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

1996/0318(COD) - 12/06/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Nicole FONTAINE (EPP, F), Parliament approved the proposal for a decision establishing a European Voluntary Service with the following changes: - the financial framework for the first two years (1998-99) must be increased from the ECU 60 m proposed by the European Commission to ECU 80 m, - the service must contribute to the development of the ideals of democracy, tolerance and cohesion of European integration, - information on the rights and obligations of the volunteers must be provided at European, national and local levels, - the Member States must take measures to ensure that this service is compatible with national civilian services and that it does not serve to restrict potential or existing paid employment, - the Member States must take measures in respect of the right of residence, social protection and tax exemption for the allowances received by young volunteers during their period of service for their travel, accommodation and subsistence, - as regards the age of the volunteers, priority must be given to those between 18 and 25 years of age, but for missions to third countries, particularly developing countries, that may be extended to 29 years, - with particular reference to voluntary service in the developing countries, measures must be taken to ensure that the service gives rise to a real transfer of expertise to the countries concerned, that it tallies with the Union's development cooperation objectives and that the projects can be extended to two years in certain cases, - post-activity follow-up must be provided in order to ensure that the experience acquired does not go to waste, - a European statute for young volunteers must be established at Member State level, valid in the volunteer's home country and host country, so as to ensure that volunteers enjoy the same mobility as other EU citizens. In addition Parliament calls for: - proper coordination with the Youth for Europe programme, - the utmost transparency in the selection of projects, not least in connection with the committee procedure (with Parliament kept regularly informed about decisions taken in the committee), - an annual assessment, in conjunction with support associations, in order to identify the obstacles to the participation of young people in the programme, - the volunteers to be properly supervised in their host country, whether by community or institutional organizations, - consideration to be given to the possibility of involving young nationals from third countries in voluntary service in the Community, - cooperation with NGOs and civil society, - the young people participating in the programme to be given adequate language and cultural training, - a report to be drawn up before 31 December 1998 on the main priorities for European youth policy, - a decision on a possible change to the financial framework for the service to be taken after the Commission has submitted its final report and in accordance with the codecision procedure.