COMMISSION DECISION
OF 2003

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) 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 2500/2001 of 17 December 2001, and in particular Article 8 thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Regulation No 3906/89 lays down the rules and conditions for the granting of economic aid to certain countries of Central and Eastern Europe,

(2) 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,

HAS DECIDED 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, under the present decision, shall be 12.3 M€ to be financed in 2003 through Budget line B7-030A.

Done in Brussels,

For the Commission

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1 OJ no. L375 of 23/12/1989

2 OJ no. L342 of 27/12/2001
FINANCING PROPOSAL

1. Identification

Beneficiary: Multi-country
Programme: Phare Information and Communication Programme
CRIS _ Number: 2003/004205
Year 2003
Cost €12.3 million
Sector code: 99810
Group 998
Budget line: B7-030A
Expiry date: Contracting: 31 December 2004
Disbursement: 31 December 2005
Programming Task Manager DG ELARG/02 - Benedictus Nieuwenhuis
Implementing Manager(s) Decentralised activities : EC Delegations in candidate countries / DG ELARG/02 - Benedictus Nieuwenhuis
Centrally-managed activities: DG ELARG/02 – Irene Mingasson

2. Summary

Enlargement of the European Union is an historic process, which will affect the lives of many people. It is, therefore, vital that the citizens of the present and future Union understand the reasons for enlargement, as well as the benefits it will bring and the challenges it poses.

On 10th May 2000, the Commission adopted an Enlargement Communication Strategy for the period 2001-2006 that established a comprehensive approach to communicating enlargement to all candidate countries and Member States. This communication strategy will be funded from a number of budget lines, including B7-030A.

3. Strategy

Eight of the Phare beneficiary countries are likely to have referenda on their accession to the Union in 2003, and join on 1st May 2004. Two others, Romania and Bulgaria will be concentrating on implementing the road map agreed at Copenhagen, in order to achieve their objective of joining the Union in 2007.
Malta and Cyprus are also likely to join in 2004, but their communication strategy is funded under the Regulation 555/2000. Turkey, also an accession candidate receives funding under its MEDA allocation.

This Financial Proposal covers the implementation of the communication strategy by the Commission Delegations in the ten central European candidate countries and by the services managed centrally by the Commission in Brussels. This amounts to € 12,3 million.

4. Objectives & Description

Objectives

The major part of the expenditure will be dedicated to the decentralised part of the communication strategy programme, implemented by the Delegations in the countries concerned. The objectives of their activities in this area are to:

For the 8 countries expected to join the EU in May 2004:

• prepare for the accession into the EU whereby citizens in these countries will become EU-citizens;

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

For Bulgaria and Romania:

• increase knowledge of the country’s accession process and its implications particularly among key target groups taking into account the new roadmap;

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

The objectives of the centrally managed part of the programme are to provide

• a number of strategic services to support the Delegations in the candidate countries including research, training and audio-visual production

• professional advice to the Commission on communication issues related to the communication strategy

Description

The activities carried out by the Delegations in the Candidate Countries are implemented in the framework of annual work programmes, and include the full range of information activities, such as Management and staffing of dedicated EU Information Centres in capitals and, where appropriate, in the regions.
Specific activities to be carried out include:

- production of information material (in paper and electronic form) in local languages
- Dissemination of information via a network consisting of regional information centres, universities, chambers of commerce, etc.
- management of information events such as “Europe Days” throughout the country
- professional assistance to the Delegations in their press and information activities, including the organisation of journalists visits to existing Member States and European institutions
- development of relations with key target groups, especially with farmers and the rural population

The services managed centrally by the Commission will include the following elements:

- management of the Enlargement Information Centre in Brussels
- strategic advice and research, including public opinion and media research for Commission services in Brussels and in Delegations
- production of information products such as the Enlargement Weekly and the monthly Enlargement Research Bulletin
- maintenance of the principal database names and other databases of those in the EU and the candidate countries who have expressed interest in the accession process
- a publication programme, including:
  - promotional brochures, explaining the accession treaty and EU policies to a wider public in the future Member States
  - information on the candidate countries
  - electronic publishing on Internet
- event management, particularly to reach the media concerned with enlargement
- a media programme covering media in Brussels, the present and future member states and including support and training for journalists
- provision of short-term expertise (to supplement local expertise where this is lacking)
- provision of some common services, e.g. training (via the organisation of joint seminars for staff in the representations, delegations and EU information centres in the candidate countries), Extranet communication, comparative media analysis
- assistance with revising and updating the Delegations’ Information Officers Handbook
5. Budget

The total amount of the budget is divided into two parts, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>BUDGET (£ MILLION)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>3.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>6.248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>2.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. In-country activities (managed from Delegations)

The implementation of the communication strategy is decentralised, and therefore contractual periods differ according to the particular timetable chosen by each delegation on the basis of prevailing local circumstances. The current funding under which the Delegations in candidate countries operate will expire between August and December 2003, depending on the strategy chosen by each Delegation. Therefore, the precise breakdown of the €9.8 million (I + II) to be implemented via the individual delegations\(^1\) for a 12-month period following the end of their existing contracts will be made during the first half of the year 2003. It will be made on the basis of draft work programmes submitted by the Delegations concerned.

Given this timing, the funds are likely to cover information activities that will be carried out after the referendum, but the important period where final preparations are being made for

\(^{1}\) The breakdown between Delegations in 2002 was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegation</th>
<th>Sum allocated (£ million)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warsaw</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucharest</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ljubljana</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilnius</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riga</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bratislava</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofia</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallinn</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.88</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
membership. Previous enlargements have shown the importance of providing adequate
information to the public during this period.
a) The main part of the €9.8 million will be allocated in two parts:

1. A provisional allocation for each Delegation to ensure continuity by covering necessary infrastructure and to act swiftly in the period between the referenda and accession. This includes the fees and running costs for the management of the EU Information Centres established in all capitals and, if appropriate, the regional affiliates, as well as their staff.

2. A further allocation to Delegations on the basis of a certain number of criteria:

- The referendum in the 8 countries expected to join.
- The state of public opinion in the country concerned, which is a key factor in the communication strategy. The Eurobarometer surveys will be the main parameter for this.
- The quality of the work programme submitted by the Delegation
- The administrative capacity of the Delegation as indicated by previous expenditure patterns

b) The importance of being able to react to events and to adjust in consequence from central level and support core activities is vital in the period of the referenda till accession. Therefore, flexibility will be retained within the future allocation.

Therefore the following provisional allocation will be granted to the delegations representing 40% of the amount granted in 2002. As indicated, the remainder of the € 9.8 million will be allocated following the criteria established under point 2.
Provisional allocation (€):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>680,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>468,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>440,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>348,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>280,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>220,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>264,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>224,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>380,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>248,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further allocation 6,248,000

Total 9,800,000

II. Central activities (managed from Brussels)

Given the dynamic nature of the enlargement process, it is important to maintain flexibility in the activities in this area. The allocation of funding across the various activities (Media relations; Training; Research; and Publications and Internet) will be made on the basis of an evaluation of the performance of the existing contractor. The existing contractor is to submit an interim report of activities in December 2002, and the contract is expected to be renewed in April 2003.

The continuation of Phare/Enlargement Information Centre as of April 2003 will be done via a separate contract for which tendering is underway.

The funding of €2.5 million is foreseen in the Phare budget commentary (experts’ meetings, seminars, information and publication), that deals with information activities aimed at ensuring the successful implementation of the programmes.

6. Audit, monitoring and evaluation

The accounts and operations of all activities carried out under the programme are subject to supervision and financial control by the Commission (including the European Anti-fraud Office) and the Court of Auditors. This includes measures such as ex-ante verification of tendering and contracting carried out and on-the-spot checks.
In order to ensure efficient protection of the financial interests of the Community, the Commission can conduct check-ups and inspections on site in accordance with the procedures foreseen in Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No. 2185/96 dated from November 11, 1996, concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

The procedures foreseen in Art. 15 para 3 of Commission Regulation No. 2222/2000 dated from June 7, 2000, on the communication in case of irregularities and the putting in place of a system to administrate the information in this field shall apply.

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.

The Commission services shall ensure that an ex-post evaluation is carried out after completion of the Programme.

7. Implementation schedule

The central activities will be managed by the Commission services in Brussels. The existing contract (start date: 11 April 2001) is up for renewal for one more year on 11 April 2003. The continuation of Phare/Enlargement Information Centre as of April 2003 will be done via a separate contract for which tendering is underway.

Activities in the candidate countries will be managed by the Commission’s Delegations on the basis of work programmes approved by the Enlargement DG in Brussels. Deconcentrated activities will be contracted using the standard procedures for external assistance, with the exception that local contracts may, following the approval in May and December 2000 of DG Budget, continue to be service procurement contracts. For these activities calls for tender have taken place in 2001 and contracts started at various dates in 2001. All these contracts do foresee a renewal in 2003.