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Youth for Europe
Interim evaluation report

(presented by the Commission)

YOUTH FOR EUROPE
INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT

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YOUTH FOR EUROPE

INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The decision of 14 March 1995 of the European Parliament and the Council establishing Youth for Europe III stipulates that during the third year of the programme the Commission must present to the European Parliament and the Council an interim evaluation report covering the first two years of programme implementation and which will be used to redefine and possibly adjust the programme.

The implementation of the Youth for Europe (hereinafter referred to as YFE) programme has been examined on the basis of a cross-analysis of the final reports of the projects supported, the activity reports from the national agencies and also the results of the various thematic seminars and working parties organised by the Commission and the national agencies. The findings of an external evaluation have also helped to pinpoint certain achievements, strong points and developments, and also avenues for the future.

Youth for Europe Programme

YFE targets young people aged 15-25 resident in the 15 Member States of the EU, as well as in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. It is a five-year programme (1995-99) and in 1995 and 1996 respectively received a budget of ECU 24 million. The participation of the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe and of Cyprus is due to start at the end of 1997.

Five main actions are proposed:

- ⇒ Intra-Community actions involving young people (Action A)
- ⇒ Youth workers (Action B)
- ⇒ Cooperation between Member States' structures (Action C)
- ⇒ Exchanges with non-Community countries (Action D)
- ⇒ Information for young people and youth research (Action E)

• *Developments in Community action on youth-related matters*

The adoption in 1988 of YFE to support mobility actions for young people was a first stage in Community action outside the formal education framework. Following the presentation of the memorandum "Young people in the European Community"¹ in 1990 and the European Parliament's report on "Community policies and their impact on young people"² in 1991, the first formal "Youth" Council was held that same year. The ministers responsible for youth affairs then adopted a Council resolution on priority actions in the field of youth. Lastly, at the end of 1991, the European Parliament introduced a budget heading for the implementation of these priority actions the title of which was to be changed to "Youth policy"³ in 1993, thus embracing the Youth for Europe programme and the priority actions.

With its proposal for Youth for Europe III, adopted by the Council and the European Parliament on 14 March 1995, the Commission introduced a policy of cooperation in the field of youth at the Community level, taking as its basis Article 126 of the EC Treaty. This third phase grouped the various actions previously pursued in the first two phases of YFE, in the priority actions in the field of youth and, partly, in the Petra (Youth initiative projects) and Tempus (Youth activities) programmes.

This move enhanced the impact and complementarity between actions and at the same time provided a consistent framework for non-formal education activities targeting young people. The pilot action "European voluntary service for young people", launched in 1996, further enhanced the scope of Community action on cooperation in the field of youth.

• *Specific features and objectives*

YFE is a forum of social experimentation and provides a way of creating awareness and familiarity among young people as to European and transnational activities. It acts as a catalyst and provides a cascade effect for the development of similar concepts and actions in the Member States by facilitating exchange of experience and good practice.

The framework and the objectives of the cooperation policy in the field of youth are defined in the first article of the YFE programme. Taking tangible experiences, it seeks to cover the full range of learning processes and intellectual, moral and civic knowledge a person should acquire in order to become an active and responsible citizen. Its primary aim is the **active participation and the integration of young people** in society. This education is based on the involvement of the young people themselves and uses by way of preference the instruments used by the voluntary sector in the broad sense.

The YFE Programme has cut a path towards strengthened partnerships at all levels: between the Commission and the Member States, between public authorities, national agencies responsible for implementing the programme in the Member States or within group work to prepare and carry out projects. As soon as the programme was launched in

¹ COM(90) 469 final

² Rapporteur: Mr L Vecchi, 24 May 1991 (A3-0142/91)

³ B3-1011

1988, the Commission introduced mechanisms for cooperation with the Member States and these mechanisms have grown and strengthened over the years.

YFE has since its inception defined a level of effective participation for disadvantaged young people and introduced positive measures for this purpose. The third phase of the programme continues and builds on the specific consideration of this target group.

- **Implementation**

The Commission is responsible for the implementation of the programme and is assisted in this task by a joint committee comprising two representatives per Member State. The national agencies are responsible for operational implementation of the programme nationally. These agencies are linked to the Commission by an annual contract based on a detailed plan of work and receive a subsidy which can cover 50% of operating costs. In order to improve cooperation between all the players concerned, the Commission has introduced a real time communication network known as NETY and the YOUTHLINK management and monitoring instrument between the Commission, the national agencies and the technical assistance offices.

Management of Actions AI (Exchange of young people and mobility) and BI (Youth workers – support for action A) is decentralised. In conjunction with the programme Committee, the Commission has deemed it preferable to maintain the management of the other actions at central level, at least for the launch period of the programme. The Commission is now considering complete or part decentralisation of certain actions for the final two years of the programme. Moreover, central management of all these actions is done in close conjunction with the Member States and the youth organisations.

In the months ahead, the Commission will conduct an operational analysis of these agencies, so this document will not analyse how they are run. Nevertheless, some observations can already be made. It needs first of all to be stressed that the decision-making, administrative and legal structures of the national agencies vary from country to country. There are two major categories of agencies: those part of a public or state organisation (e.g. ministry) and those part of private organisations (youth associations, etc.) linked to the public authority by service contracts or some other form of subordination (subsidies, etc.). This link with the state also means 50-75% cofinancing of the budget of the agencies. The fact that an agency is or not part of a state or of a private structure is also important particularly with regard to their accessibility and to the rules applied to the processing of dossiers. Lastly, at decision-making level only a minority of national agencies have total autonomy. In most cases decisions are taken by selection committees on which youth organisations generally sit.

The national agencies are **at the heart of the process of decentralisation of the programme**. They act as part of a genuine network which has built up over the years in conjunction with the Commission. Although this network has been gradually consolidated, there are still some outstanding problems due in particular to the fact that the network has continually expanded to take in new participating countries. It is not simply a matter of settling administrative problems but also preserving the Community dimension and the integrated approach of the programme. This presupposes consulting and agreeing on the contents, guidelines and quality of the projects and actions while facing up to socio-economic and cultural situations and traditions which are very

different. The problem is to keep up without interruption the communication and interaction between the agencies and the 18 participating countries and with the Commission.

Experience shows that the involvement of the national agencies in all the actions depends on their involvement in decision-making and thus on the decentralisation of resources linked to the different actions. Greater decentralisation also means a higher degree of control and monitoring, and implies greater transparency in procedures and a better flow of information. This in turn presupposes substantial investment by the Commission, which should be further stepped up in the coming years.

- ***Preliminary results of implementation***

The players concerned agree that YFE is important to young people in that it is an **open programme** which has brought **significant added value to non-formal education** both in the Member States and at European level. They also feel that its educational character sets YFE apart from other activities intended to occupy young people's leisure time. Traditions differ when it comes to youth work in general and particularly at international level, but no country has a programme which is comparable in structure or content.

Moreover, solid results have been achieved in developing and broadening out international youth work, which was hitherto frequently confined within the opportunities existing through bilateral agreements between Member States. A European dimension has now been added. Against this background, the arrangements for **continuing cooperation established with the Member States** have made it possible to consolidate action in the area of youth in the Member States and have helped along the emergence of fresh local initiatives. The programme has also introduced quality demands for national and European actions. It has prompted investment in training and research.

The programme objectives are consistent with the national youth policy objectives and comply with the education principles shared by all the Member States, e.g. the development of democracy, tolerance and the active integration of young people in society.

Trends and achievements of the various actions

1995-96 enabled all the players involved in the programme (young people, associations, national agencies, Committee members and the Commission) to familiarise themselves with a programme which includes a range of actions which dovetail around a common objective. The first two years of implementation have solidly anchored the new actions in this framework while developing the exchanges of young people which existed before YFE III. Artistic and cultural expression, raising European awareness and living conditions feature among the main themes of the activities supported.

It should also be stressed that the analysis of budget figures shows that **recipients benefit directly from the money spent**. However, the procedures and arrangements for transferring subsidies at decentralised and central levels are often judged to be excessively cumbersome and ill-adapted to the situation in the field. This is a very complex issue which can only be resolved by reconciling the need for nearness to the citizen and the constraints inherent in the sound management of public money. This issue

is compounded by the need not to jeopardise the participation of partners having very limited financial capacity, while at the same time pursuing a quality-orientated policy for the projects supported.

The programme envisages **positive actions to facilitate access by disadvantaged young people** to all its actions. This is a major objective which raises several problems with regard to its implementation in the field. It is an approach which makes dialogue necessary and ongoing consultation between Member States in order to properly target the steps to be taken. In 1995-96, the Member States earmarked 37% of their budget for action AI to support projects involving disadvantaged young people. Figures notwithstanding, it is important to stress that the nature of the actions, the pedagogical and methodological openness encouraged by the programme, make it an instrument which is particularly adapted to the participation of those who are experiencing difficulties and are possibly least inclined to take part in other Community actions. Nevertheless, the efforts made in this field should be continued and stepped up, particularly for the training of youth workers responsible for this target public and cooperation between Member States' structures in order to generate new partnerships.

Lastly, **cooperation between the Commission and the Member States** is a concrete and productive example of the application of the principle of subsidiarity. The national agencies, for their part, have had to step up a gear in relation to the first two phases of the programme which were more limited in scope. After two years there are still certain shortcomings or unclear aspects. Action therefore needs to be taken to address this and to encourage agencies to make greater use of the opportunities given to them by the programme and the contract which links them to the Commission (training of personnel, information and counselling instruments, more effective results from thematic seminars, etc.). There will also be a need for more dynamism in the work of the agencies as part of a network.

Action A Intra-Community activities directly involving young people

Exchanges of young people (action AI) - the only activity of the programme during the first two phases - form its backbone. They have since 1995 been supplemented by actions to promote initiative, creativeness and solidarity of young people in the EU (actions AII.1 and AII.2).

Action AI Exchanges and mobility of young people

Over 100 000 young people benefited from this action in 1995-96. Thanks to the first two phases of the programme exchanges are henceforth associated with YFE in the minds of young people. This reputation of the exchange activities compared with the other actions of the programmes is also explained by the priority given by most of the national agencies to this type of activities in their information and counselling work and by specialisation by certain organisations in this area.

Management of Action AI is decentralised, apart from the multilateral activities of European NGOs which are managed directly by the Commission. The projects submitted

under this action are thus sent directly to the national agencies which are also responsible for their selection, drafting of contracts, their funding and their monitoring. As this is a long-standing action, the national agencies are now well-versed in the various aspects of management. However, generally speaking, there is a case for closer consideration of new types of exchanges, interaction with other actions within the programme and gradual opening up to multilateral activities. From the point of view of Community cooperation, there should also be an effort to strengthen interaction among the national agencies themselves and to establish greater transparency in project selection and follow-up. The new communication systems – Nety and Youthlink – introduced by the Commission should help the agencies with this.

For many young people a YFE exchange project is the very first multicultural experience and one with which they are very satisfied. It has given many of them ideas for future activities and has often prompted them to seek a greater degree of mobility.

A group of young people from Germany, Luxembourg, the UK and the Netherlands have prepared a street show about anti-racism. This show has been performed in Luxembourg, Rotterdam, Sheffield and Berlin in environments in which the populations originating from different countries live daily side-by-side.

25 physically and mentally handicapped young people took part in an exchange which took place in the Netherlands. These young people from Finland, Spain, Portugal and Austria were taken in hand by young Dutch people also suffering from handicaps, in order to find ways of achieving better mobility for handicapped persons. The young people can thus assess innovative experiments and help adjust them to their local environment. This first experience is to be followed by another exchange, this time hosted by the countries of southern Europe.

The European dimension of exchanges, as in the case of the Youth Initiatives, is often more implicit than explicit. Many participants say they have not learned much about the EU during their exchange activity and that they are not interested in the European themes. However, they attach great importance to the themes of exchanges – most of which relate to problems common to all the countries of the EU such as solidarity, racism, the environment and the building of Europe. They also feel that working together with young people from different countries is an important component of the programme. There is therefore a need to carry on examining how the European character of this action can be approached, utilised and disseminated, including in the forms for applying for subsidies and in the final reports. Moreover, those participating in a YFE exchange activity – or any other action within the programme – all too often discover by chance that they are taking part in an action which is part of an EC programme. The Commission and the national agencies must therefore continue their efforts to strengthen the visibility of the programme and its European character.

It is indeed observed that the young people themselves are the prime standard-bearers of the programme. When an exchange proves successful, the young people involved want to bring in others and continue making exchanges (moving up from bi- to tri- and even

multi-lateral, for instance, or opening them up to other countries), to themselves become organisers or to follow training.

Lastly, over the years, the type of association benefiting from the programme has also changed. Small, often local, associations have opened up to exchanges and they include groups or associations which had received the opportunity of undertaking a first experience under the priority actions in the field of youth and which organise an exchange of young people in the hope of finding partners to set up a network. The statistics show a new influx of organisations in over 50% in 1996.

An analysis of the activities supported in 1995-96 show that in many exchanges those taking part test new methods of working and communicating which permit exchange of experience and practice which transcends simply 'meeting up'.

This trend should be monitored and analysed between now and the end of the programme, and support should be provided for certain pilot projects which make it possible to try out new types of exchange. There should also be an in-depth analysis of the follow-up to the exchange in educational terms and in terms of impact, and new arrangements for making further progress should be investigated.

With the support for its approach from the members of the Programme Committee, the Commission has wanted to use this third phase of the programme to encourage trilateral and multilateral exchange programmes as a means of testing European diversity even better.⁴ At this stage, however, bilateral exchanges are still the norm, apart from projects undertaken by European NGOs. This situation stems largely from the lack of experience of the main players and the higher cost of this type of activity. The associations and youth leaders involved readily admit that multicultural activities are more difficult to implement both from the pedagogical point of view and from the organisational and financial point of view. This points to an urgent need for specific training and this will be addressed subsequently under Action B. Moreover, the Commission is considering adjusting the procedures currently in force in order to endeavour to overcome the obstacle represented by the cost of these activities. It must also be added that the national agencies, the organisers of exchanges and youth workers feel that bilateral exchanges are a good way of facilitating access and participation by disadvantaged young people and for associations which wish to organise an exchange of young people for the first time.

The vast majority of the members of the programme Committee, who have been interviewed in the framework of the interim evaluation of the programme, have maintained their priority for multilateral activities, for they feel that such activities represent the genuine Community value added in the field of youth exchanges. A more detailed analysis should be carried out on the problem of bi/tri-multi-lateral during the next two years, particularly in view of the resolve to open up the programme to all young people.

⁴ In this context, the bilateral exchanges undertaken every year by a given country with one of its partners may not in principle exceed 30% of its total exchanges and may not receive more than 20% of the appropriations allocated to it for this activity.

Action III Spirit of initiative, creativity and solidarity among young people

Action III.1 Youth initiatives

YFE would like to get through to young people without restriction. It needs to go to them where they are and enable them to develop their spirit of initiative and creativity in a European context. This is why the programme supports the Youth Initiatives, which are projects instigated and managed by the young people themselves within a firm local community basis and directly linked to their needs and interests. These initiatives, with a European theme or part of networks which establish a link between their local community and Europe, should enable young people to develop their awareness of and belonging to the EU and to become involved at their level as players in the building of Europe.

A local group of unemployed young persons met up through an ecological association. This group hopes to set up a hotel managed on a wholly ecological basis and which should show how it is possible to live in full respect of the environment, recycling materials and reducing the consumption of electricity and water. The hotel would be a model for those who wish to undertake an experience of ecological life and could also receive guests from similar European projects. The material and information on the other projects will be collected and presented at the hotel.

A group of young people from a disadvantaged area is taking part in creating a sculpture in their neighbourhood and a play area for the young people of the district. These achievements are designed to create an environment to advocate tolerance in a particularly difficult context of exclusion and violence.

The Youth Initiatives Action is managed centrally by the Commission. Project selection is carried out by a selection committee comprising representatives of the Commission, the national agencies and the Youth Forum. The national agencies are expected to provide the Commission with input on all their country's projects. They should also have advisers to support potential projects and act as a link between the young people and the national agency concerned.

Action III.1 is part of the new actions of the programme. It meant a running-in period which is only just starting to produce results as this report goes to press. In 1995-96, this action enabled almost 500 youth initiatives to be started up. On the basis of the results to date, it can be stated that the impact of the Community action is already visible. It is clear that the support for Youth Initiatives has permitted the creation or strengthening of this type of activity in the Member States.

Nevertheless, it needs to be stressed that the Youth Initiatives are among the actions which have suffered most from the late adoption of the programme. This delay has had at least two major consequences. Firstly, the rate of project acceptance in 1995-96 is below the average, for the concept of Youth Initiative has not always been perceived in the

same way in the various Member States. Two European seminars held in 1995 undoubtedly helped bring a clearer definition and a better understanding of the selection criteria, but experience shows that there is still a case for stepping up support measures for the Youth Initiatives in order to better define their identity and advance towards a common approach via the training of advisers. The Commission took certain steps in this direction in 1997.

Lastly, many initiatives are still all too often limited to the local level and a European dimension is sometimes difficult to see. This situation stems primarily from the fact that it takes time and money to instigate the creation and consolidation of local initiatives. The same requirements apply if they are to move forward within a European framework, given that it was not possible to provide financial support for these networks of initiatives under the procedures in force. The Community character of the youth initiatives and the importance of action in which the young people themselves are the main players, is insufficiently highlighted. There is also a need to stress that through this action the European Union gets closer to the daily situation of young people. The latter moreover adamant that they would never have been able to fulfil their project without support from the Community. Lastly, this action provides a contribution to social cohesion and provides a rallying point for the population groups benefiting therefrom. Over a third of the youth initiatives have opened on to a new association. Around 60 jobs have been created following a project organised and managed by young people. An analysis of the projects supported during these first two years also shows that many beneficiaries are taking part for the first time in a European programme. Community aid locally has made it possible to open up the programme to another type of public and has rallied young people and associations who would otherwise never have been able to take part in a European programme. Most of the players/instigators of these projects are young people in a situation of growing precarity in an urban or rural area and, significantly, while the themes around which initiatives are developing are very diversified (social sphere, cultural, environment, heritage, etc.), virtually all these initiatives primarily target the reconstruction of society. Lastly, there is evidence that young people taking part in a youth initiative feel the benefits in terms of self-esteem and are encouraged to undertake fresh projects.

Against this background, it is necessary between now and the end of the programme to take better advantage of the synergy which arises naturally between the youth initiatives, exchanges and voluntary service activities.

Indeed, the Commission feels the management of this action should be decentralised in order to strengthen the on-the-spot assistance the young people need and to make the national agencies more responsible for this action of the programme. This will allow the Commission to devote more attention to networking and the creation of partnerships.

Action AII.2 Voluntary service periods

Action A.II.2 is managed centrally by the same arrangements as action A.II.1. Voluntary service activities allow young people to put into practice their spirit of solidarity in a country other than their own, but within the territory of the Member States.

The very nature of the action means that voluntarily service is not solely focused on the opportunities for learning by the young participants. It is an action which also brings benefits to the host organisations and communities. Voluntary service is a source of

enrichment for the young volunteers and contributes to community endeavour. The budget earmarked for this action is comparatively limited. Nevertheless, in 1995-96, over 200 people were able to undertake a period of voluntary service in another Member State. Action A.II.2 has mainly allowed the development of short and medium-term voluntary service activities and supplementary activities (studies, seminars, etc.). An analysis of the projects shows that while the countries which have a tradition of voluntary service are always well represented, the other countries are showing increasing interest in this type of action.

The range of activities supported since 1992 and the discussions and exchanges of experience they have given rise to with the Member States have produced familiarity with and awareness of the potential and importance of this type of activity on a European scale.

More generally, the inclusion of an action of the voluntary service type in a programme which concerns policy on cooperation on youth-related matters has given this policy added drive: voluntary service has introduced the dimension of individual participation. It has unshackled youth policy from the concept of leisure time and established a clear link with the socio-economic world.

As this document is drafted, the timetable of negotiations for the future European voluntary service programme for young people envisages adoption in the first half of 1998, although there are no certainties in this area given the unpredictability of the codecision procedure. The Commission therefore envisages the maintenance of action A.II.2 "Voluntary service periods" under YFE until the "European voluntary service for young people" programme is adopted.

Action B Youth workers

YFE recognises the fundamental role of youth workers, the natural interfaces with and for young people. Action B of the programme is designed to improve the quality of all the activities under action A, through study visits, feasibility visits and training actions for youth workers. It also intends to set up or consolidate networks of youth workers across the Member States (Action BI) and will endeavour to encourage European cooperation between organisations and structures responsible for providing such training (Action BII). In addition, as part of positive action for disadvantaged young people, the programme encourages specific training for those working with this target group. Action BI is managed largely on a decentralised basis by the national agencies, while management of action BII is done centrally by the Commission.

37 young youth workers from seven European Union countries have received training which should enable them to enhance their capacity to relate to and act with disadvantaged young people and working-class environments. Personal development and intercultural learning form an important part of this training.

Training of 15 youth workers permitting the pooling and analysis of action concerning local work in five countries. The purpose of the project is the acquisition by the participants of knowhow for undertaking projects and setting up a network of young

players to spearhead rural projects in various European countries.

All the partners concerned (national agencies, members of the programme Committee, youth workers) recommend that greater emphasis be laid on training, maintaining that these activities represent the heart of the programme in terms of quality and potential for dissemination. It is a fact that little exists in the way of national training targeting transnational and European activities, while trainers and youth workers are eager to acquire certain qualifications in this area. Moreover, all the project promoters who have been supported so far stress the importance of this in organising transnational cooperation in this field.

In 1995-96, over 3 000 youth workers and 35 European cooperation projects on training – including two major pilot projects – benefited from this action. Training of youth workers and short-term study visits continue to dominate. However, action BI is under-utilised when it comes to diversifying exchanges, the youth initiatives and voluntary service periods. The themes of the short-term study visits remain too general and the training periods should be focused to a greater degree on the actions of the programme. There is also a need to examine in greater depth the impact of the support for European cooperation and training on action BI and the use of youth workers trained by this action.

The Commission in mid-1996 organised a seminar on the theme “Involving youth workers in the Youth for Europe Programme”. This effort will be pursued refocusing study visits on the investigation of the potential for setting up projects for exchanges, voluntary service periods and partnerships under the Youth Initiatives. The training of “Youth Initiative” advisers should also be stepped up and made systematic.

The Member States acknowledge the value of this action if it is clearly situated at European level and sets out to instigate and support cooperation between training establishments and trainers. It should also strengthen the dialogue between the various levels and organisations involved in initial and continuing training of youth leaders in the EU. They accordingly recognise the Commission’s right of initiative while at the same time stressing the principle of subsidiarity given that the training of youth workers as such is a matter for the Member States. Care is therefore needed to ensure that the activities supported under YFE supplement arrangements which already exist nationally.

Over and above the recognition earned by this action and the setting up of pilot projects and networks of trainers, there is a need to better disseminate the products of training which are more closely concerned with practice as part of an overall strategy for Community cooperation. The Commission has already taken one step in this direction by promoting the development of training programmes at European level targeting the needs of the YFE mobility activities.

The Commission also hopes to pursue the cooperation which already exists with the Council of Europe in this field.

Action C Cooperation between the structures of the Member States

Youth-related matters involve a wide range of players. Action C is intended to facilitate their cooperation at European level. 47 projects received support in 1995 and 1996.

While momentum is being built up as regards projects, this does not obviate the geographical imbalance observed. No projects, for instance, have come from the structures of Portugal, Greece, Finland, Iceland and Ireland and very few from Italy and Spain. A drive is in progress to raise awareness and secure greater involvement by these countries.

Despite a comparatively small volume, this action has already allowed 100 or so local structures to form a network thanks to the setting up of a European confederation of youth centres. But potential beneficiaries are still insufficiently familiar with action C and this obstacle to its full development can only be removed by strong involvement of the national agencies and local representatives. The Commission is therefore considering decentralising its implementation.

Action D Exchanges with non-Community countries

The activities envisaged under action D are designed to encourage the transfer to the government and non-government structures responsible in the countries concerned, of expertise in knowhow with regard to youth work, and to contribute to the development of the voluntary sector and civic society in non-Community countries. It also seeks to bring a response to the relentlessly growing demand from young people themselves who are eager to develop cooperation with young people outside the EU.

The launch phase (1995-97) allowed the foundation to be laid for developing exchanges of young people with non-Community countries, fostering balanced access for all Member States and focusing efforts on the quality of projects and durable partnerships. It also encouraged gradual diversification of the traditional flows of exchanges. The action envisages for this purpose not only projects for exchanges of young people, but also preparatory activities as a necessary condition for securing the quality of these exchanges. Experience shows how important the concern for quality of projects and partners was, as well as the continuity of the context in which they operate, and this concern should continue to apply during the consolidation phase.

Training seminar in the West Bank bringing together 32 young youth workers of the European Community, Jordan and the West Bank. The aims are to contribute to the peace process on the basis of a youth education project targeting the acquisition of skills in social and educational work enabling the participants to undertake youth actions in the West Bank and Jordan. The activity also purports to be the platform for future exchanges in which the young people would be in a position to develop initiatives themselves.

Project organised by an association whose aim is to create a European network of non-professionals rock groups and associations which nurture rock culture, in order to promote cultural exchanges between young people from different countries. The project is taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to encourage the renaissance of the rock scene in this region. The project will be extended by a durable cultural exchange between this country and three other participating countries. The organisers hope through this exchange to encourage the development of musical and voluntary activities of young Bosniacs and meet their aspirations for opening up to Europe and their eagerness to meet others by establishing a network between the four partner countries.

A group of youth workers from the two Cypriot communities undertook a study visit to

Northern Ireland on the theme of cooperation between divided communities. The Cypriot YFE agency prepared this activity by making available to the two communities all Community information available. In the wake of this study visit an exchange of young people is planned for 1998.

Over 5 000 young people took part in action D in 1995-96. 1996 was the year in which action D took off once again in terms of participation after some degree of decline caused by the delay in implementing the third phase of the programme in 1995. The most significant increase was in cooperation with the Mediterranean countries, particularly as part of the peace process between Israel and Palestine. On the achievement/impact side, it has to be stressed that the northern countries of the EU are involved in many projects with these countries. There is, by contrast, some degree of stagnation as regards the republics of the CIS because of the technical and economic difficulties, and a marked slowdown with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe following budget restrictions. It has to be said that the Council Declaration of June 1994 requesting that ECU 3.5 million of the Tempus-Phare appropriations be set aside each year up until 1999 for youth activities with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, has received little follow up since in 1996 a mere ECU 660 000 was available for such activities. During these first two years of the programme, the Commission also assisted the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus in setting up national agencies and in familiarising them with the working methods of the agencies which already exist. In addition, a special effort has been made to disseminate information to these countries. Be that as it may, geographical imbalances continue and are particularly the result of the tendency countries have to concentrate on areas which are traditionally and culturally close. However, the beneficiaries of these non-Community countries stress that Action D, particularly thanks to the criteria which calls for a minimum participation of two Member States and two eligible countries, has made it possible to start up regional cooperation at their level without overlooking and indeed strengthening the European dimension of the action. Lastly, it is interesting to note that action D is also starting to have knock-on effects on the beneficiaries of the EU.

It is essential to strengthen cooperation with the Council of Europe in this field.

Action E Information of young people and youth-related studies

If it is to be effective and operational the whole of the structure envisaged in YFE needs a supply of reliable, accessible and user-friendly information, this being primarily up to the Commission. As for action E, it provides the framework for developing cooperation between youth information structures, public and private alike, and cooperation on studies on the situations and needs of young people in the Member States.

Action E.1 Information of young people

Promoting the participation of young people also means enabling them to be heard. Action E.1 provides tangible means of direct dialogue between young people and the different levels of responsibility for youth-related matters in the Community.

This Action is an incentive to improve the information of young people by taking their points of view into account. It makes it possible to generate and disseminate this information along two lines: the European projects and the Eurodesk network.

EURODESK provides information and guidance to young people – at the European level – on everything that concerns Community and national actions and programmes in which they can participate. EURODESK at present consists of a coordination unit – the Brussels Link – and 18 partners in each country. The role of the Brussels Link is to seek out and constantly update information (there is a database of publications concerning the youth field and descriptions and addresses of youth organisations) and the day-to-day management and dissemination of information to partners through a telecommunications network. The partners – in certain cases through national youth information networks – provide information services to a young public: phone-in facilities, publications and direct assistance to people in their premises. Each partner is obliged to provide input to the common database, including information on national programmes likely to interest young people. The partners are responsible for everything concerning the management and development of the network.

In 1995-96, 91 projects were supported under action E.I. The projects and networks supported emerge either around a specific issue (young immigrants, excluded population groups, minority groups, etc.), or around a medium (video, radio, Internet, guide, magazine, etc.). All the projects selected generally feature a sound balance between projects focusing on exchange of experience and those whose purpose is to generate information. One of the strong points of action E.I is to allow associations to try out innovatory modes of information. It has made it possible to establish a culture of European cooperation in this field opening on to tangible action of benefit to young people. The experience with Action E.I shows it is necessary to bring greater clarity to the objectives and arrangements for the implementation of this action. With this in mind, the Eurodesk project will remain at the centre of the Commission's priority when it comes to information for young people.

There is also a need to step up counselling upstream targeting the promoters of projects, to encourage and to assist small-scale projects in the setting up of genuine partnerships and the organisation of European-scale projects.

Action E.II Studies in the field of youth

Action E.II was launched with the purpose of supplementing research which could be supported as part of the specific targeted socio-economic research programme. After two years of implementation, it has made it possible to have detailed information on certain aspects concerning young people and to assemble the knowhow of research groups on this theme. It has also permitted a specific survey on youth in Europe – “Eurobarometer” – and which it is envisaged to make a regular feature.

The productive cooperation with the Council of Europe will be continued.

A new stage in Community cooperation on youth-related matters

• *Policy for cooperation on youth*

The implementation of a policy of cooperation on youth at the Community level is an important achievement which has opened up new forums of debate and policy definition for this sector. It has also brought a boost to cooperation on non-formal education, mobility and support for youth initiatives. The two Communications 'Agenda 2000' and 'Towards a Europe of knowledge', which were adopted by the Commission in 1997, must also be taken into account in considering the next stage of Community action in this field.

The Commission Communication "Agenda 2000" which sets out the broad framework for Community action in the years ahead, includes among the EU's internal policy priorities, the development of exchanges of young people and European voluntary service (EVS). Similarly, the recently adopted Commission Communication "Towards a Europe of knowledge", puts the policy on cooperation on youth at the heart of knowledge policies as a driving force of non-formal education within the European education area.

The new stage which is opening up for Community action on youth matters fits into this patterns of events. The actions of the YFE programme and those of EVS are part of a process to promote different types of non-formal education for all young people.

The guidelines set out in the Communication "Towards a Europe of knowledge", pinpoint the specific contribution of non-formal education, the importance of which is increasing in the move to promote access to different types of skills throughout life. In addition, this document opens up tangible possibilities for synergy between the policies for cooperation in education, vocational training and youth-related matters.

An integrated youth programme based on the types of action identified in the Communication "Towards a Europe of knowledge" will naturally provide several bridges with Community programmes in the related sectors of educational and vocational training and will thus make this synergy all the easier to achieve. It will thus be possible to work in conjunction with the Leonardo da Vinci programme on projects to train youth workers. Similarly, there should be joint projects in schools and youth centres, particularly in the information sector.

The potential synergy with Community programmes of cooperation with non-Community countries should also be examined.

Lastly, sport and culture together constitute an area in which young people spontaneously become involved. The recent Eurobarometer survey shows that nearly 30% of young Europeans belong to a sports organisation. There is therefore a case for opening up to a greater extent than in the past activities targeting young people to sectors which are invaluable contexts of non-formal education and acquisition of citizen skills.

• *Management: a way of operating closer to the citizen*

The YFE programme is comparatively well known by its various potential beneficiaries. Opening it up to all young people in an unrestricted way makes it a unique action at the

Community level. This capacity to make young people take charge of their projects and minimise implementation costs are a way of getting through to a large number of young people. These successes must not conceal the shortcomings mentioned earlier, but they do argue in favour of an expanded and strengthened decentralised management for a big portion of the actions of the integrated youth programme which should emerge in the year 2000.

The experience gained in implementing YFE and the decentralisation of European voluntary service actions provide a solid basis for further developing genuine management partnership, as stressed in the Communication "Towards a Europe of knowledge". Significant progress has been made in this direction and has made it possible to now be in a position to use arrangements which provide immediate and smooth communication. Thus the 'Youthlink' computerised management and communication system is proving to be a very efficient monitoring instrument allowing for real-time management of projects involving several national agencies. This is a platform for further development of the European dimension of youth exchanges and making them more frequently trilateral or multilateral. Similarly, the Nety network will make joint organisation of projects based on several cooperation programmes easier. A requirement of this improved management partnership is to have partners trained in administrative, advisory and organisational tasks. It is therefore essential for the structures responsible for managing the programmes nationally or locally to have the appropriate resources whereby they can make full use of the potential and synergy between action programmes in education, training and youth to be implemented simultaneously.

The Commission, for its part, will make an increased effort with regard to communication and cutting down on red tape, thus highlighting the capacity of cooperation actions to make Europe more real for its citizens:

- ***A three-pronged Community programme***

The achievements of the cooperation programmes illustrates the areas in which added European value is at its highest and in which the Community level plays its role as catalyst for and complement to national action.

These areas include the promotion of mobility, youth initiatives and follow-up measures, based in particular on the organisation of networks.

A. Mobility

Exchanges of young people as supported via the YFE programme have a clear-cut educational objective. Past experience proves that they are irreplaceable instruments for acquiring social and personal skills. Indeed, mobility is the most tangible way of experiencing Europe. 75% of the young people interviewed during the Eurobarometer survey associated the EU with freedom of movement and hoped to be able to take advantage of it. The educational potential of youth exchanges can only be fully tapped if these exchanges take account of the varying requirements of young people. A flexible approach is therefore called for whereby young people can be the prime movers and take

charge of their projects. This sometimes means specific preparation so that the young people experiencing the greatest difficulties can also take part in all forms of mobility.

Just as under present action A.1 of YFE, physical mobility will come in the form of group mobility and also in the form of individual mobility by the young volunteer. It is a fact that group exchanges seem to suit young people particularly well. Nearly half the participants are aged 17 and under. These exchanges provide a first experience of mobility and meeting other people in a comparatively reassuring framework. Voluntary service on the other hand is an experience requiring a full-time commitment which certain young people would be unable to envisage straight away.

Exchanges with non-Community countries cater for a constant demand from young people who want to experience Europe's solidarity and openness to the rest of the world. This action has already borne fruit under agreements with the associated countries, particularly by allowing a contribution to be made to the development of civic society in these countries. It is important to strengthen links with these countries which are geographically or culturally close to Europe.

Voluntary service is a unique experience of perspective in relation to the young person's environment and of profound contact with another culture. These periods provide a fantastic opportunity to bring together different social contexts, putting young people in touch with disadvantaged groups and enabling young people from these groups to get out of their normal environment and make themselves useful to others.

B.- Youth initiatives

Community cooperation in the field of youth has succeeded in assembling new partners and has prompted young people outside organised youth structures to take part in Community actions. Its impact has thus filtered down to the local level. In addition, these actions generate an unprecedented European opening for most organisations benefiting from the YFE programme. Nearly half the organisations receiving Community support under this framework are different every year, extending the scope of the programme to levels which would not spontaneously have thought of starting up a Community-supported activity.

This aspect stems from the experience amassed through the implementation of youth initiatives. It will enhance the capacity of its initiatives to become genuine sources of jobs, for nearly a third of them have created jobs in the last two years. Youth initiatives will thus make it possible to propose a tangible opening to those volunteers who, upon completion of their period of voluntary work, may wish to conduct a project beneficial to the community at large or of an entrepreneurial nature. These actions are also opportunities to create new partnerships in the public and private voluntary sectors.

Fostering the creativity of young people is particularly appropriate in the area of social integration and the life of the community at large. It explores new ways of active integration of young people. The approach should henceforth be to use the results obtained via these initiatives as a basis and strengthen their capacity to implement innovatory practices to integrate young people and ensure that such practices are disseminated.

Young promoters of initiatives will be encouraged to use the potential of new technologies to communicate between partners and make it easier to subsequently set up a Community-level network of initiatives having shared objectives. The European value added of such initiatives will be strengthened if they are networked.

C. Steps to monitor and support quality

Community policy on youth has opened up to the types of action and working arrangements of a sector more accustomed to local or national activity. It is important to build on this and pursue exchanges of information and good practice between promoters of youth-related actions and all players, particularly those not originating in this sector of activity but who wish to become involved. Particular care needs to be taken to improve organisers' capacity to support young people taking part in projects with a European dimension. Similarly, the targeted training of youth workers should be pursued in terms of multicultural aspects and support for the participation of the most disadvantaged.

Information is often mentioned as the key to the capacity of EC programmes to act as a fulcrum despite the ambitious level of the target. Certain efficient instruments such as the Eurodesk network already provide tangible perspectives for effective dissemination of information to young people. The Commission intends to continue providing targeted information for young people in order to get them to take part in EC actions. This is particularly crucial when it comes to involving disadvantaged young people for whom the lack of information is frequently the first hurdle to their advancement. Close cooperation with the Member States and the players in the field will be a decisive factor in the effectiveness of these measures.

Following up projects promoted by the cooperation programmes will be one of the priorities for the youth programme. The networks are an appropriate instrument in stabilising cooperation between different players assembled for the purposes of projects targeting young people. They are also a good way of providing solid openings for voluntary activities which young persons might wish to convert into a lasting project.

Action C of YFE has brought invaluable lessons as to the potential of networking players in the field of youth. In the same way as the experimental networks developed under the EVS pilot action it provides a starting point which should be built on with a view to diversifying partners.

As stressed in the Communication "Towards a Europe of knowledge", targeted studies should be continued in order to gain greater familiarity with certain aspects of European youth and to push forward more effective approaches to cater for their needs. Community actions targeting young people without restrictions on qualification have shown that young people are eager to take part. It gives them the opportunity to emerge from the shell into which they withdrew from certain social spheres such as formal education or the labour market. This trend should be studied in order to better allow youth actions to play the role of fulcrum for the participation of all young people. This aspect will also make it possible to analyse trends in these new individual pathways which cut across the fields of education and training.

Conclusions

Community cooperation on youth is opening up to new developments and is benefiting from the acknowledgements for its specific contribution and from a renewed interest by players traditionally less involved in this sector. The growth of the third sector multiplies the scope for action and support from which youth-targeted actions can benefit.

This promising trend and the positive response received by Community cooperation actions in the field of youth together provide a solid basis for future developments in this context. Despite the shortcomings observed and which are more to do with operational procedure, Community cooperation has played a locomotive role which it is important to sustain.

ANNEXES

NUMBER OF PROJECTS (submitted and approved) 1995, 1996

DECENTRALISED AND CENTRALISED

	1995			1996			1995 + 1996		
	Projects submitted	Projects approved	APPROVED %	Projects submitted	Projects approved	APPROVED %	Projects submitted	Projects approved	APPROVED %
DECENTRALISED									
Subtotal (decentr.)	3795	2480	65,3	3632	2459	67,7	7427	4939	66,5
% of totals	79,2	82,7		69,5	77,5		74,1	80,0	
CENTRALISED									
Subtotal (centr.)	996	518	52,0	1596	713	44,7	2592	1231	47,5
% of totals	20,8	17,3		30,5	22,5		25,9	20,0	
TOTALS	4791	2998	62,6	5228	3172	60,7	10019	6170	61,6
%	100	100		100	100		100	100	

PRELIMINARY DATA

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NUMBER OF PROJECTS (submitted and approved) 1995, 1996

DECENTRALISED

	1995			1996			1995 + 1996		
	Projects	Projects	APPROVED	Projects	Projects	APPROVED	Projects	Projects	APPROVED
	submitted	approved	%	submitted	approved	%	submitted	approved	%
A.I	3379	2246	66,5	3128	2168	69,3	6507	4414	67,8
B.I	416	234	56,3	504	291	57,7	920	525	57,1
TOTAL	3795	2480	65,3	3632	2459	67,7	7427	4939	66,5

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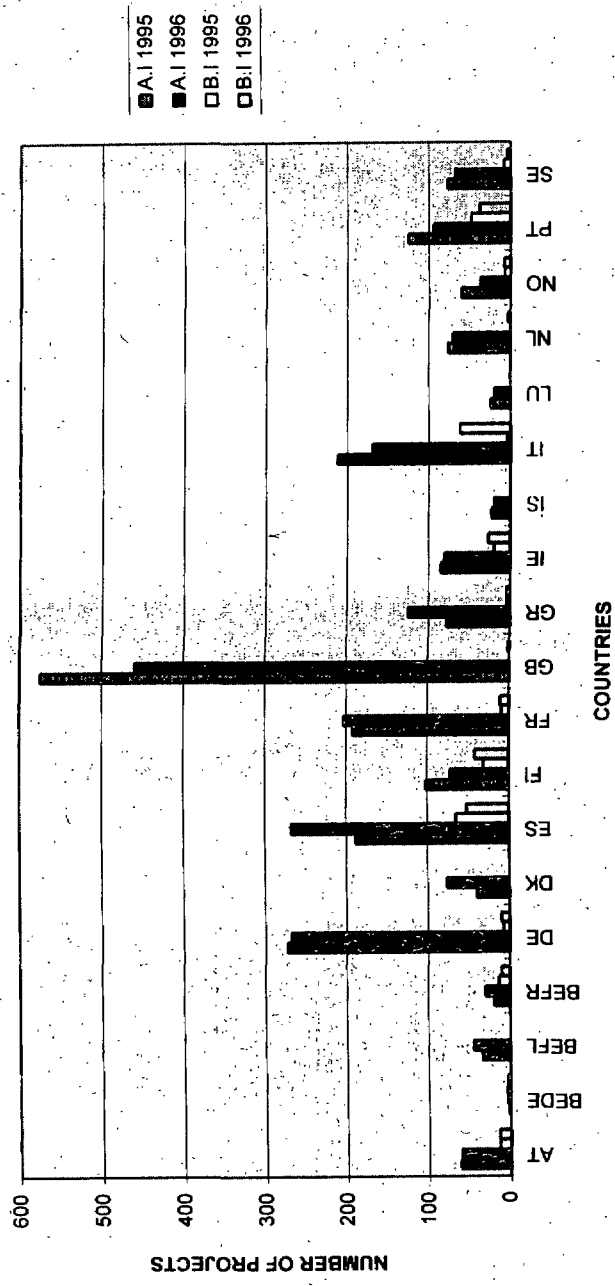
PRELIMINARY DATA

NUMBER OF GRANTED PROJECTS 1995/1996 (DECENTRALISED)

	A.I		B.I	
	1995	1996	1995	1996
AT	61	60	13	14
BEDE	2	3	4	3
BEFL	34	45		
BEFR	19	30	13	10
DE	273	268	8	10
DK	40	76		
ES	188	268	65	52
FI	102	72	31	42
FR	192	203	9	11
GB	575	460		2
GR	78	125	4	5
IE	85	81	20	27
IS	23	20		
IT	212	169	4	62
LU	24	19		
NL	76	70		3
NO	60	37	7	8
PT	125	94	48	38
SE	77	68	8	4
TOTAL	2246	2168	234	291

PRELIMINARY DATA

**NUMBER OF GRANTED PROJECTS 95/96
(DECENTRALISED)**



PRELIMINARY DATA

NUMBER OF PROJECTS (submitted and approved) 1995, 1996

CENTRALISED

	1995			1996			1995 + 1996		
	Projects	Projects	APPROVED	Projects	Projects	APPROVED	Projects	Projects	APPROVED
	submitted	approved	%	submitted	approved	%	submitted	approved	%
A.I	70	51	72,9	67	39	58,2	137	90	65,7
A.II.1	384	163	42,4	709	313	44,1	1093	476	43,5
A.II.2	84	53	63,1	76	32	42,1	160	85	53,1
B.I	16	16	100,0	12	8	66,7	28	24	85,7
B.II	21	15	71,4	31	17	54,8	52	32	61,5
C	20	15	75,0	48	32	66,7	68	47	69,1
D	342	162	47,4	451	205	45,5	793	367	46,3
E.I	59	43	72,9	128	48	37,5	187	91	48,7
E.II				74	19	25,7	74	19	25,7
TOTAL	996	518	52,0	1596	713	44,7	2592	1231	47,5

PRELIMINARY DATA

PARTICIPANTS, BREAKDOWN BY AGE AND GENDER (DECENTRALISED)

		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
		<15	15-17	18-20	21-23	24-25	> 25	MALE	FEMALE
A.I	1995	2,1	44,5	30,0	14,3	6,0	3,1	48,4	51,6
	1996	2,8	43,9	28,7	15,6	5,9	3,2	47,5	52,5
B.I	1995	0,1	4,0	6,3	24,7	21,1	43,7	53,2	46,8
	1996	0,0	2,4	9,6	19,0	19,7	49,2	50,9	49,1

PRELIMINARY DATA

THEMES OF THE PROJECTS (DECENTRALISED)

	A.I		B.I	
	1995	1996	1995	1996
	%	%	%	%
Active citizenship	3,0	2,9	8,1	8,5
Cultural and artistic expression	35,1	31,5	12,2	7,6
Environmental issues	6,1	7,2	2,0	4,9
Equal Opportunities	2,6	2,8	0,5	2,2
European awareness	12,5	21,8	7,6	8,0
Health (drugs, AIDS, alcoholism)	1,0	2,2		0,4
Life conditions	9,0	8,0	1,5	2,2
Measures against crime	0,4	0,4	1,0	1,3
Measures against exclusion	2,7	2,9	4,6	5,4
Measures against racism	2,8	2,8	1,0	0,9
Mobility	1,6	0,6	40,6	30,8
New technologies	0,2	0,4		0,4
Protection and Promotion of the local heritage	2,8	3,0	1,0	0,9
Social Integration	4,3	6,6	2,0	5,8
Youth Information	7,5	3,4	14,2	12,9
Youth leisure time activities	7,9	3,3	2,5	6,7
Theme missing	0,3	0,3	1,0	0,9
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Based on preliminary data from national YouthLink databases Oct/97,
 final and application (DK, ES, FR, NL, PT) level
 GR, IT datafiles missing

PRELIMINARY DATA

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