

Action programme in the field of lifelong learning; Commission implementing powers

2008/0025(COD) - 08/02/2008 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to reduce the time required for awarding grants covered by the “Lifelong learning” programme, 2007-2013.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: this proposal relates to the legislative act establishing the [Lifelong learning](#) programme 2007-2013 and its implementing powers. In order to implement the programme’s objectives, namely to provide individuals with the opportunity to take part in a dynamic learning process at all stages of their lives, the Commission relies on its implementing rights as expressed through “comitology” procedures. This is particularly pertinent in the case of selecting grant projects following calls for proposals.

To recall, the Commission’s right of implementation is set out, *inter alia*, in Decision No 1999/468/EC. In this Decision a number of procedures are set out including the “management” procedure and the “consultation” procedure. Both of these procedures involve the participation of the European Parliament. Under the consultation procedure, the Parliament has one month in which to examine a draft measure before the Commission makes a formal decision.

Under the terms of the lifelong learning programme, the “management” procedure is applied in cases relating to selection decisions concerning large grants or those involving politically sensitive issues, namely multilateral projects and networks related to the key activity of policy cooperation and innovation, and multilateral projects and networks representing sums greater than EUR 1 000 000, only. In principle, all other decisions are not subject to a comitology procedure. Wording in the Decision, however, implies that the “consultation” procedure should be applied to all selection decisions. The current wording can cause serious problems by delaying the adoption of decisions – some times by up to two to three months. Yet, in general, the projects affected are of a short-time frame only.

With Parliamentary consent, temporary solutions have been found in order to reduce the time required for scrutiny. Nevertheless, it is important that a long-term solution is put in place in order to prevent unnecessary delays.

CONTENT: the purpose of this proposal, therefore, is to amend Council Decision 1720/2006/EC, setting up the lifelong learning programme, in order to find a definitive solution.

The wording of the amendments has been framed so that the consultative procedure will disappear and be replaced, on the basis of a Commission declaration, with a procedure whereby the Commission provides the programme committee and the European Parliament with immediate information on the selection decisions which it adopts. This arrangement is fully in line with the legislator’s original intention when the Decision was being negotiated.

Upon approval, the amended Decision will make it possible to reduce, by two to three months, the time required for grants to be awarded and to ensure effective implementation of the activities and measures covered by the programme. The programme committee and the European Parliament will be informed immediately of the selection decisions. It will also help strengthen the principles of simplification and proportionality.

A similar revision of the basic instruments establishing programmes on (i) culture and (ii) youth and (iii) citizenship, is planned in parallel with this proposal.