

# Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	<a href="#">2002/2050(COS)</a>	Procedure completed
European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper		
Subject 4.40.10 Youth		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<b>CULT</b> Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport		12/12/2001
		PSE <a href="#">GRÖNER Lissy</a>	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	<b>LIBE</b> Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
Council of the European Union	<b>EMPL</b> Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>FEMM</b> Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities		26/02/2002
		PPE-DE <a href="#">MÜLLER Emilia Franziska</a>	
	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	<a href="#">Education, Youth, Culture and Sport</a>	<a href="#">2430</a>	30/05/2002
European Commission	<a href="#">Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN</a>	<a href="#">2424</a>	07/05/2002
	<a href="#">Education, Youth, Culture and Sport</a>	<a href="#">2408</a>	14/02/2002
	<a href="#">Education, Youth, Culture and Sport</a>	<a href="#">2391</a>	29/11/2001
	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	<a href="#">Education, Youth, Sport and Culture</a>		

Key events			
21/11/2001	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2001)0681	Summary
29/11/2001	Debate in Council	<a href="#">2391</a>	
14/02/2002	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
11/03/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
18/04/2002	Vote in committee		Summary

18/04/2002	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A5-0126/2002</a>	
07/05/2002	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
13/05/2002	Debate in Parliament		
14/05/2002	Decision by Parliament	<a href="#">T5-0223/2002</a>	Summary
14/05/2002	End of procedure in Parliament		
30/05/2002	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
31/07/2003	Final act published in Official Journal		

### Technical information

Procedure reference	2002/2050(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/5/15976

### Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2001)0681	21/11/2001	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A5-0126/2002</a>	18/04/2002	EP	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		<a href="#">CES0528/2002</a> <a href="#">OJ C 149 21.06.2002, p. 0084</a>	24/04/2002	ESC	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		<a href="#">T5-0223/2002</a> <a href="#">OJ C 180 31.07.2003, p. 0025-0145 E</a>	14/05/2002	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		<a href="#">CDR0389/2001</a> <a href="#">OJ C 287 22.11.2002, p. 0006</a>	03/07/2002	CofR	
Non-legislative basic document		<a href="#">COM(2003)0184</a>	11/04/2003	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2003)0465	11/04/2003	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		<a href="#">COM(2004)0336</a>	30/04/2004	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		<a href="#">COM(2004)0337</a>	30/04/2004	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		<a href="#">SEC(2004)0627</a>	14/05/2004	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		<a href="#">SEC(2004)0628</a>	14/05/2004	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		COM(2004)0694	22/10/2004	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		<a href="#">SEC(2006)1006</a>	20/07/2006	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		<a href="#">COM(2006)0417</a>	20/07/2006	EC	Summary

**PURPOSE:** to set a policy agenda for greater youth participation in the governance of Europe. **CONTENT:** this White Paper needs to be viewed within the context of the White Paper on Governance which was presented to the Member States and European Parliament in July 2001. It examines ways in which to offer young people in Europe a greater say in political governance - not just at a European level but at a national and regional one as well. The White Paper estimates that following EU enlargement there will be 75 million young people in Europe between the ages of 15 and 25. At this age, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background, most young people consider themselves fully fledged citizens expecting all the attendant rights and obligations that go with such a status. The EU Treaties themselves encompass many policy fields having a direct impact on the lives and concerns of today's youth, including: employment, education, vocational training, culture, health, consumer protection, freedom of movement, environmental protection, mobility for young researchers and social issues such as exclusions, discrimination and racism. In addition to the policy goals set by the Treaties, the EU has introduced a number of its own initiatives under the YOUTH programme based on Article 149. These programmes encourage mobility and exchange schemes for young people. The Council of Youth Ministers has similarly adopted a series of resolutions relating to: - youth participation, the educational potential of sport, social integrations and entrepreneurship amongst the youth. Authors of the Commission the White Paper fear however that declarations are no longer enough to tackle some of today's youth issues such as: - Demographic and social change. By 2020 it is estimated that the 65-90 age group will increase to 21% of the total population while the 15-24 age group will fall to just 11%. This could make relations between the generations complex. - the widening gap between young people and public affairs at national, European and international levels. - investing in the quality of the debate on the future of the European Union and encouraging closer links with people, civil society and local players. Bearing these issues in mind the White Paper proposes a new policy with which to tackle some of the issues outlined above. The two main aspects to the new co-operation framework are: - application of the open method of coordination in the more specific field of youth; and - taking more account of youth in other policies. Concerning the first aspect, i.e. the open method of coordination, the White Paper proposes this should involve fixing guidelines for the Union. These guidelines should be translated into national and regional policies by setting specific targets taking into account national and regional differences. It offers a way of encouraging cooperation, the exchange of best practice and agreeing to common targets for Member States to implement. In this way the White Paper hopes that young people will be taken into account when it comes to: Youth participation, the dissemination of information, voluntary service among young people, understanding youth, taking youth into account on other policy issues, education, lifelong learning and mobility, employment, greater youth autonomy and social integration.?

## European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper

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The committee has adopted the report by Mrs Lissy Gröner (PSE, D) on the Commission's White Paper. While welcoming the White Paper, which gives a new impetus to youth policy, the committee regrets that the proposed initiatives do not match the expectations aroused among young people during the consultation process. The committee also emphasises that a number of European Union policies are of particular importance to young people, including health policy, drugs policy, anti-discrimination measures, the labour market, education and lifelong learning, immigration and equal opportunities for men and women. It stresses the specific importance of health, given the comparative research showing alarming tendencies towards a worsening state of health in young people in the EU. Parliament calls for the gender dimension and sexual equality to be included as a factor in all areas of the White Paper and asks the Member States, when implementing the White Paper, to ensure participation by young people and youth organisations at national level, for example through the setting up of gender-balanced youth advisory committees comprising representatives of youth organisations, including vulnerable groups such as disabled young people and young members of ethnic minorities. The Committee supports a significant development of voluntary service by young people at national, regional and local level and deplores current obstacles, especially lengthy procedures for issuing visas and barriers formed by the provisions of social legislation, and in particular the specific obstacles faced by disabled people. Lastly, considering that voluntary service is an important type of informal learning, Parliament believes that the Commission should create a diploma in voluntary service. ?

## European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by its rapporteur Lissy GRONER (PES, Germany) on European Youth policy. Parliament welcomed the White Paper, but considered that it could not be regarded as optimum. It can be used constructively if it is seen as part of a process about participation and in connection with, for example, the White Paper on Governance. Whilst the open method of coordination is an appropriate way of improving cooperation at European level in the specific field of youth policy, the procedure for applying the method needs to be defined more precisely with regard to the following: -the Commission should propose priority areas, common guidelines and objectives to Council and Parliament before their adoption by the Council, and -the Commission should monitor implementation and regularly report to the Council and Parliament. Participation should first and foremost take place within young people's immediate environment, within the local community and above all in schools. Political parties should also play a role in promoting participation by young people, above all by encouraging them to stand for political office. In the area of information, the White Paper, which is geared mainly towards measures related to the Internet, involving the creation of an electronic portal and forum, does not go far enough, as significant differences remain in Internet use according to geographical area and gender and consequently, there is a danger that many people could be excluded from the provision of information. With regard to voluntary service, this is an important form of non-formal learning, for which a diploma should be created. The Commission needs to bring forward concrete proposals for certifying non-formal education with a view to establishing an appropriate legal and social protection status for volunteers. In addition to voluntary service, voluntary civil involvement in a wider sense is very valuable and the promotion of such involvement should be an important aspect of youth policy, with youth associations and NGOs and sports associations playing an important role. With regard to other policy areas, Parliament reminds the Commission about the specific importance of health, given the comparative research showing alarming tendencies towards a worsening state of health in young people; the Commission needs to come forward with indicators based on comparable data aiming to improve the health of young people. Finally, the Convention on the future of Europe should examine in depth the issue of the status of young European citizens and send a clear signal on involving young people actively in the process of building a more democratic Europe.?

## European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper

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**PURPOSE:** to present a Commission communication on the follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth in response to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field.

**BACKGROUND:** the present Communication follows on from the White Paper on youth, approved by the Commission on 21 November 2001, and the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 setting a new framework for co-operation in the youth field. In this Resolution, the Council called for the open method of co-ordination to be applied to 4 priorities: (i) participation by young people; (ii) information of young people; (iii) voluntary activities among young people; (iv) a greater understanding and knowledge of youth. Pursuant to this mandate, the Commission first proposed common objectives for participation by and information of young people. This proposal for common objectives is based on the Member States' and acceding countries' answers to questions about their own situation and their expectations at European level. It reflects the consensus resulting from the analysis of the answers.

In parallel to this exercise on voluntary activities the same procedure is being carried out for the priority a greater understanding and knowledge of youth.

**CONTENT:** in view of enhancing active citizenship and solidarity of young people, voluntary activities should be developed, promoted, and recognised at all levels. To achieve this overall goal the following common objectives are proposed by the Commission:

**Objective 1:** Develop voluntary activities of young people with the aim of enhancing the transparency of the existing possibilities, enlarging their scope and improving their quality: in order to achieve this objective the following lines of action are proposed:

At national, regional and local level:

- Identify and classify existing voluntary activities (e.g. voluntary service, occasional voluntary engagement) in view of creating a clear and visible picture of voluntary activities available for young people.
- Enhance existing voluntary activities of young people by developing the different categories of these activities further by supporting civil society organisations active in voluntary engagement of young people, reinforcing voluntary services where they already exist and, where appropriate, create new ones.
- Foster training opportunities for young volunteers and those supervising and managing with a view to improving the quality of voluntary activities and their organisational framework.

At European level:

- Encourage a better coordination of the various voluntary activities, and in particular of the transnational cooperation of civic services, where they exist, and encourage the exchange of young volunteers in various domains.
- Disseminate and promote the exchange of information on national voluntary programmes and their European dimension.
- Take into consideration the opportunity and feasibility of extending the European Voluntary Service (EVS) to a wider range of actions with a view to giving young people the possibility to participate in actions of solidarity of the European Union.

**Objective 2 - Making it easier for young people to carry out voluntary activities by removing existing obstacles:** in order to achieve this objective the following lines of action are proposed:

At all levels:

- Take the measures considered appropriate ?? to remove the legal and administrative obstacles to the mobility of persons undertaking ? a voluntary activity??, as set out in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council on Mobility.
- Ensure that young volunteers receive the visas and residence permits when and where needed.
- Enhance the exchange of information, experience and good practice of all relevant actors in the field of voluntary activities of young people with the aim of removing obstacles.
- Consider if legal means and instruments could help reach the aim of making it easier for young people to carry out voluntary activities.

**Objective 3 - Promote voluntary activities with a view to reinforcing young people's solidarity and engagement as citizens:** in order to achieve this objective the following lines of action are proposed:

At national, regional and local level:

- Disseminate information on volunteering at all appropriate levels, with the aim to raise young people's awareness about volunteering, inform them about concrete possibilities to volunteer, provide advice and support and promote a positive image of volunteering.
- Encourage an enhanced cooperation between all relevant actors (young people, youth and voluntary organisations, public authorities, private economic sector, etc?) on the promotion of voluntary activities, by exchanging information, experience and good practice.
- Analyse more carefully the phenomena that lead to the exclusion of certain groups of young people from voluntary activities and develop approaches focused on encouraging them to participate in voluntary activities, also by creating possibilities of voluntary activities at the appropriate levels that correspond to the needs of these groups.

At European level:

- Launch appropriate information actions with a view to promoting voluntary activities of young people as well as the values of voluntarism.

**Objective 4 - Recognise voluntary activities of young people with a view to acknowledging their personal skills and their engagement for society:** in order to achieve this objective the following lines of action are proposed:

At national, regional and local level:

- Develop measures that lead to an enhanced recognition of voluntary activities with a view to acknowledging the young people's voluntary engagement and acquired skills. Recognition should be reinforced at all levels and by various actors, e.g. public authorities, private business, social partners and civil society and young people themselves. The level and format of recognition should be appropriate to the voluntary activities carried out and could take the form of certificates, reward schemes, awards, reduced fees, study and employment incentives.
- Develop actions that lead to an enhanced recognition of voluntary activities with a view to acknowledging the added social value that the voluntary sector offers to society. Recognition could take the form of a National Volunteers Day, a National Volunteers Action Week, awards to groups of volunteers.

At European level:

- Enhance the recognition of voluntary activities at occasions as the European Youth Week and the European Volunteer's Day.
- Ensure a better recognition of voluntary experience of young people in the framework of ongoing processes and by existing means in other policy fields, as e.g. the open method of coordination in the education field, the life-long learning strategy, the development of the Europass, the social dialogue.

Follow-up: On the basis of the national reports the Commission will prepare a progress report for submission to the Council and propose, if appropriate, amendments to the common objectives and inform the European Parliament. Pursuant to an invitation by the Council the Commission will also convene, when appropriate, representatives of the national administrations dealing with youth, in order to promote the exchange of information on the progress made and on best practice. It is suggested to apply the same principles to the common objectives on voluntary activities.

Consequently, the Commission proposes that Member States agree to achieve all the common objectives approved and submit reports on the national contributions to the implementation of the common objectives on voluntary activities by the end of 2006. These proposals for common objectives for voluntary activities will be sent to the European Parliament.

## European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper

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This Communication is a follow up to the White Paper on Youth, which was approved in 2001. The stated aim of the Report is to find common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth matters. The analysis and conclusions of the Report are based on responses, received by the Commission, from the EU Member States, plus Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, as well as input from the European Youth Forum. Based on the results of these submission the Commission Communication highlights the challenges - both at a national and at a European level - which Member States need to overcome if they are to fully address the challenges facing Europe's youth. To address these challenges, the European Commission proposes the development of an efficient and coherent policy which addresses future needs on the basis of a continuing dialogue and the continual exchange of information. The overall goal should be achieved through the implementation of the following common objectives: - at a national level: to identify and organise existing knowledge on youth around a core set of common themes such as participation, information and voluntary activities; to commission further studies, collect statistical data and gather practical knowledge of NGO's, youth organisations and young people; to organise events relating to non-formal learning, discrimination, education and training, employment, social inclusion and health; - at a European level: to complement the work undertaken at a national level and offering input through EU information tools such as Eurobarometer and Eurostat. The Commission asks the Member States to keep it abreast of any developments they undertake in relation to youth policies. The information received will allow it to prepare a progress report, which it will forward to the Council. The present proposal for common objectives will be sent to the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.?

## European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper

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The purpose of this Commission staff working paper report is to present a synoptic analysis of the replies given by the Member States and the acceding countries to the questionnaire on voluntary activities of young people, which will serve as a basis for proposing common objectives in that area for adoption by the Council.

Analysis of the situation by the Member States and acceding countries is as follows:

- general information on voluntary activities of young people;
- young people in voluntary activities;
- voluntary service.

Member States and acceding countries have highlighted the following challenges, entailing action not only at national but also at European level:

- development of voluntary activities of young people;
- facilitating voluntary activities of young people;
- promotion of voluntary activities of young people;
- recognition of voluntary activities of young people.

Based on the answers of the Member States and acceding countries which are presented in this analysis report the Commission proposes common objectives for voluntary activities of young people. The common goal is to develop, facilitate, recognise and promote the voluntary activities of young people with a view to enhancing their active citizenship and solidarity.

## European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper

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The purpose of this Commission staff working paper is to present a synoptic analysis of the replies given by the Member States and the acceding countries to the questionnaire on a greater understanding and knowledge of youth, which will serve as a basis for proposing common objectives in that area for adoption by the Council.

Analysis of the situation by the Member States and acceding countries is as follows:

- a knowledge area in the youth field : existing knowledge on specific themes which are of interest to the youth field; existing means for compilation and dissemination of knowledge;
- organisation, support and further development of knowledge in the youth field : existing structures and main actors for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth; legal bases for structures and activities leading to a better understanding and knowledge of youth; existing methods to ensure quality and comparability of knowledge in the youth field; interaction between the various actors in the youth field for a greater knowledge and understanding of youth.

Conclusion of the analysis : most Member States and acceding countries have stressed the scattered nature of information concerning youth,

acknowledging the sometimes poor understanding decision makers have of young people. They also highlighted the lack of qualitative and quantitative methods specific to the youth field and underlined that co-ordination and dialogue between the various actors in the field could be improved. They acknowledge that, as a consequence, the available knowledge on young people is often not in phase with the concrete needs of policy makers, actors in the youth field and young people themselves.

Member States generally recognise that for effective, timely and sustainable policy making in the youth field, developing a coherent and qualitative knowledge of young people based on exchange, dialogue and networks between all relevant stakeholders in the field is of paramount importance. They recognise that this should be done using channels at all appropriate levels ? i.e. also at local and regional level ? ensuring however that coherence and visibility of knowledge at national level is maintained.

Overall, the challenges for achieving the overall goal are as follows:

- coherent and updated knowledge in priority areas of the youth field and access to such knowledge;
- quality of knowledge in the youth field;
- cooperation between the various actors.

As regards cooperation at the European level, the Commission proposes common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth. The overall goal of these objectives is to develop a coherent, relevant and qualitative knowledge area in the youth field in Europe and anticipate future needs, through exchange, dialogue and networks.

## European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper

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This document is a response to the Council's request in its Resolution of June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field. In this Resolution, the Council called on the Commission to draw up an evaluation report on the cooperation framework including an evaluation of the open method of coordination and, as appropriate, suggestions for its modification.

The framework of European cooperation in the youth field, established by the Council Resolution based on the Commission White Paper, has two complementary strands:

- applying the open method of coordination (OMC) to the specific priorities of the youth field;
- taking better account of the youth dimension in other policies.

In the Resolution, the four priorities proposed in the White Paper. These are participation, information, voluntary activities among young people, greater understanding and knowledge of youth. The procedures to be followed which should lead to the adoption of common objectives by the Council and the Member States are laid down. The Resolution also provides mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the objectives.

The Resolution also states which policies and programmes should include a youth dimension: lifelong learning, mobility, employment and social integration, combating racism and xenophobia.

In evaluating the OMC, the Commission feels that the new framework of European cooperation has become a reality, and the Commission's undertakings have all been fulfilled. The youth field is now a political field where all those involved are mobilised, in dialogue and cooperating with each other.

The choice of a flexible open method of coordination adapted to youth has facilitated the setting up of a coherent plan of action and the establishment of political priorities. These European priorities also constitute a reference point for the establishment of national priorities.

This method of working has mobilised the national administrations and given visibility to activities developed for youth. The speed at which the work plan has been developed has enabled each of the successive Presidencies to make the process of implementing the objectives coming under the responsibility of the Member States even more dynamic.

The implementation of the common objectives by the Member States is crucial for the success of the OMC. Each Member State, depending on its national situation, should draw up a plan of action to achieve the agreed objectives. It is essential for young people to be consulted at all levels, European as well as national, and at the various stages of the procedure (answers to questionnaires, drafting and follow-up of the national actions, reports for the Commission, etc.).

The Commission lists the actions which have been developed at European level on lifelong learning, mobility, employment and social integration, combating racism and xenophobia, and autonomy to exercise citizenship (national and European). It discusses action in the priority areas identified in the White Paper.

The Commission has proposed a new European programme for youth for the period 2007-2013, entitled Youth in Action. This new programme will ensure continuity with the current programme and facilitate the development of new activities in support of the priorities established in the context of policy cooperation, in particular young people's participation, which contributes to their active citizenship, the extension of voluntary activities and support for the studies and research required to gain a better understanding of youth.

In conclusion, the Commission calls on the Council to recognise the results achieved so far in the area of European cooperation in the youth field. All the undertakings in the Commission White Paper have been fulfilled.

## European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper

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The Community's youth policy centres on two policy objectives: firstly, to facilitate young people's transition into the labour market and secondly, to develop their sense of active participation in civil life. The purpose of this report is to assess Member States' measures to implement common objectives relating to a) the participation of young people in civil life and b) what information the Member States are making available to young people. The measures are based on the youth 'Open Method of Co-ordination', which was agreed upon by the Council in 2003.

On the basis of these findings, the Commission confirms the continued relevancy and validity of the common objectives for participation and information. At the same time, it proposes some changes, which in summary, can be described as:

Improving young people's access to information services: by enhancing co-ordination and the promotion of the information society.

Quality information: by developing individual counselling services and using the European youth information charter systematically.

The participation of the young in information: by involving young people in public information strategies.

Participation in civic life: by ensuring a structured consultation process with young people; developing local structures; analysing obstacles to the participation of young people; and developing tools to promote participation (such as guidelines);

Participation in representative democracy: by promoting young people's involvement in political parties and encouraging the inclusion of young people on party lists.

At regional, national and local level: by setting up a structured dialogue. The Commission supports the idea of an informal forum between youth representatives and the European Parliament. A further proposal is to organise, on a regular basis, a Youth Week and to organise a youth specific Eurobarometre by end 2006.

In addition the report sets out recommendation for the Member States such as taking part, on a voluntary basis, in peer reviews to be organised by the Commission.

The Commission calls on the Council to endorse the proposals made in this report.

## European youth: opening up decision-making process to young people. White Paper

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In 2003 European Ministers identified a number of objectives to help strengthen the participation of young people in civic life. The first common objectives concern youth participation: They are

- Increasing youth participation in the civic life of their community.
- Increasing youth participation in the system of representative democracy.
- Providing greater encouragement for various forms of participation.

The second common objectives concerns youth information. They are:

- Improving youth access to information services.
- Ensuring that young people can access quality information.
- Encouraging the participation of youth in information services.

This Commission working document analyses Member States' approach to implementing the common objectives. It covers the period 2003-2005. The Commission Paper is based on reports sent to it by national authorities. The first part of the Report covers the first common objectives on participation and has been structured along the following lines: 1) Implementation of the objectives; 2) the types of obstacles encountered and 3) Conclusions.

### 1) Implementation

When the common objectives were adopted youth participation schemes varied between the EU Member States. There is, however, a recognisable general trend towards developing genuine national policies to help encourage greater youth participation ? even if the degree of leverage applied by the authorities varies from one country to another. The legislative framework has taken different forms however. In Ireland, for example, specific youth legislation has been adopted. In the Czech Republic a ?youth policy? has been defined, whilst in Belgium youth organisations and structures have received on-going support. Some countries such as the Baltic states have drawn up specific action plans. Both the UK and Ireland have citizen education policies. In addition, most countries have encouraged the creation of structures which enable young people to become more involved in Community life be it at a national, regional or local level. To that end Cyprus has created a Youth Parliament. The Danish approach has been to support youth councils within football clubs. As regards the public authorities' support for the participation of youth in representative democracy Italy encourages young people aged between 25-35 to stand on electoral lists. Belgium and the Netherlands rely on the internet as a medium for regular consultation with young citizens. Noteworthy is the fact that almost all of the EU Member States have launched campaigns to encourage young people to vote.

### 2) Obstacles to implementing the ?participation? priority

The difficulties encountered by the Member States to implementing the defined objectives can be grouped into three categories. Firstly, a lack of adequate resources. Secondly, a lack of youth interest or motivation. Thirdly, a failure to seek synergies between actions and youth policy measures.

### 3) Conclusions

National reports indicate that an effective youth policy remains a policy priority. One concern is how to strengthen youth community activities, how to involve youth in democratic life and how to integrate them fully into society. To better integrate young people in civic life the Commission proposes a number of actions including: promoting the involvement of youth participation in NGO's, associations and voluntary work; recognising the outreach work done by parents and youth workers and identifying the obstacles to participation.

### 4) Access for young people to information services

Improved youth information is accompanied by improvements in the quality of information. On-line information appears to be the commonest form of providing information. In some cases the most advanced youth portals provide personal on-line counselling. For example, in the UK, a national on-line advice service called Connexions Direct (CXD) was rolled out in 2004. This service offers young people advice by telephone, text message and email. Similarly, the Danish Parliament launched a new website for young people dealing with Danish political policies and institutions.

#### 5) Quality information

The majority of Member States use or tend to use the European youth information charter to ensure that information provided by youth information services obey a minimum standard of quality. This charter, which was reviewed in November 2004, consists of 16 guidelines for general youth information work. In some Member States the youth information centres are obliged to comply with these guidelines. Indeed, this specific line of action has proved to be one in which the Member States are most interested in exchanging good practices as well as in developing new methods to improve quality standards.

#### 6) Youth participation on information

This is one of the least developed common objectives although different approaches can be identified. It appears that the majority of the Member States believe youth information needs to be developed by professionals. In addition some Member States are in the process of conducting surveys and evaluation reports as a means to take the views of young people into account.

#### 7) General Conclusions

Since 2003, most of the EU Member States have undertaken studies in the field of youth participation in a bid to widen their knowledge of young peoples needs and expectations. Studies on youth information are scarcer. Some Member States have started country scale mapping exercise to find out about the wealth of knowledge in their country and to identify the main studies in the field. All bar a few countries have developed tools to make existing knowledge more widely available and to facilitate access to it. Those who have made steps in this direction have done so through CD?s, publications and the setting up of national data bases for youth knowledge.

Lastly, the involvement of youth in policy development and implementation is fundamental. That is why the Commission proposes to reinforce consultation with young people with a view to setting up a structured dialogue.