

Life long learning: integrated action programme comprising Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig programmes and the Jean Monnet programme

2004/0153(COD) - 14/07/2004 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish an integrated programme for Community action in the field of lifelong learning from 2007-2013.

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

CONTENT: this integrated lifelong learning programme builds on the current Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes, the eLearning programme, the Europass initiative, and the various actions funded through the Community action programme to promote bodies active at European level and to support specific activities in the fields of education and training. In addition, the Erasmus Mundus programme, which runs to 2008, will be incorporated as an additional programme within the Integrated Programme from 2009.

This restructuring responds to the need to reinforce the strengths and address the perceived discontinuities and lack of synergy resulting from the current more fragmented programme design, as revealed by interim evaluations of Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci, and by the public consultation on the options for the new generation of programmes.

The general objective of the Integrated Programme is to contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, while ensuring good protection of the environment for future generations. In particular, it aims to foster interchange, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the Community so that they become a world quality reference.

The Programme has nine specific objectives, including the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity, and the reinforcement of the role of lifelong learning in creating a sense of European citizenship and encouraging tolerance and respect for other peoples and cultures. These objectives will be pursued through the implementation of four sectoral programmes, one transversal programme, and the Jean Monnet programme ('the Specific Programmes'.) The provisions relating to the Integrated Programme will also govern the Specific Programmes, to which specific provisions also apply.

The sectoral programmes comprise the following:

- Comenius, for general education activities concerning schools up to and including upper secondary level;
- Erasmus, for education and advanced training activities at higher education level;
- Leonardo da Vinci, for all other aspects of vocational education and training;
- Grundtvig for adult education.

The transversal programme incorporates four key activities and makes specific provision for language learning and ICT-related activity where these fall outside the specific programmes.

The Jean Monnet programme supports action related to European integration and European institutions and associations in education and training.

The integrated approach is designed on the one hand to preserve essential continuity with past experience, hence an architecture based on the main types of education and training provision found in all Member States and retention of the established programme names, and on the other to increase the coherence and synergy between all its constituent parts, so as to permit a greater and more flexible range of actions to be supported more efficiently. The Integrated Programme will therefore comprise common actions and procedures across all its parts, and a single programme committee to ensure overall coherence.

The new quantified targets are as follows:

- 1 in 20 school pupils involved in Comenius actions 2007 – 2013;
- 3 million Erasmus students by 2011;
- 150,000 Leonardo placements by 2013;
- 25,000 Grundtvig mobilities by 2013.

The Commission views such ambitious targets as essential to make the new programme an adequate instrument to support the achievement of the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy by 2010.

The proposed indicative financial amount is set at EUR 13.620 billion for the 7 years of the programme.

The draft decision proposes that the following activities should be administered via National Agencies: mobility, small-scale partnerships between institutions, transfer of innovation projects in the field of vocational education and training, and some work on the dissemination and exploitation of results.

The Decision will be implemented over the period from 1 January 2007 until 31 December 2013. However, preparatory measures may be implemented as from the date of entry into force.

For a more detailed assessment of the budgetary implications of this proposal, please refer to the financial statement.