Basic information

2008/0025(COD) COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Regulation	Procedure completed
Action programme in the field of lifelong learning; Commission implementing powers Amending Decision No 1720/2006/EC 2004/0153(COD) **Subject** 4.40.01 European area for education, training and lifelong learning 4.45.02 Cultural programmes and actions, assistance	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	CULT Culture and Education	BATZELI Katerina (PSE)	31/03/2008
Council of the European Union	**Council configuration**	**Meetings**	**Date**
	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	2905	2008-11-20
European Commission	**Commission DG**		**Commissioner**
	Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs		FIGEĽ Ján

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
08/02/2008	Legislative proposal published	COM(2008)0061	Summary
21/02/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
24/06/2008	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
27/06/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A6-0276/2008	
02/09/2008	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T6-0372/2008	Summary
02/09/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
20/11/2008	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
20/11/2008	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's 1st reading		
16/12/2008	Final act signed		
16/12/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

30/12/2008	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2008/0025(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
Amendments and repeals	Amending Decision No 1720/2006/EC 2004/0153(COD)
Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 150-p4 EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 149-p4
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/6/59540

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE406.031	09/06/2008	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE407.852	16/06/2008	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A6-0276/2008	27/06/2008	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T6-0372/2008	02/09/2008	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Draft final act	03677/2008/LEX	16/12/2008	

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(2008)0061	08/02/2008	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2008)6073	17/10/2008	
Follow-up document	COM(2010)0411	30/07/2010	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0999/2008	28/05/2008	

Additional information		
Source	**Document**	**Date**
National parliaments	IPEX	
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act	
Decision 2008/1357 OJ L 350 30.12.2008, p. 0056	Summary

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

2008/0025(COD) - 16/12/2008 - Final act

PURPOSE: to reduce the time required for awarding grants covered by the lifelong learning programme for the period 2007-2013.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision No 1357/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1720/2006/EC establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning.

CONTENT: until now, the implementing measures of Decision No 1720/2006/EC establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning were adopted in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 9(2) of that Decision, namely in accordance with the advisory procedure established by Council Decision 1999/468/EC laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission. However, the wording of this paragraph of the Decision results in particular in selections decisions being subject to the advisory procedure and to the European Parliament's right of scrutiny.

However, these procedural requirements add two to three months to the process of awarding grants to applicants, causing many delays for recipients and providing no added value given the nature of the grants awarded.

In order to allow selection decisions to be implemented more quickly and efficiently, it is necessary to replace the advisory procedure with an obligation on the Commission to inform the European Parliament and the Member States without delay about any measures taken for the implementation of Decision No 1720/2006/EC without the assistance of a committee.

In accordance with the compromise reached at first reading between the Parliament and the Council, it is provided that the Commission shall inform the Committee (referred to in the Decision) and the European Parliament of all other selection decisions it has taken for the implementation of this Decision within two working days of the adoption of the decisions in question (for example, descriptions and an analysis of the applications received, a description of the assessment and selection procedure, and lists of both the projects proposed for funding and those rejected).

It is also provided that the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the impact of this Decision by 30 June 2010.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 30/12/2008.

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

2008/0025(COD) - 02/09/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 620 votes to 48, with 16 abstentions, a legislative resolution under 1st reading of the co decision procedure, amending the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1720/2006/EC establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning. The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Katerina **BATZELI** (PES, EL) on behalf of the Committee on Culture and Education. The amendments were the result of a compromise between Parliament and Council.

The Commission had proposed eliminating the advisory procedure for selection decisions in order to simplify decision-making procedures in the interests of potential beneficiaries of the grants. However, Parliament considered that in order to allow selection decisions to be implemented more

quickly and efficiently, it was necessary to replace the advisory procedure with an obligation on the Commission to inform the European Parliament and the Member States without delay about any measures taken for the implementation of Decision No 1720/2006/EC without the assistance of a committee.

Accordingly, a new clause states that the Commission shall inform the Committee and the European Parliament, of all other selection decisions taken by the Commission for the implementation of the Decision, within two working days of the adoption of the decisions in question. This information shall include descriptions and an analysis of the applications received, a description of the assessment and selection procedure, and lists of both the projects proposed for funding and the projects rejected for funding.

Parliament added that the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and the Council on the impact of the Decision 18 months after its entry into force.

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 learningprogramme 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 decision 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 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.

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

2008/0025(COD) - 30/07/2010

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.