COMMISSION DECISION
OF 2000

Establishing the Phare information and communication 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 18 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 communication programme 2000 described in the Annex to the present decision is hereby adopted.

Article 2

The maximum amount of Community assistance shall be 7.0 MEUR to be financed through budget line B7-030A.

Done at Brussels

For the Commission
1. Identification  
Country: Multi-country  
Programme: Information and Communication Programme  
Year: 2000  
EC Contribution: 7.0 MEUR  
Sector classification: AA  
Responsible Authority: European Commission in Brussels  
Budget line: B7-030A (7.0 MEUR)  
Expiry date: Contracting: 31 December 2001  
Disbursement: 31 December 2002  
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.

The Commission has adopted on 10 May 2000 a new Communication strategy for informing the population of both Member States and Candidate Countries about the process of enlargement. The funds made available under this proposal will be used to implement the first year of that strategy regarding the Candidate Countries of eastern and central Europe. The programme will be fully co-ordinated with programmes directed at the other candidate countries and the Member States, which are funded from the financial instruments available for Cyprus, Malta and Turkey and the Commission information budget. The existing implementation arrangement for the information programme will be pursued for a further year with a view to revising it, if necessary, in 2001.
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 communication to be successful, both to targets in the EU and the countries concerned
- To provide the strategic services based in Brussels, designed to support Delegations in the candidate countries 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 consist 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.

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, both in the EU and in the candidate countries, 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
  - 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
- communication training (mostly in Delegations)
• a media programme which covers media in Brussels, the EU and the candidate countries, including support and training for EU and 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 information material 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 by the Commission centrally from Brussels. The core activities indicated in section 3 will be let as a single contract. In 1998 there was a tender for implementation of the decentralised information programme covering the next three years - to be financed from the information programme for those years. The 2000 programme will be the third year covered by that tender procedure. The contract will therefore be let directly to the same contractor as in the previous two years with unchanged terms and conditions.

The terms of reference will be revised to take account of the adoption of the new Communication strategy for Enlargement, in particular the management of the in-country programmes by the Delegations.
5. Cost and financing plan – see project fiches at annex

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<tr>
<th>Core activities (managed from Brussels) B7-030A</th>
<th>DGELARG</th>
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<tr>
<td>Media relations</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>Training</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<td>Research</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<td>The E.C. Phare and Tacis L.C.</td>
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<td>Publications and Internet</td>
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<th>In-country activities (managed from Delegations) B7-030A</th>
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<tr>
<td>Main contractor Brussels (extra muros)</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Fund (Delegations)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<td>ranging from €300.000 to €750.000 depending on Work Programme</td>
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The funding is foreseen in the Phare budget commentary (experts’ meetings, seminars, information and publication), which deals with information activities aimed at ensuring the successful implementation of the programmes. Since the aim of the Phare programme is the successful conclusion of the pre-accession phase of the enlargement process, this programme is a key to ensuring success.

6. Audit monitoring + Evaluation

For this programme, the Commission services shall monitor the implementation of the programme on the basis of 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 mid-2000. Details of monitoring and evaluation from the centre can be found in the log frame matrix at Annex.

All financing agreements or contracts concluded under this programme shall provide for in situ checks by the Commission and the Court of Auditors.

Recipients of support under specific actions are under the obligation to provide a report and financial statement which are analysed from the point of view of content and eligibility of expenditure in accordance with the objective of Community funding and bearing in mind the contractual obligations and the principles of sound and efficient management.