

European Year of Education through Sport

EYES 2004

2001/0244(COD) - 14/10/2002 - Council position

In general, the common position retains the main features of the Commission's proposal for a decision while being consistent with the opinion of the European Parliament. This common position, which was adopted unanimously with Portugal abstaining (as it can find no justification for the absence of any express reference to EURO 2004 to one specifically European event of 2004), it provides a basis for pursuing negotiations on the proposal for a decision. As regards the budget, the Council approved the overall budget of EUR 11.5 million, which was proposed by the Commission and accepted by the Parliament at first reading. As regards the objectives of the decision, the common position remains faithful to the seven objectives proposed by the Commission and amended by the Parliament at first reading. As a result of the amendments, greater emphasis has been placed on the educational aspects of the Year of Education through Sport and the subsidiarity principle has been given greater weight. The Parliament's amendment concerning the inclusion of a specific objective on gender equality has been added to the recitals. In fact, rather than being an overall objective relating specifically to the European Year of Education through Sport, this is an issue which must be incorporated generally into Community measures. As regards the measures, the common position accepts those proposed by the Commission and amended by the Parliament, particularly the elimination of surveys and studies, with the exception of those relating to the evaluation of the impact of the European Year of Education through Sport. However, two amendments have not been accepted. The common position does not accept the Parliament's amendment concerning the inclusion of a list of various sporting competitions to be held in 2004. The Commission agrees with this approach. In fact, in its initial proposal, the Commission cited the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Athens firstly because of their universal and symbolic character and secondly because they cover most sports. The proposal simply mentioned the other major sporting events and only cited EURO 2004 in Portugal as an example. If other events were also cited, this would result in a very long list, which would be out of proportion with the text of the decision. It should be borne in mind that each year around 200 European and/or international championships relating to all sports and all categories of participants are organised in Europe. An exhaustive list would add nothing to the proposal for a decision and would make it excessively cumbersome. One of the objectives of the European Year of Education through Sport is simply to use events of this kind as a platform for voluntary initiatives - this being viewed as a key part of non-formal education. The common position also does not accept the amendment which would involve a sports competition being organised among European schools. The winners of the competition would take part in the lighting of the Olympic torch in March 2004 in Olympia. The Commission did not accept this amendment either. The Commission feels that the arrangement proposed by the Council, which would involve mentioning "European competitions with an educational slant", would enable those involved in the European Year of Education through Sport to submit proposals in response to the concerns expressed by the Parliament, as set out explicitly in a declaration attached to the common position. The Commission cannot under any circumstances take the place of educational institutions or sports organisations and organise activities which fall within their remit. When implementing the decision, however, the Commission will do its utmost to encourage the specialised organisations, from both the school education sector and the sports sector, to put forward as part of the European Year of Education through Sport a project for a major event involving all Member States and stressing the added value the Olympic ideals can bring to education. The common position makes provision for the setting up of a committee to assist the Commission in the management of the European Year of Education through Sport. This amendment means that, for the sake of consistency, the same procedures will be adopted for the European Year of Education through Sport as for the European Year of Languages and the European Year of the Disabled. The other amendments, which serve merely to make the text more comprehensible and readable, retain the main features and respect the spirit of the Commission's initial proposal.

