

COMMISSION DECISION

C (2008) 4570

of 27 August 2008

adopting an information and communication programme under the IPA -Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2008,

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)¹, and in particular Article 14(2)(a) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 lays down the objectives and main principles for pre-accession assistance to candidate and potential candidate countries.
- (2) In accordance with Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006, the assistance should be provided through multi-annual or annual programmes, which can be established by country and by component, or, as appropriate, by group of countries or by theme. These programmes should be drawn up in accordance with the general policy framework referred to in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 and the relevant multi-annual indicative planning document referred to in Article 6 of that Regulation.
- (3) The Council established for all candidate and potential candidate countries an Accession Partnership or a European Partnership. The Commission has adopted on 29.05.2007 a Multi-Beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2007 - 2009 which presents indicative allocations for the main priorities for pre-accession assistance to all countries concerned².
- (4) Therefore, the Information and Communication Programme under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2008 aims at implementing the Commission communication on the Western Balkans³ by providing assistance for improving the understanding in the candidate and potential candidate countries of the challenges and benefits of European Integration, increasing awareness in those countries on the necessary reforms to be undertaken as a condition for EU membership, as well as promoting civil society development and dialogue that generates public support to the Enlargement process.

¹ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 82.

² Commission Decision C (2007/2205 of 29/05/2007.

³ COM(2008)127 of 5 March 2008.

- (5) This decision meets the requirements of Article 90 of Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation No 1605/2002⁴ (hereafter: “Implementing Rules”) and constitutes thus a financing decision within the meaning of Article 75 of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities⁵ (hereafter: “Financial Regulation”);
- (6) The measures provided for by this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the IPA Committee,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The Information and Communication Programme under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2008, as set out in the Annex, is hereby adopted.

This programme shall be implemented by centralised management.

Article 2

The maximum amount of Community contribution shall be **EUR 7.3 million**, to be financed through *Article 22.04.02* of the general budget of the European Communities for 2008.

Done at Brussels, [...]

For the Commission

[...]

Member of the Commission

⁴ OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p. 1 Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 478/2007 (OJ L 111, 28.4.2007, p. 13).

⁵ OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006 (OJ L 390, 30.12.2006, p.1) and by Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1525/2007 of 17 December 2007 (OJ L 343, 27.12.2007, p.9) .

ANNEX

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME

1. IDENTIFICATION

Beneficiary	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo (as defined under UNSCR 1244), Turkey
CRIS number	2008/019-911
Year	2008
Cost	€ 7.3 million
Implementing Authority	European Commission
Final date for concluding the financing agreements	The programme is implemented without Financing Agreements
Final dates for contracting	30 November 2009
Final dates for execution	30 November 2011
Sector Code	99810
Budget line(s) concerned	22.04.02: information and communication
Programming Task Manager	Information and Communication Unit (DG Enlargement)
Implementation Task Manager	Information and Communication Unit(DG Enlargement) for activities implemented by EC central services and EC Delegations for each respective country.

2. PRIORITY AXES / (MEASURES) / PROJECTS

2.1. Priority axes

This programme comes under priority axe 4 – information and communication.

The current EU enlargement agenda covers the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey. The EU's enlargement strategy is based on consolidation, conditionality and communication, combined with the EU's capacity to integrate new members¹. It is essential to ensure public support for enlargement. In particular, in the candidate and potential candidate countries it is important to raise awareness for the EU's commitment to their European perspective, according to the progress made regarding the reforms to be implemented. The governments in

¹ Enlargement strategy and main Challenges 2007 – 2008, COM(2007)663 of 6 November 2007.
Presidency conclusions of the Brussels European Council (14/15 December 2006) (16879/1/06 Rev 1).

the candidate and potential candidate countries have the responsibility to explain to the citizens the challenges and the benefits of European integration, and to inform them about the concrete results and benefits already achieved through the pre- accession process. The European Commission will support and complement their communication efforts.

2.2. Description of projects grouped per priority axis

This financing proposal covers the implementation of the communication strategy by the European Commission Delegations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, the EC Liaison Office in Kosovo and by the central services of the Commission in Brussels.

The budget amounting to 7.3 million € will be distributed between these different entities for the implementation of information and communication activities whose specific objectives are to:

- Emphasise the EU 's commitment to the European perspective of the candidate and potential candidate countries
- Improve understanding in the beneficiaries countries of the process towards European integration : conditions for progress of each country and progress toward the EU depends on the pace of reforms in each country
- Increase knowledge of the benefits for the citizens at the different stages of the integration process
- Increase general understanding of the EU, its policies and programmes
- Promote the concrete results of EU assistance, designed to support the candidate and potential candidate countries in their efforts and progress towards the objective of the EU membership
- Support the governments of these countries in their communication efforts on EU issues
- Promote civil society development and dialogue
- Reinforce the awareness of regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe, its positive results and its complementarity with European integration.

On the basis of these objectives, the EC Delegations and the Liaison Office will develop specific communication goals, according to EU policy for the country and at regional level, and more precisely adapted to the political situation and to its perception by the different audiences. Each EC Delegation will develop key messages according to the information needs of specific audiences. Delegations will also be attentive to cooperate with multipliers in order to maximise the impact of Communication action. Regular media monitoring, opinion polls and studies provide necessary information on the impact of the communication activities implemented and on the adaptation to be done to respond to the needs.

The information and communication activities implemented by the central services of the Commission in Brussels will generally be of a multi-beneficiary dimension. In some cases

these activities may include participation of Member States in order to promote exchanges as well as mutual knowledge and understanding and reinforce the impact of the activity.

The information and communication programme, to be implemented by EC Central services and EC Delegations, will include a full range of information activities:

- Various information and communication products : printed, on line, audiovisual productions, TV programmes
- Web site development and maintenance
- EU Information centres (and assimilated as Information Relays and Info points) setting up and management: this activity comprises the production of information and communication products, the organisation of various events, animation of information desks and provision of PC equipment at the disposal of the general public in a space selected for its accessibility. The implementation of these projects requires a location open to the public and a services contract for the management of the information centre, including the production and organisation of various activities. These centres once well known by the public as EU Information centres should remain at the same place and must not be changed following a change of contractor managing the EU Information centre. For this reason operating costs required by the nature of the activity - rent of the premises, running costs and staff requirements - are funded by the programme, according to article 66(3) of the Commission regulation (EC) N° 718/2007 of 12 June 2007 implementing Council Regulation (EC) N° 1085/2006 establishing an instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA). EU information centres which have been set up in the previous years were funded by CARDS, PHARE and /or IPA 2007 budgets. The existing contracts (services and rent contracts) will be renewed according to the initial terms of the contracts. When necessary new procedures will be launched for the management of the existing EU Information Centres (and assimilated) and for the implementation of new information centres. The amount allocated to the rental of premises of EU information centres is based on market prices in the country and town concerned.
- Media relations : seminars, visits, conferences, technical support (including all related costs)
- Organisation and management of events, conferences with strategic partners, including related activities and expenses.
- Development and follow up of networks with communication actors (including all related costs)
- Activities in support of the information and communication strategy : advisory services, opinion polls, media monitoring, studies, monitoring and evaluation of communication programmes
- Support to the EU i (previously called EDC, European Documentation Centre) set up in the countries of the region (eg provision of equipment and information material – transport and dispatching costs included – coordination and monitoring of the different EU i).

These activities will be implemented by the EC Delegations and by Central services of the EC in Brussels by means of:

- **Procurement**

Services contracts, indicative number 4, for a global indicative amount of € 1.8 Million, procedures scheduled to be launched during the second semester 2008 (3) and during the first semester 2009 (1).

- **Grants**

Indicative number 2, for a global indicative amount of 300 000 €, procedures planned to be launched during the second semester 2008.

The main objective is to raise awareness and inform the local audiences about the process of EU accession.

The calls for proposals will be launched by the EC Delegations:

- the EC Delegation in Croatia will launch a call for proposal, intended to NGOs, with a rate of co-financing by IPA budget of 90 %, in order to allow participation of small NGOs;
- the EC Delegation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will launch a call for proposal, aiming at co-financing television audiovisual production, with a maximum rate of co-financing by IPA budget of 70%, as it is estimated that the production companies have the resources to fund the remaining 30 % of the cost of the projects.

The essential selection and award criteria for the award of grants are laid down in the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions.

- **Negotiated procedures:**

Approximately 4 (1 during the second semester 2008 and 3 in 2009), for a global indicative amount of € 1.5 Million, on the basis of provisions of article 242 - inter alia under 1. b), 1. d) and 1. f) - of the Implementing Rules to the Financial Regulation. They will be launched by :

the EC Delegation in Serbia for the production of a TV programme entitled "Hello Europe Quiz" to be broadcasted by the Serbian Public Service broadcaster RTS (100 000 €) and for the production and distribution of video news clips with news agency (15 000 €) ;

the EC delegation in Turkey for the production and broadcasting of EU related programmes by the State Public Broadcaster TRT (600 000 €) and for the development of Information Relay network in Chambers of Commerce and Industry (800 000 €).

The renewing of contracts are in accordance with article 242.1c) and 242.2b) of the Implementing rules to the Financial Regulation.

- **Extension of existing** contracts funded by previous information and communication programmes under CARDS, Phare and IPA, in conformity with the original terms of reference which foresaw renewal of the contracts on a yearly basis, according to the maximum number of years for the contract foreseen

- **Specific contracts based on existing framework contracts**

- **Competitive negotiated procedures**

According to article 241 (1)(b) of the implementing rules to the Financial regulation: approximately 13, for an indicative global amount of 800 000 €

- **Single tenders:** approximately 37 for an indicative amount of 300 000 €. The EC Delegation in Albania plans to launch 2 single tenders – web site and promotional material – for an approximate amount of 20 000 €. The EC Delegation in Bosnia and Herzegovina plans to launch approximately 34 single tenders – organisation of conferences and seminars, cultural events, Europe Day, printing of publications and promotional material, information activities to be implemented by the EU Information Centres, ad hoc information activities – for an indicative amount of 225 000 €. The EC Delegation in Serbia foresees the launch of single tenders to implement information activities according to events, for an amount of 10 000 €.

2.3. Overview of past and on going assistance including lessons learned

In 2006, the information and communication programmes for the candidate and potential candidate countries were funded both by CARDS and PHARE programmes. The deadline for commitment of these funds was December 2007.

Since 2007, the information and communication programme has been funded by IPA and amounted to € 7 million. The budget was allocated to the EC Delegations and EC Liaison Office for implementation of information programmes in the candidate and potential candidate countries and to EC Central services in Brussels, for the implementation of activities including a regional dimension. The funds were made available in July 2007 and are in the process of being committed, the deadline for commitment being fixed at November 2008.

The strategic communication guidance provided by Commission central services to the EC Delegations and the EC liaison Office, and the exchange of best practices and regional synergies among them, have continued to develop and contributed to the improvement of the information and communication activities implemented and under preparation. In particular, the setting up of Information Centres, which promote and facilitate direct relations with the citizens on various EU' issues is a project which is successful and tends to be developed.

Moreover, since September 2007, EC Delegations have started to send to EC Central services quarterly activity reports, which are then evaluated and discussed at the regular meetings (at least bi-annual meetings) with a view to coordinate activities and to exchange best practices.

At regional level support continued to be provided to journalists through provision of technical support to WB TV journalists correspondents in Brussels of WB TV channels, seminars organized in Brussels and in Strasbourg, for journalists from national media on a specific topic and for journalists from regional and specific media on more general EU policy issues. In the future, it is planned to diversify the tools to support the media. Future activities will include exchange with media of the Member States and allow for practical experiences and exchanges on specific themes. Taking into account the recommendations of the external evaluation regarding the organisation of seminars for journalists and the technical support provided to TV correspondents in Brussels of Western Balkans TV channels, the possibility to organise some seminars for journalists in the candidate and potential candidate countries themselves will be explored, with the objective to reach a larger group of journalists.

In 2006 and 2007, conferences were organized to promote communication networks, in particular with representatives of national authorities. To develop ownership of the initiatives and to support the national governments in their efforts of communication about EU enlargement policy, a follow up should be given in 2008.

The organisation of conference(s) aiming at promoting civil society network is also planned.

In the next years, the activities will continue to be implemented taking into account the objectives of the Communication strategy related to Enlargement policy.

2.4. Benchmarks

	N		N+1 (cumulative)	
	EU	NF	EU	NF
Number of tenders launched	3	NA	4	NA
Number of calls for proposals launched	2	NA	2	NA
Number of competitive negotiated procedures	10	NA	13	NA
Number of negotiated procedures	1	NA	4	NA
Single tenders	15	NA	37	
Contracting Rate (%)	37 %		64,38 %	

The remaining 35,62 % correspond to commitments for extension of existing contracts (24,66%) and for the financing of the specific contracts (10,96 %).

3. BUDGET (AMOUNTS IN €)

Allocation 2008 IPA Budget line 22 04 02 : 7.3 million €.

3.1. Indicative budget table

The budget will be distributed as follows:

I - In country/territory activities	6 450 000
EC Delegation in Albania	300 000
EC Delegation in Bosnia and Herzegovina	350 000
EC Delegation in Croatia	1 200 000
EC Delegation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	500 000
EC Delegation in Montenegro	50 000
EC Delegation in Serbia	450 000
EC Liaison Office in Kosovo	100 000
EC Delegation in Turkey	3 500 000
II - Central activities managed by EC in Brussels	850 000

TOTAL**7 300 000**

The breakdown of funds available for distribution between the EC Delegations, the EC Liaison Office and the EC central services takes into consideration the following elements : communication needs in the candidate and potential candidate countries, policy priorities as reflected in the allocations of funds between countries (for the year 2008) as stated in the Multi-annual indicative financial framework, the capacity of the EC Delegations and EC Liaison Office to manage and implement the information budget to be allocated and the necessity to also implement activities at a regional level.

	EU – IPA assistance				Total co-financing NA no co-financing of the programme		Total IPA no co-financing of the programme	
	<i>Institution Building</i>	<i>Investment NA</i>	<i>Total in € NA</i>	<i>Total in % NA</i>	<i>€ NA</i>	<i>(%) NA</i>	<i>€</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Priority axis 1 Administration (in the MIPD area of intervention 11) Information and Communication								
Project 1 : Activities implemented by EC central services							850 000	11.6
Support to media	350 000							
Organisation of events	350 000							
Production and dissemination of various information products	150 000							
Project 2 : Activities implemented by the EC delegations and EC Liaison Office							6 450 000	88.4
Strategy and Support	600 000							
Production and dissemination of various information products	2 700 000							
Support to media	1 100 000							
Organisation of events	2 050 000							
TOTAL	7 300 000	NA	NA				7 300 000	100

3.2. Principle of co-financing applying to the projects funded under the programme

The Community contribution, which represents 100% of the budget allocated to this programme, in accordance with article 67(3) of Commission Regulation (EC) 718/2007 of 12 June 2007² has been calculated in relation to the eligible expenditure, which in the case of centralized management is based on the total expenditure.

This programme is implemented solely by the European Commission, EC Delegations and Liaison Office and central services, without signature of agreement with the beneficiary countries.

In the case of individual grants, final beneficiaries should contribute with a minimum of either 10% or 30 % of the total eligible costs of the actions (as detailed under 2.2).

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Method of implementation

The programme will be implemented on a centralised basis by the European Commission in accordance with Article 53a of the Financial Regulation³ and the corresponding provisions of the Implementing Rules⁴.

The information and communication programme will be implemented by central services of the Commission in Brussels, mainly for activities with a multi-beneficiary dimension, and by the EC Delegations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and by the EC Liaison Office in Kosovo. The EC Delegations and the EC Liaison Office will implement information activities on the basis of an information programme approved by the DG Enlargement.

4.2. General rules for procurement and grant award procedures

Procurement shall follow the provisions of Part Two, Title IV of the Financial Regulation and Part Two, Title III, Chapter 3 of its Implementing Rules as well as the rules and procedures for service, supply and works contracts financed from the general budget of the European Communities for the purposes of cooperation with third countries adopted by the Commission on 24 May 2007 [C(2007)2034].

Grant award procedures shall follow the provisions of Part One, Title VI of the Financial Regulation and Part One, Title VI of its Implementing Rules.

The Commission shall also use the procedural guidelines and standard templates and models facilitating the application of the above rules provided for in the "Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions" ("Practical Guide") as published on the EuropeAid website⁵ at the date of the initiation of the procurement or grant award procedure.

² OJ L 170, 29.6.2007, p.1.

³ See footnote 5 *supra*.

⁴ See footnote 4 *supra*.

⁵ current address: http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/tender/gestion/index_en.htm

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.1. Monitoring

The Commission may undertake any actions it deems necessary to monitor the programmes concerned

5.2. Evaluation

Programmes shall be subject to ex ante evaluations, as well as interim and, where relevant, ex post evaluations in accordance with Articles 57 and 82 of IPA Implementing Regulation⁶, with the aim of improving the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the assistance from Community funds and the strategy and implementation of the programmes.

The results of ex ante and interim evaluation shall be taken into account in the programming and implementation cycle.

The Commission may also carry out strategic evaluations.

6. AUDIT, FINANCIAL CONTROL AND ANTI-FRAUD MEASURES

The accounts and operations of all parties involved in the implementation of this programme, as well as all contracts and agreements implementing this programme, are subject to, on the one hand, the supervision and financial control by the Commission (including the European Anti-Fraud Office), which may carry out checks at its discretion, either by itself or through an outside auditor and, on the other hand, audits by the European Court of Auditors. This includes measures such as ex-ante verification of tendering and contracting carried out by the Delegation in the Beneficiary Country.

In order to ensure the efficient protection of the financial interests of the Community, the Commission (including the European Anti-Fraud Office) may conduct on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with the procedures foreseen in Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) 2185/96⁷.

The controls and audits described above are applicable to all contractors, subcontractors and grant beneficiaries who have received Community funds.

7. LIMITED CHANGES

Limited changes in the implementation of this programme affecting essential elements listed under Article 90 of the Implementing Rules to the Financial Regulation, which are of an indicative nature⁸, may be undertaken by the authorising officer by delegation (AOD), or by the authorising officer by sub-delegation (AOSD), in line with the delegation of powers

⁶ Commission Regulation (EC) No 718/2007 of 12 June 2007 (*OJ L 170, 29.6.2007, p. 1.*)

⁷ OJ L 292; 15.11.1996; p. 2

⁸ These essential elements of an indicative nature are, for grants, the indicative amount of the call for proposals and, for procurement, the indicative number and type of contracts envisaged and the indicative time frame for launching the procurement procedures.

conferred upon him by the AOD, in accordance with the principles of sound financial management without an amending financing decision being necessary.