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

1996/0318(COD) - 12/06/1997

The rapporteur pointed out that this proposal fell within the more general context of implementing a genuine youth policy at European level. She called for the European Voluntary Service to be accessible to all young people, for solidarity associations to be closely linked to the processes and for those Member States favourable to the idea of a European voluntary civilian service to be able to integrate this within their national services. The rapporteur also called for young volunteers to be guaranteed a proper status which would ensure their social protection and legal coverage. The voluntary service should also be open to young people from third countries. Finally, she regretted that the resources did not match the programme's ambitions. Recalling that the Commission's proposal was in response to demands made in a Parliament resolution of 22 September 1995, Commissioner Cresson stressed that the high number of projects received showed that people were extremely keen to create a Europe of citizens. As for the amendments tabled, the Commissioner said that the Commission could take most of these on board, in particular those advocating development of the cooperation policy, those stressing the importance of coordination with the 'Youth for Europe' programme, those intended to bring down legal obstacles to transnational mobility and those underlining the role of the association sector. However, the Commission could not accept the part of Amendment No 11 establishing a link between national civilian services as these were the responsibility of the Member States. Likewise, for legal reasons, Amendments Nos 1, 4, 7, 10 and 38 could not be accepted by the Commission and neither could part of Amendments Nos 28 and 29 which also referred to points which were the exclusive remit of the Member States. The Commission could also not accept Amendments Nos 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35 on comitology. Finally, Amendment No 20 on the budget could not be accepted at this stage.