14 September 2016, the Commission put forward the External Investment Plan (EIP), an ambitious initiative to provide the EU with a coherent approach to investments in Africa and the Neighbourhood and a long term strategy to promote the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda and thus address root causes of migration. The EIP foresees a closely coordinated implementation of three distinct pillars: a new European Fund for Sustainable Developments (EFSD), which will support investments in Africa and the Neighbourhood through blending instruments and a new EU guarantee facility (pillar 1); technical assistance (pillar 2), to help local authorities and companies develop a higher number of sustainable projects and attract investors; and finally a range of dedicated thematic, national and regional EU development cooperation programmes combined with structured political dialogue targeted at improving the investment climate and overall policy environment in the countries concerned (pillar 3). In 2017 DG NEAR will continue to support the co-legislative process with the Council and the European Parliament, with the aim to have the EIP approved and operating as of mid-2017. In parallel, and jointly with DG DEVCO, DG NEAR will develop the different components of the plan, so that it can be rolled out as soon as the co-legislative process is concluded. These include: the development of the one-stop-shop and the project web portal; the definition of the investment windows and the criteria for the investments to be supported by the EU guarantee facility that will be created under the EIP; the deployment of the EIP Secretariat; and the monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment framework to be applied.

This initiative represents a streamlining of the procedures for a number of investment facilities including the Neighbourhood Investment Facility. It will offer a one stop shop for synergies and efficiencies for both DG NEAR and DG DEVCO and will enhance working relationships with the EIB.

- **RER**

In 2017, DG NEAR will continue to work on implementing a coherent and comprehensive RER, applying to all areas of expenditure. This will enhance the Director General's assurance and contribute to the development of a single audit approach.