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Annex to the

Proposal for a

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

establishing for the period 2007-2013 the programme "Citizens for Europe" to promote active European citizenship

Impact assessment

{COM(2005) 116 final}

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1. INTRODUCTION

Citizenship of the Union was established by the Maastricht Treaty, which inserted the current Article 17 into the Treaty establishing the European Community. It specifies that citizenship of the Union shall complement and not replace national citizenship.

The Commission Communication[1] of 10 February 2004 "Building our common Future: Policy challenges and Budgetary means of the Enlarged Union 2007-2013", proposed developing European citizenship as a main priority for EU action. This included the need to make citizenship a reality by fostering European culture and diversity, covering areas directly involving European citizens with the integration process, including that of citizenship.

The diversity of the Union has already increased with the accession of 10 new Member States on 1 May 2004 and by 2007 the total population will approach 500 million, representing an immense richness of cultural, social and linguistic diversity. Moreover, this coincides with major demographic change resulting in an ageing and shrinking working-age population and sustained immigration flows[2]. In such a context, the shared values, such as freedom, fairness, tolerance and solidarity, which hold our societies together, become more important than ever.

Direct, personal experience of what European citizenship and these values mean in practice – whether through participation in dialogue with the institutions, through citizen exchanges or through participation in cross-border projects is a major contributing factor to the validation and development of these values.

This report will present the context of the proposed programme, the different elements that have led to such a proposal and the expected results of the programme. It combines the requirements of an impact assessment with those for an ex ante evaluation. The structure of this report will therefore be the following: the problems that the proposal is expected to tackle (2), the stakeholder consultations and lessons learned (3), the objectives (4), the main policy options and alternative delivery mechanisms (5), the risks and assumptions (6), the expected positive and negative impacts of the different options (7), the added value of Community involvement (8), helping to achieve cost-effectiveness (9), monitoring and evaluation (10), the draft Commission proposal and justification (11) and the conclusion (12).

2. WHAT PROBLEM IS THE PROPOSAL EXPECTED TO TACKLE?

2.1. Principles

According to the Preamble of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Union, "the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union [...]. The Union contributes to the preservation and to the development of these common values while respecting the diversity of the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe as well as the national identities of the Member States".

The European Union today forms a dense network of institutional, social and political relationships that will become even more complex in the context of an enlarged Europe and of future enlargements. This union needs to go beyond the economic dimension to build the Europe of citizens and diversity that it is called upon to become.

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1 COM(2004) 101

2 COM (2003) 336 final of 3.6.2003 on immigration, integration and employment

Recent analyses of the media, from research centres and statistical organisations (notably Eurobarometer) have shown a gap between citizens and the European institutions. The low level of participation in the last elections for the European Parliament is a recent illustration. This is even more significant since the growth in the competences of the Union affecting the daily life of citizens has increased their expectations.

At present, however the Union does not have suitable instruments at its disposal. Although there is currently a programme, this, in spite of its strengths, suffers from a lack of coherence.

It is therefore essential to promote the active transnational participation of citizens in such a way as to involve them in the construction of a more united Europe and in the building of its structures. At the same time, it is important to build on mutual understanding and solidarity to promote intercultural dialogue within the Union. For this, the Union has to provide instruments that permit European citizens –vital actors in this construction of Europe– to become involved in this arena.

The European Union therefore has a need for a programme that puts citizens at the centre and which responds to the need for improving their participation better in the construction of Europe. This programme would permit citizens from different countries to meet, act together and develop their own ideas in a European environment that goes beyond a national vision and which respects their diversity. Mutual understanding, solidarity and a sense of belonging to Europe are basic necessities for the involvement of citizens. This European public arena needs to be built around specific events based upon the ideas of active European citizenship and intercultural dialogue, which would benefit from a high visibility to European citizens. It also needs to be supported by transnational citizen initiatives such as town twinning and numerous activities by civil society (the voluntary sector, social sector, etc.).

The existence of a wide range of cultural and associative activities covered by the term civil society could be a suitable field for action by the Commission in order to develop relationships of confidence and co-operation with citizens[3]. Indeed numerous representatives of European civil society express an increasing desire to participate in building this vision of Europe. This wish to develop the participation and involvement of citizens in European integration cannot go unanswered. The obligation to act is further reinforced by the fact that civil society organisations include bodies such as trade unions, non-governmental organisations, "Euro think tanks", and organisations representing different religions and trends of thought, which undoubtedly offer a structured method of involving citizens at policy level. Local authorities also need to be involved in this activity.

Although mechanisms exist to do this in the field of sectoral policies (such as the environment, employment, development, industry), there is no tool for implementing transnational projects to develop the active participation of citizens in questions of general European interest and in the values that underlie and guide the Union.

2.2. The problems in societal terms

The recent developments in the European Union make it more necessary than ever for Europe's citizens to have the chance to experience a sense of belonging to the Union and to be able to identify with it. In reality many citizens only experience the Union as a distant and remote political and economic entity as reflected in the low turnouts for European elections. Recent opinion polls also show falling levels of support for European Union membership. The concept of European citizenship must therefore be given concrete meaning through direct,

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[3] See the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on The role and contribution of civil society organisations in the building of Europe, OJ C 329 of 17.11.1999, p.30.

personal interaction –whether through participation in dialogue with the institutions, through citizen exchanges or through participation in cross-border projects. Fostering the mobility of citizens and events will enable, European citizens to take advantage not only of the opportunities offered by their rich and diverse history but also of common elements in their developing European identity, an identity which complements those -national, regional, ethnic, religious - that citizens already have.

2.3. The target group and its needs

The programme clearly has the citizen at the centre of its activities – since citizens are the group with which it is concerned. However, this is too broad a target given available resources, so the programme, while keeping its central focus on the citizen, needs to work through intermediaries and multipliers[4] in order to reach its audience as effectively as possible. In the arena of civil society at European level, however, these organisations themselves often need support and development in order to act effectively in an independent manner. Finally, as the notion of Europe and active citizenship itself develops, there is a need for activities and organisations that contribute to this through encouraging debate and leading the development of new thinking.

While some opportunities exist for activities on specific sectoral issues, or for community actions in the field of information, these are not aimed at the direct involvement of citizens or at the support and development of their organisations.

2.4. Consequences of a "no policy change/do nothing" scenario

The "no action" scenario

The option of not presenting a programme for the period after 2006 would be politically incomprehensible at a time when the Union has undertaken to reinforce European citizenship. A promise has been given to citizens, especially through the Commission's Communication of 10 February 2004[5], and cannot go unanswered. The Commission would be severely criticised in such circumstances. In more general terms the European institutions risk being accused of not attaching sufficient importance to the distance that has arisen between them and citizens and of acting counter to their undertakings to citizens (as expressed in the political priorities of the Dutch presidency, the speech of Mr Barroso in his hearing at the parliament as well as in the Strategic Objectives 2005-2009). In addition, the end of the programme would involve suppressing a series of successful activities involving citizens such as town twinning. In order to avoid a serious loss of credibility by the European institutions, the European Parliament, a strong supporter of such activities, asked the Commission to present a concrete programme proposal in 2005.

The "no change" scenario

The current programme was established to provide a legal basis for the granting of a series of subsidies for promoting active European citizenship. This programme accordingly comprises a series of grants linked to different budget lines and, while having a basic logic linking the different elements, suffers from a lack of sufficient cohesion. It has been widely criticised by the Parliament and civil society organisations for its lack of ambition. Simply continuing the programme would be insufficient to realise the objectives set out below.

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4 For example local municipalities, citizens organisations, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, think tanks, associations or federations of European interests, plate-forms, networks etc.

5 COM (2004) 101

3. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

The active European citizenship programme is still relatively new, so no evaluation results are yet available. Of course, the individual actions themselves are not new, and therefore have some history and experience that need to be built upon. However, in the course of the development of this proposal for a new programme, extensive consultation has been carried out on the problems and issues to be addressed, the target users, key objectives and potential options for implementation. Furthermore, an external evaluation report on the current programme (2004-2006) is to appear by the end of 2006; a draft report should be available before then.

An online consultation was organised as the first step in this consultation process: all interested citizens and their organisations were invited to submit their opinions on the proposed orientations by filling in a general questionnaire. The second step was a consultative Forum gathering together a large number of representatives of all interested parties on 3-4 February 2005 for a more in-depth discussion.

3.1. Public on-line consultation

The online consultation resulted in more than thousand responses, including around 700 from organisations and 300 from individuals. Overall 98 % of respondents agreed with the need for a new programme. This means that there was overwhelming support for a new programme. Ninety six percent of respondents felt that it was important or very important to involve EU citizens, and 93% felt the same about civil society organisations, thereby validating the overall approach proposed, of involving both citizens directly and civil society organisations; this need was also widely expressed in the free comments made after the questionnaire. The success of the current activities was evidenced by the strong support to pursuing them: with regard to town twinning, 84% of respondents felt that this was important or very important, 89 % felt the same for the support to operating costs of organisations, and 93 % for the support to small projects. The main innovations sought are multi-annual projects, pooling of experience between local projects of different Member States, development of innovative partnerships/cooperation with new partners and major events mobilizing citizens at EU level, notably in the context of intercultural dialogue. The ideas of exchanging good practices in the voluntary sector and the networking of think tanks were also welcomed. Simplification of procedures is requested by a large number of respondents.

3.2. Consultation Forum

Approximately 350 participants took part in the consultative forum, covering the full range of stakeholders including NGOs, think tanks, regional and municipal representatives, European networks, advocacy groups, trade unions and European associations. The transnational dimension was considered essential. The intercultural dimension was underlined, as well as the need to pay particular attention to building bridges between the citizens of “new”, “old” and future Member States. There was a demand for a better recognition of the aspect of volunteering which is intrinsic to this field. There was also a view that the programme should benefit both individual citizens and Europe as a whole. Another conclusion was that the action of bringing the various stakeholders together should be built upon in future. It was suggested that there should be more scope for events with a certain visibility and to celebrate together certain achievements and key moments of our history.

Continuity came out as a recurrent theme, without it being contradictory to the introduction of innovation. There was strong support for a continuation of the town-twinning activities. The situation was the same as regards to the support for operating costs of NGOs and other civil society organisations, reflecting their need for sufficient public sources of funding in order to

preserve their independence. Already well established organisations like trade unions may use their networks for contributing and debating on European issues. European think tanks activities have to be supported, strengthened and structured. Many of the issues raised at the forum related to implementation and the need for simplification of the procedures

The notion of multi-annual funding was seen as an opportunity to actively assist in capacity building and enhanced stability in all activities although scope for short-term actions should be maintained, be it for innovative actions or for small entities (particularly in the town-twinning area). Cross-fertilisation between the various activities carried out under the programme was recommended, for example between town-twinning and NGOs. Networking was also considered as being important. This networking should not only be amongst the same types of stakeholders but between them – for example, linking think tanks (ideas) and civil society organisations (action). It was also asked that bridges between this programme and other Commission programmes be ensured (in the fields of Youth, Education, Justice, Social Affairs…).

4. WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES THAT THE PROPOSAL IS EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?

4.1. General objectives

The general objectives of this programme are to contribute to:

– giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, united in and enriched through its cultural diversity

– forging a European identity, based on recognised common values, history and culture

– enhancing mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and celebrating cultural diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue.

During the preparatory work and the consultation, new tendencies have been identified: the essential importance of promoting mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue; the necessary focus on our values, culture and history, as building elements of our European identity; the wish to find a space for the commemoration of great historical events; the necessary priority on the integration of citizens from new, or future, Member states; the wish to develop opportunities for celebrating, exchanging experiences and debating at European level.

These needs are reflected into two of the programme's objectives, which are to contribute to forging a European identity, based on recognised common values, history and culture and to enhancing mutual understanding between European citizens, respecting and celebrating cultural diversity

Those objectives are linked to article 151 of the EC Treaty on "Culture", which states that "action by the Community shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in (…) improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European (…)".

The reference to this legal basis is therefore appropriate, but not sufficient. The first objective, which is to give citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing a more united Europe, is broader than article 151.

The Community programme to promote active European citizenship (civic participation) (2004-2006) is based on Article 308 of the EC Treaty that establishes that if action by the Community should prove necessary to attain one of the objectives of the Community, and this

Treaty has not provided the necessary powers, the Council shall take the appropriate measures.

The reference to this article appears necessary in order to cover the objectives of this programme, which do not have a specific legal basis in the Treaty. They nevertheless contribute to creating an "ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizen", by involving citizens in the construction of a more united Europe and by fostering mutual understanding among European citizens.

Therefore, the use of both legal bases, article 151 and article 308 of the EC Treaty, appears to be the most complete and adequate solution.

4.2. Specific objectives

Taking account of the current situation and the needs identified, the most appropriate specific objectives that will be implemented on a transnational basis are to:

- Bring together people from local communities across Europe to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future
- Foster action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship through cooperation between civil society organisations at European level
- Make the idea of Europe more tangible for its citizens by promoting and celebrating Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past
- Encourage the balanced integration of citizens and civil society organisations from all Member States, contributing to intercultural dialogue and bringing to the fore both Europe's diversity and unity, with particular attention to the activities with Member States that have recently joined the European Union

These objectives are based on the following:

- bring together people from local communities across Europe to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future

The programme will foster the direct participation of citizens across Europe, both in the activities of the programme and in the development of the notion of a European identity. One of the most effective ways of participation is directly experiencing other cultures in an environment that fosters exchange and where people learn through involvement in issues and actions related to the essence of Europe. This intercultural exchange will contribute to the improvement of the mutual knowledge of the culture and history of the European peoples, and will therefore bring our common cultural heritage to the fore and strengthen the basis for our common future.

- foster action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship through cooperation between civil society organisations at European level

There is a need to support transnational cooperation among civil society organisations at European level. Those Europe-wide organisations, representing a vast spectrum of citizens, can act as multipliers and offer a voice in Europe for citizens, through transnational and cross-sectoral actions, debate and reflection, linked to citizenship of the European Union.

- make the idea of Europe more tangible for its citizens by promoting and celebrating Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past

There is a need for activities addressing the widest possible audience across frontiers, built around shared ideas, values or achievements, and reaching the greatest possible number of Europeans. These activities across Europe have the objective of forging a sense of belonging to common European ideals, adding to the existing sense of national and regional identity. They will contribute to bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.

– encourage the balanced integration of citizens and civil society organisations from all Member States, contributing to intercultural dialogue and bringing to the fore both Europe's diversity and unity, with particular attention to the activities with Member States that have recently joined the European Union

Without the strong and full participation of the citizens and civil society organisations of the newer Member States, the development of Europe will be severely compromised. All the above objectives will therefore take this last objective into account, which will be implemented in all the programme's activities. Transnational cooperation will play an essential role with regard to this objective.

4.3. Operational objectives: Actions

These specific objectives will be realised by three sets of actions which constitute the operational objectives.

For all actions, the elements of networking, cross-fertilisation and focussing on the multiplier effects are important, and should be reflected both in the types of activities and the range of organisations involved. This contributes to the notion of sustainability and building a structure which can continue to contribute to the emergence of a European active citizenship beyond the constraints and lifetime of the programme. This therefore involves not only developing and strengthening networks but also the organisations themselves. By bringing together and reflecting diversity of people and organisations, programme can contribute to the development of a dynamic and innovative society.

Action 1: Active citizens for Europe

– Town twinning

The measure is aimed at activities that involve or promote direct participation by citizens through town twinning activities, including conferences or seminars on subjects of common interest or related publications, organised in the context of town twinning activities. This measure will actively contribute to strengthening mutual knowledge and understanding between the citizens.

– Citizens' projects and support measures

Under this measure, a variety of projects of transnational and cross-sectoral dimension, directly involving citizens, will be supported. The scale and scope of such projects will depend on the evolutions within the society and will explore, through innovative approaches, the possible responses to the needs that will have been identified. Those projects will gather citizens from different horizons, who will act together or debate on common European issues, hereby developing mutual understanding as well as raising awareness of the process of European integration. It also appears necessary to develop support measures to exchange best practices, to pool experiences between stakeholders at the local and regional levels including public authorities, and to develop new skills for example through training, in order to improve citizens' projects.

Action 2: Active civil society in Europe

– Structural support to European public policy research organisations (think tanks)

Bodies providing new ideas and reflections on European issues are important institutional interlocutors able to provide independent strategic, cross-sectoral recommendations to the EU institutions... They can undertake activities that feed the debate notably on citizenship of the European Union and on European values and cultures. This measure is aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of those organisations, which provide real European added value, which are representative, which can induce important multiplier effects and, finally, which are able to cooperate with other beneficiaries of this programme. The strengthening of transeuropean networks is an important element of this area of work.

– Structural support to organisations of civil society at European level

Civil society organisations need to exist and to be able to operate and cooperate at a European level in a large number of fields of general interest (e.g. common values and heritage, voluntarism, social issues). The measure will provide them with the capacity and stability to act as transnational catalysts for their members and for civil society at European level. The strengthening of transeuropean networks is an important element of this area of work.

– Support to projects initiated by civil society organisations

Civil society organisations, such as non-governmental organisations, trade unions, federations, think tanks etc., can, through debate, publications, advocacy, and other forms of concrete transnational projects, either involve citizens or represent their interests. Introducing or building on a European dimension in the activities of civil society organisations will enable them to enhance their capacities and reach wider audiences. Direct cooperation among civil society organisations from different Member States will contribute to mutual understanding for the different cultures and point of views and to the identification of shared concerns and values.

Action 3: Together for Europe

– High visibility events

This measure will support events organised by or in cooperation with the European Commission, which are substantial in scale and scope, strike a significant chord with the peoples of Europe, help to increase their sense of belonging to the same community, make them aware of the history, achievements and values of the European Union, involve them in intercultural dialogue and contribute to the development of their European identity.

– Studies

In order to get a better understanding of active citizenship at European level, the Commission will carry out studies, surveys and opinion polls.

– Information and dissemination tools

Given the focus on the citizens and the variety of initiatives in the field of active citizenship, there is a need to provide comprehensive information on various activities of the programme, on other European actions related to citizenship and on other relevant initiatives, through an Internet portal and other tools.

Designated beneficiaries

Six organisations pursuing an aim of general European interest will be specifically mentioned in the legal basis for receiving an operating grant, due to the specificity of their mission and membership.

Three organisations celebrate the memory and prolong the work of the "Founding fathers" of the European Union:

The "Association Jean Monnet" and the "Centre européen Robert Schuman" are meeting places for the people of Europe, the aim being to set the pioneers and pioneering activities of European integration in the context in which two of the founding fathers of Europe lived and worked, and to provide information on today's and tomorrow's Europe.

The think tank "Groupement d'études et de recherches Notre Europe" brings together the political, social, economic and scientific worlds to promote a closer union of Europe, through research and debates on European issues.

The three other supported organisations are umbrella-organisations with special representativity and scope:

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the major organisation of local and regional authorities. It has a unique network in Europe and has developed wide expertise in the promotion of high quality twinning initiatives and exchanges.

The Platform of European Social NGOs is an umbrella organisation gathering representative European federations and networks of non-governmental organisations active in the social sector in a very broad sense. The Social Platform promotes participatory democracy by voicing the concerns of its member organisations on a wide range of European policies relevant to their membership.

The European Movement, born over half a century ago, played a crucial part in the construction of Europe. It is present at European level as well as at the level of member countries via national councils, covering a large geographical area. It aims at contributing to the unity of Europe, founded on respect for human rights and democratic principles, by informing and mobilizing citizens on European issues.

4.4. Objectives and indicative related indicators

Objectives	**Indicators**
General ***The general objectives are to contribute to:***	
Giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, united in and enriched through its cultural diversity	• Change in behaviour of programme participants
Forging a European identity, based on recognised common values, history and culture	• Change in perceptions of programme participants
Enhancing mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and celebrating cultural diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue	• Change in attitudes of programme participants

Specific	*Indicators*
Bring together people from local communities across Europe to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future	• Proportion of launched/completed projects that specifically seek/sought to bring citizens together • Number of citizens taking part, via the medium of the programme, in exchanges and collaborations • Number of communities taking part, via the medium of the programme, in exchanges and collaborations • Proportion of relevant completed projects that, if not funded by the programme, would probably not have been undertaken (based on survey of participants) • Number of projects applications received
Foster action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship through cooperation between civil society organisations at European level	• Proportion of launched/completed projects that specifically seek/sought to facilitate a structured and dynamic civil society • Extent of new knowledge and ideas which have been developed with the support of the programme • Proportion of relevant projects that, if not funded by the programme, would probably not have been implemented (based on survey of participants) • Number of projects applications received
Make the idea of Europe more tangible for its citizens by promoting and celebrating Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past	• Press and media coverage of the events – qualitative and quantitative

Encourage the balanced integration of citizens and civil society organisations from all Member States, contributing to intercultural dialogue and bringing to the fore both Europe's diversity and unity, with particular attention to the activities with Member States that have recently joined the European Union	• Proportion of launched/completed projects that specifically seek/sought to bring organisations together • Proportion of launched/completed projects that specifically seek/sought to involvement of new Member State and candidate country organisations and citizens • Increase in involvement in transnational activities by participants from new Member States and the candidate countries • Proportion of relevant projects that, if not funded by the programme, would probably not have been implemented (based on survey of participants) • Number of projects applications received
Operational	***Indicators***
Active citizens for Europe: – town twinning – citizens projects and support measures	• Number of town twinning projects • Proportion of total programme budget used to support town twinning • Number of projects to encourage active citizenship launched • Number of support measures funded • Proportion of total programme budget used to support citizens' projects and support measures • Level of use of information portal • Proportion of total programme budget used to support this operational objective (indicative target 40 %).

Active civil society in Europe: - Structural support of European public policy research organisations - Structural support to organisations of civil society at European level - Support to projects initiated by civil society organisations	• Number of actions involving policy research organisations • Number of supported public policy research organisations • Proportion of total programme budget used to support policy research organisations • Number of European organisations active in the field of civil society supported • Proportion of total programme budget used to support such organisations • Number of projects supported • Level of use of information portal • Proportion of total programme budget used to support this operational objective (indicative target 30 %).
Together for Europe	• Number of events supported • Number of conferences supported • Level of use of information portal • Number of funded studies and research projects • Proportion of total programme budget used to support this operational objective (indicative target 15 %).

The percentages mentioned under each action are indicative. The total does not cover the totality of the programme's budget, in order to preserve some flexibility and to take into account administrative expenditures.

5. WHAT ARE THE MAIN POLICY OPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MECHANISMS?

Instruments other than a programme

A legislative instrument would not be appropriate to promote citizen participation as described above. The proposed objectives imply the implementation of concrete actions at a European level requiring appropriate financial support and could not be achieved by simple recommendations or co-operation between Member States.

The "no action" scenario

The option of not presenting a programme post 2006 would be politically incomprehensible at a time when the Union has undertaken to reinforce European citizenship. A promise has been given to citizens and cannot go unanswered. There would be a predictably high level of outrage and criticism of the Commission in such circumstances. In more general terms the European institutions risk being accused of not giving sufficient importance to the distance

which has arisen between them and citizens and to contradict themselves with regard to their undertakings to citizens (such as the political priorities of the Dutch presidency and the speech of Mr Barroso in his hearing at the parliament). In addition, the end of the programme would involve suppressing a series of successful activities involving citizens such as town twinning. In order to avoid a serious loss of credibility by the European institutions, the European Parliament, a strong supporter of such activities, asked the Commission to present a concrete programme proposal in 2005.

The "no change" scenario

The current programme was established with the objective of establishing a legal base for the granting of a series of subventions for the promotion of active European citizenship. This programme is therefore characterised by a series of grants linked to different budget lines which while having a basic logic linking the different elements, suffers from a lack of sufficient cohesion. This programme has been largely criticised by the Parliament and civil society organisations for its lack of ambition. Simply continuing the programme would be insufficient to realise the objectives set out below.

Mainstreaming

This option is not sustainable in that no other sectoral programme can cover the objectives as set out. This programme differentiates itself from the other European initiatives specifically because of its horizontal dimension and its comprehensive approach to promoting active European citizenship.

Integration into a general citizenship programme

Merging all citizenship programmes into a single and unique framework programme has not been retained, because despite its appearance this approach would not represent a simplification. In fact, the different fields that come under citizenship – in particular education, culture, youth, justice, freedom, security – are covered by different Articles of the Treaty, are governed by specific decision-making procedures and administrative rules, and often target different audiences.

The target group

It could have been envisaged to focus only on citizens, or on civil society organisations. However, the experience, as well as the consultation, has shown that both groups should be targeted in order to ensure complementarity and synergies. The citizens, in the heart of the programme, have to be directly involved. However, civil society organisations have an important multiplier effect and allow a wide range of activities to take place. It appears necessary to target a wide spectrum of organisations, in order to be able to adapt to the changes, needs and expressions of civil society and to integrate all forms of citizens' involvement into Community and public life.

The need for a new programme

In response to the emergence of the question of citizenship among the political priorities of the Union, the adoption of a new specific programme is the best option for achieving the desired objectives.

In order to respond properly to the expectations of citizens, this programme aims to firmly place the citizen at the centre of the actions, and is distinguished by its educational and transnational aspects. The first element gives citizens the necessary instruments to become involved at a European level, and the second creates favourable conditions for the mobility of citizens. It thus gives people the opportunity to develop their mutual understanding and to

share a feeling of solidarity through the common European values that unite them. Through this approach the programme attempts to respond as closely a possible to the needs of civil society. It develops a public arena devoted to dialogue and citizenship open to all citizens and decentralised across the whole of Europe through lending support to town twinning, to all types of transnational citizens' initiatives and to events with a European dimension. At the same time it encourages a structured participative process on questions linked to the construction of Europe and the values on which it is based. Finally it respects the diversity on which the richness of the European Union is founded.

6. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Assumption	**Risk**	**Assessment**
The programme is based on the assumption that the other sources of funding for transnational citizen's projects and organisations will remain relatively stable.	A substantial increase or decrease in available funding (at regional or national level, from the private sector, etc.) would threaten the effectiveness of the programme.	The experience of the previous years is that the fluctuations are not important enough to be a real threat to the programme.
The proposal assumes that civil society will stay dynamic and that the interest of citizens will remain high or even increase.	A lack of interest on the part of civil society organisations and citizens for transnational projects would deeply affect the programme.	The consultation process revealed great interest by both organisations and citizens.
This proposal is based on the assumption that civil society organisations and citizens will react positively to this new programme and will actively take part in it. .	There is a risk of a negative reception of the programme.	The new programme is based in large part on the positive remarks expressed during a wide consultation process, so it should be generally welcomed.
Risks in implementing the programme		
The programme can manage the volume of applications.	There is a risk that a too large number of applications would overwhelm the programme.	Past experience shows that there is potential for an increase in applications, but that this potential is not unlimited. The planned establishment of an executive agency entirely dedicated to the management of programmes should help in facing increased demand.

		If necessary, the decentralisation of the management of the programme to certain Member states could be envisaged (centralised indirect management).
The programme can encourage cross-fertilisation between the different kinds of organisations and activities supported.	There is a risk that the different organisations would be reluctant to take part in such projects.	The consultation revealed that there was a need for such innovative, "cross-action" projects. The calls for proposals will set up clear criteria in this respect.
The number of applications for each of the activities foreseen will be stable, or will increase.	There is the risk that the heavy administrative burden of the application procedure could discourage applicants, especially those from less resource-rich organisations.	This problem has been underlined by the submissions made during the consultation. All necessary measures will be taken to simplify the implementation of the programme and the application procedure.
Risks linked to the different actions		
a) Action 1: Active citizens for Europe		
Town twinning		
Town twinning activities, based on a long tradition, are expanding and meet a real demand.	There is a risk that new forms of cooperation – more flexible and more project based (one-off projects) —are preferred to twinning exchanges.	Past experience, as well as the consultation; revealed a great dynamism in the twinning field. The programme will offer the necessary flexibility to adapt to new demands, for example for supporting measures.
Local communities from all over Europe are interested in potential twinning projects.	For reasons of tradition and geography, some countries might be less involved.	The involvement of *all* Member States will be an explicit priority of the programme. In this respect, support measures will be funded in

		order to develop twinning activities and provide the necessary tools for new twinnings.
Citizens' projects and support measures		
There is potential for development of citizens' projects and there is a need for support measures.	The demand could be low, due for example to difficulties in implementing such projects at European level.	The need for such actions was clearly expressed during the consultation.
b) Action 2: Active civil society in Europe		
Structural support to European public policy research organisations		
There is potential for the development of think-tanks at European level that are better structured and more visible than hitherto.	There is a risk that the think-tanks remain isolated and do not engage citizens.	The calls for proposals will set up clear criteria in this respect. The consultation revealed that there is space for innovative partnerships, methods and research approaches.
Structural support to organisations of civil society at European level		
A variety of organisations will apply, including not only beneficiaries from the current programme, but also new organisations.	There is a risk that there are not enough "new comers".	The programme will set up clear criteria and will encourage all organisations that fulfil those to apply.
Support to projects initiated by civil society organisations		
Civil society organisations will present proposals for a wide range of innovative project.	There is a risk that projects might not be innovative.	The consultation revealed that there was indeed potential for developing innovative projects. The calls for proposals will set up clear criteria in this respect.
c) Action 3: Together for Europe		
High visibility events		
Events of high visibility	There is a risk that such	The events will be set up

will make Europe and its values more tangible to citizens.	events will appear to be imposed on citizens in a "top-down" fashion, and that they do not have the expected impact on citizens themselves.	in partnership with civil society organisations and with regional or national authorities, representative organisations etc. The bottom-up approach, as well as maximising the potential impact on the largest possible number citizens (for example by appropriate use of information technology) will be essential.
Information and dissemination tools		
An information tool is needed and the Community has a unique role to play in this regard.	• The Internet tool for information and communication is intended to be very broad. It could appear difficult to maintain an up-dated site. • It could be challenged by another website or simply by changing needs.	• These issues will be discussed with the company or institution in charge of the projects, which will have to prove its technical capability as well as its flexibility. The Commission will ensure the maximum level of control. • It seems very unlikely to have such a broad instrument developed by another organisation.

7. WHAT POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS ARE EXPECTED FROM THE OPTIONS SELECTED?

7.1. Social impact

Direct impact:

– On social cohesion: The programme aims at improving the participation of citizens, which should increase their confidence in the impact of European policies and the institutions that produce them. While respecting their national identities, and through letting them "live" their citizenship, the new programme will contribute to the development of a feeling of belonging and a European identity for Europeans. The initiative will contribute to the development of a European public life well disposed to the opening of dialogue and the bringing together of ideas and opinions on the construction of Europe and its future.

– On new Member States and candidate countries: The programme will have an impact on the integration of organisations from new Member States into

European networks and the active participation of their citizens in civil society, as well as their sense of belonging to a common European idea and values.

Indirect impact:

- On geographical social cohesion: The programme will foster geographical cohesion through cooperation between neighbouring countries or within a region.
- On employment quality: The programme may contribute to direct factors such as job creation potential (including the development of the voluntary sector), but also to the improvement of living and working conditions which contribute to the overall strength of the local economic environment.
- On security and terrorism: The increased intercultural dialogue will contribute to the strengthening of mutual understanding and solidarity.

7.2. Economic impact

Direct impact:

The programme aims to contribute to the strengthening of civil society and its organisations and, through this, their potential to contribute to economic development at all levels from the local to the European.

Indirect impact:

- On human capital formation: The programme aims to help citizens to learn from each other and thus contribute to the development of human capital.
- On economic cohesion: It will have an effect on economic integration, especially of new Member States.
- On specific sectors: The programme is aimed to be horizontal in nature – the potential impact on specific sectors will depend on the nature of the actions which are undertaken within the framework of the programme.
- On innovation: The development and support of an active civil society, especially the capacity to build shared values from the wealth of diversity at local and national levels is one of the fundamental contributors to a dynamic and innovative society.

7.3. Environmental impact

The programme does not have direct environmental objectives but provides the scope for positive actions in this area. There are no negative environmental impacts anticipated.

On a short-term basis as well as in the long term, there seem to be no potential conflicts between social, economic and environmental impacts for this programme. In accordance with the Lisbon strategy, the positive economic and social effects combined are likely to have a positive impact on growth and employment, as well as on social cohesion.

8. ADDED VALUE OF EUROPEAN UNION INVOLVEMENT

8.1. Transnational activities

All actions will be implemented on a transnational basis. They will encourage mobility of citizens and of ideas within Europe. Twinning projects are by nature transnational, but the programme will also encourage transnational cooperations between regional organisations,

NGO's, think tanks etc. It will support the development of the transnational activities of civil society organisations and the structuring of civil society at European level. Some special events will bring more visibility to those transnational activities. Transnational debate and exchange of ideas will be supported. Studies by the Commission or research projects by think tanks will feed this debate.

The programme will pay due attention to broad geographic coverage of supported activities and projects. Special emphasize will be put on the integration of citizens and organisations from "old", "new", or future Member states into transnational projects and networks.

Transnationality lies within the core of this programme, at is an essential element of its European added value.

8.2. Complementarity and synergies

Many actions of the European Commission are involved in the wide area of citizenship, but with different objectives and different targets, as the following examples illustrate.

Within the DG Education and Culture programmes, the dimension of active citizenship is a recurrent theme. The programmes in the field of Education foresee actions promoting European citizenship. One of the objectives of the Youth programme is to promote young people's active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular. It encourages voluntary work of young Europeans. The Culture programme, by fostering cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue, also contributes to strengthening the feeling of solidarity and mutual understanding, essential for the building of a European citizenship. However, these programmes are aimed either at specific sectors (such as culture), specific groups (such as youth) or specific activities (such as education and culture) whereas the actions proposed by this programme are specifically aimed to be horizontal and inclusive, addressing issues which do not fit comfortably into the other programmes. It can, however, act as a nexus between all these activities, thus further adding value to its own actions. For example, links between schools and town twinning can easily be imagined.

In the field of Justice, Freedom and Security, the Commission has activities in relation to citizenship, for example the Preparatory action to support civil society in the ten Member States which acceded to the European Union on 1st May 2004, in the areas of the rule of law, democracy, fundamental rights, media pluralism and the fight against corruption. The aim of this action is to reinforce civil society in those countries mainly through support for Non-Governmental Organisations in promoting fundamental rights. The DG is preparing a programme on Fundamental rights and citizenship for the period 2007-2013. Those activities have a clear focus on citizenship rights and fundamental rights. The support to NGO's therefore is limited to those promoting fundamental rights. The development of this programme of JLS and that of DG EAC are being carried out in close consultation to ensure maximum synergy.

In the context of its research activities, and more specifically on it work in the field of Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society, the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development has an objective of research directed towards providing a sound scientific base for the management of the transition towards a European knowledge based society, conditioned by national, regional and local policies and by decision making by individual citizens, families and other societal units. This covers scientific research on: the implications of European integration and enlargement; new forms of governance; resolution of conflicts and restoration of peace or new forms of citizenship and cultural identities. This research is relevant for policy makers and could be used to improve the EU policy in favour of the active involvement of citizens and their organisations.

In the field of communication, the Commission will be undertaking significant activities aimed at bringing the proposed constitution to the attention of citizens, and building understanding of fundamental rights and the need for active citizenship. However, this activity is top-down and informative whereas this programme has a more bottom-up and participative focus. However, when appropriate, cooperation with DG PRESS will be organised, particularly regarding Action 3 of the programme (Together for Europe).

Complementarities could be envisaged in the context of the European Neighbourhood policy as far as the external relations of the EU are concerned. The proposed programme will be open to candidate countries and to the countries of the Western Balkans, which should join the EU. It will not be open to other Third countries. However, the expertise of the programme could be useful for implementing actions involving citizens and civil society in those countries. This would be in line with the objective of tightening the relations with our neighbouring countries.

8.3. Subsidiarity

Promoting active European citizenship is a fundamental objective of the European Union and, in fact, of most public authorities nowadays. This is a huge task, requiring action on a variety of fronts and at many levels, where national and local authorities have a major competence (notably in education policies). The Commission believes however that it has a complementary role to play, by proposing a specific and ambitious programme for the promotion of an active involvement of citizens in the development of Europe based on transnational activities. The aims of this intervention will, while being focussed on the individual citizen, be better achieved and have more effect at Community level than at Member State level. Indeed the specific aspects of reflection and action at a European level and the issue of co-operation and mobility addressed by, for example, the town twinning projects, are not systematically addressed at the Member State level. For the applicants, a nationally based system would be very confusing, with different sources of funding and different procedures. This scenario being rejected, we can state that the proposed programme fully complies with the subsidiarity principle.

The programme will bring financial added value, because it will cost less than interventions at Member States' level. Because of its centrality and visibility, the programme will also be able to attract other funding sources available for active citizenship and steer them towards multilateral European cooperation projects.

8.4. Proportionality

Through the support of active European citizenship actions, to European organisations active in the field, and to information and knowledge, the proposed programme will focus on the objectives of the Treaty: it will bring the common values to the fore, while respecting national and regional diversity. It will encourage an active citizen participation in the values, ideals and life of Europe as well as cooperation between Member States and with third countries. The actions envisaged in this programme do not go further than what is necessary to achieve these objectives, in keeping with the principle of proportionality.

9. HELPING TO ACHIEVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS

9.1. Cost implications of the programme: € 235 million

9.1.1 Total financial impact

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total

Mio €	21,2	28,1	29,8	34,9	38,0	40,0	43,0	235,0

The cost of the proposal results from assumptions, which take into account the experience of support to the sector of the previous Community action as well as the emergence of new needs (see point 6.). They draw on the conclusions of the consultation of the stakeholders carried out in the preparation of the draft decision. The overall budget is informed by the need for credibility. It takes account of parameters justifying an increase in the budget (extension of the fields of activity and the geographical scope of the programme and the increase in the number of measures, as explained above). It also takes account of the need to keep a certain number of activities at national, regional or local level which the principle of subsidiarity requires to be conducted at these levels and which would not be gained if handled at European level. The budget also takes account of the capacity of the project management structures.

In carrying out the programme the Commission will have recourse to an executive agency. The agency was operational as from January 2005. In establishing the agency, a feasibility study has been carried out by an independent external consultant. The study demonstrated that a centralised management guarantees the European dimension of the programme and the subsidiarity principle.

Commitment appropriations in € million (to three decimal places)

	Type of output	**Av. cost**	**TOTAL**	
			No. outputs	Total cost
ACTION 1: **ACTIVE CITIZENS FOR EUROPE**				
Measure 1: **TOWN TWINNING**				
- Citizens' meetings	Project Grant	0,008	**8.939**	**71,500**
- Conferences & Seminars	Project Grant	0,025	**488**	**12,200**
- Multi-annual twinning projects	Project Grant	0,200	**67**	**13,200**
- Support of CEMR	Operat Grant	0,250	**7**	**1,890**
Measure 2 **CITIZENS' PROJECTS and SUPPORT MEASURES**				
- Citizens' projects (panels…)	Project Grant	0,020	**94**	**1,880**
- Support measures (training…)	Project grant/Market	0,020	**95**	**1,880**
Sub-total Action 1			**9.690**	**102,550**

ACTION 2: **ACTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY IN EUROPE**				
Measure 1: **STRUCTURAL SUPPORT TO "THINK TANKS"**				
- Think tanks	Operat. Grant	0,160	**79**	**12,600**
- Networking THINK TANKS	Operat. Grant	0,100	**28**	**2,800**
- "Our Europe" Association	Operat. Grant	0,650	**7**	**4,550**
Measure 2: **STRUCTURAL SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**				
- Networks	Operat. Grant	0,160	**111**	**17,500**
- Social Platform	Operat. Grant	0,640	**7**	**4,480**
- Europ. Movement Europ. Movement	Operat. Grant	0,490	**7**	**3,000**
Measure 3: **CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECTS**				
- Support to projects	Project Grant	0,080	**596**	**35,800**
Sub-total Action 2			**835**	**80,730**

ACTION 3: **TOGETHER FOR EUROPE**				
Measure 1: **HIGH VISIBILITY EVENTS**				
- Events	Grant /Market	0,750	**23**	**17,500**
Measure 2: **STUDIES**				
- Studies, surveys, opinion polls	Grant /Market	0,200	**10**	**1,730**
Measure 3: **DISSEMINATION / INFORMATION**				
- Portal /Service Contracts	Market	0,100	**20**	**1,930**
- Maisons JM & RS	Operat. Grant	0,200	**14**	**3,030**
Sub-total Action N° 3			**67**	**24,190**
TOTAL COST			**10.592**	**207,470**

9.1.2 Technical and administrative assistance

EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

Budget line (15.0104…)	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*TOTAL*
1 Technical and administrative assistance (including related staff costs)								
Executive agencies[6]	*2,551*	*3,173*	*3,238*	*3,540*	*3,609*	*3,806*	*3,883*	***23,800***
Other technical and administrative assistance								
- intra muros	*0,062*	*0,064*	*0,065*	*0,066*	*0,068*	*0,069*	*0,070*	***0,464***
***-** extra muros*	*0,029*	*0,030*	*0,030*	*0,031*	*0,031*	*0,032*	*0,032*	***0,215***
Supporting expenditure	*0,398*	*0,403*	*0,417*	*0,433*	*0,452*	*0,463*	*0,485*	***3,051***
Total Technical and administrative assistance	***3,040***	***3,670***	***3,750***	***4,070***	***4,160***	***4,370***	***4,470***	***27,530***

9.1.3 Number and type of Human resources

Types of post		Staff to be assigned to management of the action using existing and/or additional resources (**number of posts/FTEs**)						
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Officials or temporary staff[7] (15 01 01)	A*/AD	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
	B*, C*/AST	7	7	7	7	8	8	8
Staff financed[8] by art. 15 01 02		4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Other staff[9] financed by art. 15 01 04/05		22	27	27	29	29	30	30
TOTAL		**36**	**41**	**41**	**43**	**45**	**46**	**46**

6 Reference should be made to the specific legislative financial statement for the Executive Agency(ies) concerned.

7 Cost of which is NOT covered by the reference amount

8 Cost of which is NOT covered by the reference amount

9 Cost of which is included within the reference amount

9.1.4. Financial cost of human resources and associated costs not included in the reference amount

EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

Type of human resources	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
Officials and temporary staff (15 01 01)	*1,127*	*1,150*	*1,173*	*1,197*	*1,463*	*1,493*	*1,523*
Staff financed by art 15 01 02 (auxiliary, END, contract staff, etc.)	*0,232*	*0,236*	*0,241*	*0,245*	*0,251*	*0,256*	*0,261*
Total cost of Human Resources and associated costs (NOT in reference amount)	***1,359***	***1,386***	***1,414***	***1,442***	***1,714***	***1,749***	***1,784***

Calculation– ***Officials and Temporary agents***

(2005): 108.000 €

Indexation: 1,040 (2007), 1,061 (2008), 1,082 (2009), 1,104 (2010), 1,126 (2011), 1,149 (2012), 1,172 (2013)

10 (12) FTE: 3(4) A – 1(2) B – 6 C

Calculation– ***Staff financed under art. 15 01 02***

Contract staff: (1) A: 87.014 € - (1) B: 51.140 € - (1) C: 40.037 € - (1) END: 44.316 €

Indexation: 1,040 (2007), 1,061 (2008), 1,082 (2009), 1,104 (2010), 1,126 (2011), 1,149 (2012), 1,172 (2013)

3 FTE: 1A – 1B – 1C & 1 FTE: (END)

The costs for staff under point 9.1.4. are an estimate for the period 2007-2013. Taking into account the increase of operational credits year after year, these human resources would pass from 14 men/years in 2007 to 16 men/years in 2013.

No additional human resources are needed in 2007 compared with the situation in 2006.

9.1.5 Other administrative expenditure not included in reference amount

EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
15 01 02 11 01 – Missions	0,042	0,042	0,043	0,044	0,045	0,046	0,047	**0,309**
15 01 02 11 02 – Meetings & Conferences	0,328	0,336	0,342	0,349	0,356	0,363	0,370	**2,444**
15 01 02 11 03 – Committees[10]	0,068	0,069	0,071	0,072	0,073	0,075	0,076	**0,504**
15 01 02 11 04 – Studies & consultations								
15 01 02 11 05 - Information systems								
2 Total Other Management Expenditure (15 01 02 11)	**0,438**	**0,447**	**0,456**	**0,465**	**0,474**	**0,484**	**0,493**	**3,257**
3 Other expenditure of an administrative nature (specify including reference to budget line)								
Total Administrative expenditure, other than human resources and associated costs (NOT included in reference amount)	**0,438**	**0,447**	**0,456**	**0,465**	**0,474**	**0,484**	**0,493**	**3,257**

Calculation - ***Other administrative expenditure not included in reference amount***

Missions: 5persons * 10 missions * 825 € (average)

Meetings: 2meetings * 50 persons * (860 € + (2*150 €))

Meetings: 3meetings * 25 persons * 860 € (management Committee)

Conference: Annual conference - (approx. 200.000 €)

The needs for human and administrative resources shall be covered within the allocation granted to the managing DG in the framework of the annual allocation procedure.

9.2. Could the same results be achieved at lower costs?

Table 1 shows the target outputs (excluding technical assistance):

[10] Specify the type of committee and the group to which it belongs.

Table 1

Target Outputs	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Action 1:								
TOWN TWINNING	932	1.154	1.193	1.382	1.518	1.607	1.715	**9.501**
CITIZENS' PROJECTS AND SUPPORT MEASURES		13	23	31	36	36	50	**189**
Action 2								
STRUCTURAL SUPPORT TO "THINK TANKS"	7	12	13	16	20	22	24	**114**
STRUCTURAL SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS	13	15	16	18	20	21	22	**125**
CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECTS	50	78	83	90	95	100	100	**596**
Action 3								
HIGH VISIBILITY EVENTS	1	3	3	4	4	4	4	**23**
STUDIES		1	1	2	2	2	2	**10**
DISSEMINATION/ INFORMATION	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	**34**

Those outputs are calculated on the basis of the estimated average amounts for each measure, which reflect the needs expressed by the sector and correspond to its specificities. The cost of the programme is the lowest possible. The only way in which the cost of the programme could be significantly reduced would be by cutting down the number of projects supported. This would endanger the viability of the programme. The programme's multiplier effect would be seriously at risk and so would its expected results and impacts.

9.3. Could the same or better results be achieved with the same cost by using other instruments?

Under the heading 5, this report discusses the recourse to a Community action programme versus non-intervention and other approaches. It concludes that an action programme is needed, in order to respond properly to the expectations of citizens. The report also discusses the need for a new action programme versus the use of the existing one. It concludes that maintaining the current programme would not be satisfactory either, as it would imply not taking advantage of the experience acquired. The cost-efficiency would not be as high as it could be, notably because of a limited use of measures with multiplier effects. In light of the above, it can be concluded that no other instrument would allow for the same or better results to be achieved at the same cost.

9.4. Simplification

In its above-mentioned communications of 10 February and 9 March 2004, the Commission underlined the importance of profiting from the review of the legal instruments to significantly simplify the design and implementation of Community instruments, and to rationalise these new programmes as much as possible.

Simpler methods for beneficiaries

The Commission will examine all means currently possible for reducing the constraints on beneficiaries while respecting the financial rules in force, in particular by:

- simplifying forms and application methods;
- limiting, in some cases, the amount of information contained in grant agreements;
- making the award procedure more transparent and improving information for applicants;
- applying the principle of proportionality as much as possible, for example by using flat-rate systems for small contributions.
- awarding, in some cases, grants to natural persons;
- allowing, for small grants, co-financing in kind.

In order to facilitate the administrative management of the programme, the proposal for a legal basis incorporates the derogations authorised by Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 and its implementing measures.

Developing multiannual partnership agreements

The programme will develop the principle of multiannual partnerships, based on agreed objectives, building on the analysis of the results, in order to ensure mutual benefit, both for the civil society and the European Union.

Rationalised management

The programme will be managed in a centralised way, either directly or indirectly. In order to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, the Commission will entrust the management of some measures to an executive agency under the terms of the Council Regulation laying down the statute for executive agencies to be entrusted with certain tasks in the management of Community programmes[11] and the "Guidelines for the establishment and operation of executive agencies financed by the general budget of the European Communities"[12]. If necessary, the programme could also be partly managed at the Member states' level (centralised indirect management).

Different management methods will therefore be at the disposal of the Commission, allowing adaptation to the needs with best efficiency.

Simplification of budget lines

The programme will also simplify the financial management of these activities for the Commission, as there will be only one budget line instead of eight (administrative expenditure not included).

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[11] Council Regulation (EC) No 58/2003 of 19 December 2002, OJ L 11, 16.01.2003.

[12] C(2003)4645, 12.12.2003.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Mid-term report

The first report will be drawn up three years after the start of the programme (31 December 2010 at the latest). The object of this report is to provide an initial assessment of the results obtained at the halfway stage so that any changes or adjustments that are deemed necessary may be made for the second half of the programme (31 December 2011 at the latest).

Ex-post evaluation

The ex-post report on the impact of the action in question will be drawn up at the end of the seven-year programme (31 December 2015 at the latest). The object of this report is to assess the comparative results of support systems in the light of the programme objectives. As with the mid-term report, the Commission will call on outside consultants for assistance.

The specific aims of the programme and the actions will be subject to monitoring. Information providing a measure of the performance, results and impact of the programme will be also taken from audit reports on a sample of programme beneficiaries (30 per year).

11. COMMISSION PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION

In compliance with the Commission's guidelines on improved legislation at European level, the proposal for a legal basis was the subject of a preceding consultation. It is also based on the present impact study that integrated all the elements of an ex-ante evaluation. Finally, the proposed legal basis is simple and readable. It is structured in terms of objectives and actions and is flexible thanks to a clear but adaptable framework.

As a reminder, the new legal basis presents the following objectives:

The general objectives of this programme are to contribute to:

– giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, united in and enriched through its cultural diversity

– forging a European identity, based on recognised common values, history and culture

– enhancing mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and celebrating cultural diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue.

Taking account of the current situation and the needs identified, the most appropriate specific objectives that will be implemented on a transnational basis are to:

– bring together people from local communities across Europe to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future

– foster action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship through cooperation between civil society organisations at European level

– make the idea of Europe more tangible for its citizens by promoting and celebrating Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past

– encourage the balanced integration of citizens and civil society organisations from all Member States, contributing to intercultural dialogue and bringing to the fore both Europe's diversity and unity, with particular attention to the activities with Member States that have recently joined the European Union

This proposal has the following characteristics. It will:

– be targeted both at citizens and civil society organisations, in order to ensure complementarity and synergies

– put emphasise on the long term structuring of civil society

– encourage cross-fertilisation

– seek synergies with other Community activities concerning citizenship

– foster integration of citizens and organisations from newer member states into transeuropean activities or networks.

12. CONCLUSION

The content of the new legal basis maintains the essential elements of the Civic participation programme 2004–2006, and adapts them in the light of the past experiences and needs expressed during the wide consultation process. It is in line with new political priorities and provides a stronger internal coherence to the programme: it encourages synergies and cross-fertilisation between the different activities and organisations, in order to reach the maximum number of citizens and to have the greatest impact. Concerning the contents of the actions, the present legal basis both ensures the continuity of the Civic participation programme and opens itself to new activities, while providing a degree of flexibility in order to be able to adapt to future evolutions.