COMMISSION DECISION
OF 1998

Establishing Business Support Programme for 1998,

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 3906/89 of 18 December 1989 on economic aid to certain countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 753/96 of 22 April 1996 and in particular Article 9 thereof,

Whereas Regulation No 3906/89 lays down the 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 programme described in the Annex to the present decision is hereby adopted.

Article 2
The maximum amount of Community assistance shall be 20 MECU to be financed through Budget line B7-500.

Done in Brussels,
For the Commission

FINANCING PROPOSAL

BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

1. IDENTIFICATION

Countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia.

Programme title: Business Support Programme (BSP); to provide assistance to business organisations in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEECs) in preparing themselves as well as local businesses for accession to the European Union.

Year: 1998

Cost: 20 MECU

Implementing Authority: European Commission, DGIA

Expiry Dates: 31 December 2000 (contracting)
               31 December 2001 (disbursement)

Sector: PR

Group: L

Budget Line: B7 - 500

Task Manager: Bardo Gavazzoli Schettini DGIA

2. SUMMARY

During the period since 1991, the development of the private sector was essential to enable CEECs to achieve the transition to a market economy. To facilitate this, the European Commission has supported business development initiatives through the various national Phare programmes as well as through multi-country programmes such as JOP and COOPME. These programmes have supported a variety of business and SME development initiatives.

Over the next few years, and before the first accessions of the CEECs to the European Union, it will be necessary for national policies and institutions to be adapted so that they can meet the necessary political, institutional and economic conditions. However, this will not be sufficient to ensure that enlargement is a success. It is crucial that business operators can also adapt themselves to this new context. Of particular importance will be the ability of these operators to adapt their management, production methods and product specifications.
to the Community ‘acquis’, in particular to the rules concerning the Single Market, be it through legislation or standards. 

In this perspective, the BSP will assist CEEC business operators, via their representative and support bodies, in meeting the requirements of accession and the demands of the Single Market. It will also lend direct assistance to these bodies so that they can fulfil their various roles in the best possible conditions. The BSP builds upon the positive experience of past programmes, notably COOPME, and reflects the fact that, although situations vary between the CEECs, in many cases considerable progress has been achieved in the development of a strong and healthy private sector. It also seeks to complement the company-specific assistance that can be provided in the framework of the new, revised JOP programme.

The bulk of Phare support will be earmarked for a package of actions designed to strengthen business organisations as a whole. This will be completed by measures targeted on 3 sectors of specific importance:

The BSP will consist of the following components:

i. Support to Business Representative Organisations and businesses
ii. Support to the activities in the textile sector
iii. Support to the Representative Organisations in the Agricultural Sector
iv. Support to institutions in the area of industrial property

This support will help prepare business organisations in the candidate countries to be acquainted of the Community acquis and to be prepared to provide valuable service to their members that will have to operate under the rules of the Single Market.

**Logical Framework**

Programme objectives results, sources of information and assumptions and risks are presented in the attached logical framework matrix.

### 3. BACKGROUND

Phare has already provided significant support for the business sector in CEECs through the JOP, COOPME and RIPP programmes. Since 1991 JOP has been providing important assistance, through a range of financial intermediaries, for the creation of joint venture companies between enterprises in the EU and in CEECs. Its continuation has been the object of a separate financing proposal which received a positive opinion of the Phare Management Committee earlier in 1998.

The COOPME programme, for its part, has provided a mechanism aiming to improve the capability of associations of businesses in the CEECs to expand relations and twinning arrangements between counterpart associations in EU, as well as to support co-operation and partnership between enterprises in the two regions. In particular, the COOPME programme supported innovative initiatives by business organisations in the EU and in the CEECs in order to provide concrete assistance to CEEC businesses as well as to facilitate
their adaptation to the new competitive and regulatory context which is emerging as part of the transition process. COOPME has received 13 MECU for the period 1994-1997.

The protection of industrial property (patents, trademarks, industrial designs and utility models) is a common concern to all CEECs and has an impact on foreign investment since, when properly functioning, it facilitates inward technology transfer. The RIPP programme has been focused mainly on the reinforcement or establishment of national Patent and Trademark Offices, the creation of modern documentation system and the development of computerised management tool for these offices. Phare assistance in this field started in 1992 and has been continuous with RIPP-II in 1994 and RIPP-III in 1995. In total, Phare dedicated 9 MECU to the reinforcement of industrial property protection in Central and Eastern Europe.

The JOP, COOPME as well as RIPP Programmes have been subject to independent assessments and the general outcome has been satisfactory. The BSP builds upon these experiences and will provide a framework for supporting similar activities according to the new objectives of Phare for the candidate countries. In addition, it will also seek to help CEEC business support organisations play their various roles through “twinning” type of arrangements and networking with counterparts in the EU.

4. POLICY ASSESSMENT

4.1 Socio-economic context

The development of a strong private sector in the candidate countries is a crucial element of the transformation process initiated in 1989, and is essential in minimising the tensions that will arise as a result of the process of accession to the EU. In this context, it is necessary to ensure that CEEC businesses are able to fully adjust to Community rules and standards. This will enable them to compete in the wider Single Market. It is also essential that business support organisations in the CEECs are able to provide appropriate assistance to their member companies, as is the case in the EU.

In the years leading up to “1992” the Commission pointed out that the Single Market would become effective in a gradual process depending as much on the behaviour of economic agents as on the adoption of Community legislation and its transposition into national law. Enterprises in CEECs and their support organisations will face a particularly severe challenge in meeting the needs of the Single Market. This is because, unlike businesses in current EU Member States, they will join a fully functioning Single Market rather than one which is gradually evolving.

The changes which businesses from CEECs will need to anticipate and implement as part of adjusting to the Single Market rules and supporting European standards are varied and relate to all aspects of their operations, from procurement and production to marketing and sales, not to forget human resources management, social issues, and technological and financial matters. A smooth adaptation to the Community “acquis” will ensure that CEEC companies are able to take full advantage of the opportunities that accession to the Single
Market will create for them, while minimising the disruptions it could imply. Previous experience shows that co-operation between business support organisations from the EU and the CEECs can play a key role in ensuring that CEEC businesses will adapt to the “acquis” and are therefore able to face increased competition in larger markets.

4.2 Relationship to other programmes

The new BSP will reflect the priority attached by the Commission to the role of national programmes and will therefore support only those twinning arrangements that can better include activities with a multi-national component. This programme should also complement the activities of the JOP Programme and of the future Phare Multi-country SME Investment Facility.

Business operators need a favourable legal, regulatory and administrative environment. The Phare programme has been supporting the relevant authorities through TAIEX, PRAQ (Quality Assurance), and the Customs and Environment programmes. Since all these are in part concerned with the provision of information to private sector intermediaries and companies, it will have to be ensured that the BSP does not overlap with their activities. In particular, synergy with TAIEX will be ensured in relation with those activities focused on information on approximation and implementation of the EU legislation in the CEECs.

During the period of operation of the BSP, participation in the “Third Multiannual Programme for SMEs in the European Union” run by DGXXIII will be open to the associated countries. Appropriate co-ordination will therefore be ensured between the two programmes.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The wider objective of this programme is to assist business operators within the CEECs to develop a capacity to cope with the need to adapt to the Community “acquis”.

The intermediate objectives of the programme are the strengthening of business support bodies and networks in the CEECs through twinning actions with their counterparts in the Union.

The immediate objectives of the BSP are the development of partnership contacts and co-operation actions for business sectoral/horizontal organisations and the support, through such bodies, of activities aimed at helping CEEC companies to adjust to the Community “acquis”.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME
The programme will comprise four components. The first one will be open to the benefit of all sectoral and horizontal business representative organisations in the CEECs, the other three will give support to activities focused to some specific sectors and issues where special attention is needed. The components are as follows:

i. Support to Business Representative Organisations and businesses
ii. Support to the activities in the textile sector
iii. Support to the Representative Organisations in the Agricultural Sector
iv. Support to institutions in the area of industrial property

6.1 Support to Business Representative Organisations and businesses

Business operators need the support of institutions capable of effectively representing them and advocating their interests vis-à-vis national governments, interest groups and the public opinion. Through the strengthening of such bodies the legitimate interests and expectations of business operators can also be more adequately taken into consideration in the process of adopting, implementing and enforcing the “acquis”.

In addition, the existence of well functioning business representative bodies in the CEECs and appropriate co-operation between these bodies and their counterparts in the European Union can provide a unique tool for designing and implementing programmes with a view to helping CEEC companies adjust their organisation, management and production methods to the constraints of the Single Market.

Under this component the BSP will support two specific actions:
1. Strengthening of CEEC business support organisations;
2. Strengthening the activities of business support organisations in helping CEEC companies to adjust to the Community acquis.

6.1.1. Strengthening of CEEC business support organisations

Under this priority, support would be given to partnerships and twinning operations between business support bodies (at horizontal or sectoral level) in the CEECs and in the EU. In order to manage this process in a cost effective and efficient manner a reduced number of representative business support bodies or consortia of such bodies will be selected and contracted to develop two-year programmes of integrated twinning activities. These programmes should only benefit CEEC-based horizontal or sectoral business support organisations. They could be designed, proposed and implemented either by European level organisations or by consortia of national level organisations.

The programmes selected may for example include the following activities:

• technical assistance on organisational aspects (financing, networking with sister organisations, public relations and promotional activities, setting up of IT networks or tools, etc.);
• training (on issues such as relations with decision-making public authorities, provision of information services, etc.);
• awareness raising and promotion of best practices on issues such as technology, quality and benchmarking, promotion of industrial co-operation, assistance to partner searches, social policy issues, etc.;

The methods used for delivering such assistance may include:
• long / medium term secondment of EU experts to CEEC organisations;
• long / medium term internships of CEEC staff members in EU partner organisations;
• creation of a network between the organisations participating in the project.

The eligible bodies will be EU/CEEC business support organisations, whether horizontal or sectoral. Projects will be selected by the programme’s Steering Committee (see below 9.1.) following a call for proposals. The proposals will be evaluated according to their relevance with regard to the programme’s objectives, of their technical quality and added value. A preference will be given to those programmes with a broad geographic coverage in terms of the number of CEECs covered and with a view to maximising economies of scale. The projects are intended to last for a period of two years and have a long term impact in relation to the CEECs needs.

Commission co-financing for each selected programme will not as a general rule exceed 90% of the total costs, with a maximum of 2 MECU. A total of 10 MECU is foreseen for this priority.

6.1.2. Strengthening the activities of business support organisations in helping CEEC companies adjust to the Community acquis

Earlier experiences, notably under the COOPME programme, have shown that co-operation between EU and CEEC businesses can play a significant role in helping CEEC businesses adapt to the challenges of accession to the EU, and in particular to the changes that will arise at the company level as a result of the need to adapt to the Community acquis.

Under this specific action of the BSP programme, appropriate support will be provided by sectoral and horizontal business support organisations in the EU to their counterparts in the CEECs so that the latter can help their member companies adapt to the parts of the Community acquis relevant to their specific sectors.

This assistance would be provided as part of integrated programmes that may cover some or all of the following issues:
• the strengthening of the ability of local associations in assessing the practical implications of EU sectoral legislation on the activities of companies;
• the provision of assistance to the definition of improvement plans with a view to adapting the management, organisation, production methods and product lines of companies to the relevant Community “acquis” and to European standards.
• the introduction of relevant technological solutions and other innovations with a view to implementing these improvement plans;
• the assistance to the design and implementation of EU-compatible quality policies.
The following methods and tools could be used, among others, to provide assistance:

- Long / medium term training activities;
- Networking activities;
- Technical support (e.g. secondment of industry experts);

The eligible bodies will be EU and CEEC sectoral and horizontal business support organisations. Consortia may also include sectoral EU or CEEC technological centres.

The BSP programme may support proposals also including the development of those networks aiming at promoting the use of new technological tools in relations to business information and co-operation.

Project proposals under 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 will be selected by the programme’s Steering Committee (see below 9.1.) following a call for proposals. The proposals will be evaluated according to their relevance in regard of the programme’s objectives, of their technical quality and of added value. With a view to maximising economies of scale, preference will be given to those programme proposals with a broad geographic coverage in terms of the number of CEECs concerned.

As for the secondment of industry experts to the CEEC associations, with a view to ensuring low cost of management and good value for money the Commission may encourage, whenever appropriate, the involvement of the existing EU associations of seniors and retired managers.

Commission co-financing for each selected programme will not as a general rule exceed 90% of the total costs, with a maximum of 1 MECU. A total of 6 MECU is foreseen for this priority.

6.2. Support to the activities in the textile sector

The textile and clothing industry plays an important role in the economies of the candidate countries. It accounts for some 12% employment in manufacturing, around 12% of manufacturing export and almost one-fifth of total EU imports of textile and clothing originate from the candidate countries.

Given the importance of the textile and clothing sector in most CEECs, and the strong potential for mutual interest in co-operation between EU and CEEC companies in this sector, the BSP will give specific support to the Observatoire européen du Textile et de l’Habillement (OETH) in order to facilitate such co-operation and therefore help CEEC companies to adjust to the relevant Community acquis as well as to European standards.

OETH aims at increasing knowledge and understanding of the EU textile and clothing sector (industry and distribution), including the provision of reliable statistics, by providing up to date information on the situation of the textile and clothing industry in the EU and in the CEECs. This specific assistance will be provided with a view to collecting quantitative and qualitative information and comparable statistics on the situation of the textile and clothing industry in the various candidate countries. This will be done in close co-operation with EUROSTAT.
In line with the objectives of the BSP, the OETH will develop new tools, including networking activities, so as to be in a position to respond rapidly to the requests from CEEC companies and associations on any given aspect of the textile and clothing industry, including distribution and markets. The OETH will also prepare an annual report to the Community institutions on the situation of the textile and clothing sector in the CEECs.

In order to support the activities thereof, the Commission will enter into direct agreement with the OETH. The financing under the BSP will be used exclusively for funding operational activities, and not for covering the administrative costs of OETH. A total of 200,000 ECU is foreseen for this component.
6.3. Support to the Representative Organisations in the Agricultural Sector

The agriculture and food sectors in the CEECs face various structural problems restricting the ability of farmers and companies to adapt to the challenges of the market economy. These include, among others, the land reform and the privatisation process, the limited processing and marketing structures, the availability of credit and the lack of proper market information. Companies operating in this sector also need to adapt to the Community “acquis” in critical areas, namely the environmental impact of the agricultural production as well as the consumers protection.

Over the past few years farmers, young farmers and co-operative organisations have been established in the candidate countries to address these issues and to assist their members in adapting to the new market conditions. In the light of the accession process special assistance is now needed in this sector.

The BSP will therefore support the strengthening of the agricultural co-operatives and farmers’ organisations with the objective of a more pro-active assistance to their members’ adjustment to the relevant acquis.

To this purpose the BSP will support the European organisation COPA-COGECA which, through a comprehensive programme of around two years duration, will assist the farmers, young farmers and co-operatives in the candidate countries to meet the mentioned objective. The activity of COPA-COGECA will be comprised of the following components:

- Institutional Development: Specific advisory bodies in each candidate country will be created in order to ensure that the organisational structures of the agricultural organisations will respond to the new priorities related to the accession to the EU;
- Provision of Advisory and Information Services: Information programmes will be created to provide advice and information on the “acquis” and on other EU related issues to the officials from agricultural organisations in the candidate countries;
- Long-term secondment of experts: long-term placements of staff from EU organisations to those in the candidate countries will be organised in order to ensure the proper development and follow-up of the components thereof;
- Twinning Programmes: it will consist of placements of staff and young leaders from farmers and young farmers organisations in the candidate countries to those in EU.
- High level seminars and workshops may be organised to exchange experience between CEEC and EU leaders in this sector;

In order to support the activities thereof the Commission will enter into direct agreement with the COPA-COGECA. A total budget of 2.5MECU is foreseen for this component.

6.4. Support to institutions in the area of industrial property

Under the Europe Agreements the Associated countries are obliged to become member of the European Patent Convention (EPC). Requests for accession have already come from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic and
Slovenia. Accession of national industrial property offices to the EPC/European Patent Office (EPO) requires adapting their structure to the new situation (e.g. reduction of number of staff, change of their functions, training of new top and intermediate managers etc.).

In order to reach this objective the Business Support Programme will support, in cooperation with EPO, the national offices in their activity of preparation for accession into the EU industrial property system. In particular, the activity of EPO will comprise the following components:

- Preparation of the CEECs for accession to the European Patent Convention, either by support to national patent offices in their preparation for accession to the EPO, especially in terms of training of staff, or by the provision of legal technical assistance for the preparation of new legislation and the adaptation of existing legislation.

- Assistance for the development and strengthening of the structural capacity of the industrial property offices to co-operate and provide services to businesses. Disseminating information is as important as granting rights and has economic significance for businesses. Several countries have set up a network of regional patent information centres (more than 100 exist in the EU), but they lack sufficient resources for training and documentation. The BSP will assist in both areas.

- Enforcement of industrial property rights, through a comprehensive training programme for the relevant public officials.

With regard to its training activities, the EPO will not only use its own experts, but it will also call upon the expertise of the offices of the EU Member States (as it was done in the past). This can either result in (i) participation of national experts in training actions co-ordinated by the EPO or (ii) trainees from the CEECs participating in exchange programmes with EU offices. In the field of trademarks, the EPO will continue to co-operate with the Benelux Trademark Office.

In order to support the activities thereof the Commission will enter into a direct agreement with the EPO. A total budget of 1,2 MECU is foreseen for this component.

7. ACTIVITIES OF OTHER DONORS AND CO-ORDINATION

Co-ordination with the activities of other donors will be encouraged. In particular, under RIPP-III there have been regular contacts with the World Intellectual Property Organisation. The exchange of information will be continued and activities will be co-ordinated where appropriate.

8. COST AND FINANCING PLAN
Phare will provide 20MECU from the 1998 budget to finance the activities described above.

**Financial Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Financial allocation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.a. Strengthening of business support organisations</td>
<td>10 MECU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.b. Strengthening the activities of business support organisations</td>
<td>6 MECU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Support to the activities of OETH in the CEECs</td>
<td>0.2 MECU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Support to representative organisations in the agricultural sector</td>
<td>2.5 MECU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support to institutions in the area of intellectual property</td>
<td>1.2 MECU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Project monitoring activities</td>
<td>0.1 MECU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>20. MECU</td>
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**9. IMPLEMENTATION**

The programme will be implemented by the European Commission on behalf of national authorities through the Steering Committee. The implementation provisions may be reviewed from time to time.

**9.1. Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee will be composed of the representatives of the Commission services concerned. It will be in charge of the selection and decisions on any individual projects under components 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 of the programme. The Steering Committee’s decisions will be based on the relevance of projects in terms of the Commission’s policy objectives and their technical quality and good value for money. The Steering Committee will meet regularly and may take decisions on specific monitoring activities in relation to the implementation of the programme. External expert may also be invited when specific assistance is needed.

In case of industrial property, the Commission will continue to held regular co-ordination meetings with representatives of the national industrial property offices and the EPO to discuss progress and approve work programmes of the latter.
10. AUDIT AND MONITORING

The Commission services shall monitor the implementation of the Programme on the basis of regular reports from the contractors and may sign contracts with independent consultants to follow the progress of the Programme and its components and carry out an ex-post evaluation after completion of the programme. To facilitate monitoring a detailed set of performance criteria will be defined in keeping with programme objectives. The intermediaries and final beneficiaries shall undertake to have their relevant accounts audited by the Court of Auditors, the European Commission or its designated agents when required.

11. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

For all categories of projects, the organisations acting as partners should provide at least part of the matching contributions from their own resources (either in finance or in kind) to guarantee their effective involvement in the project.

All project costs should ultimately benefit organisations in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

No financial assistance will be provided to companies. Companies will therefore only benefit indirectly from the programme.

12. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The programme assumes a sustained effort by CEECs to press ahead with making further progress in relation to the transformation and reform process. The main risks are (i) that activities which might be financed will have limited impact on enterprise development and (ii) that CEEC business support organisations will prove unable to play their role as foreseen by the programme. Given that the programme aims precisely at improving the ability of CEEC business support organisations to provide better services through networking and partnerships with EU counterparts, these risks seem limited.
INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION’S 
PHARE PROGRAMME

1. Objective and scope

Information and publicity measures concerning assistance from the European Union’s Phare Programme are intended to increase public awareness and transparency of EU action and to create a consistent image of the measures concerned in all applicant countries. Information and publicity shall concern measures receiving a contribution from the European Union’s Phare Programme.

2. General principles

The appropriate Programme Authorising Officer in charge of the implementation of Financing Memoranda, and other forms of assistance shall be responsible for publicity on the spot. Publicity shall be carried out in cooperation with the Commission’s Delegations, which shall be informed of measures taken for this purpose.

The competent national and regional authorities shall take all the appropriate administrative steps to ensure the effective application of these arrangements and to collaborate with the Commission’s Delegations on the spot.

The information and publicity measures described below are based on the provisions of the regulations and decisions applicable to the Structural Funds. They are:


Information and publicity measures must comply with the provisions of the Information Handbook for European Commission Delegations in Central Europe. The relevant sections of the Information Handbook will be annexed to all contracts related to works and supplies.

3. Information and publicity concerning Phare programmes

Information and publicity shall be the subject of a coherent set of measures defined by the competent national, regional and local authorities in collaboration with the Commission’s Delegations for the duration of the Financing Memorandum and shall concern both programmes and other forms of assistance.

The costs of information and publicity relating to individual projects shall be met from the budget for those projects.
When Phare programmes are implemented, the measures set out at (a) and (b) below shall apply:

(a) The competent authorities of the applicant countries shall publish the content of programmes and other forms of assistance in the most appropriate form. They shall ensure that such documents are appropriately disseminated and shall hold them available for interested parties. They shall ensure the consistent presentation throughout the territory of the applicant country of information and publicity material produced, in accordance with the provisions of the Information Handbook.

(b) Information and publicity measures on the spot shall include the following:

(i) In the case of infrastructure investments with a cost exceeding ECU 1 million

- billboards erected on the sites, to be installed in accordance with the provisions of the Information Handbook
- permanent commemorative plaques for infrastructures accessible to the general public, to be installed in accordance with the provisions of the Information Handbook.

(ii) In the case of productive investments, measures to develop local potential and all other measures receiving financial assistance from Phare;

- measures to make potential beneficiaries and the general public aware of Phare assistance, in accordance with the provisions of the Information Handbook;
- measures targeting applicants for public aids part-financed by Phare, in the form of an indication on the forms to be filled out by such applications, that part of the aid comes from the EU, and specifically, the Phare Programme, in accordance with the provisions of the Information Handbook.

.4. Visibility of EU assistance in business circles and among potential beneficiaries and the general public

4.1 Business circles

Business circles must be involved as closely as possible with the assistance which concerns them most directly.

The authorities responsible for implementing assistance shall ensure the existence of appropriate channels for disseminating information to potential beneficiaries, particularly SMEs. These should include an indication of the administrative procedures to be followed.

4.2 Other potential beneficiaries
The authorities responsible for implementing assistance shall ensure the existence of appropriate channels for disseminating information to all persons who benefit or could benefit from measures concerning training, employment or the development of human resources. To this end, they shall secure the cooperation of vocational training bodies involved in employment, business and groups of business, training centres and non-governmental organisations.

Forms

Forms issued by national, regional or local authorities concerning the announcement of, application for and grant of assistance intended for final beneficiaries or any other person eligible for such assistance shall indicate that the EU, and specifically the Phare Programme, is providing financial support. The notification of aid sent to beneficiaries shall mention the amount or percentage of the assistance financed by the Phare Programme. If such documents bear the national or regional emblem, they shall also bear the EU logo of the same size.

4.3 The general public

The media

The competent authorities shall inform the media in the most appropriate manner about actions co-financed by the EU, and Phare in particular. Phare participation shall be fairly reflected in this information.

To this end, the launch of operations (once they have been adopted by the Commission) and important phases in their implementation shall be the subject of information measures, particularly in respect of regional media (press, radio and television). Appropriate collaboration must be ensured with the Commission’s Delegation in the applicant country.

The principles laid down in the two preceding paragraphs shall apply to advertisements such as press releases or publicity communiqués.

Information events

The organisers of information events such as conferences, seminars, fairs and exhibitions in connection with the implementation of operations part-financed by the Phare Programme shall undertake to make explicit the participation of the EU. The opportunity could be taken of displaying the European flags in meeting rooms and the EU logo upon documents depending on the circumstances. The Commission’s Delegation in the applicant country shall assist, as necessary, in the preparation and implementation of such events.

Information material

Publications (such as brochures and pamphlets) about programmes or similar measures financed or co-financed by Phare should, on the title page, contain a clear
indication of the EU’s participation as well as the EU logo where the national or regional emblem is used.

Where such publications include a preface, it should be signed by both the person responsible in the applicant country and, for the Commission, the Delegate of the Commission to ensure that Phare’s participation is made clear.

Such publications shall refer to the national and regional bodies responsible for informing interested parties.

The above-mentioned principles shall also apply to audio-visual material.

5. Special arrangements concerning billboards, commemorative plaques and posters

In order to ensure the visibility of measures part-financed by the Phare Programme, applicant countries shall ensure that the following information and publicity measures are complied with:

Billboards

Billboards providing information on EU participation in the financing of the investment should be erected on the sites of all projects in which EU participation amounts to ECU 1 million or more. Even where the competent national or regional authorities do not erect a billboard announcing their own involvement in financing the EU’s assistance must nevertheless be announced on a special billboard. Billboards must be of a size which is appreciable to the scale of operation (taking into account the amount of co-financing from the EU) and should be prepared according to the instructions contained in the Information Handbook.

Billboards shall be removed not earlier than six months after completion of the work and replaced, wherever possible, by a commemorative plaque in accordance with the provisions contained in the Information Handbook.

Commemorative plaques

Permanent commemorative plaques should be placed at sites accessible to the general public (congress centres, airports, stations, etc.). In addition to the EU logo, such plaques must mention the EU’s part-financing together with a mention of the Phare Programme.

Where a national, regional or local authority or another final beneficiary decides to erect a billboard, place a commemorative plaque, display a poster or take any other step to provide information about projects with a cost of less than ECU 1 million, the EU’s and Phare’s participation must also be indicated.

6. Final provisions
The national, regional or local authorities concerned may, in any event, carry out additional measures if they deem this appropriate. They shall consult the Commission’s Delegation and inform it of the initiatives they take so that the Delegation may participate appropriately in their realisation.

In order to facilitate the implementation of these provisions, the Commission, through its Delegations on the spot, shall provide technical assistance in the form of guidance on design requirements, where necessary.