COMMISSION DECISION

of 2005

on Establishing the Phare Information and Communication Programme for the remaining central European countries and Croatia 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 769/2004 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) This Financial Proposal covers the implementation of the communication strategy by the Commission Delegations in Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia and by the services managed centrally by the Commission in Brussels and amounts to € 4.5 million.

(3) 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 ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The programme described in the Annex to the present decision is hereby adopted.

1 OJ no. L375 of 23/12/1989, p. 11

**Article 2**

The maximum amount of Community assistance, under the present decision, shall be € 4.5 million to be financed in 2005 through Budget line **22.01.04.01** (former B7-030A).

Done at Brussels, […]

*For the Commission*

[…]

*Member of the Commission*
ANNEX

1. Identification

Beneficiary: Multi-country
Programme: Phare Information and Communication Programme
CRIS _ Number: 2005/017-068
Year 2005
Cost € 4.5 million
Implementing authority Operational services in Brussels as well as in the 3 Delegations of Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia authorised by sub-delegation
Expiry date: Contracting: 31 December 2005
Disbursement period : 31 December 2006
Sector code: 99810
Group 998
Budget line: 22.01.04.01
Programming Task Manager DG ELARG/B3 – Ludger Blasig
Implementing Task Manager DG ELARG/B3 – Alain Servantie/
EC Delegations in Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia

2. Summary

Enlargement of the European Union is an historic process, which continues to 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 former Phare beneficiary countries have already joined the Union on 1st May 2004. The two remaining candidates, Romania and Bulgaria will be in the final stage of preparation for accession in 2005, in order to achieve their objective of joining the Union in 2007.

Croatia, a new candidate country of the Western Balkans, will start accession negotiations in 2005.

Turkey, also an accession candidate, receives funding under a different budgetline (22.01.04.02, former B7-050A).

This Financial Proposal covers the implementation of the communication strategy by the Commission Delegations in Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia and by the services managed centrally by the Commission in Brussels. This amounts to € 4.5 million.

The activities which were committed under the Phare programme in 2004 for both the central part and those de-concentrated to the Delegations in Romania and Bulgaria will continue into 2005.

4. Objectives & Description

Objectives

The major part of the expenditure will be dedicated to the de-concentrated part of the communication strategy programme, implemented by the three 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;
- 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, Bulgaria and Croatia, 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 youth, media and the rural population

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

• strategic advice and research, including public opinion and media research for Commission services in Brussels and in the Delegations in Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia
• production of information products including the Enlargement Newsletter
  • 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, 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 notably in 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>In-country activities (managed from the 3 Delegations)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Central activities (managed from Brussels)</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In-country activities (managed from the 3 Delegations)

The implementation of the communication strategy is de-concentrated, 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 Romania and Bulgaria operate will expire respectively in October and November 2005. The funding for Croatia, under CARDS until end of 2004, will be covered through Phare from 1 January 2005. In the case of Croatia, the contractual framework will have to be put in place for the first time. Therefore, the precise breakdown of the € 3.8 million to be implemented via the individual delegations3 for a 12-month period following the end of their existing contracts will be made during the first half of the year 2005. It will be made on the basis of draft work programmes submitted by the Delegations concerned.

a) The part of the € 3.8 million for in-country activities will be allocated in two parts:

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegation</th>
<th>Sum allocated (€ million)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bucharest</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>67.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofia</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.60</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zagreb (CARDS until end of 2004)</td>
<td>0.217 (needs estimated for 2005 at about 0.80)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 The breakdown between the 2 Delegations in 2004 was as follows:
• 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

Therefore, the following provisional allocation will be granted to the three delegations representing 40% of the amount granted in 2004, except for Croatia, a new candidate country under Phare since 2005, where the new situation and especially the establishment of the contractual infrastructure require to refer to the needs assessment carried out for 2005. As indicated, the remainder of the €3.8 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>700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>320,000</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 and Internet) will be made on the basis of lessons learned and needs identified. Taking into account that the main framework contract expired in December 2004 bridging facilities will be used (existing framework contracts).

The funding of €0.7 million foresees to cover a.o. seminars, information and publication which 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 planned activities require the use of existing framework contracts for publications (paper and electronic), events, etc. The exact implementation mode has to be decided.

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.