European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper

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The committee has adopted the report by Mrs Lissy Gröner (PSE, D) on the Commission's White Paper. While welcoming the White Paper, which gives a new impetus to youth policy, the committee regrets that the proposed initiatives do not match the expectations aroused among young people during the consultation process. The committee also emphasises that a number of European Union policies are of particular importance to young people, including health policy, drugs policy, anti-discrimination measures, the labour market, education and lifelong learning, immigration and equal opportunities for men and women. It stresses the specific importance of health, given the comparative research showing alarming tendencies towards a worsening state of health in young people in the EU. Parliament calls for the gender dimension and sexual equality to be included as a factor in all areas of the White Paper and asks the Member States, when implementing the White Paper, to ensure participation by young people and youth organisations at national level, for example through the setting up of gender-balanced youth advisory committees comprising representatives of youth organisations, including vulnerable groups such as disabled young people and young members of ethnic minorities. The Committee supports a significant development of voluntary service by young people at national, regional and local level and deplores current obstacles, especially lengthy procedures for issuing visas and barriers formed by the provisions of social legislation, and in particular the specific obstacles faced by disabled people. Lastly, considering that voluntary service is an important type of informal learning, Parliament believes that the Commission should create a diploma in voluntary service.