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NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE LLP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Subject : Written Consultation
Invitation to submit "National Teams of Bologna Experts 2008"

This note aims to request your opinion on two new elements in the Invitation to submit proposals relating to "National Teams of Bologna Experts 2008", to be published in early 2008 and covering the period from May 2008 – April 2009.

These two new elements are:

1. The re-launch of the ECTS/DS label as an integrated part of this Invitation to submit;
2. The shift from financing via an allocation per country to a new approach where NA will be funded based on the quality of their proposals.

The budget for this activity, increased to take account of the additional cost of point 1 above, was the subject of a positive opinion from the Committee at its meeting on 20-21 November.

1. The re-launch of the ECTS/DS label

Against the background of feedback from a consultation process conducted throughout 2007 with various stakeholders, the Commission services propose to re-launch the ECTS / DS label in 2008, to be implemented in the context of the Invitation to submit proposals relating to National Teams of Bologna Experts, favouring an integrated approach whereby the ECTS and DS labels would be combined and incorporated in the Bologna Experts exercise.

The policy context for this re-launch is as follows:

- Ministers pointed out in the London Communiqué (May 2007): there is progress in the implementation of ECTS, but "*efforts should concentrate on proper*

implementation of ECTS based on Learning Outcomes and student workload". The issuing of the label could help in this, setting good examples on how ECTS should be applied at institutional level;

- the distinction between an ECTS label and a DS label is for the most part artificial, as both labels are about the correct implementation of recognition tools, as stipulated by the Ministers' Conferences of Berlin, Bergen and London;
- one of the three categories of expertise for Bologna Experts is "Recognition", and more particularly ECTS;
- the ECTS / DS label and the establishment of National Teams of Bologna Experts are mutually reinforcing, and further help to promote Bologna policy lines (cf. London Communiqué).

2. The shift from financing via an allocation per country based on quantitative parameters to a new approach where NA will be funded based mainly on the quality of their proposals.

Under the Bologna Promoters exercise (as the Bologna experts were called from 2004 until 2006), and as in 2007, the budget allocations per country have been based on standard quantitative parameters. An analysis of the final financial reports shows that on average, the NA used only 65 % of the allocated Commission funds for the implementation of their activity plans. In the attached table, it is clear that while certain NA executed the planned actions as foreseen, other NA consistently had more difficulties doing so.

This has led the Commission to propose to abolish the pre-set allocation per country, and thus to shift to a new approach where NA will be funded mainly on the basis of the quality of their proposals. Before making the present formal proposal to the LLP Committee, the Commission consulted the LLP-Erasmus NAs at their meeting of 8 and 9 November. It is worth noting that both at the NA meeting, as well in the feedback received after the meeting, a clear majority of NA turned out to be in favour of this "quality approach".

As the Bologna Experts exercise is meant to be one with a broad geographical scope, involving all the countries participating in the LLP, the Commission feels that it is important to keep all NA involved, but proposes to introduce the quality-based assessment and funding in the following way:

1. to abolish the allocation per country based exclusively on pre-fixed quantitative parameters, and to introduce instead a quality-based assessment and selection procedure;
2. to establish nonetheless a minimum amount of funding for all LLP countries, thereby ensuring their continuing participation in the Bologna Experts exercise.

In this way, the Commission is convinced that it will be possible both to ensure the geographical scope of the action, and in parallel to support high quality Bologna promotion in those countries having the ambition to invest in this.

The opinion of the Committee is requested by written procedure (10 working days). As a consequence the Commission would welcome replies by **10 January 2008** at the latest.

As the Committee's rules of procedure provide, absence of comment implies assent.

Please send your contributions via e-mail only to Mr Sergio Corti (DG EAC B1) – sergio.corti@ec.europa.eu, copy to Ms Nadège Monnot - nadege.monnot@ec.europa.eu.

Thank you for your cooperation.

SIGNED

Michel RICHONNIER

Annex : Table of percentages of the use of allocated funds, Bologna Promoters 2004 - 2006