COMMISSION DECISION
OF 11 MARCH 2004

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 Europe¹, as last amended by Regulation (EC) No N°807/2003², 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 **€3.8 million** to be financed in 2004 through Budget line **22.01.04.01** "Preaccession assistance for countries of central and eastern Europe — Expenditure on administrative management”.

Done in Brussels,

For the Commission

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¹ OJ no. L375 of 23/12/1989, p. 11

² OJ no. L122 of 16/5/2003, p.36.
FINANCING PROPOSAL

1. Identification

Beneficiary: Multi-country
Programme: Phare Information and Communication Programme
CRIS - Number: 2004/006-086
Year: 2004
Cost: € 3.8 million
Implementing authority: Operational services in Brussels as well as Delegations in Romania and Bulgaria

Expiry date: Contracting: 31 December 2004
Payments: 31 December 2005
Sector code: 99810
Group: 998
Budget line: 22.01.04.01
Programming Task Manager: DG ELARG/E4 – Benedictus Nieuwenhuis
Implementing Task Manager: DG ELARG/E4 – Wenceslas de Lobkowicz

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 22.01.04.01 (former B7-030A).
3. Strategy

Eight of the Phare beneficiary countries will join the Union on 1st May 2004. Romania and Bulgaria will make further progress during 2004 towards completing their accession negotiations, in order to achieve the objective of joining the Union in 2007.

Turkey, also an accession candidate receives funding under a different budgetline (22.01.04.04, former B7-050A).

This Financial Proposal covers the implementation of the communication strategy by the Commission Delegations in Romania and Bulgaria and by the Commission services in Brussels. This amounts to € 3.8 million.

The activities which were committed under the Phare programme in 2003 on the former budgetline B7-030A for both the central part and those deconcentrated to the Delegations in the candidate countries will continue into 2004.

4. Objectives & Description

Objectives

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

- 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 Romania and Bulgaria 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 Romania and Bulgaria 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 two 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 activities managed centrally by the Commission will include the following elements:

• follow-up of the services contract with the Enlargement Information Centre in Brussels

• strategic advice and research, including public opinion and media research for Commission services in Brussels and in the Delegations of Romania and Bulgaria

• 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, two Delegations and EU information centres in the candidate countries), Extranet communication, comparative media analysis
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. In-country activities (managed from the Delegations in Romania and Bulgaria)</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Central activities (managed from Brussels)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In-country activities (managed from the Delegations in Romania and Bulgaria)

The implementation of the communication strategy is deconcentrated, 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 Bulgaria and Romania operate will expire respectively in August and October 2004. Therefore, the precise breakdown of the €2.6 million to be implemented via these two Delegations for a 12-month period following the end of their existing contracts will be made during the first half of the year 2004. It will be made on the basis of draft work programmes submitted by these two Delegations.

a) The part of the €2.6 million for in-country activities will be allocated in two parts:

1. A provisional allocation for each of the two Delegations to ensure continuity by covering necessary infrastructure. This includes the fees and running costs for the management of the EU Information Centres established in the two capitals and, if appropriate, the regional affiliates, as well as their staff.

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

- 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

3 The allocation for these two Delegations in 2003 was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegation</th>
<th>Sum allocated (€ million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bucharest</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofia</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• The administrative capacity of the Delegation as indicated by previous expenditure patterns

Therefore the following provisional allocation will be granted to these two Delegations representing 40% of the amount granted in 2003. As indicated, the remainder of the €2.6 million will be allocated following the criteria established under point 2.

**Provisional allocation (€):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>280,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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, such as the Enlargement Weekly Newsletter and the Enlargement Research Bulletin and Internet activities) will be made on the basis of an evaluation of the performance of the existing contractor. This contract will expire in April 2004 but will most likely be extended for a few months in order to cover the period around the accession day and the transition period in the months following that date.

The continuation of Phare/Enlargement Information Centre as of April 2004 is done via a different contract for which tendering has been concluded and a contract was signed in April 2003. This contract can be renewed for one year (till April 2005). The scope of the activities, however, will be adjusted to take into account the situation after accession of 10 countries and will be for the benefit of Bulgaria and Romania.

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: 4 April 2001) expires on 3 April 2004. The exact implementation mode has to be decided. Either a new tendering procedure will be launched or else use will be made of existing framework contracts for publications (paper and electronic), events, etc.

The continuation of Phare/Enlargement Information Centre as of April 2003 is done via a separate contract that can once be renewed in April 2004.

Activities in the candidate countries will be managed by the Commission’s Delegations in Romania and Bulgaria on the basis of work programmes approved by the Enlargement DG in Brussels.