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Committee on Constitutional Affairs

2011/0436(APP)

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on the proposal for a Council regulation establishing for the period 2014 – 2020 the programme "Europe for Citizens"
(COM(2011)0884 – C7-0000/2012 - 2011/0436(APP))

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SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The Commission proposal

The Commission has proposed a programme "Europe for Citizens" for the period 2014-2020. The proposal takes into account experiences and evaluations of the current "Europe for Citizens programme" 2007-2013, as well as stakeholders' consultations. A full impact assessment has been carried out.

The general objective of the programme as proposed by the Commission is to "strengthen remembrance and enhance capacity for civic participation at the Union level". The specific objectives would be to "stimulate debate reflection and cooperation on remembrance, Union integration and history" and to "develop citizens' understanding and capacity to participate in the Union making process and develop opportunities for solidarity, societal engagement and volunteering at Union level" The Commission has also defined a set of operational objectives which it believes will increase the capacity to set more firm indicators to better evaluate progress and impact. These operational objectives are to "support organisations to promote debate and activities on remembrance, European values and history", "support organisations of a general European interest, transnational partnerships and networks to promote citizens' interactions on Union matters" and a horizontal dimension "Analysis, dissemination and valorisation of project results through internal and external activities". On that basis the Commission proposes three strands for the programme: "Remembrance and European citizenship", "Democratic engagement and civic participation" and "Valorisation".

The proposal has to be seen notably in the context of the democratic principles of Articles 10 and 11 TEU¹ without replacing the specific dialogues with citizens, stakeholders and interest groups. The Commission also wishes to link the activities under this programme more closely with concrete policy making. The programme foresees in operating grants and action grants based on open calls for proposals, as well as- where applicable- service contracts based on calls for tender. It is foreseen to continue to use an executive agency for the implementation of certain management tasks of the programme. The proposed financial envelope is EUR 229 million in current prices².

Evaluation and proposed amendments

The committee on Culture and Education asked the Legal Affairs committee for its opinion on the appropriateness of the legal basis chosen by the Commission for the programme (Article 352 TFEU). The Legal affairs committee decided at its meeting of 27 March 2012 to

¹ Notably the right of every citizen to participate in the democratic life of the Union and the duties of the institutions to take decisions as openly and as closely as possible to the citizen to give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action and to maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society.

² Decision 1904/2006 establishing the "Europe for Citizens" programme for the period 2007-2013 contains a financial envelope of EUR 215 million (L 378/36 of 27.12.2006).

recommend that the legal basis should be Articles 167 and 352 TFEU. Consequently this draft opinion proposes amendments under the ordinary legislative procedure.

The amendments proposed aim mainly to complement the Commission proposal with elements which may need some more special emphasis, such as the importance of multi-stake holders joint projects, small scale projects, networking, the principle of geographical diversity and the need to reach hard to reach groups.

Further amendments address financial and administrative aspects in connection with the implementation of the programme, make explicit that the programme does not replace the specific horizontal dialogues for which administrative budgets of the Commission can be used and delete corporate communication actions on the political priorities of the European Union from the scope of this programme since limited funds should to the extent possible be geared to bottom-up initiatives.

In the same spirit, in line with criticism voiced on "high-level Union events" in the evaluations of the current programme, texts referring to activities on "Union level" have been replaced by "activities that are implemented on a transnational level or with a clear European dimension". The idea of such drafting is that it would keep all options open, including national and local actions, as well as certain events at Union level, where appropriate.

Other amendments widen the scope of eligible actions and beneficiaries, or, in the case of the strand on remembrance, give a more specific purpose to the actions. As to the link with the European policy agenda it is proposed to give such actions particular attention but not the preferential treatment that the Commission proposes.

Progress indicators have been deleted from the scope of the articles defining the objectives of the programme. It seems more appropriate to deal with such indicators in the annex to the proposal. Moreover, it is difficult to specify them at a stage when it is not clear how much funding will be available. The committee may also want to consider adding indicative percentages of the total budget to the different strands of the programme in the Annex.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Amendment 1

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 2

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(2) With the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Union and the Member States aim at

deleted

delivering growth, employment, productivity and social cohesion for the coming decade.

Or. en

Amendment 2

Proposal for a regulation Recital 3

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(3) While there is objectively a clear added value of being an Union citizen with established rights, the Union does not always highlight the link between the solution of a broad range of economic and social problems and the Union's policies in an effective way. Hence, the impressive achievements in terms of peace and stability in Europe, long-term sustainable growth, stable prices, an efficient protection of consumers and the environment and the promotion of fundamental rights, have not always led to a strong feeling of belonging of citizens to the Union.

deleted

Or. en

Amendment 3

Proposal for a regulation Recital 4

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(4) In order to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to enable them to participate fully in the construction of an ever closer Union, a variety of actions and coordinated efforts through transnational *and Union* level *activities are required*. The European

(4) *In line with Article 10(3) of the Treaty on European Union, every citizen is to have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union.* In order to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to enable them to participate fully in the

Citizens' Initiative provides a unique opportunity to enable citizens to participate directly in shaping the development of EU legislation.

construction of an ever closer Union, a variety of *participatory* actions and coordinated efforts *are required* through *activities that are implemented on a transnational level or with a clear European dimension*. The European Citizens' Initiative provides a unique *new* opportunity to enable citizens to participate directly in shaping the development of EU legislation.

Or. en

Amendment 4

Proposal for a regulation Recital 6

Text proposed by the Commission

(6) The interim evaluation report, a public online consultation and two consecutive stakeholder consultation meetings confirmed that a new Programme is considered relevant both by civil society organisations and by participating individuals and it should be established in order to have an impact at an organisational level in terms of capacity building and on a personal level in terms of increased interest in Union matters.

Amendment

(6) The interim evaluation report, a public online consultation and two consecutive stakeholder consultation meetings confirmed that a new Programme is considered relevant both by civil society organisations and by participating individuals and it should be established in order to have an impact at an organisational level in terms of capacity building and on a personal level in terms of increased interest *and active involvement* in Union matters.

Or. en

Amendment 5

Proposal for a regulation Recital 7 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(7a) Such synergies can also be achieved by using appropriate administrative

budgets of the different Commission Directorates-General for public participation, dialogue and partnerships to implement Articles 10 and 11 of the Treaty on European Union.

Or. en

Amendment 6

Proposal for a regulation Recital 8

Text proposed by the Commission

(8) The new programme should cover a wide spectrum of different actions and include, among others, citizens' meetings, contacts and debates on citizenship issues, ***Union level events***, initiatives to reflect on defining moments in European history, initiatives to raise awareness about the Union institutions and their functioning, and debates on European policy issues, ***with a view to invigorate all aspects of public life.***

Amendment

(8) The new programme should cover a wide spectrum of different actions and include, among others, citizens' meetings, contacts and debates on citizenship issues, initiatives to reflect on defining moments in European history, initiatives to raise awareness about the Union institutions and their functioning, and debates on European policy issues, ***networking and multi-stakeholder joint projects.***

Or. en

Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation Recital 9

Text proposed by the Commission

(9) A horizontal dimension of the Programme should ensure the valorisation and transferability of results for enhanced impact and long-term sustainability. ***For this purpose, activities launched should have a clear link to the European political agenda, and be communicated appropriately.***

Amendment

(9) 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.

Or. en

Amendment 8

Proposal for a regulation Recital 9 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(9a) The impact of the programme can be enhanced by support for activities that have a clear link to the European political agenda, enhance participation of citizens in Union decision-making and promote a culture of civic participation.

Or. en

Amendment 9

Proposal for a regulation Recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(10) Special attention should be paid to the balanced integration of citizens and civil society organisations from all Member States *into transnational* projects and activities, taking into account the *multilingual character* of the *EU*.

(10) 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 linguistic and geographical diversity* of the *Union and the need to include groups that are hard to reach*.

Or. en

Amendment 10

Proposal for a regulation Recital 16

Text proposed by the Commission

(16) **Preference** will be **given** to grants for projects with a high impact, in particular those which are directly linked to **EU** policies **with a view to participate in** the shaping of the **EU** political agenda. Moreover, following the principle of sound financial management, the implementation of the programme should be further simplified by recourse to lump-sums, flat-rate financing and the application of unit-cost rates.

Amendment

(16) **Particular attention** will be **paid** to grants for projects with a high impact, in particular those which are directly linked to **Union** policies **and which have a participatory effect on** the shaping of the **Union's** political agenda. Moreover, following the principle of sound financial management, the implementation of the programme should be further simplified **in a way that also allows for the inclusion of small-scale projects and groups that are hard to reach, inter alia** by recourse to lump sums, flat-rate financing and the application of unit-cost rates. **Within the limits of the Financial Regulation, the inclusion of voluntary work as co-financing, pre-financing of projects, the lowering of thresholds and volumes for co-financing, two-step project applications and a wider range for deadlines should be considered, where appropriate.**

Or. en

Amendment 11

Proposal for a regulation Article 2 – point 1

Text proposed by the Commission

1. **raise** awareness **on** remembrance, the Union's history, identity and **aim** by stimulating debate, reflection and networking;

Amendment

1. **raising** awareness **of** remembrance **and of** the Union's **and recent European** history **with a view to promoting tolerance, mutual understanding, common** identity, **values** and **aims** by stimulating debate, reflection and networking;

Progress will be measured against the number of beneficiaries reached directly and indirectly, quality of projects, and percentage of first time applicants.

Or. en

Amendment 12

Proposal for a regulation Article 2 – point 2

Text proposed by the Commission

2. encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens *at Union level*, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal engagement and volunteering at Union level.

Progress will be measured against the number of beneficiaries reached directly and indirectly, the perception of the EU and its institutions by the beneficiaries, quality of projects, and percentage of first time applicants.

Amendment

2. encouraging and enhancing participation of citizens *in Union decision-making and promoting a culture of civic participation, including the development of new democratic procedures and instruments.*

Or. en

Amendment 13

Proposal for a regulation Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 1

Text proposed by the Commission

– Citizens' meetings, town-twinning

Amendment

– Citizens' meetings **and panels**, town-twinning, **and joint projects by local authorities, civil society and other local actors**

Or. en

Amendment 14

Proposal for a regulation Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 2

Text proposed by the Commission

– Creation and operations of transnational partnerships and networks

Amendment

– Creation and operations of transnational partnerships and networks, ***cooperation between different types of organisations, and dialogue between civil society and Union institutions***

Or. en

Amendment 15

Proposal for a regulation Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 4

Text proposed by the Commission

– Community building and debates on citizenship issues based on the use of ICT and/ or social media

Amendment

– Community building and debates on citizenship issues, based ***inter alia*** on the use of ICT and/ or social media

Or. en

Amendment 16

Proposal for a regulation Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 5

Text proposed by the Commission

– ***Union level events***

Amendment

deleted

Or. en

Amendment 17

Proposal for a regulation

Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 6

Text proposed by the Commission

– Debates/studies and interventions on defining moments in European history, ***in particular*** to keep the memory ***alive*** of the crimes committed under Nazism and Stalinism

Amendment

– Debates/studies and interventions on defining moments in European history ***and European integration, inter alia*** to keep ***alive*** the memory of the crimes committed under Nazism and Stalinism ***and to promote tolerance and mutual understanding***

Or. en

Amendment 18

Proposal for a regulation

Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 7

Text proposed by the Commission

– Reflection/debates on common values

Amendment

– Reflection/debates on common values ***and identity***

Or. en

Amendment 19

Proposal for a regulation

Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 7 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

– ***Debates/studies on the future of the Union***

Or. en

Amendment 20

Proposal for a regulation

Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 7 b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

– Debates, studies and opinion polls on issues having a direct impact on citizens' lives

Or. en

Amendment 21

Proposal for a regulation

Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 8

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

– Initiatives to raise awareness *on* the *EU* institutions and their functioning

– Initiatives to raise awareness *and develop citizen's understanding of the Union* institutions and their functioning *and promoting opportunities for societal engagements and volunteering at Union level*

Or. en

Amendment 22

Proposal for a regulation

Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 9

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

– *Actions that* exploit and further valorise the results of the supported initiatives

– *Awareness-raising and dissemination activities to* exploit and further valorise the results of the supported initiatives, *inter alia through networking and platforms for information exchange or the sharing of knowledge and best practice*

Or. en

Amendment 23

Proposal for a regulation

Article 3 – paragraph 2 – indent 10

Text proposed by the Commission

– Studies on issues related to citizenship and civic participation

Amendment

– **Debate and** studies on issues related to citizenship and civic participation

Or. en

Amendment 24

Proposal for a regulation

Article 6

Text proposed by the Commission

The programme shall be open to all stakeholders promoting European integration, in particular local authorities and organisations, European public policy research organisations (think-tanks), citizens' groups **and** other civil society organisations (such as survivors' associations), and educational **and research** institutions.

Amendment

The programme shall be open to all stakeholders promoting European integration, in particular local authorities, **non-state actors** and organisations, European public policy research organisations (think-tanks) **and institutions**, citizens' groups, other civil society organisations (such as survivors' associations), and educational **entities**/institutions.

Or. en

Amendment 25

Proposal for a regulation

Article 12 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

2. The resources allocated to communication actions under this

Amendment

deleted

Regulation shall also contribute to covering the corporate communication of the political priorities of the European Union, as far as they are related to the general objectives of this Regulation.

Or. en

Amendment 26

Proposal for a regulation Annex – part 1 – title 1 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

It will support activities that invite ***to*** reflection on common values in the broadest sense, taking into account diversity. Funds may be available for initiatives reflecting on causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history (especially but not exclusively Nazism and Stalinism) and to commemorate their victims. The strand should also encompass activities concerning other reference points in recent European history. In particular, it will give preference to actions which encourage tolerance ***and*** reconciliation ***with a view to reaching the younger generation.***

Amendment

It will support activities that invite reflection on common values in the broadest sense, taking into account diversity. Funds may be available for initiatives reflecting on causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history (especially but not exclusively Nazism and Stalinism) and to commemorate their victims. The strand should also encompass activities concerning other reference points ***and defining moments*** in recent European history ***as well as important milestones in European integration.*** In particular, it will give preference to actions which encourage tolerance, ***mutual understanding*** and reconciliation.

Or. en

Amendment 27

Proposal for a regulation Annex – part 1 – title 1 – paragraph 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

As an indication, approximately 20% of a total budget allocated to the programme

will be devoted to this strand.

Or. en

Amendment 28

Proposal for a regulation Annex – part 1 – title 2 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

The strand is defined by the possible projects and initiatives that can be launched under its heading, not by the type of civic organisations or actors that can apply. The strand will accommodate activities that cover civic participation in the broadest sense, with particular focus on structuring methods for long-term sustainability. It will **give preference** to initiatives and projects with a clear link to the European political agenda.

Amendment

The strand is defined by the possible projects and initiatives that can be launched under its heading, not by the type of civic organisations or actors that can apply. The strand will accommodate activities that cover civic participation in the broadest sense, with **a** particular focus on structuring methods for long-term sustainability. It will **pay appropriate attention** to initiatives and projects with a clear link to the European political agenda **and to those that involve cooperation and networking between different types of organisations, dialogue between civil society and Union institutions and citizen-focused methods. It will also aim to include groups that are hard to reach.**

Or. en

Amendment 29

Proposal for a regulation Annex – part 1 – title 2 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

The strand may also cover projects and initiatives that develop opportunities for solidarity, societal engagement and volunteering **at Union level.**

Amendment

The strand may also cover projects and initiatives that develop opportunities for solidarity **and promote participatory democracy**, societal engagement, **networking** and volunteering.

Amendment 30

Proposal for a regulation

Annex – part 1 – title 2 – paragraph 3 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

As an indication, approximately 70% of a total budget allocated to the programme will be devoted to this strand.

Or. en

Amendment 31

Proposal for a regulation

Annex – part 1 – title 3 – paragraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

It will include "capacity building" - the development of support measures to exchange best practices, to pool experiences between stakeholders at local and regional levels, including public authorities, and to develop new skills, for example through training. The latter could include peer-to-peer exchange, training for trainers ***as well as for example the development of a database on the organisation/projects funded by the programme.***

It will include "capacity building" - the development of support measures to exchange best practices, to pool experiences ***and knowledge*** between different stakeholders, ***including at*** local and regional levels ***and*** including public authorities, and to develop new skills, for example through training. The latter could include peer-to-peer exchange ***and*** training for trainers.

Or. en

Amendment 32

Proposal for a regulation

Annex – part 1 – title 3 – paragraph 3 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

As an indication, approximately 10% of a total budget allocated to the programme will be devoted to this strand.

Or. en

Amendment 33

Proposal for a regulation

Annex – part 2 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

In general, preference will be given to grants for projects with a high impact, in particular those which are ***directly linked*** to Union policies ***with a view to participate*** in the shaping of the ***Union*** political agenda.

In general, preference will be given to grants for projects with a high impact, ***including the small-scale ones, and*** in particular those which are ***related to the current European Union policies and those that encourage participation*** in the shaping of the ***Union's current and future*** political agenda.

Or. en

Amendment 34

Proposal for a regulation

Annex – part 2 – paragraph 4

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

All actions will be implemented on a transnational basis or should have a clear European dimension. They will encourage ***mobility*** of citizens and the exchange of ideas within the ***European*** Union.

All actions will be implemented on a transnational basis or should have a clear European dimension. They will encourage ***participation*** of citizens and the exchange of ideas within the Union.

Amendment 35

Proposal for a regulation Annex – part 2 – paragraph 5

Text proposed by the Commission

The elements of networking and focussing on the multiplier effects, including the use of state of the art information and communication technologies (ICT) and social media, will be important and will be reflected both in the types of activities and the range of organisations involved. The development of interaction and synergy among the various types of stakeholders involved in the programme will be strongly encouraged.

Amendment

The elements of networking and focussing on the multiplier effects, including the use of state of the art information and communication technologies (ICT) and social media, will be important and will be reflected both in the types of activities and the range of organisations involved. The development of interaction and synergy among the various types of stakeholders involved in the programme ***and the participation of groups that are hard to reach*** will be strongly encouraged.

Amendment 36

Proposal for a regulation Annex – part 3 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

Specific objective 1: ***Raise*** awareness ***on*** remembrance, ***Union*** history, identity and ***aim*** by stimulating debate, reflection and networking.

Amendment

Specific objective 1: ***Raising*** awareness ***of*** remembrance ***and of the Union's and recent European*** history ***with a view to promoting tolerance, mutual understanding, common*** identity, ***values*** and ***aims*** by stimulating debate, reflection and networking;

Amendment 37

Proposal for a regulation
Annex – part 3 – paragraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

Specific objective 2: ***Encourage democratic and civic*** participation of citizens ***at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal engagement and volunteering at Union level.***

Amendment

Specific objective 2: ***Encouraging and enhancing*** participation of citizens ***in Union decision-making and promoting a culture of civic participation, including the development of new democratic procedures and instruments.***

Or. en