


# Procedure file

Basic information	
COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Decision	1998/0197(COD) Procedure completed
Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004 Amended by <a href="#">2003/0303(COD)</a>	
Subject 4.40.10 Youth	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<b>DELE</b> EP Delegation to Conciliation Committee		23/11/1999
		PSE <a href="#">GRÖNER Lissy</a>	
	Former committee responsible		
	<b>CULT</b> Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport		27/07/1999
		PSE <a href="#">GRÖNER Lissy</a>	
	Former committee for opinion		
	<b>BUDG</b> Budgets		23/09/1998
		PPE <a href="#">CHRISTODOULOU Eftymios</a>	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	<a href="#">General Affairs</a>	<a href="#">2254</a>	10/04/2000
	Youth	<a href="#">2222</a>	23/11/1999
	Culture	<a href="#">2195</a>	28/06/1999
	Youth	<a href="#">2185</a>	27/05/1999
	Youth	<a href="#">2139</a>	26/11/1998

Key events			
28/08/1998	Legislative proposal published	COM(1998)0331	Summary
14/09/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
28/10/1998	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
28/10/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	<a href="#">A4-0389/1998</a>	
05/11/1998	Debate in Parliament		

05/11/1998	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T4-0641/1998	Summary
26/11/1998	Debate in Council	<a href="#">2139</a>	
27/11/1998	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1998)0695	Summary
28/06/1999	Council position published	<a href="#">13175/1/1999</a>	Summary
23/07/1999	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
19/10/1999	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		Summary
19/10/1999	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	<a href="#">A5-0038/1999</a>	
27/10/1999	Debate in Parliament		
28/10/1999	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	<a href="#">T5-0080/1999</a>	Summary
23/11/1999	Parliament's amendments rejected by Council		
27/01/2000	Formal meeting of Conciliation Committee		Summary
29/02/2000	Final decision by Conciliation Committee		
16/03/2000	Joint text approved by Conciliation Committee co-chairs	<a href="#">3609/2000</a>	
30/03/2000	Report tabled for plenary, 3rd reading	<a href="#">A5-0100/2000</a>	
10/04/2000	Decision by Council, 3rd reading		
12/04/2000	Debate in Parliament		
13/04/2000	Decision by Parliament, 3rd reading	<a href="#">T5-0173/2000</a>	Summary
13/04/2000	Final act signed		
13/04/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
18/05/2000	Final act published in Official Journal		

### Technical information

Procedure reference	1998/0197(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
	Amended by <a href="#">2003/0303(COD)</a>
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 050; EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 149
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CODE/5/12283

### Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal		COM(1998)0331 <a href="#">OJ C 311 10.10.1998, p. 0006</a>	28/08/1998	EC	Summary
----------------------	--	---	------------	----	---------

Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	<a href="#">CES1309/1998</a> <a href="#">OJ C 410 30.12.1998, p. 0011</a>	15/10/1998	ESC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	<a href="#">A4-0389/1998</a> <a href="#">OJ C 359 23.11.1998, p. 0005</a>	28/10/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	T4-0641/1998 <a href="#">OJ C 359 23.11.1998, p. 0013-0089</a>	05/11/1998	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion	<a href="#">CDR0226/1998</a> <a href="#">OJ C 051 22.02.1999, p. 0077</a>	18/11/1998	CofR	
Modified legislative proposal	COM(1998)0695 <a href="#">OJ C 028 03.02.1999, p. 0008</a>	27/11/1998	EC	Summary
Council position	<a href="#">13175/1/1999</a> <a href="#">OJ C 210 22.07.1999, p. 0001</a>	28/06/1999	CSL	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position	SEC(1999)1204	20/07/1999	EC	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	<a href="#">A5-0038/1999</a> <a href="#">OJ C 154 05.06.2000, p. 0007</a>	19/10/1999	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading	<a href="#">T5-0080/1999</a> <a href="#">OJ C 154 05.06.2000, p. 0074-0132</a>	28/10/1999	EP	Summary
Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading	COM(1999)0659	22/12/1999	EC	Summary
Joint text approved by Conciliation Committee co-chairs	<a href="#">3609/2000</a>	16/03/2000	CSL/EP	
Report tabled for plenary by Parliament delegation to Conciliation Committee, 3rd reading	<a href="#">A5-0100/2000</a> <a href="#">OJ C 040 07.02.2001, p. 0008</a>	30/03/2000	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 3rd reading	<a href="#">T5-0173/2000</a> <a href="#">OJ C 040 07.02.2001, p. 0161-0429</a>	13/04/2000	EP	Summary
Follow-up document	SEC(2001)1621	09/10/2001	EC	Summary
Follow-up document	<a href="#">COM(2004)0158</a>	08/03/2004	EC	Summary
Follow-up document	<a href="#">COM(2008)0398</a>	26/06/2008	EC	Summary

#### Additional information

European Commission

[EUR-Lex](#)

#### Final act

[Decision 2000/1031](#)  
[OJ L 117 18.05.2000, p. 0001](#) Summary

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

OBJECTIVE: to propose a new youth action programme for the period 2000-2004. SUBSTANCE: the new action programme for youth incorporates the 'Youth for Europe' and 'European Voluntary Service' programmes. It is proposed for the period from 01.01.2000 to 31.12.2004, and the total budget proposed for this period is EUR 600 m. By supporting and complementing the work of the Member States in this field, Youth will help to create a Europe of knowledge and to supplement the education facilities already available in Europe. The aim is to contribute to the establishment of a 'European education area' conducive to lifelong learning and the full exercise of citizenship. Youth is addressed to all young people, is not subject to any conditions, and is designed to stimulate their creativity and enable them to participate fully

in working life. The proposal also seeks to identify more satisfactorily the implementers and beneficiaries of the programme. One of the main innovations of Youth is the intention of focusing measures on young people (aged 15-25) and on those of them who find it most difficult to participate in a Community programme, for cultural, social, economic, physical, mental or geographical reasons. The Commission wished to create links to other Community education and training programmes by means of 'European knowledge points' which will make it possible to bring together at local or regional level the implementers and beneficiaries of these various programmes. Internally, the programme has been rationalised by limiting the number of actions in comparison with the formulae for the two previous programmes (Youth III and voluntary service) and by decentralising the management of the actions to national level in so far as possible. The structure of the programme: Youth has three main objectives: -to encourage solidarity by promoting European Voluntary Service for young people; -to promote the participation of young people in European integration by means of youth mobility schemes; -to promote a spirit of enterprise and creativity among young people. These objectives will be attained by means of five categories of actions: 1) voluntary service: participation by young people in transnational community service activities within the Community or with third countries for periods ranging from 3 weeks to a year; 2) Youth for Europe: promoting mobility of young people or groups of young people within the Community, giving them the opportunity to stay in another Member State, or youth exchanges with third countries (at least one week). The emphasis will be on acceptance of others and tolerance; sporting/cultural activities will be stepped up; 3) Opportunity for Youth: promoting initiative and creativity by supporting projects in which young people participate actively and directly in innovative initiatives and which are based on solidarity at local, regional, national or European level. The projects may also extend initiatives conducted in connection with previous participation in a European programme; 4) Joint actions: generation of synergy with other Community programmes of relevance to education and training policy through 'European knowledge points'; 5) Support measures, designed primarily to supplement and support the actions in the programme: building on the achievements of the Youth programme, continuing certain innovative measures at Community level and improving quality by exchanging good practices or by training youth leaders so as to stress the European dimension. Initiatives are also planned to disseminate the results of the measures taken and to inform young people. The programme is to be implemented consistently with other Community initiatives or programmes (Leonardo II, Socrates II, research programmes, cultural programmes, employment, SMEs, etc.) and devoting special attention to equality of opportunity for women and men. The programme is to be implemented by the Commission in close cooperation with Member States; the decentralisation of its management is to be maximised. In this respect, Member States are required to establish integrated management structures to undertake the operational implementation of the projects. As regards commitment, the Commission will be assisted by a committee of representatives of the Member States, whose competences will vary, depending on the subject in hand. The programme will be extended to the Eastern European applicant countries, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey and the EEA countries, under financial arrangements yet to be determined. Cooperation will also be stepped up with third countries and the appropriate international organisations (particularly the Council of Europe). As regards evaluation and monitoring of Youth, the Commission will publish a first mid-term review of the programme by 30.06.2003, and a final analysis report by 31.12.2005. Youth will be evaluated regularly throughout its implementation, in cooperation with Member States. ?

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

---

The Committee has adopted an important report establishing a Community framework for measures for young people (whether or not they are students) for the period 2000-2004. Both the Socrates programme and the various youth programmes have been great successes, involving more than half a million young people. It was therefore important to ensure their future by giving them more resources. The Committee sought to do this by adopting a large number of amendments to the Commission's initial proposals. The creation of a single Youth programme will enable a number of currently disparate measures to be unified, thereby leading to greater coherence and transparency. The committee also unanimously adopted the report (codecision, 1st reading) by Philippe DE COENE (PES, B). For the same reasons as for Socrates II, the committee wants increased funding (ECU 800m instead of the ECU 600m proposed by the Commission). It also believes there should be a better balance between the various measures: it says the Commission gives too much weight to the European Voluntary Service to the detriment of other measures (Youth for Europe, Opportunity for Youth, joint actions and support measures). The committee also wants to improve access to the programme by stipulating that part of the funding (one third) is to be used to assist disadvantaged young people, that better information must be provided, that the age range for participation in the programme should be 14 to 27 (except for the EVS, where the minimum is 18), while taking account of special situations in the participant countries, and lastly that young people must not forfeit their rights to social protection. As regards the EVS, it should be made clear that this is not to take the place of paid jobs or reduce the number of such jobs. Referring to the last World Cup, the rapporteur said it was quite extraordinary that an organisation with a turnover of billions such as the World Cup Organising Committee should be contracted by the Commission to take charge of an EVS project. ?

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

---

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.?

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

---

The Commission accepts, in full or in part, those 36 of the European Parliament's 61 amendments which : - in relation to the initial proposal, provide useful additional information and clarification on the specific aspects of cooperation policy in the field of youth ; - improve the proposal by incorporating features designed to make access to the programme easier for young people, particularly those who may have difficulties in taking part; - are designed to stress the importance of the cooperation policy's contribution in the area of youth and the development of non-formal education, and the need to remove the legal or administrative obstacles to transnational mobility among young people and to guarantee the safeguarding of their rights, particularly when it comes to social protection. The Commission rejects those amendments which : - modify the eligibility age limits for the programme, as this would detract from concentration of resources on the target public; - relate to the EU's external policy because this policy goes beyond the framework of the programme proposal's legal basis; - propose an increase in funding, preferring to abide by its initial proposal on this; - with regard to committee procedures, refer to the procedures to be followed by the Committee as it does not conform to the 13th July 1987 decision on comitology.?

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

---

The Council's common position is based on the Commission's amended proposal adopted following the European Parliament's opinion at the first reading. However, there remains one area of discord between the Commission's amended proposal and the common position: the budget. The compromise proposed by the Presidency (350 million euros) was unanimously accepted. The Commission considers that this figure does not adequately reflect the priority given to the area of education and training in Agenda 2000. In the light of the Agenda 2000 priorities, the Commission's proposal envisaged funding of 600 million euros over five years and the Parliament increased this to 800 million. The following amendments put forward by the European Parliament and adopted in the Commission's amended proposal were incorporated in the common position: - the contribution of the programme to the struggle for respect for human rights and to combating excessive nationalism; - making the practical arrangements user-friendly and geared to young people, with a view to making the programme more accessible; - the need to respect the specific character and features of each programme (Education, Training and Youth) while retaining overall consistency with other Community activities; - special efforts to benefit small local organisations; - the introduction of a degree of flexibility concerning the age group; - the importance of ensuring that the European Voluntary Service does not replace mainstream jobs. The Council, furthermore, accepted, with the agreement of the Commission, Parliament's amendment inverting actions 1 and 2 of the programme (European Voluntary Service and Youth for Europe). The Council did not accept amendments regarding the following: - a stronger appeal to Member States to remove obstacles to access to the programme; - the protection of participants' rights concerning social protection and access to medical care; - the programme's focus on active citizenship; - the possible coordination of youth information co-operation projects with similar measures in the Socrates and Leonardo programmes; - the introduction of a structure designed to derive maximum benefit from young people's projects, to collect information on young people, and to establish a 'Young People in Europe' Internet site. The Council also changed the type of committee that would manage the programme: management committee of type IIb of the 1987 'comitology' decision, instead of a committee of type IIa.?

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

---

The Commission is lukewarm regarding the Council's common position mainly because of the Council's decision to greatly reduce the budget to 350 million euros instead of the 600 million proposed by the Commission (and raised to 800 by the Parliament). It considers that 350 million euros does not adequately reflect the priority given to the area of education and training in Agenda 2000.?

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

---

The recommendation for second reading (codecision procedure) by Lissy GRÖNER (PES, D) on the Council's common position was adopted almost unanimously by the committee. The main sticking point remained the budget, just as at first reading. Like the Commission, Parliament considers the budget proposal by the Council of EUR 350m for five years to be inadequate in view of the emphasis on education and training in Agenda 2000. To make the programme more effective the committee voted for it to have a seven year duration like Socrates and Leonardo. This would require an increase in the budget to EUR 980m as well as changes in the monitoring and evaluation dates. While welcoming in particular the proposal to allow age limits for projects under the programme to be adjusted according to circumstances, the committee wanted to ensure that the programme was adequately publicised so that participation would not be restricted to those who belong to youth organisations. It called on Member States to remove legal and administrative obstacles in order to improve access to the programme for young people. There would not be any harmonisation of social rights but the committee did want social welfare and medical assistance to be made available to participants in the Youth programme, as is already the case with students taking part in exchange programmes. One amendment also dealt with the comitology procedure. Lastly, the committee stressed the importance of fostering active citizenship, setting up a system for collecting information about young people and establishing a "Young People in Europe" internet site managed by the Commission.

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

---

By adopting the recommendation for the second reading of Mrs Lissy GRÖNER (PES, D) on the "Youth" programme, the European Parliament calls for the programme to be extended from 01.01.2000 to 31.12.2006 (and not from 01.01.2000 to 31.12.2004) and to be given a budget of EUR 980 million and not EUR 350 million as was provided for by the Council. In addition, it requests that this amount be reviewed in a proportion not exceeding 20% thereof as part of the annual budgetary conciliation. The European Parliament also called for the age limits for

access to the programmes to be adapted taking account of the specific circumstances of each project. It reiterated its demand regarding equality of access to the programmes. In addition, the Parliament requests that the actions are adequately publicised in order to ensure that they are not in fact reserved for the initiated (need to ensure that national centres reach young people in general, and not just those who belong to youth organisations). It calls on the Member States to adopt appropriate and coordinated measures to remove legal and administrative obstacles in order to further improve young people's access to the programme and facilitate recognition of the specificity of young volunteers. In relation to youth studies associated with the programme objectives, the Parliament wishes priority to be given to studies concerning the paths taken by less-favoured and marginalised young people. Priority should also be given to comparative studies of measures designed to promote the spirit of initiative, including their impact on local development, particularly through the creation of activities (creation of jobs, creation of cultural or social enterprises, etc.). It also called for a 'Young People in Europe' Internet site to be set up and managed by the Commission in order to increase the visibility of measures for young people taken at Community level and in the Member States in widely differing areas: education, training, social and political rights, health, sport, leisure, housing consumption, audio-visual, media, etc. Parliament also called for the Commission and the Member States to coordinate their efforts so that the beneficiaries of the programme can have access to social welfare and medical assistance. The EP also changes the composition of the programme committee and called for the Commission to provide a report on the results achieved by the programme, accompanied by any proposal it deems appropriate, also as regards the financial framework, by December 2002.?

---

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

The Commission accepted 10 out of the 13 amendments approved by the European Parliament in its second reading. These include, in particular: - the lifting of legal and administrative obstacles to transnational mobility for young people and to ensure the preservation of rights, particularly in the field of social protection and access thereto and to medical assistance; - the duration of the "Youth" Programme was extended from 5 years to 7 years; - the introduction of a revision clause which would enable the Commission to submit, three years after the start of the programme, a report on the results achieved, accompanied by any proposals it deems appropriate, including with regard to the financial framework; - the setting up of a structure based on deriving the maximum benefit from projects for young people, information, documentation on youth and dialogue with all young people. Other amendments are also accepted which aim to clarify or to reinforce certain aspects of the common position (importance of adequate information to make it possible to reach all young people and to encourage greater accessibility to the programme; promotion of European citizenship and the involvement of young people in the development of the Union; a greater flexibility concerning the age category of access to the programme; taking into account, in the context of studies, the impact of other policies on the world of youth and the need to provide a clearer and more global image of young people's needs and the condition in which they live). In addition, the Commission has also accepted the amendment relating to comitology. This amendment may be accepted in principle by means of wording in accordance with the wording of the provisions relating to committee procedure in basic instruments. On the other hand, the Commission did not accept 3 amendments that were considered by the European Parliament as being crucial. These amendments related to: 1) the funding of the programme : the European Parliament provides a financial envelope of EUR 980 million whereas the Commission limits it to EUR 765 million by strict application of the financial perspectives for the period 2000-2006; 2) a flexibility clause : this clause which would make it possible to review the total amount of budget in the context of annual budgetary cooperation; 3) the studies to follow in the framework of the action 5.2 "Information for young people and the studies concerning the Youth" shall come under the heading of implementation and, in particular, of the annual work programme submitted to the Committee of the programme. The concerns addressed in this amendment will be taken into account when drawing up these work plans.?

---

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

The Conciliation Committee reached agreement on a joint text for the Youth for Europe programme. The agreement essentially involved setting the programme's budget at EUR 520m, entailing an increase of EUR 30m on the Council's original offer. Provision was also made for a review clause on the financial framework. On enlargement, the Commission would submit a report on its financial implications and, if appropriate, a proposal for the adjustment of the financial framework. On that basis, adjustments to the programme would be decided by the codecision procedure. Besides the agreement on the financial aspects, Parliament was also pleased with the compromise whereby the European Voluntary Service participants might continue to enjoy the social protection provided by their countries of origin. A new article ensuring access to health care for all programme participants was also included, and agreement was also reached on a number of other amendments proposed by Parliament, for example, on a more flexible age limit and the provision of information.?

---

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

Under the codecision procedure, the European Parliament adopted its resolution on the joint text approved by the Conciliation Committee that establishes the Community action programme for youth. Parliament's rapporteur was Ms. Lissy GRÖNER (PES, D).?

---

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

**PURPOSE :** to establish a new youth action programme for the period 2000 to 2006. **COMMUNITY MEASURE :** Decision 1031/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the 'Youth' Community action programme. **CONTENT :** this Decision establishes the 'Youth' Community action programme concerning cooperation policy in the youth field, including European Voluntary Service and youth exchanges both within the Community and with third countries. This programme shall be implemented over the period starting on 1 January 2000 and ending on 31 December 2006. The total financial framework for the implementation of this programme is set at EUR 520 million. This programme shall contribute to the promotion of a Europe of knowledge by developing a European area of cooperation in the field of youth policy, based on informal education and training. It shall promote lifelong learning and the building up of the knowledge and skills and competences likely to foster active citizenship and employability. The objective of this programme is to allow young people to acquire knowledge, skills and competences which may be one of the foundations of their future development, and to exercise responsible citizenship so as to become an active part of society. In particular, this programme is aimed at young people, in principle between the ages of 15 and 25,

as well as those involved in youth work, who are legal residents of a Member State. In addition, one of the main innovations of Youth is the intention of focusing measures on young people who find it most difficult to participate in a Community programme; for cultural, social, economic, physical, mental or geographical reasons. Internally, the programme has been rationalised by limiting the number of actions in comparison with the formulae for the two previous programmes (Youth for Europe III and European Voluntary service) and by decentralising the management of the actions to national level as far as possible. The main objectives of the programme include: - to promote an active contribution by young people to the building of Europe through their participation in transnational exchanges within the Community or with third countries; - to strengthen their sense of solidarity through a more extensive participation by young people in transnational community-service activities within the Community or with third countries; - to encourage young people's initiative, enterprise and creativity so that they may take an active role in society; - reinforce cooperation in the field of youth by fostering the exchange of good practice, the training of youth workers/leaders and the development of innovative actions at Community level. The objectives of this programme will be attained by means of five categories of actions: 1) Youth for Europe; 2) European voluntary service; 3) youth initiatives; 4) joint actions; 5) support measures. As regards monitoring and evaluation of Youth, the Commission will publish an interim evaluation report on the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of this programme by 30.06.2005 and a final report on the implementation of this programme by 31.12.2007. ENTRY INTO FORCE : 18.05.2000.?

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

---

The Commission has presented an evaluation report on the third phase of the "Youth for Europe" Programme and the Community Action Programme "European Voluntary Service". In its conclusions, the report highlights that the launch of the YOUTH Programme provided the opportunity to simplify the procedures based on conclusions drawn from previous experience of the past years. These simplifications aim in particular to facilitate access to the Programme, to improve the transparency of financing and to speed up the transfer of payments. Moreover, the decentralisation of the implementation of the Actions has been increased. The development of enhanced methods of communication amongst the National Agencies themselves on the one hand and between the National Agencies and the Commission on the other, is foreseen for the year 2002. The evaluation of "Youth for Europe" stressed the weak development of multilateral exchanges, which play a more important role than others in incorporating the European dimension, and the reasons for this situation. Under the YOUTH Programme, a particular effort is being made with regard to multilateral activities. For instance, a target of at least 30% of decentralised funds allocated to multilateral projects has been set for the first year of implementation. A framework for the monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the YOUTH Programme is being developed based on some of the recommendations of the evaluators. To this end the Commission is working out a series of regular indicators which will allow, with the assistance of the National Agencies, a more systematic monitoring of the implementation of the Programme. A reflection could also be done regarding the links between youth and culture: in 2000 almost 30% of the supported projects within the framework of the programme had a theme related to culture. The new Youthlink database, which will integrate the existing systems, should be an appropriate tool responding to the needs of both the National Agencies and the Commission. It will be available before the end of 2001.?

## Youth: Community action programme 2000-2004

---

Requirements in Decision 1031/2000/EC, establishing the Youth Programme 2000-2003, oblige the Commission to prepare an evaluation report on the implementation of the programme's objectives. It has been brought forward by a year to allow the Commission to take on board some of its conclusions when preparing future draft proposals in the field of youth. The Youth community action programmes itself was established in 2000 and is based on three generations of "Youth for Europe" initiatives begun in 1988. Each generation of programmes has kept pace with the process of European integration and has assimilated new policies along with the changing times. Essentially, the EU's Youth initiative seeks to support a number of voluntary actions and informal educational activities. Its total budget amounts to EUR 520 million. The Commission has relied on a number of comprehensive sources when preparing the Report. They include: impact studies presented by the Member States (to be found in Annex I of the Report), reports from non-Member State countries participating in the programme; the evaluation of national agency provisions in 2002 and the conclusions of a seminar on "evaluation of procedures" for the Youth programme held in 2003. The evaluation itself focused on the following issues: - The internal and external relevance of the programme. - The impact of the programme on its immediate beneficiaries. - The impact on systems (national administrations, legislation and policies). - Operational mechanisms. - Performance in respect of each action. The Report goes on to list, in some detail, fifty-two recommendations. In general, the programme evaluation is positive. Nevertheless, some weaknesses are identified. The Recommendations themselves include, inter alia: - Adjusting the access age for participants. - Making young people with fewer opportunities the main target group for the programme. - Setting up regional and local information relay contact points. - Simplifying the application process. - Offering easier access through flexible grant-awarding mechanisms. - Greater youth worker involvement in the decision-making process. - Creating a "Youth programme" certificate. - Improving the quality of projects approved. - Developing clearer definitions of the target and voluntary groups. - Increasing the volunteers' activity in EVS. - Simplifying joint action procedures. - Focusing on quality and capacity building in youth work. - Supporting innovative activities. - Increasing funds for co-operation with third countries. - Increasing the number of Resource Centres. - Increasing the visibility of the actions. - Creating regional sub-programmes particularly in the Balkans and CIS. - Widening the geographic reach of the programme. - Increasing the grant for third country participant's travel costs by up to 100%. To conclude, the Report notes that the Youth programme is both welcomed and appreciated by those participating in its actions. Its objectives have been realised and its implementation appreciated. Bearing in mind the changes in youth trends the programme may need readjusting and it is for this reason that a number of Recommendations have been put forward. The Commission undertakes to implement them, either in whole or in part, during the second part of the current programme (2004-2006). Other sets of Recommendations will be implemented within the framework of the new Youth programme from 2007.?