COMMISSION DECISION
OF 2004

Establishing a multi-beneficiary programme on "Small Projects Programme" in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey,

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 Europe¹, as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 769/2004², and in particular Article 8 thereof,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2500/2001 of 17 December 2001 concerning pre-accession financial assistance for Turkey³ 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 and Regulation No 2500/01 lays down the rules and conditions for the granting of economic aid to Turkey,

(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 shall be € 4 million to be financed through Budget item 22.0206 in 2004.

Done in Brussels,

For the Commission

³ OJ L342/1, 27.12.2001, p.1
FINANCING PROPOSAL

MULTI-BENEFICIARY
SMALL PROJECTS PROGRAMME

1. IDENTIFICATION

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>Small Projects Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIS number</td>
<td>2004 / 016-869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>4 M€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing Authority</td>
<td>European Commission: DG ELARG, DG EAC (for traineeship scheme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expiry Date:</td>
<td>Contracting: December 31, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Execution of contracts: November 30, 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In no case can the contracting period for projects implemented under this programme exceed three years after the date of the global commitment (Art. 166 (2) FR). Budgetary commitments which have not given rise to payments during three years counted from the date of the legal commitment will be decommitted (Art. 77 (3) FR)

| Sector Code | AA                      |
| Group       | M                       |
| Budget line | 22.02.06                |
| Programming Task Manager | Henk Visser (DG ELARG)        |
| Implementation Task Manager | Subha Ray (DG ELARG) |
|              | Paschalis Papachristopoulos (DG EAC, for traineeship scheme) |

2. SUMMARY

This programme shall be used to provide grants for the benefit of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. These grants shall support small scale activities related to the enlargement and accession process with the objective to create more visibility of the EU and facilitate integration between citizens of the current and future Member States. The activities supported under this programme will be complementary to the activities supported under the Enlargement Communication Strategy.

3. STRATEGY

Given the Commission’s activities aimed at closer involvement of the citizen within the European Union itself, it is appropriate for the Commission to support activities with a broadly similar aim for its future Member States. Whereas the national programmes concentrate on large projects, this programme aims to support projects of modest cost, which have a potentially significant impact in terms of goodwill and awareness.

The programme should allow the Commission to support activities for the Beneficiary countries which complement the enlargement process by helping different actors be better
prepared for, and informed about, accession. These activities will be small-scale by nature, but will nevertheless be justified in that their knock-on effect will be far greater than the resources committed. Activities like those of the Small Projects Programme, with a high visibility and awareness raising will constitute an effective tool to galvanise the countries around the theme of pre-accession to the European Union.

4. OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

The objectives of the programme are:

a) to raise awareness in the Beneficiary countries on European integration and the Enlargement process;

b) to contribute directly to closer European integration in the Beneficiary countries;

c) to increase the visibility of the European Union in the Beneficiary countries.

The programme will fund different types of actions, which are directly linked to the objectives of Enlargement, more specifically to the Accession Partnerships.

The final beneficiaries will be exclusively non-profit organisations including local or regional authorities (national authorities only in the framework of the Traineeship scheme), inter-governmental organisations, universities, research institutes, chambers of commerce, NGOs, regional development agencies and other non-profit institutions or associations of a social, economic or cultural character in the EU-25 and the three Beneficiary countries.

The programme will finance the following:

1. A traineeship scheme for officials of the Beneficiary countries

In the context of institution building and assistance for integration and approximation of legislation, the programme will finance the costs of placing (local, regional or national) officials from the Beneficiary countries on traineeships within the European Commission for periods of up to 3 months. This scheme may be extended to other Institutions of the European Union. The individuals who will participate in this scheme will be selected by the Beneficiary countries.

The scheme will operate with three intakes per year of up to 36 trainees over an 18 months period, indicatively distributed as follows: up to 9 Bulgarian; 9 Romanians and up to 18 Turks. This traineeship scheme will allow (local, regional and/or national) officials of the Beneficiary countries to obtain some practical experience in the field of European Union affairs in which they specialise and where additional expertise is required. The relevant budget will be sub-delegated to the Commission’s Education and Culture DG (Traineeships Office).

Indicative amount of grant per trainee:
1,500 EUR monthly plus travel and insurance expenses.

2. A small projects facility
Activities to benefit from this facility should comprise a wide variety of actions (e.g. seminars and conferences, public information and dissemination campaigns, documentation materials) initiated by third parties\(^1\) within the objectives of the Enlargement and the priority areas set forth in the Accession Partnerships.

The following conditionalities shall apply to the Small Projects Facility:

1) **Financial**: the Commission’s contribution for every event shall not exceed 50,000 EUR. The relevant expenses which may be covered are travel and accommodation for participants from the Beneficiary countries, conference and interpretation costs, publication and dissemination costs. The Commission’s grant amount may not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs.

2) **Type of activities**: the activities submitted for funding should aim at:
   a) Raising awareness in the Beneficiary countries on European integration and the Enlargement process,
   b) Contributing directly to closer European integration and mutual cultural understanding of the Beneficiary countries,
   c) Increasing the visibility of the European Union in the Beneficiary countries.

3) **Results** expected from the Small Projects Facility include:
   a) Higher awareness in the Beneficiary countries on the European Union and the Enlargement process,
   b) Improved European integration through events resulting in increased networking and partnerships in the sectors targeted,
   c) Higher visibility of the European Union in the Beneficiary countries through publicised and high-impact events.

5. **BUDGET**

The total budget of the programme will be 4 MEUR.

**Indicative allocation for each action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Budget in EUR</th>
<th>Minimum no. of grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Traineeship Scheme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>125.000</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania &amp; Bulgaria</td>
<td>125.000</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Small Projects Facility: Headquarters (multi-country)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>250.000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania &amp; Bulgaria</td>
<td>500.000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Small Projects Facility: Delegations</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,000,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Small Projects Facility: Delegations – Indicative allocation per country**

\(^{1}\) The Final Beneficiaries as described in section 2 should be non-profit organisations including local or regional authorities (national authorities only in the framework of the Traineeship scheme), intergovernmental organisations, universities, research institutes, chambers of commerce, NGOs, regional development agencies and other non-profit institutions or associations of a social, economic or cultural character in the EU-25 and the three Beneficiary countries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Allocation in EURO</th>
<th>Minimum no. of grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.01 Bulgaria</td>
<td>1.000.000</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.02 Romania</td>
<td>1.000.000</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.03 Turkey</td>
<td>1.000.000</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.000.000</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **IMPLEMENTATION**

a.) Financial and project management

The programme will be implemented by the European Commission according to article 53.1 (a) of the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) Nr. 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Commission (the Financial Regulation: FR) and the respective Implementing Rules¹.

- The **Traineeship scheme** will be managed by DG Education and Culture (Traineeships Office) in the Commission headquarters in Brussels.

- The **Small Projects Facility Headquarters** will be managed centrally by the Commission headquarters of DG Enlargement.

- The **Small Projects Facility Delegations** will be managed locally by the EC Delegations in the Beneficiary Countries.

This means that for the Small Projects Facility, selection of projects, contracting and disbursement will be the responsibility of Commission headquarters and of Commission Delegations. In both cases, Commission services will award grant contracts using the procedures and standard documents defined and most recently published by the European Commission for the implementation of External Actions.

b.) Contracting and execution deadline

i. All contracts must be concluded by no later than December 31, 2005.

ii. All contracts must be executed by no later than November 30, 2007. Budgetary commitments which have not given rise to payments during three years counted from the date of the legal commitment will be decommitted.

7. **AUDIT, ANTI-FRAUD AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

a) Communication obligations by the beneficiary states

Beneficiary states shall inform the Commission services without delay of any element of information indicating the possible existence of irregularities or fraud.

Irregularity shall mean any infringement of the Financing Proposal, resulting contracts or Community legislation\(^1\) resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator, which has, or would have, the effect of prejudicing the general budget of the Communities or budgets managed by them, either by reducing or losing revenue accruing from own resources collected directly on behalf of the Communities, or by an unjustified item of expenditure.

Fraud shall mean any intentional act or omission relating to:

i. The use or presentation of false, incorrect or incomplete statements or documents, which has as its effect the misappropriation or wrongful retention of funds from the general budget of the European Communities or budgets managed by, or on behalf of, the European Communities,

ii. Non-disclosure of information in violation of a specific obligation, with the same effect;

iii. The misapplication of such funds for purposes other than those for which they are originally granted.

b) Audit and anti-fraud measures

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.

In order to ensure efficient protection of the financial interests of the Community, the Commission can conduct on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with the procedures foreseen in Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) № 2185/96 dated from 11 November 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 controls and audits described above are applicable to all contractors and subcontractors who have receive Community funds.

The Commission will monitor the implementation of the programme on the basis of reports from the parties managing the programme.

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

c) The applicability of the Financial Regulation as referred to in Section 6 a) includes the application of administrative and financial sanctions, as provided for in Articles 93 to 96 and 114 of the Financial Regulation, and Article 133 of the Implementing Rules.

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\(^1\) Defined as the entirety of Community rules applicable between the Commission and the Beneficiary States (for example the Europe Agreements, the Framework Agreement, the letters of exchange by which the Financing Proposal is agreed upon by the Beneficiary States, this Financing Proposal and all the ensuing contracts).
8. VISIBILITY

In implementing this Programme, the Commission and its Delegations shall provide for the maximum visibility of all activities financed in the Beneficiary countries. The costs of information and publicity relating to individual projects shall be met from the budget of those projects. The organisers of information events such as conferences and seminars 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. Publications co-financed by the Commission should, on the title page, contain a clear indication of the EU participation as well as the EU logo where the national or regional emblem is used.