COMMISSION DECISION
OF 1998

Establishing the Phare information and communications programme for all central European countries benefiting from the Phare Programme.

The Commission of the European Communities,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) N° 3906/89 of 18th December 1989 on economic aid to certain countries of central and eastern Europe, as last amended by Regulation (EC) N° 753/96 of 22 April 1996, and in particular Article 9 thereof,

Whereas Regulation N° 3906/89 lays down rules and conditions for the granting of economic aid to certain countries of central and eastern Europe,

Whereas the measures provided for by this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee on Aid for Economic Restructuring in certain countries of central and eastern Europe,

Hereby decides as follows:

Article 1

The Phare information and communications programme 1998 described in the Annex to the present decision is hereby adopted.

Article 2

The maximum amount of Community assistance shall be 6.1 MECU to be financed through budget line B7-5000, and 0.5 MECU through budget line B7-543.

Done at Brussels, ....................... 1998

For the Commission
1. **Identification**

Country: Phare beneficiary countries  
Programme: Information Programme  
Year: 1998  
EC contribution: 6.6 MECU  
Sector classification: AA  
Group: O  
Responsible authority: European Commission  
Budget line: B7-5000 (6.1 MECU)  
B7-543 (0.5 MECU)  
Expiry date: Contracting: 31 October 1999  
Disbursement: 31 December 2000  
Task Manager: Tom Glaser

1. **Background**

On 29 July 1993, the Management Committee approved a twin-track information strategy aimed, on the one hand, at increasing awareness and understanding of the EU partner countries in central and eastern Europe, and, on the other, of increasing understanding of, and support for, the Phare programme both in the partner countries and EU Member States. On 26 July 1994, the Management Committee approved the intensification of the programme, particularly on the Phare side, its extension to several partner countries in the form of in-country programmes and its response to the requirements for more information, in more languages and greater quality. 1995 saw the repositioning of Commission strategy in the light of the pre-accession strategy and a regional information strategy for Central Europe is now ready. 1997 saw the acceleration of the pre-accession strategy and an intensified requirement for EU-sources information, for which an increased amount of 10 MECU was obtained.

This included a programme to establish Info-points in the candidate countries as well as a reinforcement of DGX’s capacity to supply information materials. The present proposal aims to continue and deepen both the central and local elements of the strategy, for a total of 6.6 MECU in 1998.

2. **Objectives**

To date, the Phare Information and Communication Programmes have focused on Phare's role as the European Community's technical assistance and co-operation programme. However, since the Essen European Council of December 1994, the Union has committed itself to assist the associated countries of Central Europe in their preparation for accession. The Conclusions of the Essen European Council also referred explicitly to the "need among Member States of the EU and the associated countries to have a better knowledge of each other societies. Therefore, expansion and deepening of information efforts are necessary ...". The Essen European Council also identified Phare as the main financial instrument for implementing the Union's pre-accession strategy. The
reorientation of Phare in the light of the reinforced pre-accession strategy also calls for a reinforcement and reorientation of the communications strategy which depends upon it.

The information and communication programmes funded by Phare in previous years already contributed to this aim in certain ways, but it is necessary now to implement a coherent strategy with preparation for accession as the focal point. It is also essential that the financial resources for this step are assured for a reasonable period since nothing will damage the image and reputation of the EU as much as the opening of Info-points and their subsequent closure for lack of financial continuity.

Though the strategy will continue in future to carry on the specifically Phare-centred information and communications activities in EU Member States and to take account of their extension to the three recent member states it must also address the specific requirements of informing applicant countries' audiences about the Union's pre-accession strategy, bearing in mind the framework of the Europe agreements and structured dialogue, and the imminent prospect of enlargement negotiations.

For Bosnia, a particular effort is envisaged, given that the EU faces in Bosnia a major challenge of presenting its extensive efforts in striking, memorable and coherent manner.

Most of the Phare partner countries have now prepared or are in the course of preparing corresponding pre-accession information and communication programmes of their own. The strategy takes account of and where possible complements the efforts of the partner states to explain future accession to the EU to their public and for this new activities have been defined, taking into account the specific circumstances and policies of each partner country. To support this, the role of the Commission in each country has been enhanced and the Delegations' operational capacity and support structure strengthened to ensure effective interface at a local level. This will include the establishment of Info-points responsible to the EC Delegation in candidate countries during the course of this year. A management and logistics structure to support Delegations and Info-points is now in place and most Delegations have not only completed their strategies but are ready to engage local partners to implement them.

3. Programme description

The combined programme comprises six major elements which are the result of extensive research carried out in 1993, 1994 and 1997. They comprise:

- a foundation programme, covering a visual and written identity and including:
  - strategic counselling, audience + public opinion research
  - maintenance of the principal database of ±50,000 names and other databases
- a publication programme, comprising:
  - operational information
  - promotional brochures
3

• the Phare Annual Report
• ‘European Dialogue’ a flagship magazine published in ten central European languages aimed at decision-makers and opinion formers
• publications
• electronic publishing on Internet
• postage costs linked to publications programme

• an internal communications and training programme in Brussels, Delegations and PMUs in support of administrative and operational reorientation, and the refocussing of Central and Eastern Europe Eurobarometer, to inform the hierarchy of the likely impact of decisions

• a media programme, including support for central European journalists and electronic media comprising, where appropriate, visits to Brussels by target groups and including special events, assistance with projects launched by other services, production of one-off material for exhibitions and seminars at the request of other services, audio-visual production and the production of TV dossiers for use by networks inside and outside the EU and co-production of relevant TV broadcasts

• a parliamentary programme aimed, inter alia, at the European Parliament including specific briefings and documentation for EP committees and comprising, where appropriate, visits to Brussels by central European parliamentarians and parliamentary support staff

• decentralised EU information programmes and EU information centres linked to partner countries’ own efforts, comprising activities aimed at the general public and specific communications programmes agreed by the Delegations. These latter may contain all the elements - as required - of the other core programmes as confirmed by research carried out on the ground. The programme foresees the opening of at least 3 Info-points in the first half of 1998, and, depending on financial continuity provided by an adequate budget, a further 3 in the second half of the year.

4. Implementation

The programme will be implemented by the Commission. The Commission's Information Services will continue their role in assuring provision of programme-specific information. They will ensure centralised dissemination of operational and promotional literature as well as reports, studies, etc. with particular emphasis upon contract relevant information to the business community. They will further develop the Internet service to guarantee transparency in line with the requirements of Article 118 of the Financial regulation. They will also provide support to promote understanding of the EU’s pre-accession strategy, the Europe Agreements and the role of Phare as the main financial instrument of this strategy, encouraging its use to support moves of partner countries towards closer integration into the Union, as set out in the Europe agreements. It is also essential that partner countries understand what the EU stands for, how it functions, what it means for
them and what they can reasonably expect from the Union. Therefore it is important that information on developments and events involving the institutions of the Union which are of interest to audiences in potential member states is disseminated quickly and in a comprehensible form.

The Commission will also continue its work in identifying, informing and encouraging decision-makers and opinion-formers in the partner countries whose actions have a bearing on the success of future European integration, and develop its role to stimulate greater interest and understanding of EU affairs among the general public in partner countries.

The Phare Programme has undertaken a decentralisation effort of which information is a part. The core activities, in place since 1993/4 must remain, but much will now be further decentralised to the Delegations in partner countries. In the light of this, a rationalisation of Delegation activity will be undertaken. In the information field, the core task will remain in the Delegations, but this will be reinforced and rationalised so that contact with numerous target groups and the general public will, where possible, be confided to information centres, possibly physically separated from delegations, and staffed by qualified external personnel. These centres, whose tasks will vary from location to location, will remain under the control of Delegations as far as operations as well as staff requirement are concerned. Their number will depend upon the level of financial continuity assured by the budget for 1998 and following years.

A certain number of core tasks (contact with certain target groups, press relations, political PR) will remain with Delegations and thus there will be a need for local communications expertise. In addition, the centres themselves will require such expertise in print and on-line production, database management and event management. It will be for the Delegations to select appropriate local contractors and draw up work programmes, covering their own (core) information activities and the activities devolved to these centres. A number of tasks will remain central administered by the relevant services.

Implementation procedures will be in accordance with the Phare Regulation and the EC's Financial Regulation. DGX will be responsible for implementing the portion of the budget for the programme allocated to them, as detailed in the cost and financing plan below. The remainder will be administered by the DGIA Information Unit (including a proportion for greatly increased publicity in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is sought from budget line B7-543).
5. Cost and Financing Plan

The cost of the programme to be financed from B7-5000 will be 6.1 MECU, and will be divided as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis of the Programme</th>
<th>DGIA</th>
<th>DGX</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation programme</td>
<td>100.000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications programme</td>
<td>1.400.000</td>
<td>1.000.000</td>
<td>2.400.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal communications programme</td>
<td>40.000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media programme</td>
<td>460.000</td>
<td>450.000</td>
<td>910.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary programme (incl. visits)</td>
<td>100.000</td>
<td>100.000</td>
<td>200.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralised information programme</td>
<td>2.000.000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.000.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiovisual production</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.000</td>
<td>100.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information networks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>250.000</td>
<td>250.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific communication initiatives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.000</td>
<td>100.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4.100.000</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.000.000</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.100.000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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The cost of the programme to be financed from B7-543 will be 0.5 MECU, and will be divided as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis of the Programme</th>
<th>DGIA</th>
<th>DGX</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia PR</td>
<td>500.000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>500.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Audit, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Commission services:

a) shall monitor the implementation of the programme

b) may sign contracts with independent consultants to follow the progress of the programme and its components and carry out an expert evaluation after completion of the programme

In order to facilitate these activities, a detailed set of indications of achievements will be defined according to the objectives and targets of the programme.