

# Youth policy: Youth in action programme for 2007-2013

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The Council held a policy debate on an action programme proposed by the Commission in July 2004, aimed at promoting actions in favour of youth, for the period 2007-2013.

The debate focussed essentially on the following items: innovations and added value of the programme; age range to be covered by the programme; accessibility of the programme to young people with fewer opportunities.

Delegations agreed on the general approach of the Commission in its proposal, recognising the European added value of a programme supporting actions in favour of young people.

The objectives of the programme - the development of young people's European identity and active citizenship as well as the promotion of the participation of young people in voluntary activities, opened up to third countries - were particularly welcomed by the delegations. A broader range of ages was supported by a number of delegations, which could be justified, on the one hand, by the earlier maturity of the new generation of young people and, on the other hand, by the later entry into active life.

Delegations generally agreed on the need to give special attention to young people with fewer opportunities, especially in order to combating social exclusion and discrimination and with a special focus on early school leavers.

The action programme will be adopted by a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council under the codecision procedure, the opinion of the European Parliament being still awaited. In this context, the aim of this debate was to give delegations the opportunity to express their opinion, at ministerial level, on a number of issues identified by the Presidency, in preparation of further examination of the file.