Implementation of an information and communication strategy on the euro and Economic and Monetary Union

2005/2078(INI) - 11/08/2004 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present a new phase of the European Commission's information and communication on the euro and Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

CONTENT : Information and communication on the euro and EMU clearly remains a priority for the EU:

- the enlargement of the EU on May 1, 2004 will lead to the expansion of the euro area in the future, when Treaty conditions are met.

- the introduction of the euro, a historic step in the construction of the EU, needs to be consolidated by increasing public support for the single currency.

- the introduction of euro notes and coins has had a huge positive influence on how third countries view the EU and its economic role. This trend should be encouraged.

The document focuses on strengthening interinstitutional cooperation and developing structured partnerships with the Member States, while continuing to ensure overall consistency. The aim is to increase public knowledge within and outside the EU on the working of EMU and to contribute to a smooth changeover in those Member States which adopt the euro. The Communication explains why the euro remains a communication priority, describes the general principles of the strategy and the key players' roles, identifies the targets and sets out the operational aspects.

The following points should be noted:

- the communication strategy is based on decentralised activities while consistency will be ensured by partnership agreements. Priorities must be defined;

- the key players are the Member States and the Commission, with emphasis also given to institutional cooperation between Parliament and Commission. Implementation is to be based on shared objectives, agreed on by the three Community institutions, notably via the Interinstitutional Group on Information (IGI). Cooperation and well defined roles between Member States, the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament is an important key for a successful information and communication campaign. The Commission will report to the Member States and to the European Parliament on the ongoing evaluation of its communication activities;

- the Member States are best placed to create information tools and products and to encourage the regional and local authorities, public interest services and networks of civil society organisations to act as information relays. Activities will follow the form, content and timetable set out in the Member States' programmes;

- the Communication discusses the specific target groups of the euro area, countries with derogations, the new Member States and third countries. Within these country categories, information and communication must focus both on specific target groups (e.g. political representatives, civil society, youth, the media and business world) and on the general public;

- the tools of the communication strategy include paper publications, Internet and CD-ROM, a range of PR products, public information services (freephone information service), and info-bus, travelling exhibitions, information evenings, etc. Regular surveys on a country-by-country basis are essential to define the scope, messages and values of the communication, and to measure the impact of the campaign and the efficiency of the tools used;

- the Commission, Member States and European Central Bank will coordinate their communication activities. To this end, the Commission will continue to work closely with the directors of communication of Member States' Ministries of Finance and Central Banks and with the European Central Bank, within the "Directors of communication network", which will have a central role in defining and implementing the strategy and linking it with other activities in Member States.

The main areas of communication will be: partnership with the Member States, the twinning programme, partnership with business and civil society, networking with information relays and other natural partners, measurement and feedback, external information activities and publications and other information products. In this context, twinning agreements between old and new Member States will be concluded, so the old Member States can share their experience and best practices acquired in the activities during the changeover to the euro in 1999 and 2002.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- Budget lines and headings: 01 02 04 PRINCE – Communication on Economic and Monetary Union, including the euro.

- Overall figures:

- Total allocation for action: EUR 6.000.000 for commitment in 2004.

- Period for application: 2004-2006.

- Overall total estimate of expenditure: Commitments EUR 16000,000; Payments EUR 12000,000.

- Total financial impact for the operational part: PRINCE – Communication on Economic and Monetary Union, including the Euro: Total over 3 years EUR 16000,000.

- Calculation of costs by measure envisaged for 2004: Total EUR 6000000, comprised of: Partnership with Member States: EUR 3000 000; Networking, information relays and other natural partners: EUR 1130 000; Measurement, feedback : EUR 600 000; External information activities: EUR 890 000; Publications and other information products: EUR 380 000.

Total staff: 12.