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

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The Commission has presented an evaluation report on the third phase of the "Youth for Europe" Programme and the Community Action Programme "European Voluntary Service". In its conclusions, the report highlights that the launch of the YOUTH Programme provided the opportunity to simplify the procedures based on conclusions drawn from previous experience of the past years. These simplifications aim in particular to facilitate access to the Programme, to improve the transparency of financing and to speed up the transfer of payments. Moreover, the decentralisation of the implementation of the Actions has been increased. The development of enhanced methods of communication amongst the National Agencies themselves on the one hand and between the National Agencies and the Commission on the other, is foreseen for the year 2002. The evaluation of "Youth for Europe" stressed the weak development of multilateral exchanges, which play a more important role than others in incorporating the European dimension, and the reasons for this situation. Under the YOUTH Programme, a particular effort is being made with regard to multilateral activities. For instance, a target of at least 30% of decentralised funds allocated to multilateral projects has been set for the first year of implementation. A framework for the monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the YOUTH Programme is being developed based on some of the recommendations of the evaluators. To this end the Commission is working out a series of regular indicators which will allow, with the assistance of the National Agencies, a more systematic monitoring of the implementation of the Programme. A reflection could also be done regarding the links between youth and culture: in 2000 almost 30% of the supported projects within the framework of the programme had a theme related to culture. Lastly, the new Youthlink database, which will integrate the existing systems, should be an appropriate tool responding to the needs of both the National Agencies and the Commission. It will be available before the end of 2001.