

Fight against fraud: protection of the Community financial interests, Hercule II action programme 2007-2013

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In accordance with Decision 878/2007, the Commission presents its annual overview with information on the results of the Hercule II Programme. This overview provides information on actions implemented under the 2011 Hercule II budget and monitors the results of the programme for which information on the implementation of actions was made available in 2011.

To recall, the Hercule programme was established by Decision 804/2004/EC for the period 2004-06. By Decision 878/2007/EC, the programme was extended to cover 2007-2013 as Hercule II, with a financial envelope of EUR 98.5 million and an average annual budget of around EUR 14 million.

The programme is the only instrument specifically dedicated to protecting the financial interests of the EU by supporting the fight against irregularities, fraud and corruption affecting the EU Budget.

The report demonstrates that the activities funded under the Hercule II programme were successful overall. However, a comprehensive assessment of the Hercule II programme can only be made after the programme ends in 2013. The evaluation of the programme will take place in 2014.

81.5% of the available budget for the Hercule II programme was committed. It should be noted, however, that half of the budget was spent on grant agreements, which require co-funding from national or regional authorities. Budget restrictions in Member States eventually led to the withdrawal of several successful proposals. Moreover, budgets for grants often include cost items that are not eligible for funding. This makes it difficult to achieve a higher implementation rate.

On 19 December 2011, the Commission adopted a [proposal for a new programme](#), Hercule III, under the Multi-Annual Financial Framework MFF (2014-2020). This proposal was accompanied by an impact assessment, which confirmed the need for and utility of the programme.