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Subject:	Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme “Europe for Citizens” <i>- Partial general approach</i>

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. On 14 December 2011 the Commission adopted its proposal for a Council Regulation establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme “Europe for Citizens”<sup>1</sup>. The proposed programme builds upon the current programme of the same name while simplifying its structure and attempting to increase the programme’s efficiency and visibility.

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<sup>1</sup> COM (2011) 884 final - 18719/11.

The main objective of the Programme is to bring the European Union closer to its citizens by increasing citizens' awareness and understanding about the Union and by promoting European citizenship. The Programme consists of two strands, one focusing on remembrance and common history and the other on civic participation at the Union level, which are complemented by a horizontal strand in order to increase overall visibility of the Programme. The proposed Programme is based on Article 352 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The Commission has proposed a total budget of 229 mil. EUR which is comparable to the budget of the current programme.

## **II. WORK IN THE COUNCIL**

2. The preparatory bodies of the Council have examined the Commission proposal during six meetings between January and April. Delegations in general welcomed the Commission proposal, in particular the balance achieved by, on the one hand, simplifying the structure of the Programme, whilst, on the other hand, including an annex which sets out more detailed information on both initiatives that could be supported under each of the three strands (remembrance, civic participation and valorisation) and on the management and monitoring of the Programme, including indicators against which the progress regarding the performance of the Programme can be measured.
3. Nevertheless, during the examination, several parts of the text have been adjusted in response to the concerns of delegations, including some recitals. The amended text as it results from the work of the Council's preparatory bodies can be found in Annex to this report. The main changes made to the Commission proposal can be summarised as follows:

### ***a) Types of activities funded (Article 3 (2))***

The activities to be funded under the Programme have been organised according to the type of the activities, rather than thematically. Within this restructuring, a visible place was given to the national contact points for Europe for Citizens as the principal advice and information structures that implement the Programme.

**b) *Access to the programme (Article 6)***

Delegations have endorsed the idea proposed by the Commission that the Programme should be open to all stakeholders promoting European citizenship and integration, whilst enlarging access to regional authorities and organisations, and to cultural and youth organisations.

**c) *Implementing provisions (Articles 8 and 9)***

Delegations have supported the view of the Commission that, given the small size of the Programme's budget, the implementation phase should be as light and fast as possible, and as a consequence they have agreed with the use of the advisory procedure.

Nevertheless, in order to balance this flexibility with an appropriate involvement of Member States during the implementation of the Programme, two main changes have been made. Firstly, an indicative budgetary breakdown between the three strands has been included in the Regulation itself (Annex to Annex, Sections I and II), and secondly, a new article on communication has been introduced according to which the Commission will provide *ex-post* information to Member States on selection decisions (Article 13a).

**d) *Indicators***

Delegations have supported the need for indicators as a means to measure the impact of the Programme and assess its progress towards the set out objectives. However, the proposed structure of indicators has been simplified, qualitative indicators have been added, such as the quality of projects applications, and the description of indicators has been made more precise. Particular attention was paid to the geographical indicator which was modified so it can be clearly shown how many submitted and selected projects come from a given country.

4. Since the proposal for the Europe for Citizens is part of the Multiannual Financial Framework (2014 - 2020), the general approach does not include the financial envelope in Article 12 (1), which is therefore indicated in square brackets in the text. Similarly, due to the ongoing negotiations on the revision of the Financial Regulation, the second half of Article 8 (1) and the whole of Article 13 are also excluded from the general approach and are put in square brackets. The recitals will also be dealt with at a later stage.

### **III. TASKS FOR COUNCIL**

5. The text resulting from the work of Council's preparatory bodies<sup>2</sup> meets with the broad support of all delegations, subject to parliamentary scrutiny reservations from DE, DK, CZ, FR and UK.

Council is invited to confirm the agreement achieved by reaching a partial general approach on its meeting on 10-11 May 2012.

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<sup>2</sup> Following the meeting of Coreper on 25 April, two new recitals have been added (see footnotes 5 and 7).

Proposal for a

**COUNCIL REGULATION**

**establishing for the period 2014-2020 the programme "Europe for Citizens"**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 352 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national Parliaments,

Having regard to the consent of the European Parliament<sup>3</sup>,

Acting in accordance with a special legislative procedure,

Whereas:

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

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<sup>3</sup> OJ C , , p. .

## *Article 1*

### **Establishment and general objectives**

1. This regulation establishes the programme "Europe for Citizens" (hereinafter referred to as "the programme") for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020.
2. Under the overall aim of bringing Europe closer to its citizens the general objectives of the programme are:
  - contributing to the understanding about the European Union;
  - fostering European citizenship and improving conditions for civic participation at Union level.

## *Article 2*

### **Specific objectives of the programme**

The programme shall have the following specific objectives which shall be implemented through actions at transnational level or with a clear European dimension:

1. raise awareness of remembrance, common history and values and the Union's aim that is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples by stimulating debate, reflection and development of networks;<sup>4</sup>
2. encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal engagement and volunteering at Union level.

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<sup>4</sup> New recital 8a: "The European Parliament Resolution of 2 April 2009 on European conscience and totalitarianism and the Council Conclusions of 9-10 June 2011 on the memory of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe underline the importance of keeping the memories of the past alive as a means of moving beyond the past and building the future, and highlight the value of the European Union's role in facilitating, sharing and promoting the collective memory of these crimes."

### Structure of the programme and supported actions

1. The programme shall consist of the following two strands:

- (a) "European remembrance and European citizenship",
- (b) "Democratic engagement and civic participation".

The two strands shall be complemented by horizontal actions for analysis, dissemination and exploitation of project results ("Valorisation"<sup>5</sup> actions).

2. In order to achieve its objectives, the programme shall finance *inter alia* the following types of actions, implemented at transnational level or with a clear European dimension:

- (a) Mutual learning and cooperation activities such as:
  - Citizens' meetings, town-twinning, networks of twinned towns;
  - projects implemented by transnational partnerships including different types of stakeholders listed in Article 6;
  - remembrance projects with a clear European dimension;
  - exchanges based on the use of ICT and/or social media.
- (b) Structural support for organisations such as:
  - organisations of a general European interest as defined in Article .. of implementing rules of Regulation XX/2012 [Financial Regulation];
  - Europe for Citizens Contact Points.
- (c) Union level analytical activities such as:
  - studies on issues related to the objectives of the programme.

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<sup>5</sup> The term "valorisation" to be verified by legal linguists at a later stage (concerns the English version).

(d) Awareness raising and dissemination activities to exploit and further valorise the results of the supported initiatives such as:

- Union level events including conferences, commemorations or award ceremonies;
- peer reviews, expert meetings and seminars.

3. Initiatives related to actions listed in paragraph 2 are described in Annex to this Regulation.

#### *Article 4*

#### **Measures**

Measures may take the form of grants or public procurement contracts.

1. Union grants may be provided through operating grants or action grants.
2. Public procurement contracts will cover the purchase of services, such as for organising events, studies and research, information and dissemination tools, monitoring and evaluation.

#### *Article 5*

#### **Participation in the programme<sup>6</sup>**

1. The programme shall be open to the participation of the following countries:

- (a) the Member States;

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<sup>6</sup> New recital 11a: “The objectives of establishing deep and sustainable democracy and developing a thriving civil society are common to both the Europe for Citizens programme and the proposed regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument. The Union offers to the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Instrument a privileged relationship, building upon a mutual commitment to shared values and principles.”



- (b) acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates, in accordance with the general principles and general terms and conditions for the participation of those countries in Union programmes established in the respective Framework Agreements, Association Council Decisions or similar Agreements;
- (c) the EFTA countries party to the EEA Agreement, in accordance with the provisions of that Agreement.

#### *Article 6*

### **Access to the programme**

The programme shall be open to all stakeholders promoting European citizenship and integration, in particular local and regional authorities and organisations, twinning committees, European public policy research organisations (think-tanks), civil society organisations (including survivors' associations), and cultural, youth, educational and research organisations.

#### *Article 7*

### **Cooperation with international organisations**

The programme may support joint activities in the field covered by this programme, with relevant international organisations, such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO, on the basis of joint contributions and in accordance with the Financial Regulation<sup>7</sup>.

#### *Article 8*

### **Implementation of the programme**

1. The Commission shall implement the Programme [in accordance with the Financial Regulation (EU) No xxx/2012].

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<sup>7</sup> Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (the Financial Regulation) OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1. - Regulation as amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006 (OJ L 390, 30.12.2006, p. 1).

2. In order to implement the programme, the Commission shall adopt annual work programmes by way of implementing acts in accordance with the advisory procedure referred to in Article 9 (2). They shall set out the objectives pursued, the expected results, the method of implementation and the total amount of the financing plan. They shall also contain a description of the actions to be financed, an indication of the amount allocated to each action and an indicative implementation timetable. They shall include for grants the priorities, the essential evaluation criteria and the maximum rate of co-financing.

#### *Article 9*

#### **Committee**

1. The Commission shall be assisted by a committee. That committee shall be a committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011.
2. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.

#### *Article 10*

#### **Stakeholder consultation**

The Commission shall have a regular dialogue with the beneficiaries of the programme and relevant stakeholders and experts.

#### *Article 11*

#### **Coherence with other Union instruments**

The Commission shall ensure the coherence and the complementarity between this programme and instruments in other areas of Union action, especially education, vocational training and youth, sport, culture and the audiovisual sector, fundamental rights and freedoms, social inclusion, gender equality, combating discrimination, research and innovation, information society, the enlargement policy and the Union external action.

## *Article 12*

### **Budget**

1. The financial envelope for the implementation of the programme shall be [€229 million.]
2. The resources allocated to communication actions under this Regulation shall also contribute to covering the corporate communication of the political priorities of the European Union<sup>8</sup>, as far as they are related to the general objectives of this Regulation.

## *[Article 13*

### **Protection of the European Union's financial interest**

1. The Commission shall take appropriate measures ensuring that, when actions financed under this Regulation are implemented, the financial interests of the European Union are protected by the application of preventive measures against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities, by effective checks and, if irregularities are detected, by the recovery of the amounts wrongly paid and, where appropriate, by effective, proportionate and deterrent penalties.
2. The Commission or its representatives and the Court of Auditors shall have the power of audit, on the basis of documents and on-the-spot, over all grant beneficiaries, contractors and subcontractors who have received Union funds under the Programme.

The European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) may carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections on economic operators concerned directly or indirectly by such funding in accordance with the procedures laid down in Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 with a view to establishing whether there has been fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the European Union in connection with a grant agreement or grant decision or a contract concerning Union funding.

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<sup>8</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A Budget for Europe 2020 Part II (Policy fiches), COM(2011) 500 final, 29.06.2011.

Without prejudice to the first and second sub-paragraphs, cooperation agreements with third countries and international organisations as well as grant agreements, grant decisions and contracts resulting from the implementation of this Regulation shall expressly empower the Commission, the Court of Auditors and OLAF to conduct such audits, on-the-spot checks and inspections.]

### *Article 13 a*

#### **Communication**

The Commission shall provide the Member States with information concerning the projects which have received the Union's funding by transmitting the selection decisions within two weeks of their adoption.

### *Article 14*

#### **Monitoring and evaluation**

1. The Commission shall ensure that the Programme is regularly monitored against its objectives using performance related indicators. The results of the monitoring and evaluation process shall be utilised in implementing the programme. Monitoring shall include in particular the drawing up of the reports referred to in paragraph 3 (a) and (c).

Where relevant, indicators should be disaggregated by gender and age.

- 1a. Regarding the specific objectives referred to in Article 2, progress will be measured against indicators laid down in Annex to this Regulation.
2. The Commission shall ensure regular, external and independent evaluation of the programme and shall report to the European Parliament on a regular basis.

3. The Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions:
- (a) an interim evaluation report on the results obtained and on the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of the programme no later than 31 December 2017;
  - (b) a communication on the continuation of the programme no later than 31 December 2018;
  - (c) an ex-post evaluation report no later than 1 July 2023.

#### *Article 15*

#### **Transitional provision**

Decision No 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council shall be repealed with effect from 1 January 2014.

Actions started before 31 December 2013 pursuant to Decision No 1904/2006/EC shall continue to be governed, until their completion, by that Decision.

As provided by Article 18 of the Financial Regulation, the appropriations corresponding to assigned revenue arising from the repayment of amounts wrongly paid pursuant to Decision 1904/2006/EC may be made available to the Programme.

*Article 16*

**Entry into force**

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.  
It shall apply from 1 January 2014.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council*

*The President*

## **I. DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVES**

Complementary information on access to the programme

### **STRAND 1: European remembrance and European citizenship**

It will support activities that invite to reflection on European cultural diversity and on common values in the broadest sense, taking into account gender equality. Funds may be available for initiatives reflecting on causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history (especially but not exclusively Nazism that led to the Holocaust, Stalinism and totalitarian communist regimes) and to commemorate the victims of their crimes. The strand should also encompass activities concerning other defining moments and reference points in recent European history. In particular, it will give preference to actions which encourage tolerance, mutual understanding and reconciliation as a means of moving beyond the past and building the future, in particular with a view to reaching the younger generation.

As an indication, approximately 20 % of the total budget allocated to the programme will be devoted to this strand.

### **STRAND 2: Democratic engagement and civic participation**

The strand will accommodate activities that cover civic participation in the broadest sense with particular focus on structuring methods to ensure a lasting effect of funded activities.

It will give preference to initiatives and projects with a clear link to the European political agenda.

The strand may also cover projects and initiatives that develop opportunities for mutual understanding, solidarity, societal engagement and volunteering at Union level.

Much remains to be done to attract more young people into democratic participation and more women in political and economic decision-making. Their voices should be better heard and acted upon by those responsible for taking the policy decisions that impact on people's lives.

As an indication, approximately 60 % of the total budget allocated to the programme will be devoted to this strand.

### **HORIZONTAL ACTION: Valorisation**

This action shall be defined for the Programme overall and be applicable to both Strand 1 and Strand 2.

It will support initiatives that boost the transferability of results, provide better return on investment and increase learning from experience. The *raison d'être* of this action is the further "valorisation" and exploitation of the results of the initiatives launched for the purpose of ensuring their lasting effect.

It will include "capacity building" - the development of support measures to exchange best practices, to pool experiences between stakeholders at local and regional levels including public authorities, and to develop new skills, for example through training. The latter could include peer-to-peer exchange, training for trainers, as well as for example the development of ICT tools providing information on the organisations/projects funded by the programme.

As an indication, approximately 10 % of the total budget allocated to the programme will be devoted to this strand.



## II. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The programme will develop the principle of multi-annual partnerships based on agreed objectives, building on the analysis of the results, in order to ensure mutual benefits for both civil society and the European Union.

In general, preference will be given to grants for projects irrespective of their size but with a high impact, in particular those which are directly linked to Union policies with a view to participate in the shaping of the Union political agenda.<sup>9</sup>

The management of the programme and the majority of actions may be centrally managed by an executive agency.

All actions will be implemented on a transnational basis or should have a clear European dimension. They will encourage mobility of citizens and the exchange of ideas within the European Union.

The elements of networking and focussing on the multiplier effects, including the use of state of the art information and communication technologies (ICT) and social media, in particular with a view to reaching the younger generation, will be important and will be reflected both in the types of activities and the range of organisations involved. The development of interaction and synergy among the various types of stakeholders involved in the programme will be strongly encouraged.

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<sup>9</sup> Recital 16 should read as follows: “Preference will be given to grants for projects irrespective of their size but with a high impact in particular those which are directly linked to EU policies with a view to participate in the shaping of the EU political agenda. Moreover, following the principle of sound financial management, the implementation of the programme should be further simplified by recourse to lump-sums, flat-rate financing and the application of unit-cost rates.”

The programme budget may also cover expenditure associated with the preparation, follow-up, monitoring, auditing and evaluation activities directly necessary for the management of the programme and the realisation of its objectives, in particular studies, meetings, information and publication activities, expenditure associated with the IT networks for the exchange of information and any other administrative and technical support expenditure on which the Commission may decide for the management of the programme.

The overall administrative expenditure of the programme should be proportional to the tasks provided for in the programme concerned.

The Commission may undertake information, publication and dissemination activities as appropriate, thereby ensuring broad knowledge and a high impact of the activities supported by the programme.

The budget allocated shall also cover corporate communication on the political priorities of the Union<sup>10</sup>.

Approximately 10 % of the total budget will be allocated to the programme management.

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<sup>10</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A Budget for Europe 2020 Part II (Policy fiches), COM(2011) 500 final, 29.06.2011.

### III. MONITORING

The specific objectives in Article 2 describe the results which are sought to be achieved by the Programme. Progress will be measured by using performance related indicators such as:

**Specific objective 1:** raise awareness of remembrance, the common history and values and the Union's aim that is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples by stimulating debate, reflection and development of networks.

**Indicators:**

- Number of directly involved participants;
- Number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme;
- Number of projects;
- Quality of project applications and the degree in which the results of selected projects can be further exploited/transferred;
- Percentage of first time applicants.

**Specific objective 2:** Encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal engagement and volunteering at Union level.

**Indicators:**

- Number of directly involved participants;
- Number of persons indirectly reached by the Programme;
- Number of participating organisations;
- The perception of the EU and its institutions by the beneficiaries;
- Quality of project applications;
- Percentage of first time applicants;

- Number of transnational partnerships including different types of stakeholders ;
- Number of networks of twinned towns;
- Number and quality of policy initiatives following-up on activities supported by the programme at the local or European level;
- Geographical coverage of the activities:
  - Comparison between the percentage of projects submitted by one Member State as a lead partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the EU;
  - Comparison between the percentage of projects selected per Member State as a lead partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the EU;
  - Comparison between the percentage of projects submitted by one Member State as a lead partner or co-partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the EU;
  - Comparison between the percentage of projects selected per Member State as a lead partner or co-partner and the percentage of its population in the total population of the EU.

#### **IV. CONTROLS AND AUDITS**

For projects selected in accordance with this Regulation, a sampling audit system will be established.

The beneficiary of a grant must make available to the Commission all supporting documents relating to expenditure for a period of five years from the date of the final payment. The beneficiary of a grant must ensure that where applicable, supporting documents in the possession of partners or members are made available to the Commission.