

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(94) 490 final - COD 474
Brussels, 10.11.1994

OPINION OF THE COMMISSION

pursuant to Article 189 b (2) (d) of the EC Treaty,
on the European Parliament's amendments
to the Council's common position regarding the
proposal for a

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DECISION

**adopting the third stage of the "Youth for Europe" Programme,
aimed at promoting the development of youth exchanges and
youth activities within the Community**

AMENDING THE PROPOSAL OF THE COMMISSION

pursuant to Article 189 a (2) of the EC Treaty

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Article 189b, paragraph 2 point d) of the Treaty on EC provides that the Commission shall deliver an opinion on the amendments which the European Parliament proposes in a second reading.

The Commission sets out below its opinion on the 8 amendments proposed by the European Parliament. It also attaches, by virtue of Article 189 A, paragraph 2 of the EC Treaty, a modified proposal which incorporates the 6 amendments made by the European Parliament which it has accepted.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- a) On 15 December 1993, the Commission delivered to the Council and the European Parliament its proposal for Decision (COM(93)523 final - COD 474).
- b) On 23 March 1994, the Economic and Social Committee issued a favourable opinion.
- c) On 17 May 1994, the Committee of the Regions issued a favourable opinion.
- d) On 19 April 1994, the European Parliament adopted a favourable resolution at its first reading, containing 33 amendments to the proposal of the Commission.
- e) On 16 May 1994, the Commission adopted, in accordance with Article 189 A, paragraph 2 of the EC Treaty, a modified proposal integrating, in whole or in part, 30 of the European Parliament's 33 amendments (COM(94)186 final - COD 474).
- f) On 11 July 1994, the Council adopted a common position.
- g) On 14 July 1994, the Commission noted the common position and it informed the European Parliament of its position on this common position (SEC(94) 1169 final - COD 474).
- h) On 26 October 1994, the European Parliament voted on the second reading, and adopted a favourable resolution which includes 8 amendments to the common position.

2. PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL FOR A DECISION

The proposal for a decision aims at promoting cooperative action in the youth field within the Community.

The main objective of the programme is to contribute to fostering quality education by developing exchange activities within the Community, by other supplementary activities in the field of youth connected with such exchanges, and by exchanges with non-member countries with which the Community has concluded in particular cooperation agreements.

THE COMMISSION'S OPINION ON THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S AMENDMENTS

After examining the amendments proposed by the European Parliament at its second reading, the Commission is able to support those:

- which agree with its initial proposal, or
- which agree with its opinion on the amendments of the European Parliament presented during its first reading, or
- provide useful clarification to the text.

1. AMENDMENTS ACCEPTED BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission is able to accept amendments nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8, and has incorporated them in its new modified proposal for re-examination by the Council.

Amendment no. 1 (10th recital (a)) underlines the importance of giving the children of immigrants the opportunity to discover the culture of their country of origin.

Amendment no. 2 (13th recital) provides for Cyprus and Malta to participate in the programme on an equal footing with the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe which are already covered by the recital in question. The Commission is able to accept the principles of this amendment in both the "recitals" and the provisions of the decision (see here amendment no. 6) subject to the following modifications: the phrase "... European countries deemed to fulfil the conditions for accession to the Union..." should be removed; the wording "... provided that appropriate additional financial resources are made available to this effect" instead of "... and earmarking the necessary additional appropriations". It is important to ensure that funds be available prior to any opening of the programme to other countries.

Amendment no. 3 (article 2) sets the date of the coming into effect of the programme as 1 January 1995, and calls for the removal of the estimated necessary amount (ENA).

Amendment no. 6 (article 7 point 4), concerns the participation of Cyprus and Malta in the Programme. See comments made to amendment no. 2.

Amendment no. 7 (Annexe, Action AII.1 point c) calls for the encouragement, not only of the actual mobility of young people, but also of virtual mobility between young people from different groups and regions.

Amendment no. 8 (Annexe, Action E (2)) calls for increasing use of the media, not only to promote the objectives of the programme, but also to make them better known, and to promote and publicize the results.

2. AMENDMENTS REJECTED BY THE COMMISSION

Amendments 4 and 5 have been rejected by the Commission.

Amendment no. 4 (article 6) concerns the programme Committee. It introduces the requirement for the Commission to submit to Parliament a draft of the measures to be taken to implement the programme and to take account of the priority adopted by the Parliamentary Committee with a view, if necessary, to amending its draft decision.

The Commission maintains the formula of an Advisory Committee, as proposed in both its initial and modified proposals, for two reasons:

- the Advisory Committee is the appropriate instrument for implementing a programme like "Youth for Europe", given the non-normative character of the measures to be taken in the execution of the Decision;
- the procedure of submitting draft measures to Parliament is rigid and non-pragmatic with regard to the effective implementation of the programme.

Amendment no. 5 (article 4) calls for consideration to be given to ways of making the programme more flexible, so that it can be adapted to particularly disadvantaged young people. It also introduces a definition of disadvantaged young people which establishes a categorization of this target group, a scale of degree of poverty, and a link between this degree of poverty and the impossibility of assuming responsibilities or enjoying basic rights.

This amendment, included in full by the Commission at its first reading, has been taken over in the spirit, and in part in its specific wording, in the "heading" of the annexe to the joint position. This text of the common position is more appropriate, as it avoids introducing degrees of poverty and exclusion.

CONCLUSIONS

By way of conclusion, the Commission believes that the European Parliament's proposals for amendments nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 to the common position strengthen the text with regard to the participation of other countries in the programme, and also the aspects of inter-cultural learning, mobility, and the use of media within the context of the programme, these being perfectly compatible with the objectives of the proposal for a Decision.

The amended proposal incorporates these amendments.

Amended proposal for a

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DECISION

**relating to the "Youth for Europe III" programme
aimed at promoting the development of youth exchanges and
youth activities within the Community**

(presented by the Commission pursuant to Article 189 A (2)
of the EC-Treaty)

**THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,**

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 126 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission ¹,

Having regard to the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee ²,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of Regions ³,

Acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189b ⁴,

Whereas on 16 June 1988 the Council adopted Decision 88/348/EEC adopting an action programme for the promotion of youth exchanges in the Community – "Youth for Europe" programme ⁵ and, on 29 July 1991, Decision 91/395/EEC adopting the "Youth for Europe II" programme, second phase ⁶, for the period running from 1 January 1992 to 31 December 1994;

Whereas Council Decision 87/569/EEC of 1 December 1987 concerning an action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life ⁷ (PETRA) sets out to encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills, creativity and initiative among young people;

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Whereas Council Decision 87/569/EEC of 1 December 1987 concerning an action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life ⁷ (PETRA) sets out to encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills, creativity and initiative among young people;

Whereas in Council Decision 89/489/EEC of 28 July 1989 establishing an action programme to promote foreign language competence in the European Community (LINGUA) ⁸ it was stressed that the "Youth for Europe" programme would not fully achieve its stated objectives without accompanying measures to promote training in foreign languages, and whereas the LINGUA programme provided assistance only for projects organized by teaching and training establishments;

Whereas the Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers meeting within the Council of 26 June 1991 on priority actions in the youth field ⁹ affirmed the wish, on the basis of experience acquired in the framework of the "Youth for Europe" programme, to intensify their co-operation on exchanges and mobility of young people with the EFTA countries, with the Central and Eastern European countries and in the context of the North-South dialogue;

Whereas the European Parliament has repeatedly actively supported the development of actions and programmes at Community level in the youth field, in particular in its report of 24 May 1991 on "Community policies and their impact on youth";

Whereas the conclusions of the Edinburgh European Council, meeting on 11 and 12 December 1992, reiterated at the Copenhagen European Council, meeting on 20 and 21 June 1993, underline the requirement that activities taken to develop the independence and creativity of young people must be maintained and that vigorous and effective measures must be taken to combat racism and xenophobia, particularly through the education of young people;

Whereas youth exchanges are an appropriate method for improving understanding and becoming better acquainted with the diverse cultures of the Member States, and therefore help strengthen democracy, tolerance and cohesion in the Community and deepen the whole fabric of inter-relations being woven between the people of Europe; whereas, in that context, young people's active participation in preparing, implementing and monitoring their own projects can be used to underpin the relations between young people in the Community and their active citizenship;

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Whereas, in that respect, it is important to promote the active participation of disadvantaged young people in these activities; whereas it is necessary to promote this by the selection of actions centred on the social and educative role of youth leaders; and whereas the establishment of such a Community action, on the basis of previous experience, gives added value at Community level;

Whereas the Commission Communication to the European Parliament and the Council of 2 September 1992 on the Youth Information Action Plan affirmed the importance for the Community of an information drive among young people at European level;

Whereas it is necessary to reinforce the links between the actions undertaken under the "Youth for Europe" programme and those pursued within the framework of social policy, the fight against racism and xenophobia, and co-operation with non-member countries;

Whereas Community action in the youth field is developed in the context of the objectives set out in Article 126 of the Treaty, that is the promotion of youth exchanges and of youth workers, in conjunction with co-operation with non-member countries;

Whereas implementation of the "Youth for Europe" programme must be based on decentralized structures set up by Member States for the purpose of reinforcing co-operation with the national authorities responsible for youth questions, whilst continuing to respect the principle of subsidiarity, as defined in Article 3b of the Treaty;

Whereas, in that respect, it is important to promote the active participation of disadvantaged young people in these activities; whereas it is necessary to promote this by the selection of actions centred on the social and educative role of youth leaders; and whereas the establishment of such a Community action, on the basis of previous experience, gives added value at Community level;

Whereas the Commission Communication to the European Parliament and the Council of 2 September 1992 on the Youth Information Action Plan affirmed the importance for the Community of an information drive among young people at European level;

Whereas it is necessary to reinforce the links between the actions undertaken under the "Youth for Europe" programme and those pursued within the framework of social policy, the fight against racism and xenophobia, and co-operation with non-member countries;

Whereas it is particularly important to give the children of immigrants the opportunity to discover the culture of their country of origin.

Whereas Community action in the youth field is developed in the context of the objectives set out in Article 126 of the Treaty, that is the promotion of youth exchanges and of youth workers, in conjunction with co-operation with non-member countries;

Whereas implementation of the "Youth for Europe" programme must be based on decentralized structures set up by Member States for the purpose of reinforcing co-operation with the national authorities responsible for youth questions, whilst continuing to respect the principle of subsidiarity, as defined in Article 3b of the Treaty;

Whereas, in the light of the conclusions of the European Council meeting in Copenhagen (June 1993), provision should be made, where appropriate, for the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe to participate in the "Youth for Europe" programme on the basis of the experience gained following the opening up of the programme to the EEA countries,

Whereas the "Youth for Europe" programme should make provision for the participation of Cyprus and Malta as well as the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, following the conclusions of the European Council in Copenhagen (June 1993); whereas the Commission is called on to make proposals for opening up the Community programme to these countries, taking as a starting point the programmes which are already open to the participation of the EFTA countries provided that appropriate additional financial resources are made available to this effect".

Article 2

Financial provisions

The programme shall run for five years.

The amount of Community funds deemed necessary to implement the whole programme is ECU 105 million under the financial perspective for 1993 to 1999.

The budgetary authority shall determine the appropriations available for each financial year taking into account the principles of sound management referred to in Article 2 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

Article 2

Financial provisions

The programme shall run for 5 years from 1.1.1995.

(Second indent deleted)

The budgetary authority shall determine the appropriations available for each financial year taking into account the principles of sound management referred to in Article 2 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

Article 7

Implementation

4. The programme may be opened up, where appropriate, (in ways to be agreed on) to the participation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which have association agreements with the Community, on the basis of additional appropriations provided by those countries.

Article 7

Implementation

4. The "Youth for Europe" programme must be opened up (in ways to be agreed on) to the participation of Cyprus and Malta as well as to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which have association agreements with the European Union provided that appropriate additional financial resources are made to this effect.

ANNEX**ACTION A.II: SPIRIT OF INITIATIVE,
CREATIVITY AND SOLIDARITY AMONG
YOUNG PEOPLE****1. Youth initiatives**

- (e) Assistance for youth initiatives may be spread over two consecutive years and cover projects with a Community dimension at local, regional or national level and promotion of the transnational aspect, as well as effective establishment of co-operation networks or partnership schemes.

**ACTION E: INFORMATION FOR YOUNG
PEOPLE AND YOUTH RESEARCH**

2. - using existing youth information networks at European level

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YOUNG PEOPLE****1. Youth initiatives**

- (e) Assistance for youth initiatives may be spread over two consecutive years and cover projects with a Community dimension at local, regional or national level and promotion of the transnational aspect, as well as effective establishment of co-operation networks or partnership schemes promoting the development of mobility, either actual or potential, between young people from different groups and different regions.

**ACTION E: INFORMATION FOR YOUNG
PEOPLE AND YOUTH RESEARCH**

2. - increasingly using the media to publicize and promote the programme's objectives and results;

- 1.
2. OJ No C 148, 30.5.1994, p. 9.
3. Opinion delivered on 31 May 1994 (not yet published in the Official Journal).
4. Opinion of the European Parliament of 19 April 1994 (not yet published in the Official Journal), Council Common Position of (not yet published in the Official Journal) and Decision of the European Parliament of (not yet published in the Official Journal).
5. OJ No L 158, 25. 6.1988, p. 42.
6. OJ No L 217, 6. 8.1991, p. 25.
7. OJ No L 346, 10.12.1987, p. 31. Decision as amended by Decision 91/387/EEC (OJ No L 214, 2.8.1991, p. 69).
8. OJ No L 239, 16. 8.1989, p. 24.
9. OJ No C 208, 9. 8.1991, p. 1.

ISSN 0254-1475

COM(94) 490 final

DOCUMENTS

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16 01

Catalogue number : CB-CO-94-519-EN-C

ISBN 92-77-82002-0

Office for Official Publications of the European Communities
L-2985 Luxembourg