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## REPORT

on the Communication from the Commission to the Council - Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth - Proposed common objectives for the participation and information of young people, in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field

(COM(2003) 184 – C5-0404/2003 – 2003/2127(INI))

Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport

Rapporteur: Lissy Gröner



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## PROCEDURAL PAGE

By letter of 14 April 2003 the Commission forwarded to Parliament its Communication on the Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth - Proposed common objectives for the participation and information of young people, in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field (COM(2003) 184), which had been referred to the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport and Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities for information.

At the sitting of 4 September 2003 the President of Parliament announced that the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport had been authorised to draw up an own-initiative report on the subject under Rules 47(2) and 163, and the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities had been asked for its opinion (C5-0404/2003).

The Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport had appointed Lissy Gröner rapporteur at its meeting of 12 June 2003.

The committee considered the draft report at its meetings of 4 November, 26 November, 27 January and 19 February 2004.

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution by 13 votes to 0, with 0 abstentions.

The following were present for the vote: Michel Rocard (chairman), Mario Mauro (vice-chairman), Säïd El Khadraoui (for Lissy Gröner, rapporteur); Pedro Aparicio Sánchez, Ulpu Iivari, Lucio Manisco, Juan Ojeda Sanz, Doris Pack, Roy Perry, Christa Prets, Eurig Wyn, Sabine Zissener and Cristina Gutiérrez Cortines (for Ruth Hieronymi).

(The opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities is attached.).

The report was tabled on 20 February 2004.

## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**on the Communication from the Commission to the Council - Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth - Proposed common objectives for the participation and information of young people, in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field (COM(2003) 184 – C5-0404/2003 – 2003/2127(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council - Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth - Proposed common objectives for the participation and information of young people, in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field, of 11 April 2003 (COM(2003) 184 - C5-0404/2003)<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Decision No 1031/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2000 establishing the 'Youth' Community action programme<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Education and Youth Council of 14 February 2002 welcoming the White Paper as a starting point for the creation of a framework for cooperation on youth policy in Europe,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 May 2002 on the Commission White Paper 'A New Impetus for European Youth'<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the Council Resolution of 25 November 2003 on common objectives for the participation and information of young people<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission White Paper COM (2001) 681 of 21 November 2001 entitled 'A New Impetus for European Youth', which proposed a new framework for youth policy cooperation in Europe<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to Article 149 of the EC Treaty,
- having regard to Rules 47(2) and 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport and the opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities (A5-

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<sup>1</sup> Not published in the OJ.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 117, 18.5.2000, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 180 E, 31.7.2003, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 168, 13.7.2002, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 295, 5.12.2003, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Not published in the OJ.

0081/2004),

- A. whereas formulation of the common objectives followed on from an unprecedented consultation process involving young people, youth organisations, researchers in the youth field and political representatives at regional, national and European level,
- B. whereas young people must be seen as equal partners in this consultation process, and young people who do not belong to an organisation and, in particular, disadvantaged groups of young people must not be excluded from it,
- C. whereas the open method of coordination is to be used for the objectives of participation and information,
- D. whereas young people are becoming less and less involved in existing organisational structures, whereas young people must be given an opportunity to involve themselves more in voluntary work, in existing organisations such as political parties and trade unions as well as other social movements and organisations and take part more simply, swiftly and easily in the decision-making processes of public life,
- E. having regard to the positive contribution of voluntary work to the development of an active citizenship,
- F. whereas young people must be encouraged to take part in the first European elections of the enlarged EU,

### ***General***

- 1. Welcomes the Commission's plans for common objectives for participation and information, which make a substantial contribution to setting a new framework for European youth policy;
- 2. Welcomes the EU Council's acceptance of these objectives at its meeting of 25 November 2003 as an important step forward in the political dialogue on youth policy cooperation;
- 3. Regrets that the substance of the Council resolution does not fully reflect the Commission's original proposals;

### ***Procedural issues and general framework proposals***

#### *The open method of coordination*

- 4. Considers that the Commission's proposed open method of coordination is an appropriate way to achieve better cooperation at European level in the specific area of youth policy, and calls for an interinstitutional agreement to be concluded along these lines, as requested by the European Parliament in its resolution of 5 June 2003 on the open coordination procedure;

#### *Implementation of the objectives*

- 5. Calls for speedy and unbureaucratic implementation of the action lines to achieve the proposed objectives, with due respect for the subsidiarity principle in the current Member States and the accession countries;

6. Welcomes the fact that the proposed measures are to be implemented in a decentralised way, observing the principles of transparency and democratic control; visibility should also be a feature in achieving the common objectives;
7. Calls on the Council and the Member States to make specific proposals for regular exchanges of experience and to formulate evaluation criteria so that an objective comparison can be made, taking account of the differing structures in different countries, and to make the necessary financial resources available for this cooperation;
8. Endorses the demand that when setting the framework for youth policy and also when implementing the action lines, there must be no discrimination on grounds of gender, race, ethnicity, social background, religion or ideology, disability, age or sexual orientation;
9. Emphasises that there must be gender equality and that problematic areas for women must be identified and appropriate measures devised to overcome these obstacles;
10. Welcomes the fact that the draft treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe refers explicitly to the participation of young people in the democratic life of Europe under Article III-182 and to the creation of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps under Article III-223;
11. Is convinced that the directives announced in the White Paper should be developed without delay and, therefore, calls on the Commission, jointly with the European Parliament and the Council, to develop specific mechanisms and structural prerequisites in order to take greater account of the concerns of young people in other Community policies;

### ***Participation***

12. Endorses the Commission's basic approach of consulting international youth organisations, which should be adopted increasingly in developing open coordination in the youth policy area, and calls also for national youth councils to be consulted likewise;
13. Calls on the Member States, using the bottom-up principle, to identify opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making at local, regional and national level, to find effective ways for young people's views to be heard and to make the results of this participation visible to the general public and to young people themselves;
14. Is convinced that a high level of participation of young people in the decision making process in the area of youth policy is needed to increase the latter's efficiency at all decision-making levels;
15. Calls on the Member States to improve and strengthen existing frameworks and structures at local level (town youth groups, national and regional youth councils) and/or to create new ones to make it possible to coordinate youth work and youth policy and directly involve young people;
16. Points out that existing youth organisations and networks in the area of youth work should be recognised and reinforced as a platform to ensure that synergy effects are put to optimal use and ongoing dialogue becomes routine;
17. Is convinced that autonomy and best practice mechanisms help to strengthen the European

dimension of youth work;

18. Calls on the Member States, when implementing the action lines to achieve the proposed objectives, to take care to ensure that young people and youth organisations at national level participate on the basis of equality;
19. Welcomes and endorses the Commission's intention to encourage young people's involvement in society and a broad spectrum of youth initiatives and at the same time calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage young people to vote in the European elections in 2004;
20. Is in favour of using innovative methods in formal, non-formal and informal education and supporting organisations that are active in this field;
21. Calls for youth work initiatives open to all and provided by private organisations to be linked to European affairs courses offered in schools;

### ***Information***

22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, in further developing and supporting youth information networks (e.g. youth information centres), to ensure that measures and materials are developed, in cooperation with youth organisations and representatives of youth groups, so that young people can obtain, though local, personal contact, a high standard of information that has been specifically developed for them;
23. Calls for particular attention to be paid to the Commission's information networks and for a wider range of direct training and information events to be made available to providers of political education for young people;
24. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support measures that encourage young people themselves to become sources of information for other young people, and stresses the importance of agreeing qualitative and quantitative benchmarks for comparing young people's participation in youth information;
25. Points out that in planning and implementing information policy in the context of political and social life at European, national and local level, young people must be seen as a specific target group, which is particularly important with regard to the planned information campaign in 2004 on enlargement and the European elections; calls for inclusive language to be used in all publications produced for campaigns;
26. Is convinced that in this regard, young people must have unlimited access to information products that are comprehensible, user-friendly and appropriate for their expectations and needs;

### ***Wider perspectives for youth policy***

#### *The future of the 'Youth' action programme*

27. Calls on the Commission to develop an independent follow-up programme for the 'Youth' action programme, with sufficient financial resources to meet the growing demands in the



youth policy area;

28. Proposes, in the context of preparing future action programmes in the youth field, involving as many young people as possible from different countries, ensuring that there is a fair representation of all regions of Europe with a special attention to the most disadvantaged areas, in the measures as a target group;
29. Further proposes supporting cross-border regional groups in which young people can address cross-border issues, enabling them to meet in the context of intensive international cooperation and discuss issues such as peacekeeping, environmental protection, etc;
30. Proposes the motto 'overcoming exclusion' as the basis for the future thematic framework for youth projects; this would include such complex subject areas as social inclusion, xenophobia, intercultural learning, the environment, art as a bridge to communication, sport and globalisation;
31. Emphasises that the future youth programme should promote the political and social participation of young people in a European context; notes, that the programme should , consequently, allow young people room to manoeuvre if they are to decide themselves in relation to which political and social issues they want to develop joint projects; youth organisations and the organisations carrying out projects should therefore be consulted regularly with regard to the definition of the programme's objectives and priorities;

*European Youth Week as a permanent fixture*

32. Wishes to see a thorough assessment of the European Youth Week 2003 and calls on the Commission to make any necessary adjustments to this initiative based on this assessment and to ascertain whether it can be made into a permanent fixture and a durable feature of European youth policy, and calls for plans to include an introductory 'youth parliament' day, giving young people an opportunity actively to experience democracy at work in the European Parliament;
33. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and accession countries and the European Youth Forum.

## **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

### **1. The background to the Communication from the Commission to the Council - Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth**

In its document COM(2003) 184 the Commission has put forward its proposals for common objectives, divided into two priority thematic areas, participation and information of young people.

This document is part of the follow-up work to the White Paper 'A New Impetus for European Youth' that the Commission adopted on 21 November 2001. The subsequent Council resolution of 27 June 2002 called for an open method of coordination to be applied in the areas of participation and information of young people.

In this resolution the Council instructed the Commission to submit a report which would provide a basis for formulating overall objectives for the above areas, based on a comprehensive survey of the situation in the area of youth policy.

The survey was carried out in the EU Member States and the accession countries and was based on evaluation of detailed questionnaires. The questions asked for basic information on the situation and legislation in each country, trends in current national policies and examples of good practice and expectations at European level.

### **2. Current situation of the political dialogue**

On 25 November 2003 the EU Council adopted a resolution setting common objectives for participation and information of young people.

The first evaluation of the new action lines' implementation will be carried out at the end of 2005. By then the Member States will have submitted reports on each country's contributions to implementing the two priorities, and on that basis the Commission will draw up the progress report.

It must be stressed, in the context of developing the new framework for youth policy cooperation, that the youth policy guidelines were laid down in a dialogue with young people themselves.

### **3. Procedural issues and general framework proposals**

If the planned measures to achieve the common objectives on participation and information of young people are to be implemented successfully, the following points are vitally important.

The Commission's proposed open method of coordination is considered to offer an opportunity to achieve better cooperation at European level in the specific area of youth policy. However, further details of the Commission's proposed mechanism for this method are needed. There is also a need for an interinstitutional agreement regulating the participation of Community institutions in the application of this method.

Youth policy should be implemented in a decentralised way. Its results should be presented openly to the general public, with young people particularly in mind. The area of youth policy must be transparent and needs democratic control mechanisms, which should be applied in a way that directly involves young people.

#### **4. Participation**

The ways in which young people can participate in the mechanisms of representative democracy must be identified. Effective ways should be found to hear the views of young people so as to involve them in the political process.

Sensible measures must be taken to include youth organisations and youth councils at Member State level, with a view to optimum consultation and information of the organisations they represent.

Best practice mechanisms should be adopted as a basis to reinforce the European dimension of youth work and are the best way to establish improved structures, providing an appropriate framework for participation.

Equal opportunities in youth participation must be ensured by forming advisory committees made up of equal numbers of young men and young women. These committees should become a permanent feature of youth cooperation.

Young people should continue to be encouraged and supported to take part in political life at local, national and European level and to stand as candidates for political office.

Formal, non-formal and informal education must form stronger networks and there must be more support for organisations in the area of non-formal education and youth work, to promote an active role for young people in politics and society.

#### **5. Information**

Existing structures in the area of youth information should be reinforced and standards of youth information further developed. In this regard, youth information centres must make their services more visible and accessible and involve more young people.

After the ten new countries join in 2004 the number of young people between 15 and 25 will rise to 75 million. Many of these young people will be able to express their political will as first-time voters in the European elections.

Young people should therefore have unrestricted access to information products that are comprehensible, user-friendly and appropriate to their expectations and needs.

#### **6. A higher profile for youth policy**

The EU has an important responsibility to take action in the area of youth policy, with due respect for the subsidiarity principle. European youth policy should therefore be given a higher

profile. This requires effective cooperation between the European institutions and systematically coordinated cooperation between the Member States, involving national and international youth organisations.

The following proposals are made with regard to the future of the 'Youth' action programme.

(a) Finance: Sufficient budgetary resources must be made available if the proposed objectives are to be achieved.

(b) Geographical aspect: To encourage intercultural youth exchanges, when future action programmes, including the new 'Youth' programme, are drawn up, in the international context they should specify as many young people as possible as the target group for the measures. Therefore support for cross-border regional groups is proposed.

Under the motto 'overcoming exclusion', the following complex subject areas are proposed to establish the thematic framework for projects in the youth area.

- Social inclusion and xenophobia: The young generation today increasingly faces these issues and they must be addressed. They must be studied in detail and appropriate measures developed leading to solutions for the problems that are identified. The social model of Europe can in this regard form a platform to promote economic and social cohesion, as it includes mechanisms to facilitate successful social integration of young people and particularly disadvantaged groups of young people into the job market and the social system.
- Intercultural learning: Through being encouraged to exchange different opinions, attitudes and values in international youth meetings, young people are made aware of intercultural diversity. Becoming familiar with the ground rules of intercultural communication helps to overcome prejudices and to prevent violence and discrimination.
- Environment: Preserving the environment should be a main topic in developing cooperation in the youth area and should be taken into account in developing the new action programme.
- Art: Art can form a bridge to assist communication.
- Sport: Participation in sporting activities instils important values in young people such as teamwork, solidarity, tolerance and fairness, and also helps them to develop additional skills such as teamwork in a multicultural environment or willingness to take the initiative. Sport offers opportunities for a specific kind of interaction among young people and in general facilitates access to them.

In view of the success of the 2003 European Youth Week, this should become an annual event in future. The following proposals are made with regard to its organisation.

- Activities in connection with the European Youth Week must be accompanied by parliamentary debates with young people.
- An introductory session must be organised for young people who in future take part in official Youth Week events, to give them an overall picture of the EU's institutional system.
- Regular awards for the best youth projects supported by the Youth programme should remain one of the main highlights of the Youth Week.

It is vital to develop active strategies to combat violence against children, young people and women. We therefore propose 'combating violence' as the theme for a future European year. We also call on the Commission to take account of this subject in connection with the new European Youth portal.

5 November 2003

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

for the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport

on the communication from the Commission to the Council: Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth. Proposed common objectives for the participation and information of young people, in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field (COM(2003) 184 – C5-0404/2003 – 2003/2127(INI))

Draftsperson: Emilia Franziska Müller

### **PROCEDURE**

The Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities appointed Emilia Franziska Müller draftsperson at its meeting of 10 July 2003.

It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 2 October and 3 November 2003.

At the last meeting it adopted the following conclusions unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Marianne Eriksson (acting chairperson), Olga Zrihen Zaari (vice-chairperson), Jillian Evans (vice-chairperson), Emilia Franziska Müller (draftsperson), Johanna L.A. Boogerd-Quaak, Armonia Bordes, Lissy Gröner, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Astrid Lulling, Maria Martens, Elena Ornella Paciotti, Christa Prets, James L.C. Provan, Amalia Sartori, Miet Smet, Joke Swiebel, Sabine Zissener, Chantal Cauquil (for Geneviève Fraisse pursuant to Rule 153(2)).

## CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities calls on the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following points in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the Communication from the Commission to the Council on the follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth, which should continue to be developed in close consultation with all European youth organisations, as a fundamental strategy for European youth policy in the enlarged Europe;
2. Supports the overall objective of improving young people's access to quality information;
3. Calls for gender equality to be included explicitly and clearly and for inclusive language to be used in all publications produced for campaigns;
4. Emphasises that published material should be written in modern language that is geared towards young people. Equally necessary is the portrayal of modern, relevant role models enjoying equal rights. Gender equality is fostered by the avoidance of cultural prejudices, anachronisms and traditional stereotypes, starting in the family and continuing at school and in offers of youth work open to all and youth training, including in publications and teaching material related thereto;
5. Welcomes the emphasis given to the inclusion in the political dialogue of young people who do not belong to structured organisations;
6. Criticises the principle of the open method of coordination; calls for decentralised coordination in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, with particular regard to the presentation of gender issues in practice;
7. Calls for youth work initiatives open to all and provided by private organisations to be linked to European affairs courses offered in schools;
8. Welcomes the removal of obstacles to the full participation of young people in the political decision-making process, taking account of gender issues;
9. Welcomes efforts to encourage greater participation of all young people; emphasises at the same time the need for direct and, where possible, cross-border integration of those responsible for passing on knowledge, teachers and lecturers in youth work and schools, through dedicated educational preparation complemented by published material, taking into account the principle of equality at all times;
10. Calls for particular attention to be paid to the Commission's information networks and for a wider range of direct training and information events to be made available to providers of political education for young people.