1. Background

The European Year of Languages 2001 will be organised by the European Union and the Council of Europe. As stated in the decision of the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers:

‘During the European Year, information and promotional measures will be undertaken on the theme of languages, with the aim of encouraging language learning by all persons residing in the Member States.’

As far as the European Union is concerned, the European Year of Languages will have two main elements: a Europe-wide information campaign and co-financing for projects originating in the Member States. The information campaign will celebrate Europe's linguistic diversity and promote language learning and related skills throughout the Union. This will take place against the background of preparations for the enlargement of the Union, and on the premise that all European languages, modern and classical, form an integral part of Europe's cultural heritage and future.

The European Year of Languages 2001 has been allocated an overall budget of EUR 8 million for the period 1 January to 31 December. This sum is managed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

The Commission is launching the current call for proposals in order to co-finance projects originating in the Member States and implemented at local, regional, national or transnational levels in pursuit of the following objectives.

2. Objectives

The European Year has five main objectives, which can be summed up as follows:

(i) to raise awareness of the richness of linguistic diversity within the European Union and of the cultural value embodied in that diversity;

(ii) to encourage multilingualism;

(iii) to promote language learning among the general public as a key element in personal and professional development, in intercultural understanding, in making full use of the rights conferred by citizenship of the European Union, and in enhancing the economy;

(iv) to encourage lifelong learning of languages regardless of age or background;

(v) to collect and disseminate information about language teaching and learning, and about the skills, methods and tools used to assist that teaching and learning.

3. Available budget

The budget available for co-financed projects is EUR 4.35 million. On the basis of this figure, the Commission expects to be able to co-fund approximately 150 proposals.

Co-financing will be at a maximum of 50% of the total eligible cost of a project (see Section 8 below). The sums allocated will normally range from EUR 10,000 to EUR 100,000.

4. Areas of action for proposals submitted under the European Year of Languages 2001

The Commission wishes to achieve a balance in the kind of projects co-financed. The objective(s) of the European Year to which projects mainly contribute, along with their scale, target group and location will all be taken into account in seeking to maintain this balance.

Co-financed projects should promote the objectives of the European Year, for instance in one or more of the following ways:

— by raising awareness of and celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe (including through artistic events and cultural activities with a linguistic dimension),

— by promoting the learning and/or use of languages as an enjoyable and personally enriching activity,

— by raising awareness of the professional and economic advantages of language learning, notably through the involvement of enterprises,

— by emphasising the benefits and importance of lifelong language learning and/or by widening access to that learning,

— through the dissemination of information on innovative ways to learn languages and/or through widening access to such methods (this may involve building on the achievements of other European projects in the field of language learning and teaching),

— through the organisation of prizes and competitions,

— through undertaking local, regional, national or transnational surveys and studies on issues related to language learning, notably: linguistic diversity and less widely spoken languages, motivation, methodology, the perspective of the learner. (Proposals for surveys and studies must include an effective strategy for disseminating and making use of the results.)
5. **Who may submit a proposal?**

Commission funding is available only for organisations from within the European Union and the European Economic Area (1). Those from Council of Europe Member States should contact the Council of Europe to enquire about other support.

The European Year of Languages 2001 is aimed at the general public as well as experts in the field of language teaching and learning. Reflecting this broad scope, the range of bodies invited to submit proposals is equally wide.

Potential participants include:

— the full range of educational bodies and institutions,
— local and regional bodies and organisations,
— cultural organisations,
— social partners,
— research centres,
— companies and consortia, professional bodies, trade organisations and chambers of commerce and industry.

‘Organisations’, ‘bodies’, ‘institutions’ and other designations for applicants listed above, are understood to refer to organisations which are legally constituted and registered under the legislation of one Member State of the EU or one member country of the EEA at the time of submitting the request for a grant.

However, please note that the following cannot be funded:

— projects leading to a financial profit for their promoters,
— individuals or groups of learners wishing to follow language courses,
— projects proposed by individuals and which do not carry the endorsement of any organisation as defined above.

6. **Eligibility criteria**

— Projects must fit the relatively short time-span of the European Year, which will run from autumn 2000 to the end of 2001.

— Projects targeting specific languages must cover one or more of the following:

  — the eleven official languages of the European Union (Danish, German, Greek, English, Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, Swedish and Finnish),
  — Irish and Letzeburgesch,

  — Icelandic and Norwegian (languages of the European Economic Area Member States);
  — any other language — including regional and minority languages and sign languages — which European Union Member States designate as eligible (2)

— Projects must have a detailed action plan.

— Applications must include a financial statement, including a detailed estimation of costs, an indication of the percentage of the total budget which is requested from the Commission and a statement showing how the balance of costs will be met.

— The only proposals which will be taken into consideration, are those that are properly completed according to Point 9 below and the instructions in the application form and submitted within the deadline stipulated, to the relevant national coordination body.

7. **Selection criteria and priorities**

Applications which comply with the eligibility criteria will be assessed against a number of selection criteria and in the light of certain priorities, as follows:

7.1. **Criteria relating to the content of the project:**

— the relevance of the themes and activities chosen in the light of demonstrated need and of the objectives of the European Year,

— the project’s European dimension, that is, its capacity to offer added value for the European Union, e.g. the establishment of transnational partnerships or, in the case of projects involving a single country, the potential for transfer of knowledge, experience and best practice to others,

— the originality of the project in its field,

— content not falling within the scope of other EU Programmes and Initiatives (3)

— in addition, given that the promotion of equal opportunities is incorporated into all Community policies and actions, project proposals will also be assessed in terms of their contribution to attaining this objective.

7.2. **Criteria relating to feasibility, coherence and soundness of management**

— clarity of objectives and target groups,

— clarity and consistency of the general design of the project and the likelihood of attaining the desired goals within the time-frame of the Year,

(1) European Union Member States are: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Finland and Sweden.

European Economic Area Member States: the EU Member States plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

(2) Please contact your national coordinating body for more details. See annex.

(3) For information on other EU actions, including those in the field of languages, please consult the Commission’s website at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/.

Applicants may wish to consult particularly the specific languages site of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages/actions/commactions.html.
— quality of the management arrangements for the project (commitment and balanced involvement of all parties, precise work plans and budget, clarity of coordination, etc.),

— quality of the proposal for monitoring and evaluation of the project, for quality assurance of its outcomes, and, where possible, for assessing its impact at local/regional/national/European level,

— the experience of the participants and adequacy of their human and, where appropriate, technological resources,

— the cost-effectiveness of the proposal (the level of grant requested is reasonable, appropriate and clearly justified).

7.3. Priorities

There will be strong priorities in favour of projects which:

— are aimed at the widest possible public,

— involve more than one country,

— involve, in case they target specific languages, more than one of the eligible languages (see Point 6),

— encourage multilingualism, especially regarding the learning of less widely used and taught languages,

— have a realistic strategy for obtaining wide media coverage,

— raise awareness and increase the use and dissemination of ‘e-learning’ technology, i.e. language teaching and learning using computer technology such as the World Wide Web or other electronic applications,

— involve innovation where methods and environments for language teaching and learning are included,

— enhance the success of the European Week of Language Learning for Adults. Projects in the context of this initiative should be centred on activities taking place between 5 and 11 May 2001. They should aim to encourage adults of all backgrounds to acquire and improve language skills and/or to inform them of opportunities to do so,

— enhance the success of the European Day of Languages. Projects in the context of this initiative should be centred on a day of activities taking place in autumn 2001, on a date to be confirmed (1). Projects may be aimed at any or all age groups. The accent should be on celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity. Projects liable to attract the attention of local, regional or national media are especially welcome.

8. Financial conditions

Community subsidies are intended to encourage projects that could not go ahead without Community financial support. The principle of co-financing applies. In other words, the Commission will only part-finance the project, the Community subsidy being complementary and subsidiary to the applicant body's own contributions and/or national, regional or local grants. Community funding for the projects selected cannot exceed the maximum of 50 % of the eligible estimated costs, and will usually amount to less.

The request for subsidy must include a detailed draft budget, specifying in particular the eligible costs, towards which the Commission’s funding must contribute.

The budgets must not include any expenses that pre-date or post-date the indicated project duration.

Eligible expenditure:

Only the categories of expenditure listed below are eligible, providing they are properly accounted for and evaluated in accordance with the market conditions, verifiable and identifiable. They must be direct costs (directly incurred through the activities and indispensable for the implementation of the project):

— personnel costs incurred exclusively in implementing the action that is the subject of the proposal,

— travel/accommodation/daily allowance costs associated with implementing the action (meetings, European gatherings, travel for training, etc.),

— costs associated with conferences (hiring venues, interpreters, etc.),

— publication and dissemination costs,

— equipment costs (should durable goods be bought, only the cost of its annual depreciation may be taken into account),

— cost of consumables and supplies,

— telecommunication costs.

Non-eligible expenditure:

Expenditure incurred by a third party and not reimbursed by the beneficiary organisation is not covered by the budget eligible for co-financing. Nor are contributions in kind which do not incur any actual financial exchange; expenditure to buy infrastructure (except to cover the annual depreciation cost of the goods bought); expenditure not associated with activities specific to the project (specifically, operating expenditure and/or expenditure resulting from statutory obligations); and any expenditure that is obviously pointless or exaggerated.

However, any contributions in kind will have to be listed separately, possibly valued separately, on the form’s budgetary annex, so as to provide the Commission with the means to evaluate accurately the applicant’s effort, in line with the criteria for awarding subsidies listed in point 7.

(1) Please contact your national coordination body (see annex) for notification of the date of the European Day of Languages.
9. Procedure for submitting applications

Forms

Applications for subsidies should be made on the official application form, in one of the 11 official languages of the European Union. Only typed forms will be accepted. Forms can be obtained on the Internet in the 11 official languages of the Union, at the following address:


or by writing to your national coordinating body (see annex), who may also be able to provide you with an electronic version of the application form.

Submission of the application for subsidy

Three copies of the application form must be sent to the national coordinating body in the country of the applicant. Each copy of the application must be duly completed, dated and signed by the person legally responsible for the applicant institution. The three copies must be submitted in a single envelope, and be accompanied by a covering letter from the applicant. In addition, wherever possible, an electronic version of the application should be sent to the relevant national coordinating body by e-mail (see annex).

In the case of transnational projects involving institutions from more than one country, an institution coordinating the project must be identified. The application must be sent by the coordinating institution to the national coordinating body in its country; copies may also be sent to the national coordinating body in the country(ies) of other institutions involved.

There will be two deadlines for posting applications:

— 2. October 2000, for projects which are due to begin after 1 January 2002,
— 15 February 2001, for projects which are due to begin after 1 June 2001.

The date of postmark will be considered the official date of dispatch.

10. Processing of applications

National coordinating bodies will perform the initial examination of the applications, and will forward all applications to the Commission, together with their own evaluation of each project.

The Commission will then make a selection which will be finalised after consultation with independent experts and then with the committee of the Member States, set up under the European Year of Languages 2001 Decision.

Applicants will be informed of the receipt of their application within 10 working days.

All unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing after the selection process has been completed.

The projects selected will be subjected to a detailed financial approval procedure, during which the Commission may request further information from the project leaders.

Once the project has received the Commission’s definitive approval, a funding agreement, drawn up in euro, specifying the amount and the terms of funding, will be concluded between the Community and the beneficiary. This agreement (the original) must be signed and returned to the Commission immediately.

11. Submission of the final report and the final financial statement

Under the terms of the funding agreement, the beneficiary must submit a final report. This must provide a succinct but comprehensive description of the results of the project and be accompanied by copies of any publications produced (brochures, teaching material, videocassettes, multimedia support, press cuttings, etc.).

The final financial statement, to be attached to the report, must show actual expenditure and revenue. the beneficiary must keep accounts of the co-financed project and must keep all original supporting documents for five years after completion of the project for audit purposes.

If an action, financed through one of the proposals selected, makes a financial profit, the subsidy awarded by the Commission must be repaid, to the level of the profit realised. If the actual cost of the project turns out to be less than the total estimated cost, the Commission will reduce its contribution proportionally. It is therefore in the applicant’s interest to present a reasonable budget estimate.

In any publication concerning the project, or on the occasion of any activities for which the subsidy is used, beneficiaries must clearly mention the support provided by the European Union, with the following two phrases:

— ‘With the support of the European Commission — Directorate-General for Education and Culture — European Year of Languages 2001 Initiative’,
— ‘The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or the opinion of the European Commission’.

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