



A YOUNG PEOPLE'S EUROPE



Europe
on the move



To our young people, Europe is not an impossible dream. It is a fact of life. They have realized that barriers, in whatever shape or form, are more of a hindrance than a help and that our continent is far too small to be split into blocs and entities by artificial frontiers.

The young people of the 1990s were born into a Community whose Member States, after centuries of enmity, have succeeded in eliminating the danger of war in Europe.

The Community has come a long way since the signing of the European Treaties in 1951 and 1957. Who would have dared to prophesy in the 1950s that, 40 years on, 12 European countries would be negotiating political union and a common currency?

European integration is the key to peace; but it is first and foremost the key to the future.

'Since its inception, the Community has endeavoured to promote contacts between young Europeans. In practice this means giving them an opportunity of familiarizing themselves with Europe in all its diversity, learning to be tolerant and developing a sense of being part of a major endeavour.'

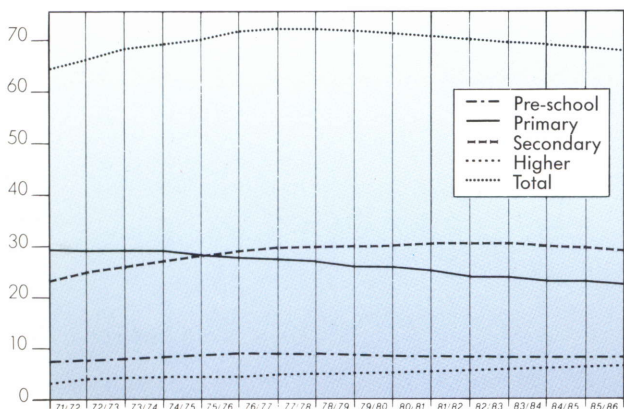
Jacques Delors,
President of the
European Commission

Of the Community's 340 million citizens, 130 million are under 25.

The elimination of frontiers is broadening horizons and increasing opportunities for young Europeans, who are acquiring new rights with the mutual recognition of diplomas and freedom of movement. The single market and the implementation of common policies in almost every area of economic and social life are laying the foundations for a European homeland in which young people are bound to flourish. Industrial cooperation, joint research, and major projects such as



Trends in the numbers of pupils and students (millions)



Source: Eurostat.

Of the Community's 340 million citizens, 130 million are under 25. It is for them that we must lay the foundations for a prosperous future.

These 130 million young people will shape tomorrow's Community, which will be their Community. This presupposes, firstly, that they are well-informed and, secondly, that they are capable of seizing the opportunities on offer. Europe expects its young people to be mobile, that is to say, prepared to move around, learn other people's languages and get to know their neighbours. Being mobile also means taking a broader view, being open to new technologies, seeking cooperation wherever an opportunity presents itself. In short, it means behaving quite differently from previous generations.

the Channel Tunnel, a European network of high-speed trains and protection of the environment, are all designed to strengthen and modernize Europe's structures.

Cultural exchange is another aspect of the Community young Europeans rank highly.

The population explosion world-wide contrasts sharply with demographic ageing in Europe. But if Europe can mobilize its energies, it should be able to play its rightful role abroad and guarantee employment and economic, social and cultural developments at home in the years ahead.

Percentage of under-25s in the Twelve (1986)

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| 0-15 years of age | 19.2 |
| 15-24 years of age | 16.3 |
| 25-64 years of age | 50.8 |
| Over 65 years of age | 13.8 |

Source: Eurostat.

The Community must meet young Europeans half-way. This is why it must take young people's concerns — education, training, employment and culture — to heart. And it is on precisely these areas that the Community has been concentrating.

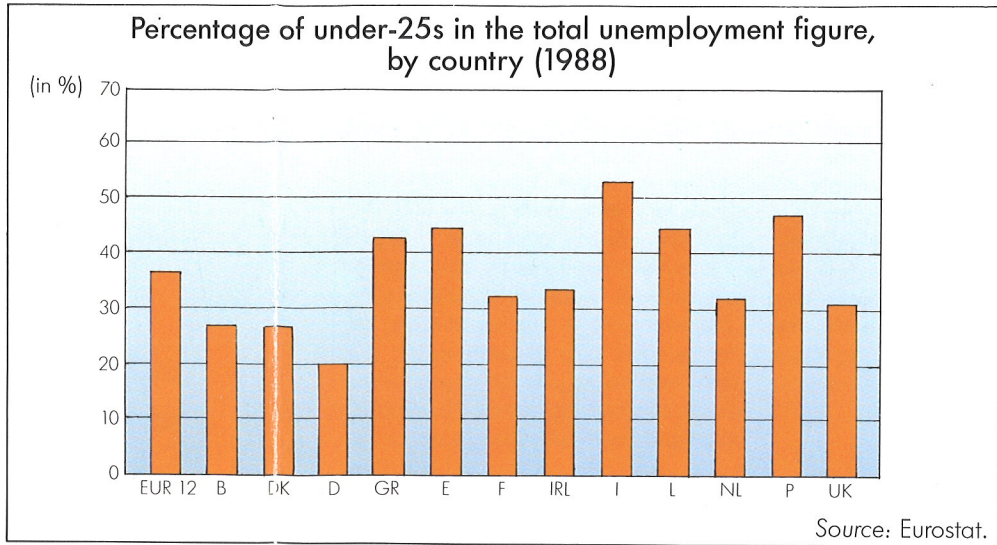
Education and mobility are the main objectives of the **Erasmus** programme launched by the Community in June 1987. It enables young people to spend some time at a university in another Member State with special grants and all the guarantees offered by organized exchange programmes.

The number of applications for mobility grants under the Erasmus programme is growing apace. In the 1991-92 academic year, 59 000 students will receive grants to attend a university in another Community country, i.e. 33% more than last year. This means that more than 100 000 young people will have benefited from the scheme since its inception.

However, the promotion of mobility for young Europeans soon encounters a major obstacle: the language problem. **Language** is, after all, the main means of communication. A knowledge of languages is essential if young people are to make contact, to learn to understand each other, to become aware of cultural differences and the personal enrichment these can generate. The aim of the **Lingua** programme, launched in 1989, is to improve foreign-language teaching and training by contributing to the funding of mobility programmes and innovative projects for the initial and continuing training of foreign-language teachers, language learning in specialized and higher education and the devising of strategies to promote language train-

ing in the business world. **Lingua** also encourages exchanges of teachers and students in the context of inter-establishment projects. The languages covered are Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Irish, Italian, Luxembourgish, Portuguese and Spanish. One of the programme's top priorities is to promote training in the less widely spoken languages.

Entering the labour market — with or without a qualification — is seldom easy. The aim of the **Comett** and **Petra** programmes is to give young people a good start.



*The language problem is a major obstacle to a frontier-free Europe. The Community's answer is the **Lingua** programme which promotes language learning.*

A special exchange programme allows young workers to acquire practical experience in another Community country.

The **Comett** programme, launched in 1987, sets out to foster closer cooperation between industry and the world of higher education. It encourages university-enterprise training partnerships (UETPs) with the aim of organizing training operations in a given technological area or industry. These cover a broad range of activities, including the definition of training needs, the organization of traineeships for students in firms in other Member States, and the promotion of staff exchanges between universities and industry.



The number of traineeships has increased by nearly 80% a year since the **Comett** programme was launched. In 1991, for example, 5 100 students will be spending an average of six months in a firm in another Member State. The second phase of the programme, known as **Comett II**, runs until 1994. It is hoped that 25 000 students can be placed in this context.

The aim of the **Petra** programme is to provide vocational training for young people and prepare them for adult and working life. Adopted in 1987 and extended in 1991, the programme is designed to give every school-leaver who so wishes one year's vocational training leading to a recognized qualification and, in this way, ease his or her integration into working life. The new **Petra** programme has two main priorities: placements and exchanges for young people undergoing training, in employment or seeking employment and a European network of transnational partnerships and initiatives launched by young people. Linked to these two priorities are activities to promote career guidance and ease the transition from training to working life. The programme is targeted at young people under the age of 28 who do not have a university education, the idea being to give all categories of young people a chance to prepare themselves for a Europe-wide labour market.

The creation of a single market has stimulated economic growth. The Community's gross domestic product has increased by 3 to 4% a year since 1988. Happily, young people have benefited from this growth. But the fact remains that unemployment is still Europe's number one problem.

The European Social Fund, the Community's main financial instrument in the area of employment, is now devoting close to three-quarters of its budget to vocational training and recruitment subsidies for the under-25s, mainly in less-favoured regions.

The Commission is endeavouring to ensure that young people who received no proper preparation for working life as part of their compulsory schooling acquire the necessary basic skills. The Social Fund, for instance, provides money for theoretical and practical vocational training courses. Particular attention is paid to specialized courses in the new technologies. Help is also available for new firms creating stable jobs.

In agriculture the Community contributes to the financing of start-up and investment subsidies for young farmers. These subsidies are particularly vital because close to half of Europe's farmers are aged 55 and over, and the younger generation will have to take over from them sooner or later.

All these initiatives underline the Community's concern to facilitate the vocational integration of the young. But the fact remains that the situation on the labour market deteriorated in the 1980s at their expense. Today, despite longer and longer training periods, 40% of those unemployed are under the age of 25, although this age group only accounts for 20% of the working population. However, the percentage of young people in the unemployed

total is on the decline thanks to efforts undertaken at regional, national and Community levels.

A Eurobarometer poll of under-25s carried out in the spring of 1990 revealed that, after peace and democracy, culture was the 'European value' to which young people attach most importance. In fact young people rank culture as more important than standard of living.

Young people's attachment to European values

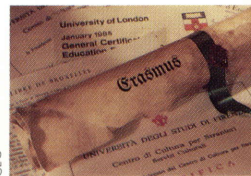
Peace is the 'European value' ranked highest by young Europeans in the 15 to 24 age bracket: 40% of those questioned put peace top of the list ahead of democracy (37%), culture (36%), lifestyle (30%), quality of life (28%) and standard of living (25%). This emerges from a survey conducted in the Twelve in the spring of 1990 (*Eurobarometer* No 33).

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|--------------------|-----|
| Peace | 40% |
| Democracy | 37% |
| Culture | 36% |
| Lifestyle | 30% |
| Quality of life | 28% |
| Standard of living | 25% |

The Community is responding to this concern by supporting cultural and artistic activities, such as the European Community Youth Orchestra, and promoting projects involving young people in the restoration of national monuments and nature conservation.

However, the main manifestation of Community policy in this area is the 'Youth for Europe' programme. The aim of the programme, launched in 1988, is to allow young Europeans in the 15 to 25 age group to take part in exchanges and work together on joint projects. This gives them an opportunity to

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Under the Erasmus programme, launched in 1987, Community students can follow part of their course of studies at a university in another Member State.

familiarize themselves with the social and cultural make-up of other young Europeans. Between 1989 and 1991, the Youth for Europe programme involved more than 80 000 young people in exchanges. The second phase (1992-94) should reach a further 100 000 young Europeans from every social, economic and cultural background. At least one-third of the appropriations available is set aside for projects for the underprivileged. The programme is also targeted at youth organizations, volunteers and youth leaders and organizations which could help promote and organize youth exchanges.

On 26 June, at the first meeting of youth affairs ministers within the Council, an important step was taken towards Community-level cooperation. Ministers agreed to work together in four priority areas:

- (i) cooperation between youth organizations;
- (ii) information for young people;
- (iii) promotion of initiative and creativity in the young;
- (iv) cooperation in the training of youth leaders, with particular preference to the European dimension.

Organizations and associations for young people are represented at European level by the Youth Forum of the European Communities. The Forum, which groups national youth committees and international non-governmental youth organizations, provides a political platform for the exchange of ideas between organizations of every hue. Every conceivable topic — from unemployment, racism, poverty and education to young people's rights, equal opportunities and development cooperation — is tackled.



The 'Youth for Europe' programme gives young Europeans from all walks of life an opportunity to work together on joint projects.



Peace, democracy and culture are the main concerns of young Europeans.



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