

III

(Notices)

COMMISSION

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

VP/2001/21

Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs

Implementation of the Council Decision of 20 December 2000 on a programme relating to the Community framework strategy on gender equality (2001-2005)

(2002/C 23/08)

1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

On 20 December 2000 the Council decided (Decision 2001/51/EC) ⁽¹⁾ to establish a programme relating to the Community framework strategy on gender equality for the period from 1 January 2001 until 31 December 2005.

According to Article 2 of the Council Decision:

- the programme is one of the instruments for the implementation of the overall Community framework strategy on gender equality ⁽²⁾ adopted by the Commission in June 2000, which embraces all Community policies and action aimed at achieving gender equality, including gender mainstreaming policies and specific actions targeted at women,
- the programme shall coordinate, support and finance the implementation of horizontal activities under the fields of intervention of the Community framework strategy on gender equality. These fields of intervention are: economic life, equal participation and representation, social rights, civil life, gender roles and stereotypes.

Funding for this programme is provided by the budget line B3-4012.

2. AIMS OF THE OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

According to Article 3 of the Council Decision, the programme shall have as its objectives 'to develop the capacity of players to promote gender equality effectively, in particular through support for the exchange of information and good practice and networking at Community level'.

This call for proposals is intended to finance transnational exchange actions to promote gender equality involving a range of players from at least three Member States of the European Union or from the European Economic Area countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein), consisting of a transfer of information, lessons learned and good practice.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 17, 19.1.2001, p. 22.

Website http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/index_en.htm

⁽²⁾ COM(2000) 335 final of 7 June 2000.

A balanced participation of men and women in the projects should be sought.

Nobody can be excluded from participating in a project due to a disability. Applicants are encouraged to consider ways of making their projects fully accessible to persons with a disability.

3. PRIORITIES FOR FUNDING IN 2002

For the budget exercise 2002, the Programme Committee has decided to implement and finance actions with regard to the theme of 'reconciliation between work and family life' as a priority. Other themes of the programme are not excluded, however, funding will be preferentially allocated to 'reconciliation between work and family life' as a priority.

The challenge of achieving better reconciliation between work and family life is one vital aspect of a whole range of broader social issues, such as declining fertility rates in Europe and changes in family structures. It also has an important bearing on changes in the composition of the labour force, new ways of organising work, in the distribution of caring work between women and men and the restructuring of social protection systems.

The reconciliation of work and family life is essential for women and men and important work on this issue has already been done at EU and national levels. Therefore, policies on the reconciliation of work and family life should not be directed only at women, as was primarily the case in the past where focus had been aimed at women, part-time work, flexibility both of contracts, working time and location and on the availability of childcare facilities. All these issues remain relevant, however, it has become clear that the reconciliation between work and family life can only be successful if the environment is equally supportive of a work/family balance for men.

In recent years, this concern has been expressed in the social partners agreement and the subsequent Directive on Parental Leave⁽³⁾. However, the uptake of these legal possibilities by men has, in general, been low. It is also necessary to promote new attitudes in society to encourage men and women to arrive at a fair sharing of the family responsibilities.

Accordingly, efforts to improve the reconciliation of work and family life should be pursued and the Commission invites potential applicants to submit proposals notably in the following areas:

- promotion by social partners at European level of measures aiming at improving take-up of parental leave for both women and men. Particular attention should be paid to encouraging fathers to become more involved in family life especially in SMEs, etc.,
- ways of developing adequately financed care services in favour of families in particular for elderly and other dependants including practical impact of benefits/allowances for parents; family tax relief, social support,
- improvement of the status of care work, recognition of appropriate professional qualifications and promoting the participation of men in the care sector,
- coordination of working times and **services policies** of importance to reconciling work and family life so that they are more responsive to the needs of women and men, for example, coordination in town planning, housing policies; opening hours of services, school hours, etc. Main actors concerned: transnational networks of regional or local authorities, etc.

Particular attention should be given to low income groups.

It should be noted that the EQUAL European Community initiative⁽⁴⁾ funded jointly by the Community budget (ESF) and the Member States supports development partnerships focusing on activities such as the development of family-friendly work organisation, including telework; development of care and support services to assist in the reconciliation of work and family life. Therefore activities already funded by EQUAL will not be eligible for funding under the gender equality programme. Furthermore, activities at the national level already funded, for instance, by the European Social Fund cannot be accepted under this call for proposals.

4. WHO CAN APPLY⁽⁵⁾

- NGOs at European level: must be legally established or equivalent⁽⁶⁾ as a non-governmental organisation at the

⁽³⁾ Council Directive 96/34/EC (OJ L 145, 19.6.1996).

⁽⁴⁾ See EQUAL website http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/index_en.html

⁽⁵⁾ See more detailed information in the applicants' guidelines.

⁽⁶⁾ In accordance with national law or practice.

time of submission of the proposal; be a non-profit organisation; have a European vocation which is set out in the articles of association or equivalent,

- social partners at European level, which are part of the list of European social partner organisations currently consulted in accordance with Article 3 of the Agreement on Social Policy⁽⁷⁾,
- transnational networks of regional or local authorities: must be legally established or equivalent⁽⁶⁾ at the time of submission of the proposal and be a non-profit organisation,
- transnational networks of organisations which aim to promote gender equality: must be legally established or equivalent⁽⁶⁾ at the time of submission of the proposal; be a non-profit organisation; have the promotion of gender equality as an objective set out in the articles of association or equivalent.

According to Article 10 of Council Decision 2001/51/EC, the programme 'shall be open to the participation of the applicant countries of central and eastern Europe (CEECs) in accordance with the conditions established in the European agreements, in their additional protocols and in the decisions of the respective Association Councils and to the participation of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, funded by additional appropriations in accordance with procedures to be agreed with those countries'.

Nevertheless, negotiations concerning the participation of applicant countries are still under way. The programme relating to the Community framework strategy on gender equality cannot take into account activities and expenditure related to the participation of applicant countries before the negotiations are concluded and the modalities for their participation decided.

Accordingly, any expenditure related to the participation of applicant countries or related to activities in the applicant countries is not eligible for Community funding under this call for proposals.

5. TYPES OF ACTION WHICH WILL BE SUPPORTED

Transnational actions involving a range of players from at least three Member States or countries from the EEA, consisting of the transfer of information, lessons learned and good practice.

Activities should take place in at least three Member States or countries from the European Economic Area (EEA).

⁽⁷⁾ See Annex I of the Communication from the Commission 'Adapting and promoting the social dialogue at Community level', Brussels, 20.5.1998, COM(1998) 322 final.

These actions may include the comparison of the effectiveness of processes, methods and tools related to the chosen themes, mutual transfer and application of good practice, exchanges of personnel, joint development of products, processes, strategy and methodology, adaptation to different contexts of methods, tools and processes identified as good practice, and/or dissemination of results, profile-raising materials and events.

Commission grants under this call for proposals are not intended to finance the normal operations or the running costs of promoter organisations.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications which do not comply with the following criteria are not eligible and will be rejected without further consideration:

1. submission of an electronic version of the application form (parts I, II and III) including the bank identification form by **15 March 2002** or earlier and presented according to the required model;
2. submission of the application form (parts I, II and III) on paper, duly completed, signed by the responsible person, dispatched by **15 March 2002** (the date of postmark or express courier receipt serving as a proof) or earlier and presented according to the required model;
3. submission of a completed, signed bank identification form;
4. submission of applicant's certificate of official registration or legal status or equivalent;
5. submission of applicant's articles of association (constitution) or equivalent;
6. submission of the last three years' annual accounts of the applicant organisation, certified by an external audit office (not required from public bodies);
7. submission of signed letters of commitment confirming a financial (cash) contribution equivalent to at least 20 % of the project's eligible costs by the applicant and/or partners and/or other sources;
8. submission of signed letters of commitment from all partners in the project confirming their participation and, where appropriate, stating the amount of their financial (cash) contributions;
9. submission of a signed and balanced budget estimate in euro;

10. submission of the curriculum vitae of the head of project and of the persons who will perform the main tasks associated with the activities for which funding is requested;
11. proposal involving actions to promote gender equality;
12. proposal submitted by organisations referred to under section 4 above ('Who can apply');
13. proposal meets the transnationality requirements, i.e. involve organisations from at least three different Member States and/or European Economic Area countries (EEA);
14. Community grant requested is no less than EUR 250 000 and not more than EUR 500 000;
15. proposal not eligible for support by other Community programmes.

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposals meeting the above eligibility criteria will then be checked against the following **selection** criteria:

1. Quality assessment of the proposal:
 - (a) relevance to the demands of the call for proposals and degree to which the proposal meets the objectives of the call notably the priority theme;
 - (b) clarity and feasibility of the work programme, including timetable, and methodology;
 - (c) quality of the proposed partnership (adequacy, experience of the partners);
 - (d) quality of the transnationality and notably the degree of involvement of the transnational partners in the project;
 - (e) added value at European level;
 - (f) scope and effectiveness of the dissemination mechanisms proposed;
 - (g) quality of the mechanisms for on-going monitoring and final evaluation;
 - (h) overall quality of the proposal.

2. Financial elements of the proposal (budget assessment):

- (a) acceptability of unit costs and total amounts;
- (b) a reasonable, realistic and balanced budget, including a grant request limited to a minimum necessary for implementing the project ⁽⁸⁾;
- (c) a sound cost-efficiency ratio.

3. Operational and technical capacity of the applicant organisation:

- (a) operational capacity of the applicant;
- (b) proven competence in the field of the proposed actions;
- (c) proven competence and professional experience of the head of project and of the persons who will perform the main tasks associated with the activities of the project.

8. DURATION OF PROJECTS

The present open call for proposals relates to a contractual period which will run possibly from early autumn 2002 for a duration of 15 months. The date of signing the contract is the starting date for actions. No extension of the period set out in the contract will be permitted.

9. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

- The selection of proposals eligible for funding will be based on the eligibility and selection criteria set out above and on the availability of the annual budget provided for the programme by the Community budgetary authority.
- **F priority for funding will be given to selected proposals dealing with the priority theme 'reconciliation of work and family life'.**
- Estimated budget available for funding: approximately EUR 4 400 000. The Commission expects to fund between 10 and 15 projects from this call.
- The Community's financial contribution will not exceed 80 % of the total eligible costs of the proposal between a minimum grant of EUR 250 000 and a maximum grant of EUR 500 000. The costs must be necessary to carry out the actions.
- The applicant and/or its partners and/or other sources is required to secure co-financing for the remaining 20 % of the total eligible costs of the project in cash. Promoters who do not present proof of secured co-financing cannot be taken into consideration.

⁽⁸⁾ Applicants are invited to read carefully the financial information given in the guidelines for applicants.

- The Commission reserves the right to reduce the Community grant if costs in the provisional budget are either ineligible, or are eligible but too high.
- Grants are awarded for one-off activities and confer no automatic right to funding in subsequent years.
- The subsidised project may not benefit from any other Community funding for the same activity.
- Applicants cannot include in their budget expenditure before or after the period during which the project is carried out.

Detailed information on eligible and ineligible costs and other financial provisions is provided in the guidelines for applicants.

10. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

- Receipt of applications will be confirmed, possibly, within one month. A reference number will be allocated to each application and must be quoted in any correspondence concerning it.
- All applications received will be examined. Only eligible applications will be evaluated against selection criteria.
- The Commission will inform all applicants of the decisions taken concerning their application in writing (possibly in early autumn 2002).
- No information will be released until the Commission's decision has been made public. The decision of the Commission is final.
- Should the Commission award a grant, a standard contract setting out the conditions and the amount in euro will be established with the beneficiaries.

11. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

- The application forms and all documents forming part of the application must be sent in paper form **by mail in triplicate** (one original plus two copies ⁽⁹⁾) **duly completed and signed** by the responsible person **by 15 March 2002** at the latest (the date of the postmark or express courier receipt serving as proof) to the address below. The number of the call for proposals must be indicated on the envelope.

European Commission
 DG Employment and Social Affairs
 Archives — Courrier DG EMPL (J-37 00/26) — VP/2001/21
 B-1049 Brussels

⁽⁹⁾ Please note that the copies must also be signed.

- **In addition, electronic versions** of the application form (parts I, II and III) including the bank identification form, filled in using the prescribed templates must also be submitted via electronic mail **by 15 March 2002** at the latest, quoting the number of the call for proposals, the name of the organisation submitting the proposal and the country of origin, to:

eqop@cec.eu.int
- Only applications submitted in the prescribed forms and formats, both paper and electronic, will be considered.
- Hand-delivered applications, incomplete or unsigned forms, hand-written forms and those sent by fax, will not be taken into consideration.
- Complementary documents sent by fax will not be taken in consideration, nor will additional documents sent by post or e-mail.
- Any document dispatched after the deadline will not be accepted.
- All correspondence concerning the application will be in either English, French or German as indicated by the applicant on the application form.
- The application form which is made up of three separate parts (part I: general information on the applicant including the bank identification form; part II: budget; part III: detailed description of the project) together with all the information concerning the detailed conditions of the call (text of the call for proposals, guidelines for applicants) can be obtained in paper and/or electronic version by writing to:

European Commission
DG Employment and Social Affairs
Unit 'Equality for Women and Men'
B-1049 Brussels
fax (32-2) 296 35 62
e-mail address: eqop@cec.eu.int
- The text of the call for proposals, the guidelines for applicants, the application form (except parts I and II) can also be downloaded from the web pages of DG Employment and Social Affairs, 'Unit Equality for Women and Men':

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/index_en.htm
- Questions related to the call for proposals may be sent to the following e-mail address: eqop@cec.eu.int, or by fax (32-2) 296 35 62. The reference of the call for proposals must be mentioned.

Amendment to the notice of invitation to tender for the reduction in the import duty on maize imported from non-member countries

(2002/C 23/09)

(Official Journal of the European Communities C 7 of 10 January 2002)

On page 5, the text of point 1, first paragraph, under heading III 'Tenders' is amended as follows:

- '1. Tenders must be submitted in writing and must either be delivered personally against a receipt or be sent by registered letter, telex, telefax or telegram, arriving no later than the date and at time stated in Title II, to the following address:

Direcção de Serviços de Licenciamento, Rua do Terreiro do Trigo, Edifício da Alfândega, P-1149-060 Lisboa (telefax (351-21) 881 42 61, telefono (351-21) 42 62).'
