

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

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The Commission presents a report on the impact certain Decisions modifying the legal bases of the European Programmes in the areas of Lifelong Learning, [Culture](#), [Youth](#) and [Citizenship](#).

It recalls that in December 2008, the European Parliament and the Council adopted four decisions amending the legal bases of the programmes in these areas. These decisions removed from the advisory procedure described in Council Decision 1999/468/EC certain selection decisions taken by the Commission for the award of grants within those programmes. The purpose was to simplify the procedures and shorten the time required for making decisions affecting directly the beneficiaries, in the interests of a quicker implementation of the programmes.

Under the original legal bases, it had been compulsory to consult within restrictive delays the European Parliament and the programme committees before the Commission could make the formal award decisions. Sometimes recess periods would add to the scrutiny periods, causing further delays in the implementation.

With the entry into force of the amending decisions, the **advisory procedure has been replaced by an information procedure**. The Commission is obliged to inform the European Parliament and the programme committees within two working days of the selection decisions it has taken. The information needs to include a description and an analysis of the applications received, a description of the assessment and of the selection procedure, and lists of both the projects proposed for funding and those rejected.

In addition to these decisions, Decision n°1298/2008/EC establishing the [Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013](#) action programme also requires the Commission to inform the European Parliament and the programme committee within two working days of the selection decisions it has taken.

Although the decision establishing the Erasmus Mundus action programme does not contain a reporting requirement, the Commission has decided, in the interest of transparency, to include in this report the impact of the new information procedure on the implementation of this programme as well. In this way, a single report covers the impact of all five decisions.

The report notes that for all programmes, the **time taken for the selection process from the submission deadline to the adoption of the grant award-decision and the notification of the beneficiaries has been considerably shortened**.

Lifelong Learning programme: in 2009 grant award decisions in the actions that can be compared were notified to the beneficiaries on average 123 days after the submission deadline, with an average gain was of 37 days in comparison to 2008 and of 32 in comparison to 2007. In one case (Leonardo de Vinci – Transfer of Innovation), the period in 2009 was slightly longer than in 2008 due to the need to examine thoroughly a specific case that involved the protection of the financial interests of the EU.

Culture programme: notification in 2009 occurred on average 152 days after the submission deadline, with an average gain of 54.5 days when in comparison to 2008 and of 117 in comparison to 2007.

Youth in Action programme: the average time gain was more than 40 days compared to 2008 and of more than 75 in comparison with 2007. Grant-award decisions and the subsequent notification of

beneficiaries occurred at the latest 3.5 months after the submission deadline, whereas under the consultation procedure, the average selection time was of 5.5 months.

Europe for Citizens programme: the gain was, on average, 22 days compared to 2008 and 12 days compared to 2007. However, two actions present an exception: no time was saved for actions 1.4 and 1.5 between 2009 and 2008. These projects ("Citizens' projects and "Support measures") are more complex and larger in scale than other more traditional projects such as town twinning. However, this had no impact on beneficiaries as they were notified of the result of the selection in time for the projects to start as scheduled.

Erasmus Mundus scholarships: the reduction was of 27 days in comparison with the 2007 scholarships and of 10 in comparison with 2008. For the joint programmes the reduction was of 74 days, despite the fact that 2009 was also the first year in which, in addition to the Masters' courses, PhDs were funded by the programme. In all cases the information to the European Parliament and programme committees was provided within the set delay of two working days. The amount of information transmitted has not changed compared to the comitology procedure, but the removal of the formalities associated with the advisory procedure, concerning for example the launch of written procedures and the upload in the registry, has resulted nonetheless in a significant reduction of the administrative burden.

Conclusion: the information procedure replacing the formal advisory procedure under the Comitology Decision has been successfully implemented in all five programmes. All the necessary information required in the decisions has been systematically transmitted by the Commission to the European Parliament and the programme committees within the compulsory deadline of two working days. The Commission has not received any reactions or complaints from the European Parliament or the programme committees on the information transmitted or on the procedure itself. Several beneficiaries have instead expressed their satisfaction with the reduced time taken for selection decisions as a result.

The substantial shortening of the delays has increased the efficiency of the programmes by enabling the applicants to be informed on the selection decisions further in advance, with positive effects on the sustainability of the partnerships implementing the projects, and therefore on the quality of the projects themselves. For all programmes, the new procedure has enabled the increased effectiveness of project management.