



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
 DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
 REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY

The Director-General

Brussels,
 REGIO/ML

Subject: Important recognition of the Integrity Pact pilot

Dear partners,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for your role in the Commission’s pilot project “Integrity Pacts – Civil Control Mechanism for Safeguarding EU Funds” which we are implementing in cooperation with Transparency International.

The news may have reached you already: on 27 June 2019, the European Ombudsman awarded the Integrity Pact project in the category ‘Excellence in Open Administration’¹. The Ombudsman introduced the award in 2017 and this year was the second edition of the award. The Integrity Pact project received this very important recognition for “its innovative use of the partnerships with NGOs, public authorities and private companies, helping to increase public trust through tackling corruption”. It is an acknowledgment of the work and efforts of all partners involved in the 17 projects in 11 Member States implementing the Integrity Pact pilots on the ground. The award gives the Integrity Pact pilot project a visibility that can help us spread this new cooperative way of working.

In this context, I would like to highlight and praise the unique role of the sixteen monitoring Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Your day-to-day involvement in following the implementation of the projects and your observations, advice and recommendations help ensure that EU taxpayer’s money is spent in the best way possible. I hope your example will inspire more citizens to be engaged and to follow closer the implementation of other EU-funded projects in the future.

I also want to thank all involved Contracting Authorities / Beneficiaries. By participating, you have shown your openness to collaborate closely with civil society organisations and to engage with the local communities affected by projects. You have demonstrated your willingness to work in a transparent manner and to listen to advice. It takes courage to do things differently. I trust that the pilot provides you with valuable insights that you will use in your future work and share with colleagues across Europe.

Last but not least, the respective Managing Authorities across all participating Member States have been supportive partners of the Integrity Pact pilot project. By supporting this innovative pilot, you have demonstrated your eagerness to look for improved and innovative ways in implementation of EU co-funded projects. I encourage you to share your experience with other national authorities within your region/ Member State and to

¹ <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/press-release/en/115766>

To all partners involved in the Integrity Pact pilot

consider how the lessons learned from the Integrity Pact pilots can feed into your future work for Cohesion Policy 2021-2027.

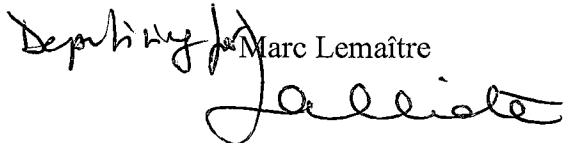
All partners involved have set an example to leave trodden paths and explore new and innovative ways of cooperation. You have demonstrated readiness and determination to ensure effective and efficient spending of EU funds for the benefit of citizens.

I would like to use this opportunity to inform you also about the recent G-20 summit in Osaka on 28-29 June 2019. Leaders of the G20 have recognised our Integrity Pacts initiative as a global good practice for promoting integrity and transparency in infrastructure development. The project has been included in the special G20 compendium, and is an integral part of the G20 Leaders' Declaration. The document underlines the importance of the collaborative approach to assessing and mitigating the risk of corruption in infrastructure development by governments, business and civil society. This is the second important acknowledgement received by our initiative after the Ombudsman Award. This should provide us with extra momentum to share and build on the experiences from the Integrity Pacts pilot for future use of this tool.

My services will therefore explore how we can work closer with civil society and citizens in the next programming period. This is fully in line with the political guidelines set out by the Commission president-elect on 16 July 2019. The lessons learned and experiences from the Integrity Pact pilot give us important input to this work. Therefore, in order to capitalise fully from the pilot and successfully complete it, we decided to extend the current project until the end of 2021. The precise terms and scope are currently being negotiated with the Transparency International Secretariat.

Together we can bring EU Cohesion Policy closer to citizens and showcase how work in a transparent and collaborative way can produce positive results for all involved partners in the form of increased and fair competition, better value for money for investments and increased trust between citizens, businesses and local authorities.

Yours sincerely,


Marc Lemaître

Enclosures:

1. A copy of the European Ombudsman Award for Good Administration 2019;
2. List of addressees - partners involved in the Integrity Pact pilot project.

c.c.: Mr Maximilian Heywood, Mr Ivan Zupan, Transparency International Secretariat