

An EU-funded project managed by the European Union Office in Kosovo
Contract No. 2018/400-527

Contract title: **“Support to communication of EU integration process”**

INCEPTION REPORT



An EU funded project managed by the
European Union in Kosovo

Implemented by:  **koperativa**
LOCAL COMMUNICATION

 **Pomilio Blumm®**
ideas can

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List of Abbreviations:

IWG – Inter-ministerial Working Group
PIO – Press and Information Office
MEI - Ministry of European Integration
EU – European Union
SAA – Stabilization Association Agreement
GIZ – German International Cooperation
PT – Project Team
TL – Team Leader
PD – Project Director
TM – Task Manager
CE – Communication Expert
ToR – Terms of Reference
BA – Baseline Assessment

List of annexes:

Annex 1: Baseline Assessment Questionnaire
Annex 2: Workplan
Annex 3: Logframe Matrix



1. Introduction

Project title:

Support to communication of EU Integration Process

Contract number:

No. 2018/400 – 527

Country:

Kosovo

Key stakeholders:

EU Office in Kosovo, Ministry of European Integration, Koperativa Communications, Pomilio Blumm

Purpose:

Promotion of the EU standards in four priority sectors (Consumer protection, Agriculture, Food Safety, Safety at work) under Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), the key issues and concerns related to these sectors in Kosovo, and the impact EU standards could/will have on the citizens' lives by applying such standards.

Results:

Strengthened thematic knowledge on the four sectors among the target groups; Improved communication and awareness of key concerns related to the four priority sectors in Kosovo, and the rights, entitlements and obligations that the SAA, under four priority sectors, introduces among the target groups;

Strengthened dialogue and engagement of the target groups on the issues identified as concern in the four priority sectors and dialogue and engagement on the SAA priorities and actions; Inter-ministerial Working Group on Communication led by MEI able to create communication messages in the four sectors.



Contracting authority:

The European Union Office in Kosovo

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2. Executive Summary

The implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement and the steps that Kosovo must undertake in relation to this major milestone comprise a long political and technical process that is necessary for the EU integration process in Kosovo. Informing the citizens of Kosovo about this process is very important for the fact that the citizens play an integral role in the successful implementation of the SAA agreement that is to be carried out by Kosovo institutions.

The communication project Support to Communication of EU Integration aims to facilitate this process by informing and educating the general public about the SAA, specifically in four priority sectors to be covered by this campaign: Consumer Protection, Safety at Work, Agriculture, and Food Safety. As the entire Western Balkans region aspires to moving closer to the EU, it is crucial to communicate to the public in Kosovo the values that pertain to the European perspective. The prospect of EU membership should be an incentive for reform and progress, which will improve the living conditions, and the perspectives for the people.

Upon signing the contract on September 13, 2018, we have begun to work intensively on the implementation of the work plan, in close cooperation with the EU office. Our first meeting was with Mrs. Burbuqe Kelmendi, project Task Manager from the EU office in Kosovo, and Mrs. Mikaela Gronqvist, Team Coordinator, PAR / PFM - Cooperation section of the EU office. In this introductory meeting, we discussed all the phases of project implementation, and we agreed on the specific activities of the inception phase: introductory meetings with other stakeholders, and the Baseline Assessment questionnaire.

Specifically, we have agreed to set an agenda for meetings with other stakeholders, namely the Inter-ministerial Working Group (IWG), the Ministry of EU Integration (MEI) as the main coordinator, NIPAC Office, Internal Communication group of MEI, Ministry of Public Administration, Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social welfare, Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning. In the meeting with Mrs. Kelmendi and Mrs. Gronqvist, we agreed that all project activities will be done in full coordination with the EU office and the Communication Office of MEI, represented by Mr. Gezim Dushi, who is also the coordinator of IWG.

In order to coordinate the activities with all the stakeholders involved as well as other current EU Integration communication projects, we met Mr. Dushi, representatives of the EU Press and Information Office and representatives of German Cooperation



(GIZ), who are currently developing a campaign for facilitating the integration process of Kosovo, but is aimed at promoting the visa free movement of people. In this meeting we harmonized our project activities in order to avoid any potential overlapping.

In close coordination with Mrs. Kelmendi and Mr. Dushi, in the first week of October 2018 we began meetings with all other beneficiaries of this project as well as representatives of twinning projects supporting the Kosovo institutions in the implementation of the SAA. We wanted to get as much information as possible about the SAA implementation process and the specific tasks that belong to each component of the Government of Kosovo.

In the meetings with representatives of the communication offices of ministries of the Government of Kosovo we have invited officials for European integration offices of each ministry, in order to get as much data as possible about the processes that each governmental sector is going through. From these meetings, we have collected relevant data for drafting the Baseline Assessment questionnaire. In addition, we have also established initial communication regarding the activity of Public Events in municipalities that will be organized later on in the project.

The purpose of the Baseline Assessment survey is to provide accurate data on the knowledge of Kosovo citizens about the SAA, specifically in the areas targeted for communication of this campaign, namely: Consumer Protection, Safety at Work, Agriculture, and Food Safety. The data that we have gathered from the meetings with all the stakeholders, and the data that will come out of the survey with citizens, will be analyzed in detail and based on these findings we will develop other communication activities for the campaign such as video and radio spots, as well as other materials, as requested in the ToR.

The research and analysis phase regarding the Baseline Assessment is now completed and the questionnaire of the BA was sent for approval almost a week ahead of the original date planned, on 12th of October 2018. EU Office had minor comments on the BA questionnaire, after addressing them and having the final approval on it we will proceed with the implementation of the Baseline Assessment.



3. Review of project design/financing proposal (relevance, feasibility and any changes required to design)

Up to this stage of the project implementation Koperativa considers that there are no reasons or needs for any changes on the work plan.

3.1 Policy and program context, including linkage to other ongoing operations/activities

As stated in our proposal, based on the results of the European Awareness Survey Kosovo 2017, conducted by the EU Office in Pristina, Kosovars continue to be overly positive and supporting the EU integration process of the country. This finding sets a fertile ground for the work that is yet to be done in regards to the EU agenda in Kosovo. However, the survey indicated that majority of Kosovars are convinced that the governmental institutions are not fully committed about their obligations towards the SAA and, what is relevant to our project here, that they do not explain the benefits of the SAA to the citizens. Since the support of the general public and the proper information of all stakeholders and beneficiaries of the SAA process is vital for the successful and timely implementation of this agreement linked directly to the integration process, a communication campaign is needed to inform, clarify and raise awareness about SAA, with focus on four priority sectors: consumer protection, safety at work, agriculture and food safety.

Due to recent political development linked directly to the process of dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, which process has led to a clash of Kosovo political leaders on their views how the dialogue should be handled, the citizen's awareness on SAA process is considered quiet low. In relation to EU integrations, in this period of time Kosovars are expected to get visa free travel in Schengen states after the European Parliament voted in September to lift the visa regime for Kosovo.

In this context, topics such as the SAA agreement are not being sufficiently communicated, leaving the general public uninformed about the importance, benefits and responsibilities such agreements bring. Koperativa believes that our work-plan will increase awareness among the general public as our main target group, will communicate more creatively with the general public, making the SAA for Kosovo a more appealing topic.



3.2 Objectives to be achieved (Overall Objective, purpose, results)

Based on ToR and the proposed methodology by Koperativa, the overall objective, purpose and results to be achieved, remain unchanged.

Overall Objective

Conceptualization of a communication campaign that will increasing knowledge and understanding among main Kosovo stakeholders on the European Integration process and implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA).

Purpose

The campaign will promote the EU standards in four priority sectors (Consumer protection, Agriculture, Food Safety, Safety at work) under Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), the key issues and concerns related to these sectors in Kosovo, and the impact EU standards could/will have on the citizens' lives by applying such standards.

Results

- Strengthened thematic knowledge on the four sectors among the target groups;
- Improved communication and awareness of key concerns related to the four priority sectors in Kosovo, and the rights, entitlements and obligations that the SAA, under four priority sectors, introduces among the target groups;
- Strengthened dialogue and engagement of the target groups on the issues identified as concern in the four priority sectors and dialogue and engagement on the SAA priorities and actions;
- Inter-ministerial Working Group on Communication led by MEI able to create communication messages in the four sectors.

3.3 Activities

During the inception phase, Koperativa has carried out a series of activities for the initialization of the project. Below they are elaborated in a chronological order:

Activity 1: Signing of the contract / 13 September 2018

Koperativa Communications, and EU Office in Kosovo signed the contract for implementation of the project Support to Communication of EU Integration Process.



Activity 2: Meeting with Task Manager of the EU Office in Prishtina / 21 September 2018

Following the signing of the contract, Koperativa met with TM Mrs. Kelmendi and Mrs. Gronqvist, at the EU Office in Pristina. The meeting had an introductory character, and technicalities of the contract were the main topic discussed.

Activity 3: Meeting with MEI, GIZ and EU Communication Officers / 25 September 2018

This meeting was arranged by TM Ms. Burbuqe Kelmendi between Koperativa representatives, EU Information Office representatives, GIZ representatives and MEI. The meetings purpose was to coordinate the campaigns activities with other campaigns related to EU integration.

Activity 4: Meeting with IWG Coordinator / 1 October 2018

The purpose of this meeting was to coordinate the campaign activities with Mr. Dushi, the coordinator of the IWG. We agreed on an agenda for a series of meetings with all stakeholders from the Government of Kosovo.

Activity 5: Meetings the stakeholders / 4 – 12 October 2018

Koperativa met with all the stakeholders from the Government of Kosovo, such as Ministry of EU Integration (MEI) as the main coordinator, Internal Communication group of MEI, Ministry of Public Administration, Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social welfare, Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning. We also met representatives of twinning projects such as Twinning Project “Food safety”, at the Food and Veterinary Agency, Phytosanitary Twinning Project, Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency, EU Assistance on the free movement of goods project, Twinning Project, Support Kosovo Institutions on SAA Implementation.

Activity 6: Baseline Assessment Questionnaire / 12 October 2018

Koperativa has sent for approval to EU Office the questionnaire intended to conduct the Baseline Assessment.

3.4 Resources and budget

The resources and budget for this project derive from 2014 Annual Programme for Kosovo under IPA 2014 decision 2014/032-353 (EU Office in Kosovo allocation).

The contract is implemented under the Contracting Authority of European Union, represented by the European Commission, on behalf of and for the account of Kosovo. The total value of the budget of this contract is 241,250.00 EUR.

3.5 Assumptions and risks

Not much has changed in the overall context of Kosovo and EU relations, therefore assumptions and risks remain the same from the writing of the proposal.

Assumptions underlying the project

- **The interest for the European Union and EU membership among the specific target groups remains high.** This assumption appears to be very sound; a very high level of support for EU membership exists among the general public, and a sudden change in policy or support is unlikely for the foreseeable future. The campaigns developed for this project will only ensure that the EU membership remains to be an attractive and appealing aspiration. As part of the SAA awareness raising campaign, we shall communicate the advantages of the European Union accession process through clear, fact-oriented, but at the same time interesting and well-designed communication concepts. Together with EU Office we shall carefully tailor the messages, taking in consideration the most recent political developments.
- **The Kosovo authorities continue to be strongly committed to the European agenda.** The Government of Kosovo and all public institutions have never ceased to claim commitment towards the EU integration process. The high support by the general public is another indication that EU membership is and will remain a priority for Kosovo.
- **There is a wider political consensus on Kosovo's European Agenda** Regardless of their differences, all political actors have in one way or another declared their commitment towards EU integration. Euroskepticism has not been identified in any of the political parties in Kosovo until now, and following this trend, it is highly unlikely that it will appear.

Risks

- **Key stakeholders do not maintain sufficient focus on and interest in the EU agenda and/or communication about it.** It is not very likely that the key stakeholders do not maintain focus on the EU agenda or communicate about it. The communication about this, in the past years, has been very stable, without any indication of shifting stands. As Kosovo is part of the Western Balkans integration process, and, as other countries in the region, its EU agenda is interlinked with the agenda of its neighbouring countries, it is important to understand that any change in focus will be reflected in the



overall situation in the region.

- Kosovo's European perspective and the SAA implementation Action Plan process too abstract. The SAA is one of the complex EU related topics to be presented to the Kosovar audiences due to its highly official terminology and regulations. However, we believe that this can be broken down to very concrete and practical communication messages that will simplify the process for the public audience in general and for specific target groups/beneficiaries of the SAA in particular.

- Too-high expectations of Kosovo people (especially about the date of possible membership) demand sensible expectations-management not to over-promise. Currently, Kosovars are not focused on a membership date, although, as the European Awareness Survey has shown, they are misinformed about it. Based on the general mood, visa liberalization continues to be the highest anticipated step in regards to the EU integration process. Therefore, we believe it is unlikely that this risk affects this contract.

- Visa-liberalization process requirements can create negative attitudes towards EU agenda in general. Due to Kosovo being the last country in the region without visa liberalization, and due to complicated procedures for applying and getting a visa for traveling to the EU countries, it is very likely that postponement of this important process for Kosovar citizens will affect the attitude towards the EU. However, due to the recent confirmation of the European Commission that Kosovo has fulfilled all the requirements for visa liberalization for Kosovars, there has been a general uplifting of citizen's mood in regards to this issue. Therefore, we strongly believe that this risk has a very low likelihood.

- EU facilitation of the dialogue with Serbia in order to normalize the situation in the north can be abused for internal political debates. The dialogue with Serbia has been ongoing since March 2011. These past seven years, Kosovars has not been very happy with a lot of unpopular agreements that this dialogue has yielded. We have also witnesses several cases when the dialogue has been used for stirring up internal political debate, especially between opposition and the leading parties. However, same as the previous risk, we believe that such abuse of this very important process is possible only when there is misinformation or incomplete information about the process in place. With proper information that reflects the situation as it is, we are sure that this risk can also be managed and reduced.

3.6 Management and coordination arrangements

The project will be implemented under the supervision of Mr. Massimo Pomilio, the Team Leader for this project. The TL will be responsible for the running of all aspects of this, including staff management and support, and will act as primary point of contact



for communications and delivery of reports to the Contracting Authority. He will organise and oversee the administrative and logistical support including the timely delivery of reports.

The Communication Expert, Mr. Kastriot Jahaj, is a key member of the team and will act as point of contact for communications, drafting and delivery of reports, and other products to the Contracting Authority. The Communication expert will be responsible for strategically planning and implementing information and public awareness campaigns and other related activities.

Another key member of the team will be the Project Director, Mr. Arianit Dedi, has been assigned for the whole duration of the project. Mr. Dedi will have the overall responsibility for the smooth and timely implementation of the Project.

The European Union Office in Kosovo maintains sole and integral responsibility for the management of the Contract. The TM will call regular meetings with the contractor in order to review progress achieved in the implementation of the Contract as well as strategy and work plan.

3.7 Monitoring, review and evaluation arrangements

Our quality control procedures include a thorough analysis of the processes that were followed to design and implement a specific product or service. The project's overall impact equates to the sum of its incorporated products and services. Qualitative and quantitative evaluation of each of these products and services and their relevance for each target is therefore essential.

Each type of output can be assessed through various tools, including: questionnaires/ surveys, interviews, focus groups, recording of overall figures (formal and informal records compiled in-house).



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