



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Impact Assessment Board

Brussels,
D(2011)

Opinion

Title **DG COMM - Impact assessment on the "Citizens for Europe"
Programme 2014-2020**
(draft version of 24 August 2011)

(A) Context

The Commission adopted an over-arching proposal for the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) on 29 June 2011, fixing high-level budget allocations and some key implementation choices. A series of follow-up proposals to provide a legal basis for sectoral spending programmes and to establish their specific budgetary arrangements are currently being finalised. This Impact Assessment report will accompany one such proposal relating to the "Citizens for Europe" programme ("Programme") for the 2014-2020 period. The Programme aims to promote active European citizenship and the total funds allocated to it for the period 2014-2020 are €203 million.

The IAB has focused on the policy choices not yet fixed in the MFF package.

(B) Overall assessment

The report needs to be significantly improved in several important aspects. The problem analysis should provide a better assessment of the performance of the current Programme, to indicate the actions and processes having produced the most effective results and those falling below expectations. In doing this, the evaluation results and the stakeholders' different views should be better integrated into the analysis. The objectives should be more specific and clearly linked to the identified problems. On that basis the policy options should consider alternative solutions on how the content and architecture of the future Programme could be significantly improved. The report should also discuss how the impacts of the Programme could be better measured.

Unless considerable improvements are made to address the recommendations above, the IA report cannot be considered to provide the evidence base to support decision-making that is normally expected from impact assessments.

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

(1) Provide a more complete and focussed problem analysis and develop the baseline scenario. Given the complex and deep-rooted nature of the gap between the EU institutions and the citizens, which clearly cannot be effectively addressed by communication means alone, the report should focus from the outset on concrete issues related to the financial instrument rather than to the policy. In order to do so, the need for and value added of the Citizens Programme should be clearly identified. Based on the evaluation results and stakeholder feedback, the problem definition should provide a thorough assessment of the performance of the current Programme, e.g. as regards targeting, focus, scope, visibility or geographical coverage. The report should indicate which actions/elements of the Programme have been most effective and created a high EU value added, and which have not, e.g. due to ineffective targeting or insufficient involvement of actors in Member States. It should also analyse the efficiency of the administrative and management arrangements of the Programme. The baseline scenario should provide a more comprehensive overview of other EU or Member States initiatives supporting citizens' participation (e.g. the European Citizens' Initiative or stakeholder consultations, but also financing programmes in the areas of employment, equal opportunities, youth, justice or fundamental rights). On that basis the report should more clearly indicate the gaps to be filled by the Citizens Programme.

(2) Be more specific about the objectives. The report should set more concrete *specific objectives*, which reflect the (revised and focused) problem areas and which would enable the performance of the Programme measures to be assessed in more concrete terms. In addition to specific objectives, the report should develop *operational objectives* indicating the necessary changes to the structure and functioning of the Programme.

(3) Design and assess substantive policy options. Currently the report considers three options – 'continuation of Programme', 'no Programme', 'revamped Programme' - with the latter being the preferred option. However, it should also analyse 'how' the Programme should be 'revamped', i.e. discuss alternatives in terms of policy prioritisation, content, design and delivery instruments. Coupled with a strengthened problem definition and more focussed objectives, as suggested above, this should help to establish a clear intervention logic. The implementation arrangements and delivery mechanisms of the new Programme should be presented in more detail, including ways to ensure participation of all target groups and possibilities to create administrative cost savings. The assessment should include an analysis of the wider impacts of the Programme by discussing how the new architecture would lead to achieving more effective results.

(4) Clarify evaluation arrangements and define more robust progress indicators. The report should discuss in more detail the issues with measuring the impacts of the Programme, as indicated by stakeholders and the evaluation report, and analyse how to define much more robust impact indicators.

Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG and are expected to be incorporated in the final version of the impact assessment report.

(D) Procedure and presentation

The report should clarify upfront the choices already made in the MFF June package. The different stakeholder views should be reflected throughout the report in the sections of problems, objectives, options and analysis. The executive summary should follow more closely the structure of the main report and provide a better overview of the essential elements of the Programme.

(E) IAB scrutiny process	
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Reference number	2011/COM/001
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External expertise used	No
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Date of IAB meeting	21 September 2011
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