

Trainers' Digest



**ETUI-REHS EDUCATION 's
information bulletin about EU
training programmes**

New Programme "Europe for citizens" (2007-2013)

A new Programme "Europe for citizens" has been proposed by the European Commission, as a continuation of the Programme "Active European Citizenship" which will expire at the end of 2006.

The "Active European Citizenship" programme was the heir to the EU Budget Lines which, in the past, used to provide grants for activities aimed at promotion of a dialogue with civil society organisations, including trade unions.

The Commission had originally proposed a programme budget of 235 million euros for the period 2007 – 2013.

However, following discussion in the Council, the proposed programme budget is now 190 million euros.

Objectives

The "Europe for Citizens" programme is seen as contributing to the following general objectives:

- Giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, which is democratic and world-oriented, united in and enriched through its cultural diversity, thus developing citizenship of the European Union;
- Developing a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture;
- Fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union among its citizens;
- Enhancing mutual understanding between European citizens, and respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity whilst contributing to intercultural dialogue.

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In specific terms, the programme is likely to have the following objectives, which are to be implemented on a trans-national basis:

- Bringing together people from local communities across Europe to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future;
- Fostering action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture through cooperation within civil society organisations at European level;
- Bringing Europe closer to its citizens by promoting Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past;
- Encouraging interaction between citizens and civil society organisations from all participating countries, contributing to intercultural dialogue and bringing to the fore both Europe's diversity and unity, with particular emphasis on activities aimed at developing closer ties between citizens from Member States which joined the European Union before 30 April 2004 and those which have joined it since.

Types of actions

The Programme's activities are divided into 4 actions and cover many of the activities supported in the 2004-2006 programme to promote 'Active European Citizenship'.

However, it should be noted that not all of the previously supported activities will appear in the same format and structure as in the previous programme.

Action 1 - 'Active citizens for Europe' - currently consists of:

- town-twinning (including citizens' meetings and conferences);
- citizens' projects and support measures (including a new project category based on the experience of running pilot actions in 2006-2007, and training and information measures).

Action 2 - 'Active civil society in Europe' - currently consists of:

- structural support for European public policy research organisations (i.e. operating grants);
- structural support for civil society organisations at European level (i.e. operating grants);
- support for projects initiated by civil society organisations (this activity replaces the previous separate calls for proposals run by cross-sectoral trade union organisations, NGOs and European associations/federations).

Action 3 - 'Together for Europe' - currently consists of:

- high visibility events, such as commemorations, awards, artistic events, Europe-wide conferences;
- studies, surveys and opinion polls;
- information and dissemination tools.

Action 4 – 'Active European Remembrance' - currently consists of:

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- preservation of the main sites and archives associated with deportations and commemoration of the victims (this action develops and continues the activities first supported by decision no 792/2004/CE of the Council and the European Parliament of 21/04/2005).

Eligible applicants and countries

The programme will be open to all stakeholders promoting active European citizenship, in particular to local authorities and municipal organisations, European public policy research organisations (think-tanks), citizens' groups, and other civil society organisations, from:

- the Member States
- the EFTA countries
- Candidate countries benefiting from a pre-accession strategy
- Western Balkans

Interest to trade unions

It is worth noting that civil society organisations as mentioned in article 5 are defined as including "inter alia, trade unions, educational institutions and organisations active in the field of voluntary work and amateur sport."

However, as has been stated, the specific call for proposals open to cross-sectoral trade union organisations, which DG EAC had managed for a number of years prior to 2006, has not been continued in the proposed new programme.

There is a lot of evidence to show the importance trade unions attach to encouraging their members to discuss and engage in 'citizenship' and civil society issues such as the proposed new EU constitution, the Lisbon strategy, lifelong learning, the development of social dialogue, etc. It is therefore to be hoped that the thematic areas and priorities established by the new programme will take into consideration the potential contribution of trade unions as the largest Europe-wide network of membership-based organisations active in civil society.

Who administers the Programme

Management of the "Europe for Citizens" programme has been split between the European Commission, DG Education and Culture, and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency recently created by the Commission.

The EAC Executive Agency will be largely responsible for implementing and managing actions 1, 2 and 4 of the programme.

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All relevant information can be obtained from:

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
Unit P7 Citizenship
BOUR 00/13
B- 1049 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 299 11 11
Fax: +32 2 296 23 89
E-mail: eacea-p7@ec.europa.eu
<http://eacea.cec.eu.int/static/en/citizenship/index.htm>

The Commission department responsible for implementing and managing action 3 will be Unit D4 of Directorate General Education and Culture:

E-mail: eac-soc-civile@ec.europa.eu
Tel: + 32 2 299 00 61
Fax: +32 2 299 93 02

Information for Trade Unions and advice

The online library of ETUI-REHS Education's Information Service will give updated details about the future calls for proposals at:

http://education.etui-rehs.org/etuco/en/eu_information/library/default.cfm

If you need special assistance with preparing your project proposal, or suggestions on partner searches, please contact us here: spennell@etui-rehs.org

The Call for proposals, including funding, eligibility rules, application packages and relevant contact details for further information, are also posted at the following EC web address:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/activecitizenship/index_en.htm

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