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Brussels, 9.9.2021  
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**COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION**

**of 9.9.2021**

**amending Implementing Decision C(2014) 10188 approving certain elements of the operational programme "Norte 2014-2020" for support from the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund under the Investment for growth and jobs goal for the region Norte in Portugal**

**CCI 2014PT16M2OP001**

(ONLY THE ENGLISH TEXT IS AUTHENTIC)

# COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 96(10) thereof,

Having consulted the ESF Committee,

Whereas:

- (1) By Commission Implementing Decision C(2014) 10188, as last amended by Commission Implementing Decision C(2020) 6909, certain elements of the operational programme "Norte 2014-2020" for support from the European Regional Development Fund ('ERDF') and the European Social Fund ('ESF') under the Investment for growth and jobs goal for the region Norte in Portugal were approved.
- (2) On 17 August 2021 Portugal submitted, through the electronic data exchange system of the Commission, a request for an amendment to the operational programme. The request was accompanied by a revised operational programme, in which Portugal proposed an amendment to the elements of the operational programme referred to in points (a), (b)(i) to (v), (c) and (d)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, all subject to Implementing Decision C(2014) 10188.
- (3) The amendment to the operational programme consists in the reallocation of ERDF financial resources from priority axes 1 "Research, development and innovation", 2 "Competitiveness and internationalisation of the regional economy" and 3 "Low-carbon economy", to the following priority axes: 4 "Environmental quality", 5 "Urban system", 6 "Employment and labour mobility", 7 "Social inclusion and poverty", 8 "Education and lifelong learning", 9 "Institutional capacity and ICT" and 10 "Technical assistance" within this operational programme, while maintaining the global ERDF allocation of the operational programme.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320.

- (4) The amendment to the operational programme consists also in the reallocation of ESF financial resources from priority axes 7 "Social inclusion and poverty" and 8 "Education and lifelong learning" to priority axis 6 "Employment and labour mobility", while maintaining the global ESF allocation of the operational programme. Furthermore, a new specific objective is created under priority axis 6 – "to promote and develop employability" in Investment priority 8v, named "Ensure job maintenance in the resumption of business activity after the pandemic". This new specific objective will receive EUR 115 million, of which EUR 107.3 million are allocated from other priority axes and investment priorities and EUR 7.7 million are allocated from other investment priorities within the same priority axis 6. The amendment also includes the deletion of Investment Priority 9 iv) "Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest".
- (5) The amendment of the operational programme consists, additionally, in the modification of the target values for some financial and output indicators, some of which are included in the performance framework in priority axes affected by the financial reallocations. Finally, the amendment consist in the introduction of new output indicators specifically related to COVID-19 operations.
- (6) In accordance with Article 30(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the request for the amendment to the operational programme is duly justified by the need to provide an effective and immediate response to the economic crisis related to the COVID-19 outbreak and to support the crisis management and recovery efforts. Both ERDF and ESF financial reallocations will also encourage a faster resource expenditure in this operational programme, since the axes to be reinforced present higher potential demand in a shorter time period. The request for the programme amendment sets out the expected impact of the changes to the programme on achieving the Union's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the specific objectives defined in the programme, taking account of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Regulations (EU) No 1301/2013<sup>2</sup> and (EU) No 1304/2013<sup>3</sup> of the European Parliament and of the Council, as well as of the horizontal principles referred to in Articles 5, 7 and 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.
- (7) In accordance with point (e) of Article 110(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the monitoring committee, at its meeting of 11 May 2021, examined and approved the proposal for the amendment to the operational programme, taking into account the text of the revised operational programme and its financing plan.
- (8) The Commission assessed the revised operational programme and did not make observations pursuant to the second sentence of the first subparagraph of Article 30(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.
- (9) The amended elements of the revised operational programme subject to the Commission's approval under Article 96(10) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 should therefore be approved.
- (10) Implementing Decision C(2014) 10188 should therefore be amended accordingly,

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<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 289).

<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 470).

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

*Article 1*

Implementing Decision C(2014) 10188 is amended as follows:

1. in Article 1, the introductory sentence is replaced by the following:  
"The following elements of the operational programme "Norte 2014-2020" for joint support from the ERDF and the ESF under the Investment for growth and jobs goal for the region Norte in Portugal for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020, submitted in its final version on 15 December 2014, as last amended by the revised operational programme submitted in its final version on 17 August 2021 are hereby approved:";
2. Annex II is replaced by the text set out in the Annex to this Decision.

*Article 2*

This Decision is addressed to the Portuguese Republic.

Done at Brussels, 9.9.2021

*For the Commission*

*Elisa FERREIRA*

*Member of the Commission*

