

Project Fiche: No. 6

Erasmus Mundus Action 1: Western Balkans - Turkey Windows

1. Basic information

- 1.1 ABAC Number:** SI2.537815
- 1.2 Title:** Erasmus Mundus Action 1: Western Balkans - Turkey Windows
- 1.3 ELARG Statistical code:** 02.26 - Education and culture
- 1.4 Location:** Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99

Turkey

Implementing arrangements:

- 1.5 Contracting Authority (EC):** European Community represented by the Commission of the European Communities on behalf of the Beneficiaries
- 1.6 Implementing Agency:** The programme will be implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
- 1.7 Beneficiary:** Graduate students from the Western Balkans and Turkey

Financing:

- 1.8 Overall cost (VAT excluded)¹:** EUR 8 000 000
- 1.9 EC contribution:** EUR 8 000 000
- 1.10 Final date for contracting:** 30 November 2010
- 1.11 Final date for execution of contracts:** 30 November 2012
- 1.12 Final date for disbursements:** 30 November 2013

¹ The total cost of the project should be net of VAT and/or other taxes. Should this not be the case, the amount of VAT and the reasons why it should be considered eligible should be clearly indicated.

2. Overall Objective and Project Purpose

2.1 Overall Objective

To achieve better understanding and mutual enrichment between the European Union and the Candidate and Potential Candidates in the field of higher education through promoting the mobility of students at higher education level.

2.2 Project purpose

Enable highly qualified graduates from the Western Balkans and Turkey to engage in postgraduate study at European universities and to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union and EFTA-EEA States.

2.3 Link with AP/NPAA / EP/ SAA²

Higher Education is an issue mentioned in all the European / Accession Partnerships (except Montenegro) as a medium priority. The AP for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the EP for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo also indicate higher education as a sector for promoting regional cooperation.

2.4 Link with MIPD

This project has been designed on the basis of the IPA Multi-beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2009-2011³ in which education is a priority under Section 2.3.2.3. As noted in the MIPD, the objectives of aid in the area of education is to: Support the development and the quality of the higher education systems through balanced cooperation between local higher education institutions and those of the EU Member States; Enable mutual enrichment and better understanding between the EU Member States and the IPA beneficiaries through the exchange of academic staff and students at all levels and through the provision of postgraduate studies to highly qualified students in EU universities.

2.5 Link with National Development Plan

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, priorities for higher education are identified in the Medium Term Development Strategy MTDS which apart from the adoption of the Higher Education Law, aim at establishing entity-level higher education funds as well as public and transparent mechanisms of quality assurance, including the procedures for periodic external assessment of universities. In addition, there exists a set of priorities for the implementation of the Higher

² AP = Accession Partnership; NPAA = National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (for Candidates), National Action Plan (for Potential Candidates); EP= European Partnership; SAA = Stabilisation and Association Agreement

³ C(2009)5418

Education Law in relation to the harmonisation of lower level of legislation with the state law, institutional development in particular the establishment of relevant agencies for the recognition of qualifications, quality assurance and accreditation; the transformation of public universities from loose associations of faculties to being integrated institutions.

The key priorities of the National Programme for Croatia's Accession into EU for 2009 referring to higher education include the increase of mobility of students and teaching staff, increase of access to higher education as well as the strengthening of academic recognition of Croatian higher education institutions outside Croatia. Higher education is also a key priority in the Croatian Government's strategic document for education development "Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010" whose priorities and activities are in line with the National Programme for Croatia's Accession into EU.

3. Description of project

3.1 Background and justification

The programme specifically addresses the recommendation of the European Commission's Communication of 27 January 2006 "The Western Balkans on the Road to the EU: Consolidation Stability and Raising Prosperity"⁴ which indicates that "a special window will be made available in 2006 in Erasmus Mundus to allow up to 100 students from the region to undertake postgraduate studies in EU high profile master's courses." In 2007, Turkey decided to participate in this Window. Therefore, the amount of the allocation has been increased to allow more students to benefit from this Programme. This initiative emphasises the European Commission's desire to encourage the opening up of European higher education to the Western Balkans and Turkey. It complements the EU existing programmes in higher education, Tempus (for the Western Balkans) and Erasmus (in which Turkey participates), as well as the Erasmus Mundus Action 2 – Partnerships (former External Cooperation Window).

In addition, according to the Communication of March 2008⁵ "Western Balkans: Enhancing the European Perspective" and following the recommendations of the Council Meeting of January 2008, the Commission has decided to double the 2007 budget for scholarships as from the academic year 2010-2011. Therefore, the budget and the number of scholarships under Action 1 have been doubled from IPA 2007 to IPA 2009 (100 to 200 scholarships).

In order to reinforce the added value of Community action, it is necessary to ensure coherence and complementarities between the actions implemented in the framework of the present initiative and other relevant Community policies, instruments and actions. Effective linkages in the area of higher education undertaken within the framework of the EU cooperation with the Western Balkans and Turkey and the competent international organisations will be ensured.

⁴ COM (2006)27, 27.01.06

⁵ COM (2008)127, 05.03.08

3.2 Assessment of project impact, catalytic effect, sustainability and cross border impact

The Erasmus Mundus programme has provided valuable support to the achievement of important results in the field of higher education at European level including the elaboration of masters programmes compatible with the Bologna principles, increasing international student mobility, support to the quality assurance, fostering academic cooperation between EU and non-member institutions, enhancing the image of European higher education in non member Beneficiaries.

Furthermore the programme has had a catalytic effect on the implementation of the Bologna recommendations and has strongly contributed to the promotion of mutual understanding in a multicultural environment and training.

Performance is monitored through desk and field monitoring. The Erasmus Mundus National Structures act as information offices in EU Member States.

3.3 Results and measurable indicators:

The key results of this project are:

- Students from the Western Balkans and Turkey obtain a Masters degree (joint, double or multiple) from an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course;
- Improved cultural understanding and respect for diversity.

The main performance indicators for Erasmus Mundus are the number of institutions and students participating in the programme. The impact of the Western Balkans - Turkey Window within Erasmus Mundus will be measured against performance indicators such as the number of students participating in the scheme as well as the impact of their study in the EU on employability and career opportunities. The results of the project will be evaluated through an assessment and to be carried out by the Commission services.

3.4 Activities:

The Erasmus Mundus Masters Consortia will provide approximately 200 scholarships to graduate students from the Western Balkans to attend an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course for a minimum duration of one and a maximum duration of two years. The scholarships are awarded exclusively to graduate students who have been registered to an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course.

3.5 Conditionality and sequencing:

This programme will be implemented on the assumption that numerous students will be interested in mobility activities.

3.6 Linked activities

This project complements current and previous higher education schemes in the field, building on the positive results that other programmes like Tempus and the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window have generated in the region:

- Tempus aims at up-grading higher education institutions and promoting regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in the EU and the Western Balkans. Tempus projects relate to curriculum development and institutional development.
- Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window. This Programme was extended to the Western Balkans in 2007 in order to enable academic cooperation as well as mobility of academic staff and students at all levels.
- Erasmus (part of the Lifelong Learning Community Programme): among the candidate and potential candidates for Accession, only Turkey participates in this programme, on the same footing as the EU Member States, in the framework of the pre-accession strategy.

In addition and completing the proposed scholarships under this programme, the "European Integration Scholarship Programme" under IPA 2008 aims at strengthening the capacity of relevant public institutions in Serbia, through the provision of specialised academic and professional training programmes for qualified applicants of diverse backgrounds, in areas pertinent for the process of European integration.

The Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes in Croatia, the designated national agency for management of the Life-long Learning Programme, which is undertaking preparatory measures for Croatia's full participation in the Life-Long Learning Programme, launched the Call for Proposals referring to pilot projects for Life-Long Learning Programme in 2009 funded by IPA 2007 funds. The pilot projects include application of HEIs for Erasmus Charter as well as students' mobility for studies and staff mobility under Erasmus.

The Programme shall support and supplement action taken by and in the Member States while fully respecting their responsibility for the content of education and the organisation of education and training systems, and their cultural and linguistic diversity.

The Czech Presidency will co-organise with the European Commission in May 2009 a Pledging Conference which aimed at taking stock of what has been undertaken both by the Commission and the Member States in the provision of scholarships for the students of the Western Balkans. It is now envisaged to create a mechanism of coordination and information between the Commission, the Member States and the Candidates and Potential Candidates for accession.

3.7 Lessons learned

During the first three years of implementation of the previous Erasmus Mundus programme (2004-2008), students from the Western Balkans already had the opportunity to participate in the programme that was open to individuals worldwide.

Institutions from the Western Balkans were also eligible to establish partnerships or reinforce cooperation projects with Erasmus Mundus Masters courses and to participate in projects aiming to enhance the attractiveness of European Higher Education in the world.

Since the academic year 2005-2006, five country specific-windows within the general Erasmus Mundus Programme have been operational (China Window, India Window, Thailand Window, Malaysia Window, Other Asian countries Window). These windows have allowed for a strong increase in the participation of students from these countries. Financial absorption of additional funds has been very satisfactory.

The proposed Western Balkans – Turkey Windows are foreseen to start in the academic year 2010-2011 and will benefit from the lessons learnt from previous years.

Since 2006, Serbia has benefited from 50% of the total amount of scholarships. Since it is not possible to establish "quotas" per Beneficiary as the first criteria is excellence and not nationality, it is foreseen to open three different windows from the academic year 2010/2011: (i) a window for Serbia, (ii) a window for Turkey and (iii) a window for the rest of the Western Balkans. The breakdown of the budget will be established according to the 2009 results since it will be the first year that Turkey participates in the scheme.

4. Indicative Budget (amounts in EUR)

			SOURCES OF FUNDING									
			TOTAL EXP.RE	IPA COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION		NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION					PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION	
ACTIVITIES	IB (1)	INV (1)	EUR (a)=(b)+(c)+(d)	EUR (b)	%(2)	Total EUR (c)=(x)+(y)+(z)	% (2)	Central EUR (x)	Regional/ Local EUR (y)	IFIs EUR (z)	EUR (d)	% (2)
Activity 1	x		8 000 000	8 000 000	100	-					-	
TOTAL IB			8 000 000	8 000 000	100							
TOTAL INV												
TOTAL PROJECT			8 000 000	8 000 000	100							

Amounts net of VAT

(1) In the Activity row use "X" to identify whether IB or INV

(2) Expressed in % of the Total Expenditure (column (a))

5. Indicative Implementation Schedule (periods broken down per quarter)

Contracts	Start of Tendering	Signature of contract	Project Completion
Selected Consortia	N/A	Q3 2010	Q4 2012

6. Cross cutting issues

It is necessary to increase Community efforts to promote dialogue and understanding between cultures world-wide, bearing in mind the social dimension of higher education as well as the ideals of democracy and respect for human rights, including gender equality, especially as mobility fosters the discovery of new cultural and social environments and facilitates understanding thereof, thereby ensuring that no group of citizens or Western Balkans and Turkey nationals is excluded or put at a disadvantage.

6.1 Equal Opportunity

Over the past few decades there has been increasing attention paid to the gender dimension of poverty and development in transition economies, particularly in relation to the role of women in education and the impact of higher education on equal opportunity policies.

Projects should integrate gender mainstreaming in their aims and activities, specifically in subject matters and areas of study where the presence of women in the economy has traditionally been very low (science and technology). Projects should promote gender balance and identify factors influencing gender discrimination. They should monitor and evaluate the transition from education and training to working life, recruitment and career development of potential female top managers.

Projects in the sphere of education and sciences should promote the change of gender roles and societal stereotypes, avoiding in any sort of cultural prejudice educational materials.

The principle of equal opportunities should be taken into account when evaluating the quality of all projects proposed under the three components. Specific attention will be paid to this dimension when determining the benefit of mobility activities.

While implementing the project activities and, to the extent applicable, the beneficiary will try to assure that gender disaggregated data will be made available to carry out an analysis of the social and economic impact of the actions undertaken.

6.2 Environment

During the implementation of their actions, project Beneficiaries shall ensure that due cognizance be given to the Government's development policy relating to environmental management and that such policy is embodied within all strategic policy documents that they

may draft, all training activities that they may carry out and new study programmes and curricula that they may design.

6.3 Minorities

Rights of minorities should be taken into account when evaluating the quality of all projects proposed under the programme. Specific attention will be paid to this dimension when determining the benefit of mobility activities.

ANNEXES

- I- Logical framework matrix in standard format
- II- Amounts (in EUR) contracted and disbursed per quarter over the full duration of project
- III- Description of Institutional Framework
- IV - Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents:
- V- Details per EC funded contract

ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR PROJECT FICHE	ERASMUS MUNDUS Action 1 WESTERN BALKANS- TURKEY WINDOWS	
	Contracting period expires: 30 November 2010	Disbursement period expires: 30 November 2013
	Total budget: EUR 8 000 000	IPA budget: EUR 8 000 000

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	
To achieve better understanding and mutual enrichment between the European Union and the Candidate and Potential Candidates in the field of higher education through promoting the mobility of students at higher education level.	Main performance indicators for Erasmus Mundus are the number of institutions, students and scholars participating in the programme.	Commission and EACEA services. Universities and Consortia	
Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
To enable highly qualified graduates from the Western Balkans and Turkey to engage in postgraduate study at European universities and to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union and EFTA-EEA States.	- Number of students applying to the scheme; - Impact of their study in the EU on employability and career opportunities.	Universities and Consortia Commission and EACEA services.	After selection the assumption is that students and academics from WB are permitted to leave their country and enter the European host country. European Commission Delegations should cooperate if necessary with local EU embassies in the Beneficiaries in order to ease the visa application process.

Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
- Increased mobility of students from Western Balkans and Turkey to the European Union universities; - Increased qualified and experienced students from the Western Balkans and Turkey	- Number of students participating in the Programme - Impact of the mobility of students in the EU on employability and career opportunities	Universities and Consortia	
Activities	Means	Costs	Assumptions
Award of 200 scholarships	Grants	EUR 8 000 000	

ANNEX II: Amounts (in EUR) contracted and disbursed per quarter over the full duration of project

Contracted	Q3 2010				
Erasmus Mundus – Action 1	8 000 000				
Cumulated	8 000 000				
Disbursed	Q1 2011	Q1 2012	Q4 2013		
Erasmus Mundus – Action 1	3 200 000	3 200 000	1 600 000		
Cumulated	3 200 000	6 400 000	8 000 000		

ANNEX III: Description of Institutional Framework

The Tempus Offices have been asked to ensure the promotion of the Erasmus Mundus Programme⁶. Every Candidate and Potential candidate for accession has established a Tempus Office.

At the national level, here are the authorities in charge of the Higher education Sector:

- Albania: Ministry of Education and Sciences
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Federal Ministry of Education and Sciences
- Croatia: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
- the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Ministry of Education and Science
- Kosovo⁷: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Montenegro: Ministry of Education and Science
- Serbia: Ministry of Education and Sports
- Turkey: The Council of Higher Education

⁶ In Croatia the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes is responsible for promotion of Erasmus Mundus Programme

⁷ under UNSCR 1244/99

ANNEX IV: Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents

- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/210/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania and repealing Decision 2006/54/EC
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/211/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina and repealing Decision 2006/55/EC
- Council Decision of 12 February 2008 (2008/119/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Croatia and repealing Decision 2006/145/EC
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/212/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and repealing Decision 2006/57/EC
- Council Decision of 22 January 2007 (2007/49/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Montenegro.
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/213/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and repealing Decision 2006/56/EC
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/157/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey and repealing Decision 2005/35/EC
- Multi-beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2009/2011)

ANNEX V: Details per EC funded contract

The programme will be implemented on an indirect centralised basis by the European Commission following Article 53a of the Financial Regulation and corresponding provisions of the Implementing Rules.

Implementation tasks are delegated under Article 54(2) (a) of the Financial Regulation to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, which was created by Commission Decision 2005/56/EC of 14 January 2005. The mandate of the agency was extended by Commission Decision 2007/114/EC of 8 February 2007.

According to Article 12 (3) of the Council Regulation No (EC) 58/2003 of 19 December 2002 laying down the statute for executive agencies to be entrusted with certain tasks in the management of Community programmes⁸, any programme delegated to an executive agency has to contribute to the financing of the administrative budget of the agency.

After the selection of the awarded students, the EACEA will proceed with the preparation of contracts (grants) with the universities. Afterwards, it is the role of the university consortia to deliver and finance the scholarships of the selected students. Each individual scholarship costs approximately EUR 40 000.

The different steps of the action are as follows:

- 1) The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency publishes the selected Masters Courses on the Europa website. If students start their courses in year "N" the publication of this information normally takes place at the end of summer of year "N-1";
- 2) Erasmus Mundus consortia publish their selected Masters Courses worldwide especially in the targeted Beneficiaries (and the Commission publishes the Erasmus Mundus programme as a whole). The period of maximum publicity is normally between autumn of year N-1 and January of year "N";
- 3) Students apply directly to consortia. Deadlines for applications may vary according to the Masters Courses but they normally fall between mid-January and mid-February of year "N";
- 4) The consortia select students and propose a list of grantees, including a reserve list, to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency by the established deadline of 28 February of year "N".
- 5) The list of students is then validated by a Commission internal inter-service selection committee. Eventually it needs to receive the positive opinion of the programme committee and go through the EP's right of scrutiny. The whole procedure takes two or three months.
- 6) The Commission normally takes the selection decision at the end of May of year "N".
- 7) Grantees are informed that they have been selected in June of year "N". At this point they can start procedures to obtain visas to come study in an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course in August-October of year "N".

⁸ OJ L11, 16.1.2003, p. 1.