

Decision No 771/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council
of 17 May 2006 establishing the European Year of Equal Opportunities
for All (2007) — towards a just society (Text with EEA relevance)

Article 1

The European Year

The year 2007 shall be designated as the ‘European Year of Equal Opportunities for All’.

Article 2

Objectives

The objectives of the European Year shall be as follows:

- (a) Rights — Raising awareness of the right to equality and non-discrimination and of the problem of multiple discrimination. The European Year will highlight the message that all people are entitled to equal treatment, irrespective of their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The European Year will make groups that are at risk of discrimination more aware of their rights and of existing European legislation in the field of non-discrimination.
- (b) Representation — Stimulating debate on ways to increase the participation in society of groups that are victims of discrimination and a balanced participation of men and women. The European Year will encourage reflection and discussion on the need to promote their greater participation in society, and their involvement in actions designed to combat discrimination, in all sectors and at all levels.
- (c) Recognition — Facilitating and celebrating diversity and equality. The European Year will highlight the positive contribution that people, irrespective of their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, can make to society as a whole, in particular by accentuating the benefits of diversity.
- (d) Respect — Promoting a more cohesive society. The European Year will raise awareness of the importance of eliminating stereotypes, prejudice and violence, promoting good relations between all in society, and, in particular, among young people, and promoting and disseminating the values underlying the fight against discrimination.

Article 3

Content of actions

1 The actions designed to meet the objectives set out in Article 2 may entail the development of, or the provision of support for, in particular:

- a meetings and events;
- b information, promotional and educational campaigns;
- c Community or nationwide surveys and studies.

2 Details of the actions referred to in paragraph 1 are set out in the Annex.

Article 4

Gender mainstreaming

The European Year shall take into account the different ways in which women and men experience discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Article 5

Cooperation and implementation at Community level

The Commission shall ensure that Community actions covered by this Decision are implemented in conformity with the Annex, in particular by making sure that all the forms of discrimination referred to in Article 13 of the Treaty and in Article 2 of this Decision are addressed and dealt with fairly.

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.

It shall conduct a regular exchange of views with stakeholders, the NGOs representing the groups that are victims of discrimination and civil society, particularly at European level, on the design, implementation, follow-up and assessment of the European Year. To that end, the Commission shall make the relevant information available to such stakeholders. The Commission shall inform the Committee, established pursuant to Article 7(1), of their opinion.

Article 6

Cooperation and implementation at national level

1 Each Member State shall establish or designate a national implementing body to organise its participation in the European Year. By 17 June 2006, each Member State shall inform the Commission of its choice. That national implementing body shall be responsible for defining the national strategy and 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 and shall seek to ensure a balanced treatment of all the grounds of discrimination referred to in Article 2.

The procedure for awarding Community funding for actions at national level is set out in part II of the Annex.

2 For the purpose of carrying out its tasks, the national implementing body shall consult on a regular basis and cooperate closely with civil society, including with organisations defending or representing the interests of those who are potentially exposed to discrimination and unequal treatment and with other relevant stakeholders.

Article 7

Committee

1 The Commission shall be assisted by a Committee, hereinafter referred to as the 'Committee'.

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.

4 The Member State's representative on the Committee shall be designated preferably from the national implementing body as referred to in Article 6(1).

Article 8

Financial arrangements

1 Community-wide measures, as set out in part I of the Annex, may be subsidised up to 80 % or give rise to procurement contracts financed from the general budget of the European Union.

2 Local, regional or national measures, as set out in point 6 of part II of the Annex, may be co-financed from the general budget of the European Union up to a maximum of 50 % of the total consolidated costs of the actions implemented at local, regional or national level, and 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 measures pursuant to Article 8(1) shall be adopted by the Commission in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 7(2).

2 Requests for financial assistance for measures pursuant to Article 8(2) 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

The Commission together with the Member States shall ensure that the measures provided for in this Decision are consistent with other Community, national and regional action and initiatives.

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

Participation of non-Member States

Participation in the European Year shall be open to:

- (a) countries with which the European Union has signed a Treaty of Accession;
- (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) EFTA States that are parties to the EEA Agreement, in accordance with the provisions of that Agreement;
- (d) 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;
- (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 will be covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, in accordance with the priorities and procedures established in the overall cooperation with those countries.

Article 12

Budget

The financial framework for the implementation of the actions referred to in this Decision for the period 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2007 shall be EUR 15 000 000, of which EUR 6 000 000 shall be for the period until 31 December 2006. For the period following 31 December 2006, the amount is indicative and shall be deemed to be confirmed if it is consistent, for this phase, with the multi-annual financial framework in force for the period commencing on 1 January 2007.

Article 13

International cooperation

Within the framework of the European Year, the Commission may cooperate with the relevant international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

Article 14

Monitoring and evaluation

By 31 December 2008, 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 15

Entry into force

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

Done at Strasbourg, 17 May 2006.

For the European Parliament

The President

J. BORRELL FONTELLES

For the Council

The President

H. WINKLER