COMMISSION DECISION
C/2006/3237 Of 26/07/2006

concerning the financing of information and communication actions on the enlargement under the Prince programme

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities,

Having regard to the Commission Decision of 11 March 2004 relating to the Internal Rules on the Implementation of the General Budget of the European Communities, and in particular Article 15 thereof,

Whereas

(1) Article 49(2. c) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities provide that tasks resulting from the Commission’s prerogatives at institutional level, which is the case of PRINCE activities, may be implemented without a basic act;

(2) Article 75 of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 and Article 90 of Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation, as well as Article 15 of the Internal Rules on the financing decisions provide that any action involving expenditure from the budget must be determined by a financing decision;

(3) This Decision is considered to be a framework equivalent to a financing decision within the meaning of Article 75(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities;

(4) Following the accession of the 10 new Member States, the information and communication strategy on enlargement has been re-orientated in order to ensure broad public support to sustain the enlargement policy and to cope with the needs

1 OJ L 248 of 16 September 2002
2 OJ L 357 of 31 December 2002
to communicate better the objectives and challenges of the accession process and how the EU deals with the enlargement countries\(^4\).

(5) This strategy, as well as the enlargement Strategic Guidelines for the period 2005-2009\(^5\) are embodied into the framework of the overall Commission strategy, including the Action Plan to improve communicating Europe\(^5\) and the White Paper on European Communication Policy\(^6\).

(6) The purpose of this Decision is to authorize the financing of information and communication actions under the PRINCE programme by the budget line 22.04.01\(^7\);

(7) The funds are now available to finance those actions.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS :

\textit{Sole Article}

The information and communication activities under the 2006 Prince programme, as presented in the Annex, are hereby adopted for the amount of 7 million euros.

Done at Brussels, […….]

\textit{For the Commission}

[..........................]

\textit{Member of the Commission}

\footnotesize


\(^5\) COM (2005) 985 final, of 20 July 2005

\(^6\) COM (2006) 35 final, of 1 February 2006

\(^7\) OJ L 78 of 15 March 2006, II/1226-1227
ANNEX-FINANCING PROPOSAL

concerning the financing of information and communication actions on the enlargement under the 2006 Prince programme

1. Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficiary</th>
<th>EU-25, candidate and potential candidate countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>PRINCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIS number</td>
<td>2006/018133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>7 Mio €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing Authority</td>
<td>European Commission, DG ENLARGEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expiry Date contracting</td>
<td>max 31/12/2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Execution of contracts</td>
<td>31/12/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector Code</td>
<td>22011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget line</td>
<td>22.0401 PRINCE Information and Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Manager(s) for programming and implementation</td>
<td>Ludger BLASIG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. SUMMARY

Enlargement of the European Union is an historic process, which continues to affect the life of the citizens. It is therefore recognized as a priority in the context of the overall communication strategy of the Commission and the enlargement communication strategy\(^8\). The Commission is aware of the concerns of EU citizens about European integration in general and enlargement in particular. 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.

The information and communication actions on enlargement will be funded from a number of budget lines, including 22.04.01 (PRINCE).

3. STRATEGY

The “2005 Enlargement Strategy Paper” underlines that “broad public support is essential to sustain the enlargement policy” and that “the EU needs to communicate better the objectives and challenges of the accession process and how it deals with the countries.” Better communication about previous successful enlargements and their benefits is vital to ensure support for future accessions.

This strategy, as well as the enlargement Strategic Guidelines for the period 2005-2009 are embodied into the framework of the overall Commission strategy, including the 3 Cs (Compliance, Conditionality and Communication), the Action Plan to improve communicating Europe (SEC (2005) 985, the White Paper on European Communication Policy COM (2006) 35, as well as the Communication on Plan D (Democracy, Dialogue and Debate; COM (2005) 494). However, the main responsibility for communicating enlargement falls onto the Member States, as the Commission can only provide complementary actions, initiate or stimulate this communication. The need for “going local” through Representations in Member States is particularly important. The guidelines provide for actions at EU level.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

Governments of the Member States have a major responsibility in communicating EU enlargement. The Commission’s communication strategy on enlargement regarding the PRINCE programme will be effective only if its is implemented in co-operation and co-ordination with the communication action deployed by the Member States, as well as in synergy with other strategic partners (EU Institutions, regional and local administrations, civil society organisations, the media and other intermediary organisations…). The Commission will therefore encourage communication initiatives by and synergies with those partners, and complement their efforts by using a wide variety of means to communicate its enlargement policy and counter misconceptions and myths, in order to promote a better informed debate about both past and future enlargements. The Commission’s initiative on the dialogue between civil society in the EU and the candidate countries (COM (2005) 290 final) aims at improving mutual understanding and addressing citizen’s concerns about enlargement.

5. OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

The main objective is to provide the European public with relevant and consistent general information on the enlargement of the European Union, to enhance support among opinion leaders for the enlargement process as well as for the association and stabilisation process and to manage the Commission’s present information and communication policy related to enlargement in both candidate countries and Member States.

The PRINCE funded enlargement information and communication activities concerns essentially information to and communication with strategic partners, opinion leaders, media and other information multipliers/relays, and the general public, especially in the Member States. They aim to increase public awareness of the benefits and challenges of the overall enlargement process (accession process and Stabilisation and Association process) and to raise support for the EU enlargement policy as well as to promote the
visibility of the Commission’s activities in Member States regarding the candidate and potential candidate countries, and especially to enhance the social and cultural dialogue between the civil societies.

This also implies:

- a continuous assessment of the information needs in the countries most concerned (via Representations, Delegations, networks, and opinion polls (e.g. Eurobarometer);
- the recourse to competences outside the Commission to implement information and communication actions, including networks and think tanks;
- the organisation of information actions and events aimed at main target groups (general public, civil society, journalists and media representatives and other multipliers);
- the production of publications alongside with increased information via Intranet and Internet;
- the development of audiovisual material, including broadcasting and support to television productions and dissemination towards the general public.

The available budget of € 7 Mio under this budget line will be allocated to activities under existing framework contracts (Component 1) as well as for the first replenishment of framework contracts following the 2005 call for tender (Component 2).

**Component 1 – Complementary information and communication activities (2 € mio. - indicative)**

Activities carried out aim at ensuring that the Commission’s enlargement policy regarding the acceding and candidate countries as well as the potential candidate countries is well understood in the Member States most concerned. This implies the use of multipliers and focus on target groups as well as the general public in terms of their specific information needs. The programme aims at providing the necessary information, including through training of journalists, information on websites, strategic advice on tools and information materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown</th>
<th>Indicative Budget</th>
<th>Implementation measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training of journalists + travels</td>
<td>EUR 600 000</td>
<td>Use of existing framework contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of public opinion through opinion polls, surveys and studies</td>
<td>EUR 450 000</td>
<td>Idem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Maintenance of website, publication and translations</td>
<td>EUR 400 000</td>
<td>Idem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility of communication strategy, tools, conferences, events</td>
<td>EUR 350 000</td>
<td>Idem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation, impact</td>
<td>EUR 200 000</td>
<td>Idem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Component 2 - Information and communication activities (5 € mio. – indicative)**
Activities carried out aim at ensuring that the Commission’s enlargement policy correspond to new and additional requirements regarding the implementation of the reorientated information and communication strategy in the next enlargement period. The funding foreseen aims at replenishing the specific contracts on the basis of initial framework contracts infrastructure to enable the recourse to current information strategies, tools and instruments, corresponding to new or changing needs or demands, notably in relation to the production of audiovisual products and media relations, for which there is an increasing demand.

Appropriations will be used to fund activities through the new ELARG framework contract(s), for which the tender is almost completed, renewable annually, i.e. on information and communication actions (Lot 1), and audio-visual productions and media relations (Lot 2).

The framework contracts with service providers for the two lots provide support to the establishment and implementation of the Commissions enlargement policy, including strategic advice, needs assessment, as well as co-ordination and implementation of actions; and information on the EU’s objectives and activities in the enlargement process on the one hand, as well as conception and production of audio-visual material destined to broadcasters and support to activities in the framework of media relations, on the other hand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown</th>
<th>Indicative budget</th>
<th>Implementing measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot 1: Implementation of information and communication strategy</td>
<td>EUR 3 000 000</td>
<td>Specific contracts under ELARG Framework contract(s) annually renewable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 2: Audiovisual productions as well as multilingual broadcasting</td>
<td>EUR 2 000 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **BUDGET**

| TOTAL                                       | EUR 7 000 000     |

7. **IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

a) **Financial and project management**


Component 1 of the programme will be implemented through existing framework contracts of different Commission services, including DG TREN, DG PRESS, OPOCE, SCIC, ADMIN-DI, PMO, i.e.
Component 2 will be implemented by the European Commission through framework contract(s) of DG ELARG in the field of communication tools (LOT 1) or specifically on audio-visual products (LOT 2).

b) Contracting and execution deadline

contracting deadline:

max 31/12/2007

Execution deadline: 31/12/2009

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Commission will monitor the implementation of the Programme on the basis of reports from the selected contractors and independent assessments.

As provided for in the Implementing Rules of the above-mentioned Financial Regulation, the Commission Services shall ensure that this programme will be subject to interim and/or ex-post evaluations.

9. Audit, Financial Control, Anti-Fraud Measures, Preventive and Corrective Actions

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) N° 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.

Irregularity shall mean any infringement of the Financing Proposal, resulting contracts or Community legislation 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.

The procedures foreseen in Commission Regulation N°1681/1994 of 11 July 1994 on the communication in case of irregularities and the putting in place of a system to administrate the information in this field shall apply.

The applicability of the Financial Regulation 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.

The programme will take into account lessons learnt particularly those findings of the general assessment report on the impact of the Commission’s information and communication strategy carried out in 2004.

10. Visibility and Publicity

In implementing this Programme, the Commission shall provide for the maximum visibility of EU actions in the beneficiary countries.