European youth : opening up decision-making process to young people, follow-up to the White Paper

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PURPOSE : to present the follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth.
CONTENT : this Commission communication sets out the follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European youth. It proposes common objectives for the participation and information of young people in response to the Council resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European co-operation in the youth field. To recall, the Council calls for an open method of co-ordination to be applied, initially, to two priorities, the participation and information of young people. The Council gives the Commission a mandate to draw up draft common objectives ton the basis of a report on the situation of all the Member States. The present Communication proposes common objectives to the Council, in accordance with this mandate. In accordance with its mandate, the Commission drew up a detailed questionnaire for each of these two priorities, in consultation with the Member States. These questionnaires were sent to the Member States and also to the candidate countries, as the Council Resolution provides for candidate countries to be "associated with the framework of European cooperation in the youth field". The questionnaires are based on a common approach and have the same general structure; they start with basic information on the situation and legislation in each country and go on to ask about general trends in current national policy and examples of good practice. Finally, Member States are asked to specify their expectations at European level. In view of the commitment made to consult young people, the consultation methods adopted nationally also have to be specified. More specifically, the communication consists of: - proposals to follow up the White Paper on Youth; - proposals which reflect the will to work together; - proposals to complement other political measures : lifelong learning is an important part of this strategy. The "openness" and "participation" objectives of the White Paper on Governance also include youth participation and information; - common objectives to enhance the participation of young people: the Commission proposes that measures to encourage young people to be active citizens should be instituted and supported an that their effective participation in democratic life should be reinforced. To achieve this objective, the following three sub-objectives are proposed: greater participation by young people in the life of the community in which they live; greater participating by young people in the mechanism of representative democracy and learning to participate; - common objectives to improve information for young people : information services on the spot which are free of charge and easily accessible should be provided. Disadvantaged young people should have equal access to information. National and regional youth portals linked to the European Youth Portal should be developed; - enhancing young people's participating in the shaping and dissemination of information; - and finally implementing and monitoring mechanisms : implementing and monitoring the common objectives is part of the open method of co-ordination. Each Member State must decide on the implementing and monitoring measures to be applied at national level, on the basis of its own situation in relation to the common objectives. It is proposed that the Member States should draw up national reports on the implementation of the two priorities, participation and information, in 2005. The Commission will then use these as a basis for drawing up a progress report for the Council. On the basis of the Commission's proposals, the Council will confirm, adapt or amend the common objectives for these two priorities.