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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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Proposal for a

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)

(presented by the Commission)

{SEC(2007) 1661
SEC(2007) 1662}

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. INTRODUCTION

The fight against poverty and social exclusion is one of the central objectives of the European Union (EU) and its Member States. At the launch of the Lisbon strategy in March 2000, the European Council invited Member States and the Commission to take steps to make “a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty” by 2010. Subsequent European Councils have reaffirmed this objective. The Social Reality Stocktaking Consultation, which the European Commission started in 2006, points to the importance of addressing old and new forms of poverty and social exclusion in Europe.

In the European Union, 78 million people are currently living at risk of poverty. In all Member States, part of the population is subject to exclusion and deprivation, often facing limited access to basic services. In addition, there are indications that deep poverty has become more of an issue and that the number of people suffering from absolute poverty has increased.

This state of affairs is in clear contradiction to key shared values of the European Union and needs to be tackled through resolute and credible action. The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) for Social Protection and Social Inclusion — initiated by the Lisbon Council — has been an important tool for providing EU guidance and support to Member States in their drive for greater social cohesion in Europe. However, its effectiveness crucially depends on public ownership and the commitment of all relevant actors.

In its 2005-2010 Social Agenda, the Commission therefore announced a proposal to designate 2010 as the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion. The European Year will complement the action under the Open Method of Coordination and will help consolidate the political commitment of the EU and its Member States to making a decisive impact on eradicating poverty and fighting social exclusion.

2. A EUROPEAN YEAR FOR COMBATING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

2.1. General objectives

The proposal to designate 2010 as the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion is intended to reaffirm and strengthen the initial political commitment of the EU at the start of the Lisbon strategy to making “a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty”.

The European Year should raise public awareness of poverty and social exclusion in Europe and convey the message that poverty and exclusion are disruptive to social and economic development. It should help challenge the vision that the fight against poverty is a cost for society and reaffirm the importance of collective responsibility, involving not only decision-makers but also public and private actors.

The European Year should also contribute by giving voice to people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, for example by strengthening the organisations in which they participate and involving them in activities designed to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty.

The EU must also restate its global responsibility to fight poverty worldwide. Increasing the awareness of global interdependence and the need for sustainable development and solidarity between and within generations should be part of the general awareness raising. Raising

awareness on global poverty will be closely linked with awareness raising on development cooperation issues and its primary objective, i.e. the fight against poverty.

The European Year will thus reaffirm the Union's commitment to solidarity, social justice and greater cohesion, and will promote consistency and boost support for the overarching objectives of the Union, particularly with regard to the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs and to the sustainable development strategy.

2.2. Specific objectives — Recognition — Ownership — Cohesion — Commitment

Apart from the general objectives, four specific objectives underpin the proposal for a European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion:

Recognition — Recognising the right of people in a situation of poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to play a full part in society.

Ownership — Increasing public ownership of social inclusion policies and actions, emphasising everyone's responsibility in tackling poverty and marginalisation.

Cohesion — Promoting a more cohesive society, by raising public awareness of the benefits for all of a society where poverty is eradicated and no-one is condemned to live in the margins.

Commitment — Reiterating the strong political commitment of the EU to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, and promoting this commitment at all levels of governance.

2.3. Implementation of actions

The European Year activities will underpin the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion and aim to produce a clear added value in terms of policy impact and effectiveness.

In line with the priorities identified in the Social Protection and Social Inclusion process, it is proposed to focus the European Year around the following **themes**:

- child poverty and the intergenerational transmission of poverty;
- an inclusive labour market;
- lack of access to education and training;
- gender dimension of poverty;
- access to basic services;
- overcoming discrimination and promoting the integration of immigrants and the social and labour market inclusion of ethnic minorities;
- addressing the needs of disabled people and other vulnerable groups.

In planning the European Year activities, the Member States will adapt these themes to the national, regional and local situation and challenges, including considerations of territorial

cohesion. Stakeholder involvement and participation will be mainstreamed throughout all the priorities.

In implementing the European Year activities, the Commission and the Member States will take into account the different ways in which women and men experience poverty and social exclusion. They will also ensure that the gender dimension is mainstreamed throughout the European Year priorities with a view to promoting gender equality.

2.4. Working in partnership with the participating countries

While the Union can provide a framework for coordination at various levels, tangible progress will be achieved only through the significant involvement of participating countries at national level. Activities defined at European level to ensure consistency in the approach towards an inclusive society will thus be adapted to the specificities of each country.

The involvement of participating countries calls for the establishment of coordination mechanisms at both national and EU levels in order to create the necessary synergies and leverage effects. A **Committee** made up of Member State representatives will be appointed in order to assist the Commission in the implementation of the European Year activities.

The Committee will monitor the implementation of the activities on the basis of common guidelines developed by the Commission, the **Strategic Framework Document (SFD)**, to ensure consistency with the Joint Report on Social Inclusion. The SFD will act as a point of reference for Member States, and will establish the key priorities for the European Year alongside the objectives defined for the Year.

To be effective, the EU will seek to engage with a very wide range of stakeholders, inviting them to join in an ongoing dialogue on the Year's priorities and delivery mechanisms. The Commission will also establish the necessary links with the Social Protection Committee in order to ensure that it is regularly and appropriately informed about the implementation of the European Year activities.

For the European Year, the Commission may also cooperate with relevant international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations. At national level, each Member State will be responsible for the coordination and implementation of national, regional and local measures.

National implementation will have to be consistent with the policy objectives set for the European Year, in response to the Strategic Framework Document mentioned above. Each Member State will submit to the Commission a **National Programme for implementing the European Year**. These Programmes will incorporate the overall objectives and essential principles as defined in the Decision establishing the European Year and developed in the Strategic Framework Document. They will be drawn up in close coordination and consistency with the National Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion.

Each programme should be devised, adopted and implemented in strict cooperation with and under the supervision of the **National Implementing Bodies (NIBs)** designated by the countries participating in the European Year. The NIBs are administrative authorities or equivalents with competence and proven experience in the fight against poverty and social exclusion and a strong role in the drafting, monitoring and evaluation of the NAPs/inclusion. The NIBs will be responsible for selecting national, regional and local initiatives in line with the strategic policy objectives defined by the Commission.

When establishing and carrying out their national strategies, each NIB will consult and cooperate closely with a **National Advisory Group** — NAG — composed of a broad range

of stakeholders, including civil society organisations representing the interests of people in poverty, national parliament representatives, social partners, and regional and local authorities.

3. COMPLEMENTARITY

The Commission will ensure that the activities financed during the European Year complement other relevant Community initiatives and activities closely linked to social inclusion, such as for example the Structural Funds, in particular the ESF, the Roadmap for Gender Equality, the PROGRESS Programme, the Education and Training Programmes, the European Youth Pact, the Youth in Action programme, the Health Programme, the immigration and asylum policies, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the 7th Research Framework Programme.

Coordinating mechanisms will therefore be put in place to avoid overlap and to channel support towards promoting the key messages of the European Year.

The Commission will also ensure complementarity with any other initiatives for cooperation with international organisations and third countries, including developing countries, in areas relevant to the objectives of the European Year.

4. EU ADDED VALUE (SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY)

The experience of previous European Years in the social field has demonstrated their relevance in raising awareness among the general public, fostering participation, enhancing political commitment at all levels and contributing to policy change.

The measures proposed for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion are designed to add value at European level by:

- Raising awareness among the general public as to the causes, prevalence and multiple facets of poverty in today's European Union, as well as the achievements of the European Social Model. It provides a unique opportunity for "participatory" assessment of the impact of policies to promote social inclusion, including through support for innovative actions at national and sub-national levels;
- Stimulating a debate on ways to ensure participation in society by people who currently find themselves excluded, and enabling a broader range of stakeholders to become involved by expressing their views on how to tackle poverty and exclusion, publicising their actions, reinforcing their complementarities and exchanging concrete proposals on this issue;
- Promoting a more cohesive society and better integration of the social dimension within European and national policies for economic growth and employment and the Sustainable Development Strategy, and as well fostering stronger links and synergies with EU initiatives and programmes, including the Structural Funds;
- Ensuring strong political commitment on the part of the various EU actors to eradicate poverty and social exclusion, in continuity with the commitments made under the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion.

To achieve these results, the EU has a decisive and irreplaceable role to play in coordinating, supporting and complementing the actions to be undertaken at national and local level. The proposal therefore conforms to the principle of subsidiarity set out in Article 5 of the Treaty.

At the same time, the proposal for the European Year emphasises how important it is to respect the different traditions and national contexts of the Member States, both to ensure flexible implementation and to avoid interfering with the good practices that already exist in some Member States. In this respect, the proposal also complies with the principle of proportionality.

5. EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

In order to draft this proposal, the Commission services sought the views of key stakeholders regarding the objectives and implementation of the European Year.

An external consultation of relevant stakeholders was held between April and June 2007. It was centred on a questionnaire inviting comments on the following issues, among others: objectives; involvement of stakeholders; overall design, framework and types of actions; and the follow-up needed to ensure a lasting impact for the European Year.

The results of the consultation indicate that the proposal for a European Year dedicated to the fight against poverty and social exclusion is welcomed by all relevant stakeholders. The answers highlight the potential of such a European Year in terms of communication and mobilisation and provide useful suggestions for the purpose and design of the initiative. They also point to its added value in relation to the Open Method of Coordination on Social Inclusion. The results of the consultation have been used to define the objectives and actions for the European Year.

A consultative process can never be a “one-off” exercise, and effective preparation calls for consultation over several stages. The run-up to the European Year will bring further opportunities (e.g. the annual Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion) for a broad range of stakeholders to contribute to its design and preparation.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An impact assessment of the European Year is attached to this proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision. It has been carried out by the Commission. In accordance with the rules for ex-ante evaluations, it contains a detailed presentation of the needs to be met, the objectives to be achieved, the results expected and the indicators that are needed to measure them. It also examines the added value of Community involvement, the risks linked with the proposals and the alternative options available, and the lessons learned from similar experiences in the past. Finally, it assesses the volume of appropriations, human resources and other administrative expenditure to be allocated, with due regard to the cost-effectiveness principle, and the monitoring system to be set up.

7. DETAILED EXPLANATION PER ARTICLE

Article 1 designates 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

Article 2 defines the objectives of the European Year.

Article 3 presents the content of the actions and refers the reader to the Annex for further details.

Article 4 stipulates that gender considerations are to be mainstreamed in all activities relating to the European Year.

Article 5 defines the terms of cooperation and implementation at Community level and sets out how the actions at European level for the European Year will be implemented.

Article 6 defines the terms of cooperation and implementation with and within the participating countries and sets out how the actions under the European Year will be implemented.

Article 7 establishes a Committee to assist the Commission in decisions on the implementation of the European Year.

Article 8 lays down the financial arrangements for the actions to be implemented at Community and national levels.

Article 9 sets out the procedure for the selection of actions at Community and national levels.

Article 10 requires the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to ensure consistency and complementarity with other Community actions and initiatives.

Article 11 defines the terms of participation for non-Member States.

Article 12 establishes the budget for the action.

Article 13 provides that the Commission may cooperate with international organisations.

Article 14 provides for the protection of the financial interests of the Community.

Article 15 defines the monitoring and evaluation framework for the European Year.

Article 16 defines the terms of the entry into force of the Decision.

Proposal for a

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

**on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)
(text with EEA relevance)**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 137(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission¹,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee²,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions³,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty⁴,

Whereas:

- (1) The adoption of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997 introduced the fight against social exclusion among the fields of activity covered by the social policy provisions into the EC Treaty – in particular Articles 136 and 137 - and provided a new legal framework and basis for new policy commitment in this area.
- (2) The European Council of Lisbon in March 2000 recognised that the extent of poverty and social exclusion was unacceptable. Building a more inclusive European Union was thus considered to be an essential element in achieving the Union's ten year strategic goal of economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.
- (3) The Lisbon European Council invited Member States and the Commission to take steps to make “a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty” by 2010. The Lisbon Council thus agreed to adopt an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in this area.
- (4) From the outset, the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) for Social Protection and Social Inclusion has been an important tool for supporting this political commitment and strengthening EU capacity to support Member States in their drive for greater social cohesion in Europe.

¹ OJ C , , p. .

² OJ C , , p. .

³ OJ C , , p. .

⁴ OJ C , , p. .

- (5) The OMC is helping to deepen mutual learning and has increased awareness of the multi-dimensional nature of exclusion and poverty. The OMC is thus creating the conditions to produce more impact on the ground and make the EU's attachment to social values more visible to European citizens.
- (6) Despite these achievements, significant parts of the population in all Member States are still suffering from deprivation and limited access to basic services or feel excluded from their societies, and 78 million people live at risk of poverty.
- (7) In addition, there are signs that the issue of deep poverty is becoming more important and the number of people suffering from absolute poverty is increasing, not least because of growing wealth inequalities across the Union.
- (8) The fight against poverty and social exclusion is one of the central objectives of the EU and its Member States.
- (9) Poverty and social exclusion take complex and multi-dimensional forms. They relate to income and living standards, access to good quality health services and other services, and educational and work opportunities.
- (10) The Social Agenda 2005-2010, which complements and supports the Lisbon Strategy, has a key role in promoting the social dimension of economic growth. One of the priorities of the Social Agenda is the promotion of equal opportunities for all as a vector for a more cohesive society.
- (11) In their National Action Plans for Social Inclusion, several countries highlight the high poverty and/or exclusion risk faced by some particular groups, including children, lone parents, the elderly, migrants and ethnic minorities, disabled people, the homeless, prisoners, women and children who are victims of violence, and severe substance abusers.
- (12) If employment significantly reduces the poverty risk for the individual, it is not always a sufficient condition to lift people out of poverty, and the at-risk-of-poverty rate is still relatively high even for those in work. In-work poverty is linked to low pay, low skills, and precarious and often part-time employment, but also to the characteristics of the household in which the individual lives, in terms of the number of dependants and the work intensity of the household. Quality employment is thus essential to lift individuals out of poverty.
- (13) The lack of basic competences and qualifications is also a major barrier to inclusion in society. There is a growing danger of new cleavages in society emerging, between those who have access to lifelong learning to enhance their employability and adaptability, and to facilitate their personal development and active citizenship, and those who remain excluded. Those without adequate skills will find it more difficult to enter the labour market and find a quality job, are more likely to spend long periods out of work and, if they do work, are more likely to find themselves in low-paid jobs.
- (14) The availability and the ability to use information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly becoming a prerequisite for inclusion. A ministerial declaration approved in June 2006 in Riga calls for an information society for all.

- (15) Key to the successful impact of Community action to fight poverty and social exclusion is the extent to which it enjoys broad popular support. The European Year should act as a catalyst in raising awareness and in building momentum. It should help to focus political attention and mobilise everyone concerned in order to drive forward the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion.
- (16) The varying levels of progress made at national level and the differing national socio-economic and cultural contexts and sensitivities call for a considerable part of the activities of the European Year to be decentralised at national level, through a system of indirect centralised management in accordance with the procedures laid down in Article 54(2)(c) of the Financial Regulation and its implementing rules⁵.
- (17) However, the definition of policy priorities at national level should be monitored by the Commission with a view to guaranteeing consistency with the strategic objectives agreed for the European Year and ultimately with the Common Objectives established for the Open Method of Coordination.
- (18) Participation in the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion should be open to Member States, to EFTA/EEA countries in accordance with the conditions established under the European Economic Area Agreement (EEA), to the candidate countries benefiting from a pre-accession strategy and countries from the Western Balkans, in line with the conditions laid down in their respective agreements, and to the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy, in accordance with the provisions of the May 2004 Strategy Paper and the Country Action Plans.
- (19) Consistency and complementarity with other Community action is needed, in particular with the PROGRESS programme, the Structural Funds and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), action to combat discrimination and to promote gender equality and fundamental rights, and action in the areas of education and training, culture and intercultural dialogue, youth, citizenship, immigration and asylum, and research.
- (20) This Decision establishes a financial framework for the entire duration of the programme, which is to be the principal point of reference for the budgetary authority within the meaning of point 37 of the Inter-Institutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management⁶.
- (21) The measures necessary for the implementation of this Decision should be adopted in accordance with Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission.

⁵ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002), as last amended by Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006 (OJ L 390, 31/12/2006); Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down the detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 357, 31.12.2002), as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 478/2007 of 23 April 2007 (OJ L 111, 28.4.2007).

⁶ JO C 139 14.06.06, p.1.

- (22) The objectives of the proposed European Year cannot be fully achieved at Member States level due to the need, among other things, for multilateral partnerships, the transnational exchange of information and the Community-wide dissemination of good practice, and can therefore, by reason of the scale of the proposed action, be better achieved at Community level. Accordingly, the Community may adopt measures in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the EC Treaty. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in the same Article, this Decision does not go beyond what is necessary to achieve those objectives;

HAVE DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The European Year

With a view to supporting Community action to combat social exclusion, the year 2010 shall be designated as the “European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion” (hereinafter: the European Year).

Article 2

Objectives

The objectives of the European Year shall be as follows:

- a) **Recognition** — Recognising the right of people in a situation of poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to play a full part in society. The European Year shall help in acknowledging the situation of people experiencing poverty and promoting their effective access to social, economic and cultural rights as well as to resources and services and shall help in combating stereotypes and stigmatisation;
- b) **Ownership** — Increasing public ownership of social inclusion policies and actions, emphasising everyone’s responsibility in tackling poverty and marginalisation. The European Year shall foster awareness, participation and engagement, and create new opportunities for ordinary citizens to contribute.
- c) **Cohesion** — Promoting a more cohesive society by raising public awareness of the benefits for all of a society where poverty is eradicated and no-one is condemned to live in the margins. The European Year shall foster a society that sustains and develops quality of life, social well-being and equal opportunities for all regardless of their background, ensuring sustainable development and solidarity between and within generations and policy coherence with EU action worldwide.
- d) **Commitment** — Reiterating the strong political commitment of the EU to the fight against poverty and social exclusion and promoting this commitment at all levels of governance. Building upon the achievements and possible shortcomings of the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, the European

Year shall strengthen the political commitment to the prevention of and fight against poverty and social exclusion and give impetus to further development of the European Union's action in this field.

Article 3

Content of actions

1. The actions designed to meet the objectives set out in Article 2 may include the following in particular:
 - a) meetings and events;
 - b) information, promotional and educational campaigns;
 - c) surveys and studies on a Community or nationwide scale.
2. Details of the actions referred to in paragraph 1 are set out in the Annex to this Decision (hereafter referred to as "the Annex").

Article 4

Gender mainstreaming

The European Year shall take into account the different ways in which women and men experience poverty and social exclusion.

Article 5

Cooperation and implementation at Community level

1. The measures necessary for the implementation of this Decision shall be adopted in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 7.
2. The Commission shall ensure that Community actions covered by this Decision are implemented in conformity with the Annex.
3. In particular, the Commission shall make the necessary arrangements to ensure the consistency and complementarity of the Community action and initiatives referred to in Article 10 so as to help meet the objectives set out in Article 2.
4. It shall conduct a regular exchange of views with stakeholders, particularly at European level, on the design, implementation, follow-up and assessment of the European Year.
5. The Commission shall establish the necessary links with the Social Protection Committee in order to ensure regular and appropriate information on the implementation of activities referred to in this Decision.

Article 6

Cooperation and implementation at national level

1. Each Member State shall appoint a “National Implementing Body” to organise its participation in the European Year and ensure coordination at national level. That National Implementing Body shall be responsible for defining the national programme and the priorities for the European Year and for selecting the individual actions to be proposed for Community funding. The national strategy and priorities for the European Year shall be set out in accordance with the objectives listed in Article 2.
2. The procedure for awarding Community funding for actions at national level is set out in part II of the Annex.
3. For the purpose of carrying out its tasks, the National Implementing Body shall consult on a regular basis and cooperate closely with a National Advisory Group, composed of a broad range of relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations and organisations defending or representing the interests of those who experience poverty and social exclusion, national parliament representatives, social partners, and regional and local authorities.

Article 7

Committee

1. The Commission shall be assisted by a Committee composed of one representative per State and chaired by a representative of the Commission. The representative per State shall be designated from the National Implementing Body referred to in Article 6.
2. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Articles 3 and 7 of Decision 1999/468/EC shall apply, having regard to the provisions of Article 8 thereof.
3. The Committee shall adopt its Rules of Procedure.

Article 8

Financial provisions

1. Actions on a Community scale, as set out in part I of the Annex, may be subsidised up to 80 % or give rise to procurement contract financed from the general budget of the European Union.
2. Actions at local, regional or national level may be co-financed from the general budget of the European Union up to a maximum of 50 % of the total eligible costs of

the actions implemented in accordance with the procedure set out in part II of the Annex.

Article 9

Application and selection procedure

1. Decisions on the financing of actions pursuant to Article 8(1) and Article 8(2) shall be adopted by the Commission in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 7(2).
2. Requests for financial assistance for actions pursuant to Article 8(3) shall be submitted to the Commission by the National Implementing Bodies in accordance with the procedure set out in part II of the Annex.

Article 10

Consistency and complementarity

1. The Commission together with the participating countries shall ensure that the measures provided for in this Decision are consistent with other Community, national and regional action and initiatives.
2. They shall ensure that the European Year fully complements other existing Community, national and regional initiatives and resources, where they can help to attain the objectives of the European Year.

Article 11

Participating countries

Participation in the European Year shall be open to:

- a) Member States;
- b) candidate countries benefiting from a pre-accession strategy, in accordance with the general principles and the general terms and conditions for the participation of those countries in Community Programmes laid down, respectively, by the Framework Agreement and by decisions of the Association Councils;
- c) the countries of the western Balkans, in accordance with the arrangements to be established with those countries under the framework agreements on the general principles for their participation in Community programmes;
- d) EFTA States that are parties to the EEA Agreement, in accordance with the provisions of that Agreement;

- e) the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries, in accordance with the general principles and the general terms and conditions for the participation of those countries in Community programmes laid down in the May 2004 Strategy Paper and the Country Action Plans. Any Community financial support for actions in ENP partner countries in this context shall be covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, in accordance with the priorities and procedures established for the overall cooperation with those countries.

Article 12

Budget

1. The financial framework for the implementation of the actions referred to in this Decision for the period 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2010 shall be EUR 17 000 000, of which EUR 6 500 000 shall be for the period until 31 December 2009.
2. Annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the Financial Framework 2007-2013.

Article 13

International cooperation

For the purpose of the European Year, the Commission may cooperate with relevant international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations.

Article 14

Protection of Community financial interests

1. The Commission shall ensure that, when actions financed under the present Decision are implemented, the financial interests of the Community are protected by the application of preventive measures against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities, by effective checks and by the recovery of the amounts unduly paid and, if irregularities are detected, by effective, proportional and dissuasive penalties, in accordance with Council Regulations (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 and (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96, and with Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
2. With regard to the Community actions financed under this Decision, the notion of irregularity referred to in Article 1(2) of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 shall mean any infringement of a provision of Community law or any infringement of a contractual obligation resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator

which has, or would have, the effect of prejudicing the general budget of the Communities, or budgets managed by them, by an unjustified item of expenditure.

3. The Commission shall reduce, suspend or recover the amount of financial assistance granted for an action if it finds irregularities, particularly non-compliance with the provisions of this Decision or of the individual decision or contract granting the financial support in question, or if it transpires that, without Commission approval having been sought, the action has undergone significant change that conflicts with its nature or with its implementing conditions.
4. If the time limits have not been observed or if only part of the allocated financial assistance is justified by the progress made with implementing an action, the Commission shall request the beneficiary to submit observations within a specified period. If the beneficiary does not give a satisfactory answer, the Commission may cancel the remaining financial assistance and demand repayment of sums already paid.
5. Any amount unduly paid shall be repaid to the Commission. Interest shall be added to any sums not repaid in due time under the conditions laid down in the Financial Regulation.

Article 15

Monitoring and evaluation

By 31 December 2011, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the actions provided for in this Decision.

Article 16

This Decision shall enter into force on the 20th day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

ANNEX

Details of the actions referred to in Article 3

I. ACTIONS ON A COMMUNITY SCALE

1. Meetings and events

Organisation of meetings and events at Community level, intended to raise the awareness about issues related to the European Year and about poverty and social exclusion and to provide for a forum of exchange of ideas. They will gather relevant stakeholders and will be planned together with people experiencing poverty and civil society organisations representing them, to provide a good opportunity to address policy gaps and every day problems.

2. Information and promotional campaigns involving

- The organisation of various solidarity initiatives for poverty alleviation and social inclusion to give ordinary citizens the opportunity to contribute directly or through their organisations, even modestly and in whatever form. Media campaigns may support fundraising operations within the framework of the European Year;
- The development of a logo, available in a variety of formats, and slogans for the European Year, for use in connection with any action linked to the European Year;
- An information campaign at Community level with positioning at national level, based on both traditional and new communication channels and new technologies;
- The production of communication and media tools available throughout the Community to stimulate public interest;
- Appropriate measures and initiatives for publicising the results and raising the profile of Community programmes, actions and initiatives contributing to the objectives of the European Year;
- Appropriate initiatives by educational institutions to disseminate information on the European Year;
- The organisation of European competitions highlighting achievements and experiences in connection with the themes of the European Year;
- A strong link with organisations and sectors not usually engaged with issues of poverty and social exclusion (e.g. sport, art), including the use of testimonials and “ambassadors”;
- The establishment of an information website on Europa.

3. Other actions

- Community-wide surveys and studies to assess and report on the preparation, effectiveness, impact and long-term monitoring of the European Year. To facilitate a new

consensus around political solutions, one such survey will also include a series of questions to gauge public opinion on policy to prevent and combat poverty and social exclusion, including social protection systems, and on the potential role of the Union in the fight against poverty and exclusion. This will be conducted in 2009 so that its results can be presented at the Opening Conference of the European Year;

- Cooperation with the private sector, broadcasters and other media as partners in spreading information about the European Year as well as in actions aiming for long-term dialogue on social issues;
- Technical assistance to facilitate the transfer of learning;
- An evaluation report on the effectiveness and impact of the European Year.

Specific links could be established with the organisation of events at European and international level.

The Commission may make use of technical and/or administrative assistance for the mutual benefit of the Commission and the participating countries, for example by financing outside expertise on a specific subject.

4. Funding

Funding may be in the form of:

- the purchase of goods and services, in particular in the field of communications, via calls for tender;
- the purchase of consultancy services, via calls for tender;
- subsidies allocated to cover the expenses of special events at European level to highlight and raise awareness of the European Year. Such funding will not exceed 80 % of the total expenditure incurred by the recipient.

II. CO-FINANCING OF ACTIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

These actions should take account of the need to provide funding opportunities that ensure access for organisations “on the ground” and projects involving the most marginalised groups.

1. Actions at local, regional or national level may qualify for financing from the Community budget up to a maximum of 50% of the total eligible costs per participating country. National co-funding should match the EU funding with at least 50% from public or private sources. When selecting actions, National Implementing Bodies will be free to decide whether or not, and at what level, to request co-funding from the organisation responsible for implementing individual actions.
2. Following the adoption of this Decision, the Commission will prepare a Strategic Framework Document, which, alongside the objectives set out in Article 2, will establish the key priorities for the implementation of the European Year activities, including minimum standards in terms of participation in national bodies and actions.

3. In response to the Strategic Framework Document, each National Implementation Body will produce a National Programme for implementing the European Year, in close coordination and consistency with the National Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion.
4. Each National Implementing Body will submit a single application for Community funding. That grant application will describe the national programme and priorities for the European Year, the actions proposed for funding in the relevant participating country and the organisations responsible for implementing each of the individual actions. The grant application will be accompanied by a detailed budget setting out the total costs of the actions proposed and the amount and sources of co-funding. Eligible costs may include personnel and administrative costs incurred by the national implementing body.
5. The release of global grants to participating countries will depend on the extent to which the objectives set in Article 2 and developed in the Strategic Framework Document are adequately met in the National Programme for implementing the European Year.
6. The Commission will evaluate and, if necessary, request modifications to the applications for Community funding submitted by the National Implementing Bodies.
7. Actions under point 1 above may include:
 - a) Meetings and events connected with the objectives of the European Year, including national events to launch and promote the European Year, create a catalyst effect and provide open spaces for debate around concrete action to combat poverty and social exclusion;
 - b) Mutual learning seminars at national, regional and local level;
 - c) Other events connected with the preparation of EU-level initiatives (e.g. the yearly European Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion and European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty);
 - d) Information, educational and promotional campaigns and other actions in schools and measures with a strong multiplier effect to disseminate the principles and underlying values celebrated by the European Year at national, regional and local levels, including the organisation of awards and competitions;
 - e) Surveys and studies other than those mentioned in point 3 of Part I, to examine in greater depth the key issues of the European Year;
 - f) Training opportunities for civil servants, social partners, the media, NGO representatives and other actors to increase their knowledge of poverty and social exclusion phenomena, of European and national social inclusion policies and of the different policy tools available, to increase their capacity to deal with poverty-related issues, and to encourage them to play an active role in the fight against poverty and social exclusion;
 - g) Cooperation with the media;

- h) Development of pilot regional and local action plans for social inclusion.

III. ACTION FOR WHICH NO FINANCIAL AID FROM THE GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IS AVAILABLE

The Community will grant non-financial support, including written authorisation to use the specific logo created for the European Year and other material associated with the European Year, for initiatives undertaken by public or private organisations, in so far as the latter can provide assurances to the Commission — on the basis of specific criteria set out in the Strategic Framework Document — that the initiatives in question are or will be carried out during the period of the European Year and are likely to make a significant contribution to achieving one or more of its objectives.

Initiatives organised in third countries in association or cooperation with the European Year may also receive non-financial support from the Community and use the logo and other materials associated with the European Year.

IV. PRIORITIES FOR THE EUROPEAN YEAR ACTIVITIES

Taking into account the multidimensional nature of poverty and social exclusion and with a view to mainstreaming the prevention of and fight against poverty and exclusion within other policies, the European Year activities should aim to produce a clear added value and provide an effective complement to the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion. These activities should therefore focus on a limited number of priority areas.

In line with the analysis carried out and the priorities identified in the Joint Social Protection and Social Inclusion Report, the European Year should focus around the following themes:

- child poverty and the intergenerational transmission of poverty;
- an inclusive labour market;
- disadvantages in education and training, including digital literacy training;
- poverty and the gender dimension;
- access to basic services, including decent accommodation;
- overcoming discrimination and promoting the integration of immigrants and the social and labour market inclusion of ethnic minorities;
- addressing the needs of disabled people and other vulnerable groups.

In planning the European Year activities in line with the above priorities, the participating countries will adapt them to the national, regional and local situations and challenges, including considerations of territorial cohesion.

In the light of the objectives set out in Article 2 of the Decision, the issue of participation should be mainstreamed throughout all the priorities.

Under Article 4 of the Decision, the Commission and the Member States are to take into account, in implementing the European Year activities, the different ways in which women and men experience poverty and social exclusion. They will also ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the European Year priorities with a view to promoting gender equality.

LEGISLATIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. NAME OF THE PROPOSAL:

European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

2. ABM/ABB FRAMEWORK

Policy area(s) concerned and associated activity/activities:

Policy area: Employment and Social Affairs

Activity: European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

3. BUDGET LINES

3.1. Budget lines (operational lines and related technical and administrative assistance lines (ex-BA lines)) including headings:

New budget line 04 04 12 for supporting activities carried out in connection with the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

3.2. Duration of the action and of the financial impact:

01.01.2009 – 31.12.2010

3.3 Budgetary characteristics (add rows if necessary):

Budget line	Type of expenditure		New	EFTA contribution	Contributions from candidate countries	Heading in financial framework
04 04 12	NCE	Differentiated appropriations	YES	YES	YES	1a

4. SUMMARY OF RESOURCES

4.1. Financial resources

4.1.1. Summary of commitment appropriations and payment appropriations at current prices

EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

Expenditure type	Section No		2009	2010	2011	2012	n+3 and later	Total

Operational expenditure

Commitment appropriations	Section		6.500	10.500				17.000
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(CA)	No	<i>a</i>						
Payment appropriations (PA)	Section No	<i>b</i>	3.000	10.000	4.000			17.000

TOTAL REFERENCE AMOUNT

Commitment appropriations		<i>a</i>	6.500	10.500				17.000
Payment appropriations		<i>b</i>	3.000	10.000	4.000			17.000

Administrative expenditure not included in reference amount

Human resources and associated expenditure (NDA)		<i>c</i>	0.477	0.477	0.297			1.251
Other administrative costs, not included in reference amount NDA		<i>d</i>	0.036	0.107	0.019			0.162

Total indicative financial cost of action

TOTAL CA including cost of human resources		<i>a + c + d</i>	7.013	11.084	0.316			18.413
TOTAL PA including cost of human resources		<i>b + c + d</i>	3.513	10.584	4.316			18.413

EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

4.1.2. Compatibility with financial programming

Proposal is compatible with the Commission Communication of 14 July 2004 on the Financial Framework 2007-2013, COM(2004) 487 final. Proposal will entail reprogramming of the relevant heading in the Financial Framework.

4.1.3. Financial impact on revenue

Proposal has no financial implications for revenue.

4.2. Human resources FTE (including officials, temporary and external staff) – see details under point 8.2.1.

Annual requirements	2009	2010	2011	2012	n + 3 and later
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Total number of human resources	5	5	3		
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5. CHARACTERISTICS AND OBJECTIVES

5.1. Needs to be met in the short or long term

The Commission intends to bring the issue of combating poverty and social exclusion and ensuring a more inclusive society to the attention of a wide range of stakeholders within the Member States and to coordinate efforts to raise awareness and reaffirm and strengthen the initial political commitment of the EU at the start of the Lisbon strategy to make “a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty”.

5.2. Added value of Community involvement and coherence of the proposal with other financial instruments and possible synergies

The objectives of the European Year, while aimed at the individual citizen, will be better achieved and have more effect at Community level than at Member State level. The actions envisaged will not go beyond what is necessary to achieve these objectives. The Commission will ensure that activities financed by the European Year complement other Community interventions.

5.3. Objectives, expected results and related indicators of the proposal within the ABM framework

The European Year should stimulate debate and create solutions to ensure the meaningful participation in society of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, the strengthening of the organisations in which they participate, and the development of stronger frameworks to ensure their involvement in activities designed to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty. It will help the Open Method of Coordination have more impact on the ground.

5.4. Method of implementation

Centralised management, directly by the Commission and indirectly by delegation to national public-sector bodies/bodies with a public-service mission.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1. *Monitoring system*

The table below provides some examples of indicators.

OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS (INDICATIVE)
<i>Specific objectives</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
Recognition — Recognising the right of people in a situation of poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and play a full	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Citizens’ and policy-makers’ knowledge/understanding of the different facets of poverty and its root causes – Opportunities for developing regular dialogue on social issues with

part in society	<p><i>media organisations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Change in perceptions towards people experiencing poverty as regards stereotypes and stigmatisation as well as the self-perception of people experiencing poverty</i>
Ownership — Stimulating debate on ways to increase participation in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Specific opportunities to debate the most appropriate mechanisms and models for the participation of disadvantaged groups in the policy-making process</i> – <i>Broad and effective participation, on the basis of common guidelines, in the preparations for the European Year</i> – <i>Effective learning and training opportunities</i>
Cohesion — Promoting a more inclusive and cohesive society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Events, studies and campaigns to promote a large participatory debate around the role of the EU in achieving a more cohesive society</i> – <i>Opportunities for widening the debate to organisations and sectors not usually engaged with poverty and social exclusion issues</i> – <i>Visibility of EC programmes and actions to promote social cohesion and sustainable development and EU action to combat poverty worldwide</i> – <i>Development of innovative initiatives, in particular to promote trans-sectoral approaches to social inclusion</i>
Commitment — Reiterating the strong political commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Assessment of the achievements of the Open Method of Coordination</i> – <i>Analysis at both EU and national level to provide stronger support for evidence-based policies and further policy development</i> – <i>Opportunities for a new long-term EU commitment to eliminate poverty</i>
	Operational Indicators
Information and promotional campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Number and type of information and promotion activities</i> – <i>Increased public awareness and support</i> – <i>Influence on policy process and public discourse</i> – <i>Extent and tone of press and media coverage of the events supported by the European Year (qualitative and quantitative)</i> – <i>Relevance of timing and message communicated</i> – <i>Number and types of tools to stimulate the interest of the general public</i> – <i>Percentage of population reached</i> – <i>Access to and use of information tools established and disseminated by the European Year about relevant EC programmes</i> – <i>Awareness among participants in the programmes and actions of the European Year of these activities</i> – <i>Use of logo & slogans in the European Year activities</i> – <i>Use of the European Year's website</i>
Surveys and studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Coverage of publications</i> – <i>Improvement of knowledge base</i> – <i>Relevance of recommendations</i> – <i>Use in the programming decisions</i>
Events and initiatives at Community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Number and type of participants</i> – <i>Satisfaction rate</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Type of learning effects</i> – <i>Media coverage</i> – <i>Increased public awareness</i> – <i>Quality of the message communicated</i> – <i>Influence on policy process and discourse</i>
Events and initiatives at national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Number and types of initiatives (launch and promotion of the European Year; open spaces for debate; peer review seminars; educational campaigns and actions in schools; organisation of awards and competitions; surveys and studies; training opportunities; etc.)</i> – <i>Number and type of participants</i> – <i>Relevance of the timing</i> – <i>Relevance of the topic(s) to the objectives of the European Year</i> – <i>Satisfaction rate</i> – <i>Type of learning effects</i> – <i>Media coverage</i> – <i>Quality of the message communicated</i> – <i>Increased awareness</i> – <i>Influence on policy process and discourse</i> – <i>Improvement of the knowledge base</i> – <i>Projects involving promoters or networks from different sectors</i> – <i>Proportion of the total budget used to support this operational objective</i> – <i>Multiplier effect (number of actions and initiatives at national, regional and local level sponsored but not financed by the European Year)</i>
Technical assistance to facilitate the transfer of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Number and types of initiatives</i> – <i>Number and type of participants</i> – <i>Relevance of the timing</i> – <i>Satisfaction rate</i> – <i>Type of learning effects</i>

6.2. Evaluation

6.2.1. Impact assessment

An impact assessment of the European Year is attached to this proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision.

6.2.2. Measures taken following an intermediate/ex-post evaluation (lessons learned from similar experiences in the past)

An external evaluation exercise will be launched in 2009 in order to gather baseline data to monitor the implementation of the European Year and provide interim results if needed. The evaluation results should be available by mid-2011.

7. ANTI-FRAUD MEASURES

The Commission must ensure that, when actions financed under the present Decision are implemented, the financial interests of the Community are protected by the application of preventive measures against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities, by effective checks and by the recovery of amounts unduly paid and, if irregularities are detected, by effective, proportional and dissuasive penalties, in accordance with Council Regulations (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 and (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 and with Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

For the Community actions financed under this Decision, an irregularity as referred to in Article 1(2) of Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 means any infringement of a provision of Community law or any breach of a contractual obligation resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator which has, or would have, the effect of prejudicing the general budget of the Communities, or budgets managed by them, by an unjustifiable item of expenditure.

8. DETAILS OF RESOURCES

Objectives of the proposal in terms of their financial cost

Commitment appropriations in EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

Headings of Objectives	Type of Outputs	Average costs	2009		2010		2011		2012		Year n+4 and later		TOTAL	
			No	Total Costs	No	Total Costs	No	Total Costs	No	Total Costs	No	Total Costs	No	Total Costs
<i>Actions on an EC scale</i>	Meetings and events	0.400	1	0.400									1	0.400
	Information and promotional campaigns	3.075	1	5.000	1	1.150							2	6.150
	Technical assistance	0.600	1	0.600									1	0.600
	Evaluation activities	0.150	1	0.150									1	0.150
Co-financing of actions on an EC scale	Opening and closing events	0.350	1	0.350	1	0.350							2	0.700
Co-financing of actions at national level	Grants to National Implementing Bodies	0.300			30	9.000							30	9.000
TOTAL COSTS			5	6.500	32	10.500							37	17.000

Calculation of the costs of measures

Action I. Actions on an EC scale

Meetings and events:

400 000 euros

Information, promotional and educational campaigns

A 6.150 million euro budget is the total amount necessary for the European Year's information and communication actions. While part of this amount will go towards coordinating the campaign at EU level, the bulk will be devoted to localising the campaign at national level.

Evaluation activities

All activities carried out for the European Year will be subject to an *evaluation* of the effectiveness and impact of the European Year, to be the subject of a report published after the close of the Year.

Action II. Co-financing of actions on an EC scale

The opening and closing of the European Year will be marked by two high-level, high-profile *conferences*. For such conferences, it is reasonable to expect a cost of 437 500 euros. The average Community contribution to these actions (maximum of 80% of the total eligible costs) is estimated at 350 000 euros.

Action III. Activities on a national scale

While the European Union may provide a framework for awareness-raising actions, it has to be recognised that most of the progress will be made through the active intervention of the participating members themselves.

Building on the experience of previous European Years, such actions can be financed up to 50% from the Community budget.

Administrative expenditure

Number and type of human resources

Types of post		Staff to be assigned to management of the action using existing and/or additional resources (number of posts/FTEs)				
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Officials or Temporary staff (XX 01 01)	A*/AD	1	1	1		
	B*, C*/AST	2	2	1		
Staff financed by Article XX		2	2	1		

01 02 (auxiliary, END, contract staff, etc.)						
Other staff financed by Article XX 01 04/05		0	0	0		
TOTAL		5	5	3		

Description of tasks deriving from the action

Description of tasks deriving from the action

A officials: animation of the European Year at the European level and in relation with National implementing bodies, committee, drawing up invitations to tender, monitoring grants to Member States, information campaign, events, studies and communication

B officials: financial monitoring of bids and grants, general assistance to A officials with all tasks

C officials: assistance with all tasks referred to above

Sources of human resources (statutory)

† Posts currently allocated to the management of the programme to be replaced or extended

0 Post pre-allocated within the APS/PDB exercise for 2008

0 Post to be requested in the 2009 APS/PDB procedure (but 1 contract agent FG IV or SNE from 2009 to 2011 + 1 CA FG II or III in 2009-2010)

3 posts in 2009 and 2010 and 2 posts in 2011 to be redeployed using existing resources within the managing service (internal redeployment)

EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

Budget line (number and heading)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
1. Technical and administrative assistance (including related staff costs)						
Executive agencies	0	0				0
Other technical and administrative assistance	0	0				0
- intra muros						
- extra muros						

Total technical and administrative	0	0				0
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Financial cost of human resources and associated costs not included in the reference amount

EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

Type of human resources	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Officials and temporary staff (XX 01 01)	0.351	0.351	0.234		
Staff financed by Article XX 01 02 (auxiliary, END, contract staff, etc.) (specify budget line)	0.126	0.126	0.063		
Total cost of human resources and associated costs (NOT in reference amount)	0.477	0.477	0.297		

Other administrative expenditure not included in reference amount

EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
XX 01 02 11 01 — Missions	0.017	0.069				0.086
XX 01 02 11 02 — Meetings and conferences						
XX 01 02 11 03 — Committees	0.019	0.038	0.019			0.076
XX 01 02 11 04 — Studies and consultations						
XX 01 02 11 05 — Information systems						
2. Total other management expenditure (XX 01 02 11)	0.036	0.107	0.019			0.162
3. Other expenditure of an administrative nature (specify including reference to budget line)						
Total administrative expenditure other than human resources and associated costs (NOT included in reference amount)	0.036	0.107	0.019			0.162

Calculation — *Other administrative expenditure not included in reference amount*

Missions: average of 3 missions in 32 countries (27 MSs + other participating countries) x 900 €

Committee: 4 meetings x 32 participants (27 MSs + other participating countries) x 700 €

Human resources and administrative requirements will be covered by the overall budget allocated to the authorising DG under the annual allocation procedure.