

Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020

2011/0436(APP) - 12/12/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Culture and Education adopted the report by Hannu TAKKULA (ADLE, FI) on the proposal for a Council regulation establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme "Europe for Citizens".

The committee adopts the Commission's proposal subject to the following amendments:

Legal basis: Members consider that a **dual legal basis** is appropriate for programme as the two objectives of the programme were regarded equal in importance, yet distinctly covered by different Articles of the TFEU, namely **Articles 167 and 352**. This dual legal basis would imply the adoption of the programme acting in accordance with the **ordinary legislative procedure** and the **requirement for unanimity in the Council**. The use of this dual legal basis is justified by a judgment of the Court of Justice which stipulates that the recourse to a dual legal base is possible "exceptionally when a measure simultaneously pursues a number of objectives or has several components that are indissociably linked, without one being secondary and indirect in relation to the other", which is clearly the case according to the committee as regards the programme established by this Regulation, where the two main objectives, namely raising awareness in relation to remembrance and encouraging civic participation, are to be placed on an equal footing.

General objectives of the programme: the programme shall contribute to the following general objectives:

- contributing to citizens' understanding about the Union, and **fostering their sense of belonging to a Europe united in its diversity, through remembrance, with a view to developing a sense of a common history;**
- **fostering European citizenship and improving conditions for civic and democratic participation and for intercultural dialogue at Union level**, through a better understanding of the Union's institutions, policies and politics.

Specific objectives:

- **raising awareness of remembrance, common history, cultural heritage, identity**, and the Union's aim of promoting peace, tolerance, mutual understanding, its values, its cultural and linguistic diversity and the well-being of its peoples, by stimulating debate, actions, reflection and the development of networks and by bringing together people from local communities and associations across Europe to share and exchange experiences and to learn from history;
- **encouraging interaction between citizens and civil society organisations from all participating countries** as well as democratic and civic participation and intercultural dialogue at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of, and participation in, the Union's policymaking process and promoting opportunities for societal engagement and **volunteering at Union level**.

The report gives special focus to: (i) **Roma** and to other minorities in the Union; (ii) measures to increase awareness, such as conferences, commemorations or award as well as debates/studies and interventions on defining moments in European history and European integration ceremonies in order inter alia to **keep alive the memory of the crimes committed under all the dictatorships in Europe's modern history, such as Nazism, Fascism and totalitarian communist regimes including Stalinism;** (iii) awareness-raising initiatives to **combat discrimination and xenophobia**.

Progress will be measured by using performance-related indicators.

Horizontal aspect of the programme: the report states that a horizontal dimension of the programme should ensure the valorisation and transferability of results for enhanced impact and long-term sustainability, inter alia through networking, platforms for information exchange or the sharing of knowledge and best practice, including specific methods such as extending the use of information technologies, data bases and **social media**.

Improve access to the programme for citizens: Members consider that special attention should be paid to the balanced integration and participation of citizens and civil society organisations from all Member States in projects and activities, taking into account the cultural, linguistic and geographical diversity of the Union and the need to include groups that are hard to reach. Access to the programme should be granted, in particular, to **small and medium-sized projects**. Particular care should be taken to ensure that **administrative and financial procedures are simplified**.

Participation by natural persons in the Member States' overseas countries or territories who possess European citizenship and by public and/or private organisations and institutions in those countries or territories should be recognised and encouraged with a view to strengthening the link with the Union and disseminating Union values in the most effective way in these staging posts of the Union in the world.

Financial envelope: the report states that the financial envelope specified in the legislative proposal is only an indication to the legislative authority and cannot be fixed until agreement is reached on the proposal for a regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020. They reiterate that sufficient additional resources are needed in the next MFF in order to enable the Union to fulfil its existing policy priorities and the new tasks provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon. They point out that even with an **increase in the level of resources for the next MFF of at least 5% compared to the 2013 level**, only a limited contribution can be made to the achievement of the Union's agreed objectives and commitments and the principle of Union solidarity.

Members also propose an indicative breakdown (in percentages) of the total budget to the different strands of the programme in the Annex.

Ensuring a geographical balance in the allocation of funds: Members consider that when selecting the projects, the executive agency should try as far as possible to ensure a geographical balance in the allocation of funds and should monitor that compensation of project funding takes place on the basis of real expenditure.

Grants awarded in 2014: for grants awarded in 2014, it will be possible for the period of eligibility of expenditure to start on 1 January 2014.