

Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

1998/0197(COD) - 28/08/1998 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: to propose a new youth action programme for the period 2000-2004. **SUBSTANCE:** the new action programme for youth incorporates the 'Youth for Europe' and 'European Voluntary Service' programmes. It is proposed for the period from 01.01.2000 to 31.12.2004, and the total budget proposed for this period is EUR 600 m. By supporting and complementing the work of the Member States in this field, Youth will help to create a Europe of knowledge and to supplement the education facilities already available in Europe. The aim is to contribute to the establishment of a 'European education area' conducive to lifelong learning and the full exercise of citizenship. Youth is addressed to all young people, is not subject to any conditions, and is designed to stimulate their creativity and enable them to participate fully in working life. The proposal also seeks to identify more satisfactorily the implementers and beneficiaries of the programme. One of the main innovations of Youth is the intention of focusing measures on young people (aged 15-25) and on those of them who find it most difficult to participate in a Community programme, for cultural, social, economic, physical, mental or geographical reasons. The Commission wished to create links to other Community education and training programmes by means of 'European knowledge points' which will make it possible to bring together at local or regional level the implementers and beneficiaries of these various programmes. Internally, the programme has been rationalised by limiting the number of actions in comparison with the formulae for the two previous programmes (Youth III and voluntary service) and by decentralising the management of the actions to national level in so far as possible. The structure of the programme: Youth has three main objectives: -to encourage solidarity by promoting European Voluntary Service for young people; -to promote the participation of young people in European integration by means of youth mobility schemes; -to promote a spirit of enterprise and creativity among young people. These objectives will be attained by means of five categories of actions: 1) voluntary service: participation by young people in transnational community service activities within the Community or with third countries for periods ranging from 3 weeks to a year; 2) Youth for Europe: promoting mobility of young people or groups of young people within the Community, giving them the opportunity to stay in another Member State, or youth exchanges with third countries (at least one week). The emphasis will be on acceptance of others and tolerance; sporting/cultural activities will be stepped up; 3) Opportunity for Youth: promoting initiative and creativity by supporting projects in which young people participate actively and directly in innovative initiatives and which are based on solidarity at local, regional, national or European level. The projects may also extend initiatives conducted in connection with previous participation in a European programme; 4) Joint actions: generation of synergy with other Community programmes of relevance to education and training policy through 'European knowledge points'; 5) Support measures, designed primarily to supplement and support the actions in the programme: building on the achievements of the Youth programme, continuing certain innovative measures at Community level and improving quality by exchanging good practices or by training youth leaders so as to stress the European dimension. Initiatives are also planned to disseminate the results of the measures taken and to inform young people. The programme is to be implemented consistently with other Community initiatives or programmes (Leonardo II, Socrates II, research programmes, cultural programmes, employment, SMEs, etc.) and devoting special attention to equality of opportunity for women and men. The programme is to be implemented by the Commission in close cooperation with Member States; the decentralisation of its management is to be maximised. In this respect, Member States are required to establish integrated management structures to undertake the operational implementation of the projects. As regards commitment, the Commission will be assisted by a committee of representatives of the Member States, whose competences will vary, depending on the subject in hand. The programme will be extended to the Eastern European applicant countries, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey and the EEA countries, under financial arrangements yet to be determined. Cooperation will also be stepped up with third countries and the appropriate international organisations (particularly the Council of Europe). As

regards evaluation and monitoring of Youth, the Commission will publish a first mid-term review of the programme by 30.06.2003, and a final analysis report by 31.12.2005. Youth will be evaluated regularly throughout its implementation, in cooperation with Member States.