

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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# CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 20 January 1986

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FIRST CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN MINISTERS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH

Strasbourg, 17-19 December 1985

REPORT  
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
FINAL TEXT

7.171  
04.9

REPORT

The Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth met in Strasbourg from 17-19 December 1985 at the invitation of Mr. Alain CALMAT, French Minister for Youth and Sport.

The Conference was attended by representatives of the States signatories to the Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was represented by its President and nine of its members. The Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) was represented by its President and by the Chairman of its Committee on Cultural and Social Affairs.

Canada and San Marino attended the Conference as observers.

Amongst the international organisations, the United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), the International Labour Office, the European Community and the Franco-German Youth Office were represented as observers. The Chairman of the Governing Board of the European Youth Foundation and the Vice-Chairman of the Governing Board of the European Youth Centre also attended the Conference.

The full list of participants is given in Appendix I.

The Conference was opened by Mr. Marcelino OREJA, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, who welcomed participants at the Conference and delivered an address.

The French Minister was elected Chairman further to a proposal by the Luxembourg Minister. The Norwegian and Portuguese Ministers were elected Vice-Chairmen.

The subject of the Conference was "The participation of young people in society".

This subject was introduced by the French Minister in his capacity as Chairman of the Conference. It was developed through three themes: "The situation of young people in Europe", by the French Minister, "Youth policies and the encouragement of youth participation", by the Swedish and Portuguese Ministers and "European co-operation in the youth field", by the German Minister.

The opening session and the presentation of the first theme took place in the presence of representatives of youth organisations designated by the European Co-ordination Bureau for International Youth Organisations (ECB) and by the Council of European National Youth Committees (CENYC). These representatives took an active part in a hearing, during which the results of the European Youth Week were also presented.

In their contributions, the representatives of youth organisations dealt in the main with employment, youth exchanges, education for peace and multicultural training, conscientious objection, participation in political life and the role of youth organisations in European co-operation.

The conclusions of the Conference are contained in the Final Text adopted at the close of the meeting (see Appendix II). This text contains a number of points on which agreement was reached and are such as to strengthen European co-operation in the youth field. Many suggestions were put forward for the intergovernmental work programme of the Council of Europe, the activities of the Centre and the Foundation and on the subject of co-operation between the European Community and the Council of Europe in the youth field. The Federal Republic of Germany lodged a reservation on item 26 (b) of the Recommendations in the Final Text. It was not able to enter into commitments in the field concerned but did not wish to stand in the way of the other States.

A colloquy between the Ministers and a delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly took place in the afternoon of 18 December; it was the occasion of a fruitful exchange of views on the various themes of the Conference.

The Conference warmly welcomed the invitation extended by Mr. Lars Roar LANGSLET, Norwegian Minister of Cultural and Scientific Affairs, to hold the second Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth in Norway.

APPENDIX I

**FIRST CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN MINISTERS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH**

**PREMIERE CONFERENCE DES MINISTRES EUROPEENS  
RESPONSABLES DE LA JEUNESSE**

Strasbourg, 17-19 décembre 1985

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(Colloquy of 18 December / Colloque du 18 décembre)

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APPENDIX II

FINAL TEXT

PRINCIPLES

1. Having regard to current and prospective changes in the structure of society, many young people will have to confront radically new and changing circumstances.
2. The capacity of young people to find new solutions to the problems which face them, their participation at all levels of society and their search for new future prospects require their involvement in the decision-making process on those issues which concern them and the democratic recognition of their full citizenship (right to education and training, to work, to be informed, protection of health and the environment).
3. Fullest possible participation of young people in society is essential to democracy at local, national and international levels. This is why the theme "participation" needs to be put into the perspective of the changes in society when approaching the year 2000. The vision of society for the coming years is to further the development of a fully-fledged participative democracy. This calls for the active involvement of the young; it also presupposes their desire to make this society their own.
4. Participation depends on real possibilities being offered to young people to determine their future and fashion their own life-style, and it means that its full realisation follows from the rapid achievement of autonomy by young people.
5. The process of acquiring autonomy has now been slowed, in both economic and vocational terms, by economic conditions, which have altered the traditional relationship of education, training, employment and social identity.
6. The increasing lack of meaningful opportunities for participation represents a threat to democracy and can result in alienation from society, which in its most extreme forms shows as drug abuse, delinquency and violence.
7. Rapid changes in society caused by new technologies and other factors such as the growing influence of the media make the creation of opportunities to develop skills of participation even more urgent. In this respect, the role of youth organisations in promoting and providing for youth participation is vital for the democratic process.
8. European co-operation in the field of youth is ever more necessary. It offers the possibility of comparing experience in combating difficulties facing young people, acts as a barrier to xenophobia and racism, and contributes to the building of the democratic ideal of Europe. Important aims of such co-operation are to encourage European awareness among young people, to liberate their creativity, and promote their autonomy.

9. Young people themselves and youth organisations at local, regional, national and international levels have important roles to play in European co-operation. But many such organisations, including those at European level, already have financial difficulties in achieving their existing goals.

10. A distinctive contribution of the Council of Europe in the youth field is the concept of co-management - the partnership of governments and non-governmental organisations - for meeting the needs of young people. It is important that this ideal be extended to those bodies not already involved and that non-governmental youth organisations be strengthened so that they can be true partners, both nationally and internationally.

11. The impetus given, and the co-ordinating roles played, by the European Youth Foundation, European Youth Centre and ad hoc Committee of Experts on Youth Questions (CAHJE) are greatly welcomed, and need to be continued and developed. There is moreover, a continuing ambition to extend understanding and co-operation amongst young people across the totality of Europe, thus promoting, in the field of youth co-operation as well, the principles of the final act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

12. Being committed to enhancing participation, Ministers attach special importance to promoting the following particular themes in the next three years:

- a. co-management, nationally and internationally;
- b. information and advisory services for young people;
- c. equal opportunities in the field of mobility for all young people, including young people from disadvantaged localities and regions;
- d. research and documentation on youth issues.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The first Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth, meeting in Strasbourg on 17, 18 and 19 December 1985,

- I. Recommends that the signatory States of the Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe:
  1. Establish, where they do not already exist, permanent bodies exclusively dealing with youth policies;
  2. Co-ordinate government bodies involved with youth policies;
  3. Promote the expansion or establishment of non-governmental youth organisations and afford them a specific, recognised place so that they can play a role in promoting social well-being and, more particularly, the integration of young people in social, cultural, economic and political life. Such participation needs to extend to concrete and specific issues and a plan for doing so should be drawn up by each relevant authority;
  4. Facilitate access to responsibilities in associative life for young people. Youth organisations must be recognised as active examples of democratic involvement by and with young people;
  5. Pursue an overall youth policy based on active co-operation between governmental and non-governmental bodies;
  6. Promote genuine personal and social independence for young people and recognise their status as citizens so as to rule out discrimination of all kinds;
  7. Generally support involvement in associations, since increased involvement is a crucial factor in preventing and counteracting deviant behaviour, especially drug addiction;
  8. Ensure the widest possible participation by young people in society, and for this purpose:
  9. Promote through informal educational means a climate which encourages a growing participation in decision-making by young people; enhance a dialogue between young people and public authorities at all levels on issues that concern their lives such as education, housing, environment, unemployment and health;
  10. Encourage the participation of young people in the decision-making process in areas that concern them, especially labour relations, legislation being amended where necessary, particularly that applicable to minors; promote the setting up of job opportunity programmes;
  11. Promote social and civic education and the acquisition of political and economic knowledge, especially in schools, youth work, universities and adult education, and make it possible for young people to influence their educational conditions;



12. Give young people scope for autonomous action to develop their creativity and sense of responsibility and encourage self-managing initiatives, for example in working life;
13. Help promote initiatives by young people, especially co-operatives, training firms and alternative forms of work, and draw up appropriate legal instruments for this purpose;
14. Improve the quality of the daily lives of young people, in particular, where appropriate by:
  - giving them autonomous access to appropriate social welfare,
  - facilitating access to accommodation of their own,
  - introducing a general system of reductions and other advantages;
15. Give young people improved access to relevant information, advice and counselling appropriate to their needs;
16. Acknowledge the role of youth organisations, ensure that all their activities are taken into account by the authorities in every sector and accept them as partners in all matters connected with the devising, implementation and evaluation of programmes and plans deriving from economic, social and education policy in areas of interest to young people;
17. Strengthen co-management at the various levels, while respecting the independence of associations and the prerogatives of the authorities;
18. Provide youth organisations with the technical and financial support they need in order to serve their purpose and ensure that such support is allocated by procedures that are open to scrutiny;
19. Accept youth organisations as fully-fledged partners, where appropriate, in collective consultation and negotiation in areas that concern them;
20. Regulate, by means of close co-operation between the public and private sectors, access to in-service training; provide young people, especially young women, with access to varied, high-quality training geared to technological progress, in order to promote free access to employment and training;
21. Encourage local job creation schemes and new forms of work, especially through bodies suited to the purpose;
22. Ensure that vocational training schemes have a social, cultural and human dimension that allows young people to develop their personalities to the full;
23. Promote voluntary service, especially in the context of community development both in Europe and worldwide;

- II. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe give further impetus to the youth policy pursued by the Council's organs, and
24. To this end:
- a. Recognise the importance of regular Conferences of European Ministers responsible for Youth, to be held every two or three years at the invitation of member States; Norway has offered to host the second Conference, which could take place in 1987. The governments would call periodic meetings of officials in order to prepare forthcoming conferences and exchange views on national policies;
  - b. Set up a working group to complete, in time for the next Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth, a study of the appropriate structure for promoting youth matters within the Council of Europe. This working group would comprise the States represented on the ad hoc Committee of Experts on Youth Questions and should also include representatives of the National Youth Committees and the international non-governmental youth organisations co-operating in the statutory bodies of the European Youth Centre and European Youth Foundation;  
  
Seek, after consultation with the working group but without waiting for the final results of its work, to establish a platform for inter-governmental action on youth questions, to ensure that intergovernmental co-operation in the Council of Europe in this area continues after the expiry of the ad hoc Committee of Experts on Youth Questions' present terms of reference and is strengthened;
  - c. Strengthen co-management in existing and future Council of Europe bodies dealing with youth questions;
  - d. Pay greater attention to the role, running and programming of the activities of the European Youth Centre and European Youth Foundation and their financial needs;
25. Ensure that youth questions are dealt with effectively in the programmes and proceedings of Ministerial Conferences;
26. Promote an ambitious policy in keeping with the aspirations of young Europeans, and to this end:
- a. Make arrangements in the near future, in liaison with the European Community, for encouraging European youth initiatives;
  - b. Promote the development of the European network of youth information centres, in co-operation with youth organisations, and for this purpose strengthen the ad hoc Liaison Committee, develop the data banks in each country and consider setting up a European network of such banks;

27. Pursue, at European, national and local levels as appropriate, the removal of those obstacles which financially penalise young people who choose to go abroad for training or voluntary service in the welfare or cultural sector and seek as far as possible to harmonise, at European level, the rules governing support for youth exchanges within the framework of their bilateral agreements and programmes;

28. Encourage local and regional authorities and local youth organisations to play an active role in promoting mobility by receiving and informing young people, with a view to supporting direct inter-regional exchanges;

29. Seek to ensure that the steps taken by relevant European bodies to promote youth mobility and youth exchanges complement one another and are based on principles adopted with a view to involving the widest possible European area and fostering a more open attitude towards countries not members of the Council of Europe;

30. Support the activities of international non-governmental organisations working at European level, which are obvious partners for the furtherance of youth mobility and other matters of concern to young people;

31. Promote, in liaison with the European Community, a wide-ranging youth exchange programme encompassing bilateral and multilateral schemes. Specific measures to be encouraged in the short term include:

- giving priority to vocational training and to young people in general, whether working or unemployed,
- assistance for those young people who are most deprived,
- participation by young migrants in all activities which concern them,
- improving the quality of exchanges and providing training for those responsible,

and consider the introduction of a "European Youth Card";

32. Co-ordinate the efforts of governments and specialised institutions with a view to securing information exchange between youth research workers and research facilities;

33. Plan activities in the Council of Europe's youth sector for inclusion in the Third Medium-Term Plan in the light of the recommendations of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth, the Parliamentary Assembly, the meeting of Officials responsible for Youth Questions and European Youth Week;

Consider the case for:

- a. starting, in 1986, a comparative study, co-ordinated by the ad hoc Committee of Experts on Youth Questions, of the youth programmes of the member States of the Council of Europe;

- b. including the 1986-1987 programme of activities a conference on accommodation for young people;
- c. holding a conference on municipal youth policies in 1987 in the framework of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe;

34. Consider the feasibility of drawing up a European Convention on the protection of young people vis-à-vis the media; speed up and strengthen the ongoing work of the Council of Europe on audio-visual programmes with a pornographic, brutal or violent content, especially where such programmes are likely to affect young people;

35. Maintain and encourage ongoing co-operation in the youth sector with the United Nations agencies, in particular UNESCO, ILO, WHO and UNICEF, in order to take account of the universal features of youth issues;

36. Continue to implement the measures introduced during International Youth Year, regard being had to the principles designed to foster new projects and any further action in the field of youth, as adopted at the 40th Session of the United Nations General Assembly;

37. Strengthen the special ties that exist with the European Community, paying particular attention to the co-ordination of the policies of the two organisations and to ensuring that the programmes of each organisation reflect an open attitude to the outside world; in the event of an EEC European Youth Office or any other structure or programme being set up, make provision for young people from the signatory States of the Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe to participate in its activities and benefit from its experience;

38. Reaffirm that the Council of Europe has an outstanding role in protecting human rights and combating all forms of intolerance and discrimination, in particular racism, apartheid and xenophobia, with due regard for the cultural identity of each individual and the different sets of values in Europe; in this context, in particular, hold a second Conference on Intolerance;

39. Draw attention to the open attitude of the Council of Europe's European vocation in the widest sense of the term and to its open attitude towards co-operation with all other countries;

40. Pay particular attention to co-operation with the developing countries;

### III. The Conference calls on:

41. Young Europeans to display solidarity with the victims of natural disasters, especially those in Colombia and Mexico, and with those suffering from other forms of disadvantage, and to this end to hold regular events to encourage practical action by young people on their behalf.

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The Ministers reiterated their thanks to the French Government for having held the first Conference in Strasbourg; it took place to their full satisfaction, thanks to the excellent organisation and dedication of the services of the Council of Europe, the European Youth Centre and the European Youth Foundation.

The Ministers also took note, with satisfaction, of Norway's intention to organise the second Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth at a date which the Norwegian authorities will announce in due course.

