

Council of the European Union: Multi-annual Community Programme to Stimulate the Establishment of the Information Society

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Further to the Commission's proposal (see IRIS 1997-3: 3) and after the European Parliament had delivered its opinion, the Council of the European Union, in a Decision of 30 March 1998, adopted a multi-annual Community programme to stimulate the establishment of the information society in Europe. The objectives of the programme are:

- to increase public awareness and understanding of the potential impact of the information society and its new applications;
- to optimise the socio-economic advantages of the information society, by analysing its technical, economic, social and regulatory aspects, by evaluating the challenges it generates in terms of employment, and by encouraging synergy and cooperation of action carried out at European and national levels;
- to strengthen the role and visibility of Europe in the worldwide context of the information society. Each of these objectives is matched by a number of actions to be carried out, including the dissemination and gathering of information on the needs of citizens and users, improving information aimed at the general public, monitoring of awareness of individuals and their familiarisation with the services and applications of the information society, the creation of a forum of specialists on the information society, the identification and evaluation of the financial mechanisms needed to develop the information society, identification of barriers to the functioning of the internal market in this field and the exchange of information with other countries. In order to achieve these objectives and carry out its actions, the Commission could, inter alia, contract out the tasks concerning analyses, exploratory or detailed studies, joint financing of action, organising meetings of experts, lectures, seminars and the publication and dissemination of information.

The programme will cover the period from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2002. It has a budget of ECU 25 million for the overall period, of which a maximum of 30% for the awareness section, 57% for optimisation, and a maximum of 13% for the international section.

The Commission is responsible for its implementation and will be assisted by a committee comprising representatives of the Member States and chaired by the Commission's representative. The Commission must submit an evaluation report to the other Community institutions after two years and on completion of the programme.

Participation in the programme is open to legal entities established in other countries and to international organisations, on condition that they make a real contribution to its implementation, and taking into account the principle of mutual advantage.

Council Decision of 30 March 1998 adopting a multi-annual Community programme to stimulate the establishment of the Information Society in Europe (“Information Society”). OJEC of 7 April 1998, No L 107: 10-15

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1998:107:0010:0015:EN:PDF>

