

# Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

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In adopting the report by Philippe DE COENE (PSE, B) on the new Youth programme, the European Parliament took the view that the Community action programme for youth should receive EUR 800 m rather than EUR 600 m in financial resources: EUR 280 m for the Youth for Europe action, EUR 280 m for the European Voluntary Service action, EUR 100 m for the Opportunity for Youth action, EUR 6 m for joint actions and EUR 134 m for accompanying measures. It particularly stressed that the programme should promote understanding between peoples, help to combat excessive nationalism, promote respect for human rights and the rights of minorities, and respect equality between men and women. It called for a special effort to be made to assist the young and small local groups which were the most disadvantaged for cultural, social, physical, economic or geographical reasons. 'Youth' should promote active citizenship on the part of young people and their participation in the further development of the Union, as well as a knowledge policy in Europe by means of the promotion of a European educational area. By means of its amendments, Parliament called for the programme to: -be open to young people aged 14 to 27, rather than 15 to 25, with provision for a certain adjustment to the age limits to take account of specific conditions in the participating countries; -promote the development of a tolerant society in Europe and of European citizenship; -make use of the development of new information and communication technologies. Parliament called on the Commission and Member States to coordinate their efforts to ensure that participants in the programme receive social protection and medical care. The Commission and Member States should take measures to enable the programme to be implemented in a manner appropriate and appealing to young people. Parliament called for the evaluations of the programme to be forwarded to itself. Numerous amendments were also made to the annex to the programme with the aim of refining the 3 main initiatives included in the Youth programme: 1) as regards European Voluntary Service, Parliament stressed that it must not take the place of jobs and that an adequate follow-up must be ensured (it proposed organising 'post-EVS initiatives' to exploit the experience gained under the programme); 2) as regards the mobility of young people, Parliament suggested that group mobility should favour small or remote language areas; 3) as regards the youth initiatives, it called for partnership with local players to be promoted (political leaders in towns, associations and social services). Parliament wished coordination between programmes to be stepped up and public-information campaigns to be organised. Research was needed to identify European pathways which would guide young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or the marginalised. Parliament called for the establishment of a structure to develop youth projects and collect information about them. It also proposed establishing a 'Young People in Europe' Internet site.