

ANNEX

ACTION FICHE FOR RUSSIA

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title	Preparatory Action “Ethnic and national minorities in Russia: promoting integrity and intercultural dialogue” CRIS: 2010/22557		
Total cost	European Union contribution – €2,000,000 Council of Europe contribution – €100,000		
Aid method / Management mode	Joint management (through a direct agreement with an international organisation (Council of Europe))		
DAC-code	– 15160	Sector	– Human Rights

Preliminary Remark

The purpose of the Action is the further financing of the European Parliament’s preparatory action “Minorities in Russia: development of culture, media and civil society” from the EU Budget in 2010. The funding for the preparatory action started in 2008 (€2.5 million - C(2008)6283) with further funding in 2009 (€2.5 million - C(2009)10253), and now in 2010 (€2 million). The Financing Regulation allows the financing of preparatory actions for up to 3 successive years, hence 2010 is the final financing year for this particular Action. The programme is managed by the Council of Europe which is providing additional contributions of €250,000 for 2008 and €250,000 for 2009 budgets. The 2010 Council of Europe contribution is €100,000.

As the objectives and activities of the 2009 remain unchanged, the present additional financing of €2 million (+ €100,000 Council of Europe contribution) is added to the amount of the 2009 (€2.5 million + €250,000 Council of Europe contribution) action. It is intended that a single contribution agreement for both 2009 and 2010 financing will be signed with the Council of Europe, forming in reality a single stage of the action. If a single agreement is signed, the aggregated financial contribution of the Council of Europe (€350,000) will be equivalent to 7% of the project budget.

2. RATIONALE

Background information

The European Parliament’s preparatory action “Minorities in Russia: development of culture, media and civil society” has been implemented in Russia since February 2009. The first stage entitled “Minorities in Russia: developing languages, culture, media and civil society” (based on Decision C(2008)6283 of 31/10/2008 - €2.5 million) is being implemented by the Council of Europe and will last until February 2011.

The action is being implemented through an intense dialogue with the Russian authorities (Ministry of Regional Development, State Duma, Council of Federation, Ministry of Education) and the Civic Chamber. The Russian authorities (both at the Federal and local levels) actively participate in the project activities and the work of the Steering Committee. They acknowledge that the expression of ethnic minorities at the local level is enhanced through the call for proposal and the promotion of a dialogue between the authorities and civil society.

The implementation of the above first stage has included 4 seminars at the federal level, 5 seminars in pilot regions, 2 meetings of the working group of experts, 4 meetings of the Steering Committee and 1 study visit to Europe. In addition, 2 analytical reports by Russian experts have been completed by European experts, and 8 brochures and leaflets have been translated into Russian and published.

Approximately 500 participants were involved in the first stage of the project. An average of 50 participants attended each seminar and 15 participants were present at expert meetings and Steering Committees. 5 persons took part in the study visit to Spain. The beneficiaries involved included national minority NGOs, national umbrella NGOs, local and regional authorities, universities and institutes responsible for education, schools, research centres, ombudsmen for indigenous people, Commissioners for Human Rights, and Mass Media. The activities have so far focused on the promotion of the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), signed by the Russian Federation but yet to be ratified, identification of practical steps to be taken to ratify the ECRML, awareness-raising of specific instruments, research into previously un-documented areas, network-building, clarification regarding the current situation, as well as identification of mutually-beneficial and co-operative action between different stakeholders.

The first simulation of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the Republic of Moldova was carried out and an experts' report was produced, the second simulation in the Republic of Altai is under way. Public Hearings on minority languages in the Civil Chamber and the Russian Parliament (State Duma) are taking place in summer 2010.

A Call for Proposals was organised, as planned. 314 applications from NGOs, cultural and educational institutions, local and regional authorities were submitted. 24 grant applications from 12 regions were selected for a total amount of almost €900,000.

The project has therefore laid the foundations for the identification of possible legislative work and for further discussions on the approaches to be developed concerning the Russian instrument of ratification of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and the development of dialogue between civil society and the government on minority issues.

Detailed information, articles, and publications have appeared predominantly in Russian, but also in English on a range of websites. Detailed information about project activities was published in Russian on the website: <http://www.coe.ru>. General information about the project activities was published in English on the website: <http://www.coe.int/minlang>

As part of the preparatory action, a second stage, "Ethnic and national minorities in Russia: promoting integrity and intercultural dialogue" was approved in 2009 (decision C(2009)10253 of 22/12/2009 - €2.5 million).

3. DESCRIPTION

There are no major changes regarding objectives, expected results and indicators for the 2010 commitment with respect to those stated for the above second stage of the preparatory action under the decision C(2009)10253.

It is important to continue working with a few pilot regions on the issue of intercultural dialogue. In principle, it is envisaged to select three to five pilot regions in the Russian Federation and organise specific projects there with a view to preparing a **standard model/guidelines comprising the organisational and operational modalities for a successful intercultural dialogue** between national minorities as well as between the minorities and the majority population.

Intercultural dialogue is understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It requires the freedom and ability to express oneself, as well as the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others. Intercultural dialogue contributes to political, social, cultural and economic integration and the cohesion of culturally diverse societies. It aims to develop a deeper understanding of diverse world views and practices, to increase co-operation and participation, to promote tolerance and respect for the other. (this concept and its implications is presented in the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, launched by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in May 2008).

Council of Europe has significant experience in promoting intercultural dialogue, as it contributes to its core objective, namely preserving and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The First Summit of Heads of State and Government of member states (1993), which affirmed that cultural diversity was the guarantee of an open society, led to the drafting and adoption of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995), the establishment of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the launching of the European Youth Campaign against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance (“All Different – All Equal”).

The third Summit of the Heads of State and Government (2005) identified intercultural dialogue as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation and tolerance, as well as preventing conflicts and ensuring integration and the cohesion of society. This was flashed out in the “Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe’s Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue”, adopted by the Ministers of culture later that year, which suggested preparing a White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. Following a decision of the Committee of Ministers (2006), a wide-scale consultation on intercultural dialogue ensued in 2007. The Council of Europe launched, in 2008, a programme to assist cities to excel as spaces of intercultural dialogue, through peer review and the exchange of good practice on governance, media, mediation and cultural policy. “Intercultural cities” is a capacity-building and policy-development field programme. Participating cities work towards intercultural strategies for the management of diversity as a resource. The programme is developed in co-operation with a range of intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. The elements of this programme could be integrated in the project activities in the pilot cities/regions of third stage of the action.

Based on the positive feedback from the civil society and experience of the Call for Proposals component implemented in the framework of the first stage of the preparatory action it is

proposed to increase the budget allocated for this purpose. The call could include several thematic lots.

Stakeholders will include all those groups and individuals of minority or majority background who play a role and have interests in intercultural dialogue – most prominently policy makers in governments and parliaments at all levels, local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, cultural, educational and media organisations, journalists and social partners. In terms of the stakeholders, it is foreseen that the Civic Chamber will play an important role.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

The Action will be implemented through joint management with an international organisation (Standard Contribution Agreement will be used). The international organisation identified is the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe is already active in the field of protecting and promoting minorities and fostering inter-cultural dialogue in Russia. Russia is a member of the Council of Europe and is preparing for the ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minorities Languages, having already signed and ratified the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities. All the above factors should provide the necessary degree of support and ownership for the Action.

In accordance with Article 53d of the FR, the Commission and the Council of Europe are bound by a long-term framework agreement laying down the administrative and financial arrangements for their cooperation. The Commission has ensured, on the basis of the prior audit conclusions as foreseen in Article 53 d) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002, that the management system set up by the Council of Europe offers guarantees equivalent to internationally accepted standards in their accounting, audit, internal control and procurement procedures. Consequently, a joint management agreement with the Council of Europe can be envisaged.

It is the intention that this third year funding of the preparatory action and the second year funding (Decision C(2009)10253) will be implemented under a single contribution agreement between the Council of Europe and the European Commission, forming in reality a single stage of the action. The agreement should be signed by the end of 2010.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents lay down and published by the International Organisation concerned.

The budget of the Action includes provisions for grants to be awarded to NGOs/local authorities through a call for proposals, as per the procurement procedures of the Council of Europe.

4.3. Budget and calendar

The indicative duration of the whole project is 36 months, starting in October/November 2011 (immediately following the first stage conclusions).

The total cost of the programme is €2,100,000, with a maximum €2,000,000 as a European Union contribution and €100,000 as co-financing from the Council of Europe.

The indicative breakdown of the 2010 budget is as follows:

Call for proposals for NGOs/local authorities (Including Monitoring and Evaluations €100,000)	€800,000
Visibility (including kick-off & final conferences)	€100,000
Other direct and indirect costs of the action	€1,200,000

4.4. Performance monitoring

The project will be monitored according to standard Council of Europe and European Commission monitoring procedures.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

A mid-term evaluation and a final evaluation are foreseen.

As per Article 16.2 of the General Conditions to the Standard Contribution Agreement, “financial transactions and financial statements shall be subject to the internal and external auditing procedures laid down in the Financial Regulations, Rules and directives of the Organisation. A copy of the audited financial statements shall be submitted to the European Commission by the Organisation”.

4.6. Communication and visibility

The proposed project will follow the latest EU visibility guidelines concerning acknowledgement of EU project financing. Key results of the project will be communicated to all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. They will also be published on the website of the European Union Delegation, as well as in the various visibility and communication materials of the European Union Delegation. All reports and publications made in the framework of the project shall be widely disseminated in the regions of the Russian Federation.

A kick-off and a final conference are planned to promote the project and its outputs, and enhance EU-Russia dialogue on minority issues.