

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

YOUTH INFORMATION ACTION PLAN



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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I. INTRODUCTION

The population of the Community is 340 million, 113 million of whom are less than 25 years old. 70 million of these young people are school or university students, or are undergoing vocational training; several million of them are job seekers; the remainder are employed or do voluntary work. In some Member States, the number of young people as a proportion of the total population is falling; in others, it remains high (around 40% in Ireland and Spain).

The Community's future lies in the hands of the young. It is their enthusiasm, resources and vitality which will see the Community into the twenty-first century and society should now be turning to them in preparation.

One crucial aspect of the Community's relationship with young people is ensuring they are informed about the Community and that their needs are taken into account in framing policy. Each of the Community's citizens needs to appreciate just what it is that is being built and to participate in the process.

In view of the important role they will be called upon to play in Europe, young people's information requirements need to be looked at specifically. This means providing them with information not just about the Community, but about other interesting subjects as well, leading them to a better understanding of one another.

1. Background

The Commission was asked by the Council to present an action programme on information for young Europeans.

This request was the culmination of a long sequence of studies, analyses and consultations over the last three years and which was set in motion by Directorate-General X (Audiovisual, Information, Communication and Culture) in collaboration with the Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth. As a result, the Commission prepared a communication concerning information for young Europeans (SEC (91)1010 final) which was officially presented to the first official Council meeting of Ministers with responsibility for Youth, held on 26 June 1991 in Luxembourg. The communication was well-received and the ad hoc Working Party on Youth was instructed to examine it.

The Working Party examined the communication during the Dutch Presidency. On 3 February 1992, the Council (General Affairs) adopted the following conclusions:

"Following the examination of the Working Party on Youth of the Commission communication entitled "Keeping young Europeans informed", the Council and the Ministers meeting within the Council invite the Commission to submit an action programme on information for young Europeans, taking into account the points outlined in the annex to these conclusions".

This request was repeated at the informal Council meeting of Ministers for Youth held on 11 April 1992 in Funchal (Madeira, Portugal).

The Commission continued with its work and now proposes a youth information action plan for implementation from 1993.

Although a certain amount of information is already dispensed by those responsible for the various Community measures targeted at young people, and by the Commission for the general public, the proposals making up the action plan described below seek to remedy the shortage of information specifically for young people.

This action Plan will be adapted according to the Commission's new global strategy for information.

2. Principles

The Commission's information activities observe the following principles:

- 2.1 - help create a People's Europe and encourage youth mobility;
 - take account of young people's needs in their daily life and the Community's desire to keep them informed about its institutions and programmes;
 - employ the usual intermediaries to transmit information, paying special attention to the disadvantaged.

- 2.2 At Community level, the measures taken should complement those of individual Member States (subsidiarity principle) and:
 - dovetail with the programmes of the Community and other international organizations (e.g. Council of Europe);
 - encourage exchanges between information workers;

- facilitate cooperation between Member States and help disseminate information;
- relate to areas of common interest.

2.3 As regards information content, it is proposed to place the emphasis initially on Community information likely to be of equal interest to young people and to Member States, and which deals with subjects in the Commission's sphere of activity (information on the history and operation of the European institutions, on European citizenship - as enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty - and so on).

As regards information dissemination, priority should be given to making the best use of existing channels and networks.

The Commission's Representations and Offices in the Member States have an important role to play here as they are already involved in numerous youth information activities via school networks.

Other networks, too, have important parts to play: in addition to the information and advice centre network, there are the universities, opinion leaders, local communities, associations and youth organizations, etc.

The Symbiosis network experience here is particularly valuable.¹

In addition, account should be taken of the experiences of Member States (at national, regional and local levels), and at European level (INGOs and the Youth Forum of the European Communities), to promote synergy.

3. Subsidiarity

By informing the young Europeans on the history of the Community, its functioning and its Programmes, the Community is acting within the limits of its powers.

Furthermore, the present Plan comes as an answer to a request expressed by the Council of Ministers on February 3d, 1992.

1 "Symbiosis" is an interactive information network composed of associations, local communities and networks linked to the various Community programmes (Erasmus, Lingua, Helios, etc.). The aim of the network is to disseminate information through its members on the "People's Europe" theme and promote interaction between them. However, the information provided by the network is not directly intended for young people and the language is not in the right register.

II. ACTIVITIES FOR 1993

ACTIVITY A

TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR PILOT YOUTH INFORMATION PROJECTS NOW UNDER WAY IN SOME MEMBER STATES

The Commission will be supporting a limited number of pilot youth information projects covering such subjects as the European Community, its institutions and programmes, and the European situation in general.

The Commission will draw up a list of pilot projects eligible for financial assistance from among the proposals submitted to it by Member States and/or public or private institutions and bodies, and will publicize the conclusions of the interim and final reports it receives on them.

Projects should be innovative and be presented by (or have the support of) at least three Member States.

ACTIVITY B

DECENTRALIZED EUROPEAN DATA BASE

The Commission wishes to promote the setting up of a network leading to the creation of a decentralized European data base which would in its first phase allow youth information workers direct access to information on areas of interest to young people.

The network would ultimately operate interactively and would be based on:

- a. structures designated by Member States gathering information at national level;
- b. the Commission promoting links between the structures making up the network;
- c. structures disseminating and adapting the information received via the network.

No decision has yet been taken on which technical options to adopt, and the Commission will devote 1993 to carrying out a feasibility study which completes and updates those already done in 1990/91.

ACTIVITY C

CONTACTS AND EXCHANGES BETWEEN WORKERS IN THE YOUTH INFORMATION SECTOR

The Commission will be supporting the organization of a limited number of seminars and meetings for those working in the field of youth information.

The meetings proposed should be presented by at least three Member States.

The Commission will ensure these activities take into account similar ones under other youth programmes.

ACTIVITY D

MEASURES DIRECTLY INFORMING YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE

As an experiment, the Commission aims to take steps to disseminate information on the European Community, its institutions and programmes, and the European situation in general, for example by:

- distributing brochures, books, folders, posters, pamphlets, etc.;
- preparing information videos;
- organizing seminars for journalists in the youth sector (newspapers and magazines, radio and television);
- preparing and distributing teaching material on Community institutions;
- organizing competitions for schools.

III. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. TITLE OF OPERATION

Information activities for young Europeans.

2. BUDGET HEADING INVOLVED

B3-3010.

3. LEGAL BASIS

Autonomous operation by the Commission.

4. DESCRIPTION OF OPERATION

4.1 Specific objectives of operation

The aims of the Action Plan are:

- to support and improve information for young people below the age of 25 by taking measures at Community level, paying particular attention to the disadvantaged;
- to strengthen young people's knowledge of Europe, its institutions and programmes;
- to help young people become active and responsible European citizens;
- to contribute to the creation of a People's Europe;
- to make a major contribution to increasing youth mobility in Europe.

The Action Plan comprises the following activities:

ACTIVITY A

Technical support for pilot youth information projects now under way in some Member States.

The Commission will be supporting pilot information projects already under way in some Member States.

ACTIVITY B

Feasibility study for a decentralized European data base.

ACTIVITY C

Contacts and exchanges between workers in the youth information sector.

The Commission will be supporting the organization of seminars and meetings in the youth information field.

ACTIVITY D

Measures directly informing young people about the construction of Europe.

4.2 Duration: indeterminate.

4.3 Target population.

Directly, organizations responsible for certain aspects of youth policy or activities; indirectly, all younger members of the public.

5. CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE/REVENUE

5.1 Non-compulsory expenditure.

5.2 Differentiated appropriations.

6. TYPE OF EXPENDITURE/REVENUE

6.1 100% subsidy: N/A.

6.2 Subsidy for joint financing with other sources in the public and/or private sector. Yes. The assistance granted to these pilot experiments may not exceed 50% of the total expenditure involved.

6.3 Interest subsidy: N/A.

6.4 Other: N/A.

6.5 Should the operation prove an economic success, is there provision for all or part of the Community contribution to be reimbursed? N/A.

6.6 Will the proposed operation cause any change in the level of revenue? If so, what sort of change and what type of revenue is involved? N/A.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1 Method of calculating total cost of operation

Estimated requirements for 1993 amount to ECU 850 000.

Activity A: Technical support for pilot youth information projects now under way in some Member States.

The aid granted to these pilot projects may not exceed 50% of the total expenditure involved. The estimated appropriations required amount to:

Total 250 000

Activity B: Decentralized European data base.

A feasibility study will be carried out in 1993, based on experiences in Member States and at European level. The study will be prepared and supervised by a committee of experts appointed by the Commission. The estimated cost is:

Studies 80 000
Meetings 70 000
Total 150 000.

Activity C: Support for international seminars and meetings: aid granted may not exceed 50% of the total expenditure involved.

The estimated cost is:

Total 150 000.

Activity D: Measures directly informing young people.

Total 300 000.

7.2 Breakdown of expenditure

DESCRIPTION	92 BUDGET	93 PDB
Pilot projects		250 000
Data base		150 000
Seminars and meetings		150 000
Direct measures		300 000

8. FRAUD PREVENTION MEASURES PLANNED IN THE PROPOSAL FOR THE OPERATION

- (a) Financial control is carried out by Commission officials in respect of expenditure and budget execution.
- (b) Technical control is carried out by Commission officials (mainly DG X).

9. ELEMENTS OF COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

9.1 Objectives

The European Community is steadily becoming much more than a shared living space - it is evolving into a political union in which its citizens have a major role to play. This development calls for greater efforts to be made in the area of information so that citizens can be more actively involved in the process.

Since it is they who represent the Community's future, young people in particular need to be kept informed and made aware of what European construction means. In addition, they need to know what opportunities and what rights they have as citizens of the Union. The activities proposed also aim to keep young people informed about those policies which most directly affect them: freedom of movement, education and training, protection of the environment and aid to the poor throughout the world.

It is worth noting that young people themselves feel they lack information: in a recent Eurobarometer survey, 73% of them wanted more information on Europe (Eurobarometer 34.2, May 1991, p. 100).

In its Resolution 91/C 208/1¹ the Council expressed its intention to respond to the challenge of completing the European single market by intensifying cooperation in the field of youth, so as to make young people more aware of belonging to Europe and take account of their wish to play a positive role in the building of the European Community.

1 OJ C 208, 9.8.1991, p. 1.

9.2 Grounds for the operation

The operation is justified on the following grounds:

- A. The information deficit among young people (see the Eurobarometer survey referred to above).
- B. The specific requests of the Council of Ministers:
 - the first official Council meeting of Ministers for Youth (26 June 1991) identified information as one of the four priorities of youth policy;
 - the Council meeting of 3 February 1992 (General affairs) asked the Commission to present an action Programme on information for young Europeans;
 - the informal Council meeting of Ministers for Youth (11 April 1992) repeated this request.

9.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the operation

The Commission will take account both of measures already carried out by its own departments and of initiatives taken by Member States. Pilot projects will be set up which respect the subsidiarity principle and enhance the effectiveness of existing activities.

The evaluation will monitor the progress of the pilot projects.

9.4 Incorporation in financial programming

The budget of this Action Plan will be covered by the 1993 budget, heading B 3 - 3010, should the increase suggested by the Commission be approved.

The amount of 850,000 Ecus will, consequently, be transferred to the Task Force "Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth", which will be made responsible for the carrying out of this project.

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DOCUMENTS

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