

**THE COUNCIL INVITES THE COMMISSION**, in the context of their joint work on the follow-up to the report on objectives of the education and training systems in Europe, to report regularly on its relevant activities, including on the progress by its working groups."

31 (20)

### **STRENGTHENING COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Council heard a presentation by Commissioner REDING on the Communication from the Commission of 18 July 2001 on strengthening cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education. The aim of that communication was to open up and encourage discussions on the means to develop university exchanges with third countries and to promote the place of Europe in a globalised world.

The Council held an exchange of views during which Member States generally reacted favourably to the Commission's communication and proposals to set up higher education networks with third countries and making Europe an attractive centre of education. They also welcomed the Commission's initiative to enlarge the TEMPUS programme, which constitutes the framework for cooperation in higher education with non-associated countries of central and eastern Europe and new independent States from the former Soviet Union and Mongolia, to non-European Mediterranean countries.

### **EUROPEAN YEAR OF EDUCATION THROUGH SPORT 2004**

The Council took note of the presentation by Commissioner REDING of the proposal for a Decision of 16 October 2001 establishing the European Year of Education through Sport 2004.

With that proposal, the Commission seeks to highlight the educational value of sport and mark the year 2004 which is also the year of the Athens Summer Olympics. The proposal envisages Community and national initiatives aimed at encouraging lasting cooperation between educational institutions and sports organisations and at giving more emphasis to sports activities and to transmitting sporting values in education.