

Izabela Barczyk-Olszewska, Fund Operator of the regional funds  
Ecorys Polska  
Warsaw

Brussels, 29 September 2020

### Cancellation of Fund for Regional Cooperation project 0501

Dear Ms Barczyk-Olszewska,

This is to inform you that the Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC) has decided to cancel the award of a grant to project 0501 of the Fund for Regional Cooperation due to the lead partner's non-compliance with the Rules and Procedures of the Fund for Regional Cooperation as well as the values of the EEA and Norway Grants.

The lead partner of the project *Carpathian Route - exploring, promoting and protecting the richness of the cultural and natural heritage of the Carpathian region* is the Podkarpackie Region (a self-governing regional authority). On 27 May 2019 Podkarpackie councillors voted for a resolution to 'resist the promotion of LGBT ideology', which was approved by a majority of votes.<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 1 of this resolution and its justification express 'an objection to the promotion and affirmation of the so-called LGBT movements ideology'.

Article 1.2 of the of Protocol 38c on the EEA Financial Mechanism (2014-2021) states that '*all programmes and activities funded shall be based on the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities*'. The Fund for Regional Cooperation is governed by the Rules and Procedures that were adopted by the FMC on 29 June 2016 and reflected in the agreement between the FMO and the Fund Operator (signed 21 December 2016). The relevant Article reads as follows:

#### *'1.4 Principles of implementation*

*The implementation of the Funds shall be based on the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.'*

The call for proposals reflects this Article and states 'All projects and activities funded shall be based on the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities'.

<sup>1</sup> See [https://bip.podkarpackie.pl/attachments/article/4593/Uchwa%C5%82a%20Nr%2047\\_1171\\_19.pdf](https://bip.podkarpackie.pl/attachments/article/4593/Uchwa%C5%82a%20Nr%2047_1171_19.pdf) and <http://www.sejmik.podkarpackie.pl/attachments/article/3054/wysy%C5%82ka.pdf>.  
[www.eeagrants.org](http://www.eeagrants.org)

By adopting a resolution explicitly referring to 'LGBT' or 'LGBT ideology' the lead partner discriminates against an identifiable group of persons, i.e. persons belonging to the LGBT community

The FMC is of the view that as long as the lead partner has taken a public position that undermines the principle of equal treatment to such an extent and goes fundamentally against the respect for human rights, including the rights of people belonging to minorities, such an entity is not capable of implementing the project and activities in line with these values. The funding of a project where the lead partner has adopted a resolution against 'LGBT ideology' has to be qualified as an infringement of the principles of implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants. Therefore, such funding would amount to a violation of the Protocol 38c on the EEA Financial Mechanism (2014-2021) and the Rules and Procedures for the Fund for Regional Cooperation.

Based on this, the FMC decided to cancel the award.

This decision is final and cannot be appealed.

I kindly ask you to inform the lead partner and the partner consortium of this decision.

Best regards,



Frode Dal Fjeldavli  
Head of Funds and Horizontal Concerns Unit  
Financial Mechanism Office