

Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020

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In public deliberation, the Council reached a **partial general approach** on the proposal for a regulation establishing for the period 2014-2020 the "Europe for Citizens" programme, which replaces the current programme of the same name that will expire in 2013.

Main issues discussed:

Structure of the new programme: delegations in general welcomed the Commission proposal, in particular the balance achieved by, on the one hand, simplifying the structure of the Programme, whilst, on the other hand, including an annex which sets out more detailed information on both initiatives that could be supported under each of the three strands (remembrance, civic participation and valorisation) and on the management and monitoring of the Programme, including indicators against which the progress regarding the performance of the Programme can be measured.

Main amendments: during the examination, several parts of the text have been adjusted in response to the concerns of delegations, including some recitals. The main changes made to the Commission proposal can be summarised as follows:

- **Types of activities funded** (Article 3 (2)): the activities to be funded under the Programme have been organised according to the type of the activities, rather than thematically. Within this restructuring, a **visible place** was given to the **national contact points** for Europe for Citizens as the principal advice and information structures that implement the Programme.

- **Access to the programme** (Article 6): delegations have endorsed the idea proposed by the Commission that the Programme should be open to all stakeholders promoting European citizenship and integration, whilst enlarging access to regional authorities and organisations, and to cultural and youth organisations.

- **Implementing provisions** (Articles 8 and 9): delegations have supported the view of the Commission to use the advisory procedure. Nevertheless, in order to balance this flexibility with an appropriate involvement of Member States during the implementation of the Programme, two main changes have been made. Firstly, an **indicative budgetary breakdown** between the three strands has been included in the Regulation itself (Annex to Annex, Sections I and II), and secondly, a new article on **communication** has been introduced according to which the Commission will provide ex-post information to Member States on selection decisions (Article 13a).

- **Indicators:** delegations have supported the need for indicators as a means to measure the impact of the Programme and assess its progress towards the set out objectives. However, the proposed structure of indicators has been simplified, qualitative indicators have been added, such as the **quality of projects applications**, and the description of indicators has been made more precise. Particular attention was paid to the **geographical indicator** which was modified so it can be clearly shown how many submitted and selected projects come from a given country.

Since the proposal for the Europe for Citizens is part of the Multiannual Financial Framework (2014 - 2020), the **general approach does not include the financial envelope**. To recall, the Commission proposes a budget of around **EUR 229 million**.

- **Support from the delegations:** the text resulting from the work of Council's preparatory bodies meets with the broad support of all delegations, subject to parliamentary scrutiny reservations from DE, DK, CZ, FR and UK.