



April 2008

Launch of new Civil Society Dialogue Programme

Introduction



A new **Civil Society Dialogue Programme** is being launched in 2008 by the European Commission for the benefit of the candidate and potential candidate countries¹ within the framework of the enlargement package, adopted in November 2007. One of the elements of this new initiative refers to the civil society dialogue – **People to People – P2P**. This programme, consisting of group visits, will be managed by the Directorate General for Enlargement in the framework of the TAIEX instrument.

Purpose of People to People – P2P Programme

The objective of this programme is to strengthen the role of the civil society organisations in participative democracy, by stimulating an active civil society at regional, national and European levels.

It will offer to individuals and organisations the possibility to visit the EU institutions, as well as relevant EU umbrella non governmental organisations, and other European, national and international organisations, in order to familiarize themselves with the vast set of EU policies, programmes, initiatives and best practices.

The **P2P programme** will also facilitate a better mutual understanding, especially in the perspective of future enlargement and partnership building.

Target groups

The Programme will address among others: NGOs dealing with acquis related subjects, such as equal opportunities, non discrimination, children rights, youth, etc.; cultural foundations, or organizations active in the cultural, artistic, educational and linguistic fields; teachers and academics from all levels of educational cycle; human rights groups, including minorities defence groups, human rights activists, legal aid offices, etc; representatives of municipalities/regions; representatives of the agricultural society (farmers, associations groups dealing with land exploitation and preservation, etc); representatives of religious interest groups; consumer protection associations, health related civil society organizations, etc.



What activities will be considered under P2P Programme?

The Programme will mainly entail the organisation of **group visits** such as:

- 1) **Visits for groups of different participants** from the **same beneficiary country** and active in **one particular sector**, with the objective of stimulating and strengthening dialogue and cooperation among interested parties in a given country (e.g. universities representatives, social partners, vocational training organisations, youth organisations – for a visit on employment of young people).

¹ Candidate countries are: Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey.
Potential candidate countries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (UNSCR 1244), Montenegro and Serbia.

2) **Multi-country group visits**, where 3-5 representatives per beneficiary country would be invited. In this case the participants would have the same professional background but coming from a different country. These visits will build up the regional and European dialogue and enhance cross border networks.

3) **"Package assistance" schemes**, in which the study visits will be preceded by a general training session on EU policies in the participants home countries. These training sessions could also be followed by a "feedback" seminar (in the country of origin of the participants) to be attended by a high number of participants, in order to disseminate the knowledge acquired during the study visits.

Selection procedure

a. Selection of topics

The topics under P2P will be defined by the Directorate General for Enlargement, in accordance with the political, legislative or social priorities established in relation to the targeted region and countries.

b. Selection of participants

The selection of participants for the visits will be conducted by DG Enlargement with the assistance of the European Commission Delegations in the beneficiary countries. Other EU institutions, such as the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the European Parliament and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs), other international organisations (ILO, Council of Europe etc.), may be involved in the procedure too, on a case by case basis.



How the programme will be organised?

Once the topics, target group and the programme for a visit have been established, the Institution Building Unit of DG Enlargement will deal with all the organisational, logistical and financial aspects of the visits.

Timing and budgetary resources

The pilot phase of the programme to cover approximately 200 people will start in June 2008 and it will run until the end of the year. The pilot phase will be reviewed and the programme adjusted if required in order that the P2P programme could become fully operational as of 2009 with a budget currently estimated at € 2 million over a 2- year period.

Contacts:

For further questions relating to the P2P Programme, please contact us at: elarg-p2p@ec.europa.eu or consult our website: <http://taie.x.ec.europa.eu/P2P-Programme>