COMMISSION DECISION
PH/2006451OF 22/03/2006

Establishing a global authorisation for a Phare multi-beneficiary programme on Participation of Bulgaria and Romania in Community committees in 2006,

The Commission of the European Communities,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 3906/1989 of 18 December 1989 on economic aid to certain countries of Central and Eastern Europe ¹, 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 Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania,
(2) The objective of this new programme is to facilitate the effective participation of the two acceding countries, Bulgaria and Romania in Committees and working parties. The funds will cover the costs of representatives or experts from these countries attending as active observers committee and working group meetings organised and chaired by the Commission,
(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 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 €3,461,400 to be financed through budget line 22.02.10 in 2006.

Done at Brussels,
For the Commission

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FINANCING PROPOSAL
for a global authorisation for a Phare multi-beneficiary programme on Participation of Bulgaria and Romania in Community committees in 2006

1. IDENTIFICATION

Country: Bulgaria and Romania
Programme: Participation of Bulgaria and Romania in Community Committees in 2006
CRIS number: 2006/017-896
Year: 2006
Phare contribution: €3,461,400
Implementing Authority: European Commission
Expiry Date: 31 December 2006 (contracting)
31 December 2006 (execution of contracts)
Sector: 99810
Group: L
Budget line: 22.02.10
Task Manager: Henk Visser (DG ELARG)

2. SUMMARY

The objective of this programme (as follow-up to the 2005 programme) is to facilitate active participation of the two acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania in Community committees and working groups as observers.

The funds authorised under this programme will cover the costs of the representatives or experts from these countries attending, as observers, committee and working group meetings organised by the Commission. These costs will be covered in accordance with the rules and practice in force for the participation of representatives or experts from Member States.

3. BACKGROUND

In the context of the accession negotiations, the Commission recommended in its Communication "Towards the Enlarged Union - Strategy Paper and Report of the European Commission on the progress towards accession by each of the candidate countries" of 9 October 2002 [COM(2002) 700 final] to reinforce the gradual integration of acceding countries into Community structures by giving these countries, after the signing of the Accession Treaty, the possibility to participate further, wherever legally possible, as observers in all committees set up by the "comitology" procedure and all other committees. To this end, allocations from Phare and pre-accession funds were foreseen to finance this participation.

The Council of Ministers - as in the past enlargements - has taken similar decisions as far as the relevant Council bodies and working groups are concerned. As regards the European Parliament, members of the Bulgarian and Romanian Parliaments will represent their countries as active observers as from the day following the signature of the Accession Treaty.

Furthermore, a specific information and consultation procedure was agreed with the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania at the Brussels European Council in December 2004 which is
annexed to the Final Act of the Accession Treaty in order to secure involvement of these countries prior to decisions taken by the institutions.

For 2005, €3 million had been reserved for this purpose. This 2006 programme is the follow-up of this 2005 programme and will cover the costs up to 31 December 2006.

The amounts have been adjusted in co-operation with the DGs concerned based upon their actual and expected consumption of the amounts in the 2005 programme. The experience has shown that the procedure regarding the allocation and disbursement of the funds is considered as being flexible enough to allow for an equal participation of these observers.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the programme is to facilitate acceding countries' representatives and experts to familiarise themselves with the Community decision-shaping process and working methods. This will allow the acceding countries to take part in the process of adopting new acquis during the period between the signature of the Accession Treaty and the date of accession.

Therefore, over the period from 25 April 2005 to 31 December 2006, the representatives or experts from these countries will be treated as if they were Member State representatives or experts, as far as the financial support of the costs of their participation is concerned.

Since this participation requires additional efforts of the two Phare acceding countries, the Commission recommends that Phare funds be allocated to support the corresponding costs.

5. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES FINANCED

This programme will fund the costs of the representatives and experts from these countries attending effectively, as observers, committee and working group meetings organised by the Commission and referred to in the list presented in Annex. The costs will be reimbursed on the basis of the same criteria which are currently applied for Member States (in general, only travel costs for one representative by acceding country; also accommodation costs or travel costs for representatives or experts where these provisions are in force for Member States participation).

The final beneficiaries of these funds will be officials and/or experts representing the administration or the social partners organisations in the Phare acceding countries which have signed the Accession Treaty.

These funds will not finance costs related to meetings of committees managing Community programmes in which the acceding countries participate, on the basis of Agreements, Association Council Decisions and Memoranda of Understanding, between the European Communities and these countries, laying down the terms and conditions of such participation.

6. COST
The committees and working groups concerned and the number of their meetings have been established on the basis of the previous experiences using the lists of committees and workings groups authorised by the Secretariat General of the Commission. By extrapolating the average travel costs per meeting regarding representatives of the current 25 Member States, it is estimated that for the 2006 budget € 3,461,400 is required to cover the costs for convocations for the period April - December 2006.

7. IMPLEMENTATION


For the purpose of this programme contracts will take the form of invitation letters for specific meetings as described under point 5 above.
These letters have to be sent before 31 December 2006.
The meetings in question have to take place before 31 December 2006.

The management of the programme will be sub-delegated by DG Enlargement to the Paymaster's Office (PMO). This Office will then pay out to representatives attending committee's meetings, like it does currently for Member States representatives. However, DG Enlargement may also sub-delegate the management of the amounts allocated to individual DGs if the DGs so request.