European voluntary service for young people: Community action programme 1998-2002

1996/0318(COD) - 16/12/1997 - Council position

In its common position on European voluntary service, the Council incorporated in whole or in part 16 of the 40 amendments adopted by the European Parliament at first reading. In particular, these included the following: -reinforcing informal educational activities for the young as part of a policy of youth cooperation, and adopting a coherent approach to youth policy by the year 2000, -imparting added value to voluntary service in comparison with existing international exchanges in the Union (e.g. a stimulating framework for gaining broader experience, an active contribution to the ideals of democracy and tolerance in the context of European integration, opportunities for young people to play an active role in services of benefit to the community, etc.), -integrating activities with third countries wholly into the programme and ensuring complementarity with programmes under which projects for young volunteers from third countries may be financed, -linguistic and intercultural preparation of volunteers, -informing young volunteers about their rights and obligations, -monitoring the work of young volunteers in cooperation with local authorities, -ensuring that the activities of volunteers do not have the effect of restricting potential or existing paid jobs in the Member States, -the need for a certain amount of flexibility in the age range of volunteers, in certain justified cases. Those of Parliament's amendments which were not incorporated by the Council concerned, in particular: -instituting a specific budget heading for the programme as from 1996 and respecting the programme's budgetary compatibility with other Community youth measures, -the provisions designed to eliminate obstacles to the mobility of young volunteers, -commitology. Apart from general amendments intended to clarify the text of the basic proposal (particularly to reduce the number of sections in the annex from 5 to 4 while preserving the spirit of the original text and inserting an indicative definition of 'young volunteer'), the Council made two main changes to the text of the proposal: 1) the programme's duration and budget: the Council opted for a limited budget for the programme, namely ECU 35 m from 01.01.1998 to 31.12.1999. The Council brought the duration of the programme into line with that of the Youth for Europe programme, which expires on 31.12.1999; 2) the mobility of young volunteers: the Council did not wish to insert in the decision obligations which were more the responsibility of the Member States, particularly concerning the residence rights of volunteers or preservation of their social protection rights.