

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

pursuant to the second subparagraph of Article 189 B (2) of the EC Treaty

**CONCERNING THE COMMON POSITION OF THE COUNCIL WITH A VIEW TO
THE ADOPTION OF A DECISION ESTABLISHING PHASE THREE OF THE YOUTH
FOR EUROPE PROGRAMME, DESIGNED TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF
EXCHANGES AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AND OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN THE
COMMUNITY**

COMMUNICATION OF THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Subject: Common position of the Council with a view to the adoption of a decision establishing phase three of the Youth for Europe programme, designed to promote the development of exchanges among young people and of youth activities in the Community

1. Introduction

In accordance with Article 189 B of the EC Treaty, the present document aims to present the Commission's position on the common position of the Council of 6 June 1994 on phase three of the Youth for Europe programme. The Commission's position takes into account the fact that the European Parliament adopted on 19 April 1994 its opinion on the Commission's proposal (COM(93)523 Final COD 474) in the first reading.

2. The Commission's position on the joint position

- 2.1. The Council's common position is based on the Commission's proposal, modified on the basis of the amendments made by the European Parliament. The Council has, to a large extent, taken into account the European Parliament's amendments in its common position, if not in the letter, at least in the spirit. From a purely numerical point of view, more than half of the amendments have been included, either fully or partially, in the common position.

Most of the modifications made by the Council are by way of clarification or constructive precision, and, with the exception of divergences on certain aspects such as the overall amount of the budget, the method of financing exchanges with third countries and the nature of the programme committee, the text of the common position is not fundamentally different from the Commission's proposal.

Certain modifications aim to define more clearly the political directions of the Commission and the European Parliament, repositioning them strictly within the framework of Article 6 of the TEU. Here, we should emphasize the Council's desire to draw attention to the importance of intensified Community cooperation between Member States in the youth field. This desire has led to the reformulation of Articles 1 and 2 of the Commission's modified proposal, which specifies that the Youth for Europe III Programme concerns the policy of cooperation in the youth field. The Commission believes that this refocusing should further strengthen these political directions.

Point 2.3 of the present communication examines in greater detail other modifications with which the Commission is unable to agree, because of the risk of limiting the scope of the programme.

Moreover, a certain number of Parliamentary amendments have not been incorporated, as these refer:

either to aspects which are already present in the proposal for a decision, at times in a more complete or more suitable form, such as the training of youth workers and the possibility of adapting the programme over the course of the 5 years, to permit, where appropriate, experimental activities which were not initially provided for;

or to questions which relate more to the guidelines which will govern the implementation of the decision and which could moreover prove counter-productive or produce adverse effects if they were to figure in the text of the decision itself, for example, in the case of flexibility concerning the age range of participants;

or because they call into question the principle of subsidiarity, such as the Commission's involvement in the monitoring of transnational voluntary service activities.

2.2. The Commission wishes to emphasize that the Council has expressed its unanimous agreement on the overall structure of the programme. Among the convergences on the major principles underlining the Commission's proposal, as supported and supplemented by the European Parliament's amendments, which have been developed throughout the formal and informal negotiations, the Commission would like to quote in particular:

- the need for Community-level cooperation in the youth field in order to contribute to a strengthening of the democracy, tolerance and cohesion of the Community, within a perspective of solidarity;
- the concern to guarantee a greater involvement of Member States and to pursue and develop a process of permanent consultation which commenced during the implementation of the Priority Actions;
- the importance of providing good quality information, which is easily accessible to the target group, thereby supporting the objectives of the programme;
- the importance of guaranteeing the participation of disadvantaged young people, and facilitating their access to the programme;
- the need for flexible management, whilst guaranteeing the quality of the activities undertaken;
- the importance of training of youth workers in order to both increase this quality, and also to promote the better integration of disadvantaged young people;

- a concern to see exchanges with third countries forming an integral part of the programme, and, within this context, the importance of promoting Community initiatives which supplement the bilateral activities of Member States, but also to see the agreement on the opening of the programme to participation from Central and Eastern European countries who have partnership agreements with the European Community, an opening which was also envisaged by the Commission in its communication to the Council and to Parliament [SEC(94)779/4].

2.3. The divergencies focus on the following points: the overall amount of the budget and the origins of the funds for financing (**form of financing**) exchanges with third countries, on the one hand, and the nature of the programme **committee**, on the other.

2.3.1. The first item of divergence, relating to the **total amount of the budget**, concerns the incorporating of the estimated necessary amount (ENA) in a new and specific article of the proposal for a decision.

The Commission is unable to agree with this modification. It has always held that amounts allocated for the implementation of specific actions should be fixed, for each financial year, as part of the budgetary procedure, and with due respect for the Financial Perspectives appearing in the inter-institutional agreement of 29 October 1993.

For this reason it believes that the financial statement annexed to the proposal is the appropriate instrument for estimating the financial implications of the action.

2.3.2. In this financial statement, the Commission had put forward an indicative amount of 157 MECU for 1995-1999, for two reasons:

- on the one hand, to secure the financing of all the current initiatives in favour of youth, combined, as the Council had asked, within a single framework (including those planned for the Central and Eastern European Countries, which are currently included in the TEMPUS programme representing an amount, in 1994, of 3.5 MECU); the growth rate applied to these actions was that given in heading 3 of the Financial Perspectives for the period;
- on the other hand, to finance the new activities included in the new programme, estimated at 3.5 MECU in 1995.

2.3.3. The Council, in its common position, agreed to allocate an estimated necessary amount for the Youth for Europe III programme, whilst keeping within TEMPUS the "youth" actions directed at the CEEC countries. It set this ENA at 105 MECU for 1995-99, whilst expressing its hope that the support made available under TEMPUS be maintained at the current level (17.5 MECU over 5 years).

2.3.4. The Commission noted the Council's position. It believes that, after deducting the support made available under TEMPUS, an indicative overall amount of 139.5 MECU should be made available for the Youth for Europe III programme between 1995 and 1999.

2.3.5. Finally, with regard to the programme **Committee**, the Commission notes the Council's position in support of a mixed committee combining management procedures (type IIA) and consultation procedures (I). Despite this, it maintains its proposal for an advisory committee. The fact is that the extremely positive experience of the work of the advisory committee which has assisted the Commission for six years during the first two stages of the programme, has demonstrated that such a committee encourages attempts to find consensus and compromise, which are essential for developing real cooperation, and adapting implementation procedures to the needs of the target group.

The measures providing for participation of the representatives of the Youth Forum and the Council of Europe, as observers in the work of the programme committee, pose a problem from the institutional point of view as, according to the Council, this cannot be based on precedent. In order to avoid a political problem, a pragmatic solution has been found through a consensus involving Member States and the Commission, in the form of a declaration which states that "based on a proposal by the President of the Programme Committee, one representative of the Council of Europe and one representative of the Youth Forum can take part in Committee meetings as observers". In effect, that both the Council of Europe through its action, which is complementary to that of the Community, and the Youth Forum which contributes the viewpoint of the voluntary youth organisations, contribute to enriching and to increasing the efficiency of Community action.

3. Conclusion

The Commission wishes to confirm its desire to contribute to the establishing of an appropriate, overall, agreement between the three institutions. It will continue to work together with the European Parliament and the Council towards this goal. The objective is, ultimately, to demonstrate that the Community's political commitment matches its expectations regarding the participation of 140 million young people in its construction - which represents less than 1 ECU per young person - and, in order to achieve this, to arrive at a programme based on a policy of cooperation in the youth field at Community level, which is both coherent and credible to the young people concerned. The Commission hopes that this programme will be as close as possible to its proposal, and that a final decision can be adopted within a time frame which will ensure the continuity of the process which has begun, and to guarantee a rapid and effective implementation of the programme for the young people, its primary beneficiaries.

In the present situation, cooperation with third countries, other than those of Central and Eastern Europe, is under severe threat. This situation is completely contrary to the generous and open attitudes of the young people of the Union, who are hoping that the European Union will not be perceived as a fortress, but as a Europe of solidarity.