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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION**

Accompanying the document

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**assessing the implementation and achievements of the 2014-2020 rights, equality and
citizenship programme**

{COM(2022) 118 final} - {SWD(2022) 58 final}

Background

This staff working document accompanies the report from the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, in accordance with the obligation specified in Article 13.2(c) of the legal base of the rights, equality and citizenship programme (hereinafter ‘REC programme’)¹.

The Regulation requires the European Commission to provide the European Parliament and the Council with an *ex post* evaluation report for the programme by 31 December 2021. The report must assess the long-term impact and the sustainability of the programme’s effects, with a view to informing a decision on any subsequent programme. In 2021, however, a considerable number of projects remained ongoing (more than 40%) due to their multiannual life-span. This situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused the extension of the duration of several projects.

For these reasons and in order to have a meaningful evaluation of the programme’s long-term results and impacts, the *ex post* evaluation will be carried out in two parts. This report represents the first part of the evaluation. It is based on the data currently available, provides an overview of how the funding is distributed and assesses the programme’s achievements to date. The second part will complete the evaluation of all the projects in the programme and will assess the long-term impacts and sustainability of the effects. This will take place in 2024, together with the interim evaluation of the citizens, equality, rights and values programme.

The staff working document provides an overview of the programme’s objectives and the needs addressed, the intervention logic, and the implementation of the programme. It then covers the replies to the evaluation questions regarding the programme’s effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value, equity and scope for simplification. Finally, the staff working document explains the conclusions of the analysis of eight case studies, in which a number of specific questions have been studied in detail.

In terms of geographical scope, the evaluation covers all the participating countries, namely all EU Member States and, when relevant, Liechtenstein, Iceland, and Serbia.

Description of the programme

The REC programme focuses on fundamental rights in nine areas, corresponding to its specific objectives: non-discrimination; racism and other forms of intolerance; rights of persons with disabilities; gender equality; preventing violence (Daphne); rights of the child; data protection; EU citizenship; and consumers’ rights. Compared to its predecessor programmes, its specific objectives show an effort to tackle the issues from a cross-cutting perspective. This has resulted in a more streamlined programme positioned at the intersection between equality and people’s rights.

The programme was implemented via direct management by the European Commission.

Implementation of the programme

The budget annual allocations for the programme amounted to EUR 426.8 m for the entire programming period. A total of **81 calls for proposals** were planned during 2014-2020. The largest number of these calls covered the specific objective to ‘prevent violence (Daphne)’,

¹ REGULATION (EU) NO 1381/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 establishing a rights, equality and citizenship programme for the period 2014 to 2020.

with 18 calls. Overall, **942 action grants** and operating grants were awarded throughout the programme.

A large part of the activities funded by REC projects between 2016 and 2020 can be classified as ‘training activities’ (35%). Non-profit organisations accounted for the majority of beneficiaries throughout 2016-2020 (57%)².

Procurement was an important funding mechanism for a number of specific objectives, amounting to a total of **345 contracts** over the entire period. In total, approximately **EUR 81 million** was allocated to procurement contracts and services. The most common type of procurement was for analytical and monitoring activities.

Evaluation results

Based on the results of the evaluation, the REC programme continues to be **relevant to the changing needs** of stakeholders and the target groups. Activities are highly relevant to the current needs in 85% of the sampled projects. This was ensured via its flexible programming nature, including the annual prioritisation of emerging policy needs and issues³ and dialogue with civil society organisations.

Overall, based on qualitative evidence collected, the implementation of the REC programme was **effective** and contributed to the achievement of the overall objectives. In particular, this success was due to the **quality of most of the projects** implemented with REC funding, allowing the implementation of concrete actions, directly relevant to the changing needs on the ground.

Both desk research and fieldwork show that the projects were largely successful in implementing the planned activities and **almost all finalised projects have achieved the expected results** (95% of the sampled projects delivered the expected results).

Progress has been recorded in terms of the indicators identified in the Regulation, in particular:

- the number of people that were reached by information and dissemination campaigns or took part in awareness-raising events (at least **80 million people**); and
- the number of stakeholders participating in training activities (at least **1.5 million individuals**) and in exchanges, study visits, workshops and seminars (at least **85 000 individuals**) funded by the programme.

Overall, the evidence gathered suggests that the REC programme has **contributed to increasing knowledge of EU soft and hard law**.

Qualitative evidence collected by the study suggests that **benefits of the REC programme outweigh the costs**.

The evaluation also identified a number of areas for improvement which are being addressed for the the succeeding CERV Programme, such as: (i) improving the monitoring framework in order to more systematically collect information on outputs, results and targets achieved; (ii) putting in place additional measures to increase the geographical range of participants; (iii) encouraging projects to focus on a limited number of key activities, thus preserving their focus; (iv) putting in place additional measures to improve gender mainstreaming.

² Data for 2014-2015 are not available.

³ For example, the programme adjusted to address new needs that emerged in relation to online hate speech, intersectionality, anti-Semitism, as well as issues such as adapting to the GDPR.