COMMISSION DECISION
OF 1999

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° 1266/99 of 21 June 1999, and in particular its article 8,

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 1999 described in the Annex to the present decision is hereby adopted.

Article 2

The maximum amount of Community assistance shall be 5.1 MEUR to be financed through budget line B7-500 and 0.5 MEUR through budget line B7-543 from the 1999 budget.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission
1. Identification
Country: Multi-country
Programme: Information Programme
Year: 1999
EC Contribution: 5.6 MEUR
Sector classification: AA
Responsible Authority: European Commission in Brussels
Budget line: B7-500 (5.1 MEUR)
B7-543 (0.5 MEUR)
Expiry date: Contracting: 31 December 2000
Disbursement: 31 December 2001

Task Manager: Tom Glaser

1. Background
Since 1990, Phare funding has been devoted to information and communication with and to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The need for information about the EU, its policies and programmes, increased sharply after the December 1994 Essen Council which included in its conclusions the following phrases ‘there is a need among EU Member States and the associated countries to have better understanding of each others’ societies. Therefore, expansion and deepening of information efforts are necessary.

The programme has been implemented in close cooperation with DGX and has played a central role in the pre-accession strategy.

Since its beginnings, the programme has been implemented in the associated countries and in the EU, principally Brussels.

In Central and Eastern Europe, European Documentation Centres (30-40) have been set up, and hundreds of civil servants, parliamentary assistants and journalists have taken part in visits, organised either by Commission services or by the Joint Commission Parliament EU Visitors’ Programme. Commission Delegations have been given budgets to carry out local communications and PR activities and to translate and print brochures. In the last year alone, 11 TV programmes (five for Euronews, five for CONTACT, one for Bayerische Rundfunk’s ‘Café Europa’) were financed. In addition, Delegations have been encouraged to set up Information Centres accessible to the public and staffed by information professionals to respond to public queries about all aspects of the EU and of enlargement. To date, seven such centres are open or about to open and more are to follow.

In Brussels, information efforts concentrated on the production and dissemination of key documents (the Opinions, the Accession Partnerships, the Reports); on the extension of the DG1A website, now the largest on the Europa Server with 26.000 hits per day, and on the establishment of the Phare / Tacis Information Centre which dealt with upwards of 40.000
inquiries in its first year of operation and is proof of the Commission’s policy of transparency and user-friendliness.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the core part of the programme towards the candidate countries are threefold

• To communicate clearly the mechanisms and the objectives of the EU’s accession policies to those concerned – political decision-makers and opinion formers, as well as the business community, academia and the NGO sector

• To provide the means and conditions for the communications to be successful, both in the EU and the countries concerned

• To provide the strategic services based in Brussels, but designed to support Delegations in the candidate in areas such as research, training, audio-visual production

The objectives of the in-country part of the programme conducted through the Delegations in the countries concerned consists of providing each Delegation with the methodology, funding and central support for them to carry out their own information and communication programmes. Their objectives are

• To increase knowledge of the country’s accession process particularly among key target groups

• To increase general understanding of the EU, its policies and programmes among the population at large

For those countries which are not candidates the programme objectives are as follows

• To communicate the presence of the EU, the aims of its programmes and the long-term nature of its commitment to the region to decision-makers, opinion formers and the general public

• To overcome the lack of a viable information infrastructure in the countries concerned by the provision of advice and services from outside the region

• To assist Delegations in formulating their own information and communications policies

3. Programme description

The core programme will consist of the following elements

• strategic advice and research, including public opinion and media research for Commission services both in Brussels and Delegations

• maintenance of the principal database of ±30,000 names and other databases of those, both in the EU and the candidate countries who have expressed interest in the accession process, and management of the Phare / Tacis Information Centre

• a publication programme, comprising:
• information on the enlargement process and its policies
• promotional brochures, explaining detailed policies to a wider public
• ‘European Dialogue’ a magazine published in ten central European languages aimed at decision-makers and opinion formers. This item is managed by DGX.
• electronic publishing on Internet of all official documents on the enlargement process and its policies

event management, particularly to reach the media concerned with enlargement

• communications training (mostly in Delegations)
• a media programme which covers media in Brussels, the EU and the candidate countries, including support for Central European journalists and electronic media
• training in EU affairs for Central European journalists.

Within the limits of the budget available, the in-country programme consists of

• financing of Delegation annual information strategies and work programmes in central European candidate countries
• financing the setting up, equipping, staffing and maintenance of dedicated EU Information Centres in all candidate countries
• provision of short-term expertise (to supplement local expertise where this is lacking) and products produced in Brussels by Commission services, and research carried out on behalf of individual Delegations at their request
• provision of some common services, e.g. training, Extranet communication, comparative media analysis
• assistance with revising and updating the Delegations’ Information Officers Handbook and the Financial Manual which constitute essential management tools
• financial and budgetary management

4. Implementation

The programme will be managed in Brussels and not according to the provisions of the D.I.S.

DGX will manage that part of the budget sub-delegated to it.
The budget for the remainder of the programme will be administered by the appropriate Commission Services. The division of this part of the budget is between in-country information in the central European candidate countries and core activities (including programmes in non-candidate countries).

5. Cost and financing plan – see project fiches at annex
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core activities (managed from Brussels) B7-500</th>
<th>DG1A</th>
<th>DGX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.465</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-country activities (managed from Delegations) B7-500</td>
<td>2.135</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main contractor Brussels (extra muros)</td>
<td>390.675</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Fund (Delegations)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance to non-candidate countries B7-543</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The funding is foreseen in the Phare budget commentary (experts’ meetings, seminars, information and publication).

6. Audit monitoring + Evaluation

For this programme, the Commission services shall monitor the implementation of the programme on the basis of the regular reports. In order to facilitate this, a detailed set of indicators of achievement will be defined according to the objectives and targets of the programme.

In addition, each Delegation’s work programme provides for periodic benchmarking and evaluation. This will be undertaken in late 1999 – early 2000. Details of monitoring and evaluation from the centre can be found in the log frame matrix at Annex.