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

1996/0318(COD) - 23/06/1998

Because European Voluntary Service (EVS) is an important programme for young people, the Parliament delegation finally gave its consent, unenthusiastically, to the compromise on the programme's budget reached at the EP-Council Conciliation Committee meeting on 11th June. On the other points which were part of the overall compromise package (the recognition of volunteers, access to the programme, complementarity with national services and commitology), common ground was found. However, the Parliament delegation wanted to allow itself time to evaluate the Council's final offer on the budget, which was significantly lower than that proposed by Parliament. The Council did not wish to go higher than Ecu 47.5m for 1998-99 (instead of the 35 million initially envisaged in the common position). The Commission, for its part, undertook to examine the option of reallocating unused budget appropriations to the programme. At second reading, Parliament called for 80 million while the Commission proposed 60 million. Although the EP delegation was prepared to negotiate on the amount of funding required, 50 million seemed to be the minimum necessary to ensure that the funds available did not decrease in the second year of the programme, given that 25 million had already been entered under the 1998 budget. According to the rapporteur, Nicole FONTAINE (EPP, F), the Council was guilty of political shortsightedness in adopting a mean attitude on the issue of funding, when there were plenty of reasons to support the programme. In view of the unavoidable fixed costs, adequate financial backing was essential to ensure value for money. Peter PEX (EPP, NL), chair of the Culture Committee, said it was important not to arouse false hopes which might cause young people to be disappointed by a measure which proved to be no more than window-dressing. Although the EVS was not a training programme as such, it would provide young people, through the experience they acquired in another Member States