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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

**on the impact of the European Parliament and Council Decisions modifying the legal
bases of the European Programmes in the areas of Lifelong Learning, Culture, Youth
and Citizenship**

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1. INTRODUCTION

On 16 December 2008, the European Parliament and the Council adopted four decisions amending the legal bases of the programmes in the area of lifelong learning, culture, youth and citizenship¹.

These decisions removed from the advisory procedure described in Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 certain selection decisions taken by the Commission for the award of grants within those programmes. The purpose was to simplify the procedures and shorten the time required for making decisions affecting directly the beneficiaries, in the interests of a quicker and more efficient implementation of the programmes.

Under the original legal bases, it had been compulsory to consult within restrictive delays the European Parliament and the programme committees before the Commission could make the formal award decisions. Sometimes recess periods would add to the scrutiny periods, causing further delays in the implementation.

With the entry into force of the amending decisions, the advisory procedure has been replaced by an information procedure. The Commission has now the obligation to inform the European Parliament and the programme committees within two working days of the selection decisions it has taken. The information needs to include a description and an analysis of the applications received, a description of the assessment and of the selection procedure, and lists of both the projects proposed for funding and those rejected.

The Commission is required by the amending decisions to report to the European Parliament and the Council on their impact within 18 months of their coming into force.

In addition to these decisions, the European Parliament and the Council also adopted on 16 December 2008 Decision n°1298/2008/EC establishing the Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 action programme, which gives the Commission the same obligation to inform within two

¹ Decision n°1357/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 amending Decision n°1720/2006/EC establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning
Decision n°1352/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 amending Decision n°1855/2006/EC establishing the Culture programme (2007 to 2013)
Decision n°1349/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 amending Decision n°1719/2006/EC establishing the 'Youth in Action' programme for the period 2007 to 2013
Decision n°1358/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 amending Decision n°1904/2006/EC establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme 'Europe for Citizens' to promote active European citizenship

working days the European Parliament and the programme committee of the selection decisions it has taken.

Although the decision establishing the Erasmus Mundus action programme does not contain a reporting requirement, the Commission has decided, in the interest of transparency, to include in this report the impact of the new information procedure on the implementation of this programme as well. In this way, a single report covers the impact of all five decisions.

Methodology

This report presents for each programme the information procedure that was implemented in 2009 and compares it with the advisory procedure that was previously applied. The report considers the impact of the new information procedure on the management of grants, in particular in terms of the time taken by the selection procedure, from the submission deadline to the notification of beneficiaries. The report also takes into account the impact on the administrative burden and the reactions or complaints about the information transmitted or the information procedure itself.

2. THE SELECTION DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER THE NEW INFORMATION PROCEDURE

The information procedure was applied in 30 selection decisions in 2009, for 27 of them a comparison can be made with decisions taken under the advisory procedure, as shown in the tables in the annex².

Seven selection decisions were made in 2009 within the **Lifelong Learning programme**. Of these, five are fully comparable with those made in 2007 and 2008. No comparison is possible for the grants awarded in the framework of the Transversal program Key Activity 1 (ECET) since the first selection was held in 2009 already under the new procedure, while grants awarded to develop and implement the European Qualification Framework can only be compared with those awarded in 2008 (no selection was held in 2007).

In the **Culture programme** the new information procedure was applied in 2009 to selections for four actions, which can be compared with those taken in 2008 and in 2006³ under the previous Culture programme. No selection decisions were taken through the advisory procedure in 2007.

For the **Youth in Action Programme** a total of seven selection processes took place in 2009. There are no comparable data for the grants awarded in the framework of Action 4.6 "Partnerships" because the first selection was made in 2009. Grants awarded for Action 4.4 "Projects encouraging creativity and innovation in the youth sector" can only be compared to those awarded in 2007 (there was no selection procedure in 2008), while those awarded for Action 4.1 "Support for bodies active at European level in the field of youth" and for the first centralised selection round can only be compared to 2008, because the consultation procedure was not applied to those awarded in 2007.

² Tables are included in the annex for the Lifelong Learning, Culture, Youth in Action; Europe for Citizens and Erasmus Mundus Programmes.

³ Under the previous programme: Decision No [508/2000/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 February 2000 establishing the Culture 2000 programme

The new information procedure was also applied in 2009 to ten actions of the **Europe for Citizens programme** (concerning the action 1.1 Town Twinning – Phase 2 and the action 2.7 Support to projects initiated by civil society organisations, no comitology procedure was applied in 2007, making a comparison impossible) and to the grants awarded for the **Erasmus Mundus** post-graduate scholarships and programmes. ; In the case of the latter the only possible comparison is with 2007 since no selection was held in 2008 due to the transition to the new programme.

3. THE IMPACT OF THE NEW INFORMATION PROCEDURE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMMES

For all programmes, the time taken for the selection process from the submission deadline to the adoption of the grant award-decision and the notification of the beneficiaries has been considerably shortened.

In addition, it should be noted that for all programmes - except Erasmus Mundus - and prior to the entry into force of the information procedure, a shortened right of scrutiny had been agreed with the European Parliament for selection decisions falling under the advisory procedure in the second half of 2008. In no case, however, were the gains under the shortened right of scrutiny greater than the ones resulting from the introduction of the information procedure.

As for the **Lifelong Learning programme**, in 2009 grant award decisions in the actions that can be compared were notified to the beneficiaries on average 123 days after the submission deadline, with an average gain was of 37 days in comparison to 2008 and of 32 in comparison to 2007. In one case (Leonardo de Vinci – Transfer of Innovation), the period in 2009 was slightly longer than in 2008 due to the need to examine thoroughly a specific case that involved the protection of the financial interests of the EU.

In the case of the **Culture programme**, notification in 2009 occurred on average 152 days after the submission deadline, with an average gain of 54.5 days when in comparison to 2008 and of 117 in comparison to 2007.

Within the **Youth in Action** programme, the average time gain was of more than 40 days compared to 2008 and of more than 75 in comparison with 2007. Grant-award decisions and the subsequent notification of beneficiaries occurred at the latest 3.5 months after the submission deadline, whereas under the consultation procedure, the average selection time was of 5.5 months.

In the case of the **Europe for Citizens** programme the gain was, on average, of 22 days compared to 2008 and 12 days compared to 2007. However, two actions present an exception: no time was saved for actions 1.4 and 1.5 between 2009 and 2008. These projects ("Citizens' projects and "Support measures") are more complex and larger in scale than other more traditional projects such as town twinning. However, this had no impact on beneficiaries as they were notified of the result of the selection in time for the projects to start as scheduled.

For the **Erasmus Mundus** scholarships, the reduction was of 27 days in comparison with the 2007 scholarships and of 10 in comparison with 2008. For the joint programmes the reduction was of 74 days, despite the fact that 2009 was also the first year in which, in addition to the Masters' courses, PhDs were funded by the programme. In all cases the information to the

European Parliament and programme committees was provided within the set delay of two working days. The amount of information transmitted has not changed compared to the comitology procedure, but the removal of the formalities associated with the advisory procedure, concerning for example the launch of written procedures and the upload in the registry, has resulted nonetheless in a significant reduction of the administrative burden.

4. CONCLUSION

The information procedure replacing the formal advisory procedure under the Comitology Decision has been successfully implemented in all five programmes. All the necessary information required in the decisions has been systematically transmitted by the Commission to the European Parliament and the programme committees within the compulsory deadline of two working days.

The Commission has not received any reactions or complaints from the European Parliament or the programme committees on the information transmitted or on the procedure itself. Several beneficiaries have instead expressed their satisfaction with the reduced time taken for selection decisions as a result.

Regarding the impact of the decisions on the management of the programmes and the grants awarded to beneficiaries, the substantial shortening of the delays has increased the efficiency of the programmes by enabling the applicants to be informed on the selection decisions further in advance, with positive effects on the sustainability of the partnerships implementing the projects, and therefore on the quality of the projects themselves. For all programmes, the new procedure has enabled the increased effectiveness of project management.

It can therefore be concluded that the new information procedure meets the principle of simplicity and proximity that must guide the implementation of the programmes in the interest of European citizens.

In that light, the Commission is committed to continue increasing the efficiency of the management of its programmes by shortening the process leading to the selection decisions, in particular by reducing as much as possible the time taken for the evaluation of applications.

ANNEX

Lifelong Learning Programme					
Selection Decisions	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2007	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2008	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2009	Difference 2009-2008	Difference 2009-2007
Grants awarded in the framework of the Jean Monnet programme (Key activity 3: European associations active at European level in the field of education and training) of the action programme in the field of lifelong learning	147	171	105	66	42
Grants awarded in the framework of the Jean Monnet programme (Key Activity 1) of the action programme in the field of lifelong learning	147	171	136	35	11
Grants awarded in the framework of the Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig sub-programmes of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2009	175	159	131	28	44
Grants awarded in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci - Transfer of Innovation of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2009	166	140	152	-12	14
Grants awarded in the framework of the Transversal Programme/Key activities of the Lifelong Learning Programme	177	214	128	86	49
Grants awarded for Actions to develop and implement the European Qualifications Framework – EQF	/	113	90	23	/
Grants awarded in the framework of the Transversal Programme Key Activity 1 ("Support for European Cooperation in Education and Training – ECET") of the Lifelong Learning Programme.	/	/	94	/	/

Culture Programme					
Selection Decisions	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2006	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2008	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2009	Difference 2009-2008	Difference 2009-2007
Support for bodies active at European level in the field of Culture - Annual operating grants- Strand 2	269	218	129	89	140
Cooperation projects - Strand 1.2.1	269	268	217	51	52
Literary translations - Strand 1.2.2	269	219	166	53	103
Third countries - Strand 1.3.3	269	121	96	25	173

Youth in Action Programme					
Selection Decisions	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2007	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2008	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2009	Difference 2009-2008	Difference 2009-2007
Action 4,1 - Support to NGOs	/	195	106	89	/
Round 1 - Programme Guide	/	145	108	37	/
Round 2 - Programme Guide	/	164	109	55	/
Round 3 - Programme Guide	150	106	90	16	60
Action 3,2 - Youth in the World	189	119	112	7	77
Action 4,4 - Projects encouraging innovation and quality	159	/	69	/	90
Action 4,6 - Partnerships	/	/	147	/	/

Europe for Citizens Programme					
Selection Decisions	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2007	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2008	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2009	Difference 2009-2008	Difference 2009-2007
Action 1.1. Town Twinning - Phase 1a)	/	142	94	48	/
Action 1.1. Town Twinning - Phase 2	83	118	79	39	4
Action 1.1. Town Twinning - Phase 3	107	122	97	25	10
Action 1.1. Town Twinning - Phase 4	88	143	64	79	24
Action 1.1. Town Twinning - Phase 1/2010	95	91	78	13	17
Action 1.2. Networks of twinned towns	124	142	94	48	30
Action 1.4. Citizens' projects	/	126	149	-23	/
Action 1.5. Support measures	/	76	107	-31	/
Action 2.7. Support to projects initiated by civil society organisations	106	131	110	21	-4
Action 4.1. Remembrance projects	99	96	96	0	3

Erasmus Mundus Programme					
Selection Decisions	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2007	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2008	Days needed for the selection procedure - 2009	Difference 2009-2008	Difference 2009-2007
Action 1.1 Scholarships relating to the academic year 2009/2010	85	68	58	10	27
Action 1.2 Joint programmes	151	/	77	/	74