



Brussels, 7.02.2005  
OLAF A 6/LP/ebs I (2005) 1117 Annex

## **The 'Pericles' programme**

### **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

addressed to Member States' Competent National Authorities<sup>1</sup>

The 'Pericles' programme was adopted by the Council decision of 17 December 2001 establishing an exchange, assistance and training programme for the protection of the euro against counterfeiting<sup>2</sup>. The present document aims at providing specific guidelines for the implementation of the programme in 2005, in terms of further clarifying and prioritising its objectives and providing practical information for applying. The guidelines refer to the following areas:

- objectives of the programme and priorities particularly for 2005;
- target groups and actions eligible for a grant;
- selection criteria and financial provisions;
- procedure for submission of projects and lead-time for project approval.

#### **1. Objectives and priorities of the Programme**

The purpose of the programme is to strengthen the protection of euro banknotes and coins against counterfeiting and to take transnational and multidisciplinary aspects into consideration. It seeks to promote content-convergence of the measures taken at European level to combat the counterfeiting of the euro and to ensure equivalence and homogeneity while observing the traditions specific to each National Authority.

The evolution of the needs during the four years of the programme has a bearing on the priorities for the implementation of the programme.

In particular, during the current period, after the third year of circulation of the euro cash, the improving quality and stable quantity of counterfeit banknotes and coins highlights the need for strengthening the delivery of highly specialised training for trainers. Due to the international dimension of the fight against euro counterfeiting,

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<sup>1</sup> referred to in Article 2 (b) of the EC Regulation No 1338/2001, published in the OJ L181, 4.7.2001, p.6.

<sup>2</sup> 2001/923/EC, L339, 21.12.2001, pp. 50-54

completion of the protection structures (e.g.: National Central Offices against counterfeiting) and training of the relevant staff in the new and the acceding countries as well as at “high risk” third countries continues to be a priority for the Programme. With regard to professional background, emphasis needs to be given to raising awareness of the financial sector.

Immediate priority actions would therefore include, in both technical and operational fields:

- Raising awareness of the Community dimension of the euro and the need for close cooperation between competent authorities to make for more effective protection at European level, with emphasis on the new Member States and acceding countries, as well as the financial sector.
- Promotion, within the EU and outside, of general knowledge of legislation on the protection of the euro and of the authorities competent in the field for the legal, technical and operational aspects.
- Training trainers in the mechanisms for protecting the euro, including legislation, cooperation, investigation methods and security features of euro notes and coins.
- Developing and strengthening mechanisms, and the exchange of information, for protecting the euro outside the Union.
- Increasing awareness among staff concerned with the security features of the new currency, priority being given to staff in the euro area required to handle cash as part of their job.
- Contributing to the practical training of police, judicial and financial staff, with regard to the analysis of counterfeits, judicial cooperation and applicable legislation.
- Continuous updating of prevention and repression systems.
- Promoting convergence of training activities between National Authorities with similar penal structures and methods of investigation.
- Promoting closer cooperation between national experts working in the same field or in different specialisations by creating a network of correspondents at national and European level.
- Creating regional spheres of cooperation, including for third countries and regions.
- Improving technical support facilities for protection of the euro.

## **2. Target groups and eligible actions**

### **a. Target groups**

The action shall be addressed to the following categories:

- Staff of services responsible for detecting and combating counterfeiting, in particular police forces and tax administrations, depending on their specific duties at national level.
- Staff of the intelligence services.
- Representatives of national central banks, issuing institutions and other financial intermediaries (especially as regards the obligations of financial institutions).
- Representatives of the commercial banks (especially as regards the obligations of financial institutions).
- Law officers and legal experts specialising in this field.
- Any other occupational group concerned (chambers of commerce and industry or comparable structures acting as relays for SMEs, tradesmen and carriers). Staff of services responsible for detecting and combating counterfeiting, in particular police forces and tax administrations, depending on their specific duties at national level.

#### **b. Eligible actions**

Training and operational support activities based on a multidisciplinary, transnational approach covering security aspects, the exchange of technical/strategic information and technical/scientific assistance are eligible.

Workshops, meetings, seminars and a targeted policy of traineeships and staff exchanges aimed at exchanging information at Community level, with regard in particular to methods of monitoring and analysis, so as to assess:

- the economic and financial impact of counterfeiting,
- the operation of databases,
- use of detection tools with computer back-up,
- enquiry and investigation methods,
- scientific assistance (in particular, scientific databases and new technologies),
- operation of early-warning systems;
- related questions such as the scope of the obligation to provide information,
- protection of personal data,
- the different aspects of cooperation,
- protection of the euro outside the European Union,
- research activities,

- the provision of specific operational expertise.

Projects aimed at providing technical, scientific and operational assistance, in particular:

- measures to set up educational resources at Community level (collection of European Union legislation, information bulletins, practical manuals, glossaries, databases, especially in the field of scientific assistance or technology watching) or to create IT support applications (e.g. software),
- studies with a multidisciplinary, transnational dimension,
- development of technical support tools and methods, so as to facilitate detection activities at Community level.

To be eligible for co-financing, measures must involve at least two National Authorities (transnational in character).

### **3. Selection criteria and financial provisions**

#### **a. Selection criteria**

The programme is implemented and coordinated by the Commission (OLAF) and the Member States, in close cooperation. Coordination covers initiatives taken by other bodies, in particular the ECB and Europol. The Commission (OLAF) selects the projects submitted by the Member States on the basis of the following criteria:

- consistency with the objectives of the programme, as defined in the Decision,
- European dimension, including in particular those aspects that relate to cooperation with the ECB and Europol,
- extent to which they complement other previous, current or scheduled projects,
- ability of the organiser to implement the project,
- specific quality of the project and its cost-effectiveness ratio,
- amount of aid requested and its proportionality to the anticipated results,
- contribution of the anticipated results to achieving the programme's objectives.

#### **b. Eligibility for the grant**

Projects under the programme may emanate from the Member States' competent national authorities<sup>3</sup> or from the Commission. These are the only subjects eligible to apply for the programme.

With regard to workshops, meetings and seminars<sup>4</sup> Member States may present no more than one project per year; projects in connection with placements and exchanges of staff or assistance may be additionally presented.

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<sup>3</sup> referred to in Article 2 (b) of the EC Regulation No 1338/2001, published in the OJ L181, 4.7.2001, p.6.

The Programme is open to accession or other countries, in accordance with existing agreements or conditions to be agreed upon. Accession countries can actively cooperate in projects presented by the eligible national authorities from Member States. Particularly important is the participation in these projects of countries:

- at “high risk” for counterfeiting offences (as assessed in the framework of the Committee referred to in recital (7) of the decision concerning ‘Pericles’), and
- where the euro circulates as an official currency. (e.g. some of the States of the Western Balkans).

### **c. Financial provisions**

The overall financial reference amount for the implementation of the ‘Pericles’ programme is EUR 4 million during the period 2002 - 2005.

The budget provision for 2005 is EUR 1 000 000; budget line 24.0202.

The Community’s financial contribution is up to 70 % of the eligible cost of the projects submitted by Member States. Commission initiatives may be financed up to 100%. Costs for staff of international and European institutions/bodies’ participating in the events are not part of the eligible amount. Apart from bearing the cost of participation of officials from third countries in workshops, meetings and seminars, the Community may co-finance up to 70% of the cost of training measures on the territory of non-member countries and operational support in those countries.

The following specific provisions apply.

(1) With regard to workshops, meetings and seminars:

- the Community bears the travel and accommodation expenses in another Member State of staff participating, general overheads associated with organising these events, publication and translation costs for the teaching materials used;
- Member States bear costs associated with initial and continuing training of their staff (particularly as regards technical training) and certain logistical expenses in connection with the workshops, meetings and seminars organised on their territory with Community funding (such as internal transfers, rental of premises<sup>5</sup>, provision of interpreting facilities).

For workshops, meetings and seminars organised by the Commission jointly with other partners such as the ECB, Europol or Interpol, the ensuing expenses are divided between those partners; the contribution of those partners may be a contribution in kind; each partner shall bear the travel and accommodation costs of its own guest speakers.

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<sup>4</sup> referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 3(2) of the Council Decision of 17 December 2001 No 923, establishing an exchange, assistance and training programme for the protection of the euro against counterfeiting (the ‘Pericles’ programme).

<sup>5</sup>Contribution in kind is not eligible expenditure

- (2) For staff exchanges, eligible costs related to the participation of Member States' staff in placements or exchanges are borne by the Community.
- (3) Concerning technical, scientific and operational assistance, the Community's co-financing (of up to 70 % of the eligible costs) covers in particular:
- design and production costs of teaching resources and computer applications or technical instruments with a European dimension;
  - costs of studies e.g. comparative law studies on the protection of the euro against counterfeiting.

Expenses related to non-Community components of teaching resources and of communications and information-exchange systems are borne by the Member States. Such expenses include the national databases that form part of those systems, the network connections between the Community and the non-Community components and such software and hardware as each Member State shall deem appropriate for the full operation of those systems throughout its administration.

#### **4. Procedures for applying and deadlines**

##### **a. Submission of applications**

Applications for grants must be sent to the attention of Mr. Y.XENAKIS, Head of Unit "Protection of the Euro", OLAF-The European Commission, rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels, Office: J30 – Belgium.

Applications must be submitted using the official application form in one of the European Union languages. A version of the summary of the project and its expected results in English or French, non-compulsory, will facilitate examination of the file.

Forms may be obtained by applying to OLAF by fax on +32.2.299.81.02, by email contacting [Luca.Pierini@cec.eu.int](mailto:Luca.Pierini@cec.eu.int) or by downloading the application form from the OLAF web site:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/olaf/>

Two signed application forms must be submitted in original (fax or photocopies are not accepted). Alterations to the form will disqualify the application.

In order to be valid, the application has to include the following documents:

- the original application form, duly completed and signed;
- a description of the project;
- the planned budget with a detailed financial statement.

##### **b. Lead times for evaluation of applications and award**

A specific evaluation committee will analyse and evaluate the projects received.

The committee will meet five times (March, April, June, September, November) in 2005. During each meeting it will analyse the valid and complete project proposals officially postmarked before:

- 7 March 2005;
- 18 April 2005;
- 9 June 2005;
- 9 September 2005;
- 7 November 2005.

During the fifteen working days after the above dates, an evaluation will be made and a final decision will be taken on each of the proposals received. The final approval to the project will be communicated to the beneficiaries with an official letter, together with a grant agreement to be signed and returned to OLAF. The other applicants will be informed within fifteen calendar days after the award decision has been sent to the beneficiaries. The signature of the grant agreement by both parties will allow OLAF to make available a first 50% (exceptionally extendable to 70%) of the approved grant. The remaining part of that grant will be paid upon reception and approval of the final documents supporting the expenditure incurred.

A period of roughly 5 weeks may be necessary from the approval of the grant application until the final signature of the grant by OLAF. The transfer of the first tranche of the grant will be made in roughly fifteen working days from the date of OLAF's final signature.

## **5. Follow-up and evaluation**

In compliance with the signed grant agreement, the beneficiaries of each project selected shall submit to the Commission:

- a final financial statement, justifying documents for all real expenses and proofs of payments;
- a final report within two months following completion of the operation.

They also shall collect documentation related to the project (such as minutes of lectures and results of discussions) and make it available to OLAF and to all participants.

On completion of the projects, the Commission shall evaluate the way in which they have been implemented and the impact they have had in order to gauge whether the objectives set at the outset have been achieved.