



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL
on European policies concerning youth**

**Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe –
implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship**

{SEC (2005) 693}

Communication from Mr. Figel'
in association with Mr. Špidla

1. INTRODUCTION

The destiny of Europe increasingly depends on its ability to foster societies that are child- and youth-friendly. Adoption of the European Pact for Youth by the Spring 2005 European Council¹, as part of the revised Lisbon Strategy focussing on growth and jobs, is a recognition that integrating young people in society and working life, and making better use of their potential, are essential for ensuring a return to sustained and sustainable growth in Europe.

This initiative highlights youth in core areas of the Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs, in particular via the European Employment and Social Inclusion Strategies and also the Education and Training 2010 Work programme, and calls for consistency across the initiatives within them.

Adoption of the Pact coincides with the completion of the first cycle of implementing the White Paper on a new impetus for European youth² of 2001, taken forward in the Council Resolution of June 2002³. This established a framework of European cooperation in the youth field for enhancing young people's active citizenship, through an open method of coordination (OMC), and including a youth dimension in other policies.

More than ever, Europe needs young people's ongoing commitment that will help in building an inclusive Europe. Equally, success of this initiative depends on involving all parties concerned, and first and foremost, youth organisations as well as regional and local authorities and the social partners.

The Communication:

- sets out how the Pact can be put into operation,
- defines the priorities of the Youth OMC,
- addresses a youth dimension in other policies,
- lists relevant European programmes and
- examines how to further involve young people in the political process.

2. YOUTH IN THE LISBON PARTNERSHIP FOR GROWTH AND JOBS

2.1. The context

In proposing a European Pact for Youth, the Heads of State and Government of France, Germany, Spain and Sweden identified four principal issues:

- the vulnerability of young people
- the need to develop solidarity across the generations, in an ageing society

¹ Annex 1 of Presidency Conclusions of the European Council, Brussels, 22-23.3.2005 (7619/05).

² COM(2001) 681.

³ OJ C168, 13.7.2002.

- the need to equip young people through their education and training
- the need for better coherence across all policy areas that concern young people.

This analysis coincides with the analysis in the White Paper. Under pressure from economic and socio-cultural factors, the nature of youth is changing. Young people arrive at the different stages of life later than did earlier generations, along pathways less linear than before.

The European Council, when preparing the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy, took note of the importance of demographic factors in shaping Europe's future.

As set out in the Commission's Green Paper on confronting demographic change⁴, declining birth rates and rising life expectancies have brought about dramatic changes in the size and age structure of Europe's population. The number of young people aged 15 to 24 is set to drop by a quarter, from 12.6 to 9.7%, between 2005 and 2050, while the age-group 65 + will grow from 16.4 to 29.9%.⁵ The Green paper draws attention to the implications for Europe of these changes, with particular emphasis on young people. The new Social Agenda 2005-2010⁶ also takes the importance of the intergenerational approach into account.

Transition into the labour market for young people is difficult, with youth unemployment more than double the overall rate within Europe (17.9% for under 25s, compared with 7.7% for 25 year-olds and up)⁷. Young people are particularly at risk of poverty (19% of 16-24 year olds, compared with 12% of 25-64 year-olds).⁸

Young people have a significant contribution to make to the Lisbon goals of boosting jobs and growth and to sustainable development, as they make up the future work force, and are the future source of much-needed research capabilities, innovation and entrepreneurship. These goals can only be achieved if young people are properly equipped with knowledge, skills and competences through high quality, relevant education and training. This cannot be ensured unless barriers such as growing up in poverty and social exclusion are removed. Gender inequalities also need to be addressed, as young women experience higher unemployment and a higher risk of poverty than young men, while more young men leave school early.

2.2. The European Youth Pact

Against this background, and in line with the Commission's Strategic Objectives for 2005-2009⁹, the European Council concluded that young people should benefit from a set of policies and measures fully integrated in the revised Lisbon Strategy, and adopted a Pact comprising three strands (see Annex 1):

- employment, integration and social advancement
- education, training and mobility

⁴ COM(2005) 94.

⁵ 2004-based Eurostat population projections, baseline variant.

⁶ COM(2005) 33.

⁷ COM(2005) 94.

⁸ do.

⁹ COM(2005) 12.

- reconciliation of family life and working life.

The relevant actions in these areas are to be drawn up in particular in the European Employment Strategy, the Social Inclusion Strategy, and also the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme. Including youth in the Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs will not entail any new structures. By reinforcing the measures for young people, it will help maximise the impact of the Lisbon Strategy.

Member States will draw on the ‘Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs’ (combining economic and employment guidelines) which the Commission proposed in April 2005¹⁰ when presenting their national Lisbon reform programmes in autumn 2005 (Annex 2).

The monitoring of the implementation of the Pact will be integrated in the reporting mechanisms of the Lisbon Strategy. The Commission’s Annual Lisbon Progress Report will draw on reports from Member States each autumn on the progress made in the national Lisbon reform programmes. This report will be examined in the relevant Council formations and discussed at the Spring European Council.

At Community level, the Commission has announced a Community Lisbon Programme targeting the priorities of the Lisbon Mid-Term Review endorsed by the 2005 spring Council.

The following sections highlight the aspects of the Integrated Guidelines and the forthcoming Community Lisbon Programme that are relevant for the Pact.

2.2.1. Measures for the employment, integration and social advancement of young people

The proposed Employment Guidelines 2005-2008, now part of the Integrated Guidelines, are at the core of the European Employment Strategy, and play a central coordinating role for Member States’ employment policies. They concentrate on the contribution of employment policies to creating more and better jobs, identifying the following three core priorities:

- attract and retain more people in employment and modernise social protection systems
- improve adaptability of workers and enterprises and the flexibility of labour markets
- increase investment in human capital through better education and skills

The following Guidelines in particular are relevant for young people:

- promotion of a life-cycle approach to work (which includes, inter alia a renewed endeavour to build employment pathways for young people and reducing youth unemployment, as well as resolute action to eliminate gender gaps in employment, unemployment and pay)
- ensuring inclusive labour markets for job-seekers and disadvantaged people
- improving matching of labour market needs

¹⁰ COM(2005) 141.

- expansion and improvement of investment in human capital
- adapting education and training systems in response to new competence requirements.

Member States receive financial support for implementing the relevant measures through the European Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund. Member States are also encouraged to make use of the facilities provided by the European Investment Bank.

The mutual learning programme on employment promoting exchange of good practice among Member States includes a focus on youth employment in 2005. The Commission will also continue its efforts to ensure full transposition and implementation of EC legislation banning discrimination in employment on grounds of age¹¹.

The Social Inclusion Strategy will incorporate a youth dimension, as announced in the Communication on the Social Agenda¹² and will take into account the Council Resolution on the social integration of young people¹³. This is likely to result in a high priority being given to improving the situation of the most vulnerable young people, to eradicating child poverty, and to initiatives to prevent educational failure. A study on the social integration of highly disadvantaged young people will focus on integration in the labour market, autonomy and active participation in society.

The Commission welcomes and encourages the social partners' commitment to contribute to this initiative through joint actions within the social dialogue¹⁴.

Actions in employment and social inclusion

- Member States take action for promoting the employment of young people, e.g. in order to:
 - reduce youth unemployment
 - build employment pathways
 - develop personalised action plans, with job search assistance, guidance and training
- Commission & Member States make young people a priority in the mutual learning programme on employment in 2005
- Using the Social Inclusion Strategy, Commission & Member States improve the situation of the most vulnerable young people
- Commission to launch study on the social integration of highly disadvantaged young people in 2005

¹¹ Directive 2000/78/EC of 27.11.2004, OJ L303, 2.12.2000.

¹² COM(2005)33.

¹³ Council Resolution 9601/04 of 28.5.2004.

¹⁴ Contribution from ETUC, CEEP, UNICE/UEAPME of 22.3.2005.

2.2.2. Measures for education, training and mobility

The proposed Integrated Guidelines underline the need for Europe to expand and improve investment in human capital, and to adapt education and training systems to new competence requirements. Priority is given, *inter alia*, to reducing the number of early school leavers; widening access to vocational, secondary and higher education, including apprenticeships and entrepreneurship training; and working towards common frameworks that will make qualification systems more transparent, and validating non-formal and informal learning.

These are all priorities of the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme which contributes to implementing the education and training aspects of the Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs, and which will feed into the new Lisbon governance cycle. The Guidelines stress the importance of using the agreed European instruments and references to support reforms of national education and training systems.

As part of the 2010 work programme, peer learning activities in 2005 include areas relevant to young people:

- achieving the benchmarks on early school leavers, completion rates and literacy;
- implementing the key competences framework at national level;
- achieving the benchmark on increasing numbers of graduates in maths, science and technology, in particular reducing the gender imbalance, and taking account of the link with primary and secondary level education.

A Commission proposal in 2005 for a Recommendation of the Council and the European Parliament on key competences will emphasise their importance for young people with fewer opportunities.

The Commission will propose a blueprint for a European Qualifications Framework in 2006 with the aim of providing a common reference for qualifications systems and frameworks across Europe. It will be linked to and supported by credit transfer and quality assurance arrangements, to the common European principles for identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning and to Europass (the European single framework for the transparency of diplomas, certificates and competences).

A specific tool for recognition of youth work will be developed, with a view to including a 'Youthpass' in Europass. The test phase should start in 2006.

Another key element of the work programme is to improve foreign language competence, which is both essential for and a result of more young Europeans taking part in the knowledge society and in European and global mobility.

Given that economic activity is increasingly shifting towards processes with high levels of embedded science and technology, access to science and ICT education are especially relevant for young people.

The Commission will adopt a Communication on entrepreneurship education and learning in 2005, stressing the link between entrepreneurial skills and basic life skills for young people. The Commission's Entrepreneurship Action Plan promotes 'Fuelling entrepreneurial mindsets' among young people.

Actions in education and training

- Member States take action for young people, e.g.
 - reduce the number of early school leavers
 - improve access to vocational education and training, including apprenticeships and entrepreneurship training
 - develop frameworks to support transparency and recognition of qualifications and competences, and for validating non-formal and informal learning
- Member States to implement Europass decision
- Commission to adopt a Communication on entrepreneurship education in 2005
- Commission to propose a European Qualifications Framework in 2006
- Commission to adopt a Recommendation on key competences in 2006
- Commission & Member States to develop 'Youthpass' from 2006

The proposed Integrated Guidelines invite Member States to provide more transparency and information about employment and training opportunities, in order to make mobility easier, as part of the modernisation of employment services. The European Year of Worker Mobility in 2006 will include special initiatives for young people entering the job market. From 2007 the follow-up to the Commission and Member States' Action Plan for skills and mobility 2002-2005 will focus more on improving the chances of young people on the labour market through increased mobility. Member States should where necessary reinforce their strategies for removing obstacles to mobility, as noted by the Commission Report¹⁵ on the follow-up to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council on mobility within the Community of students, persons undergoing training, volunteers and teachers and trainers¹⁶.

To further encourage mobility of young people within Europe, the Commission has proposed reinforced programmes targeting young people, students and volunteers, with new forms of voluntary activities, to broaden and facilitate access to the European Voluntary Service (EVS). The information portals EURES (European job mobility portal), and PLOTEUS (portal for learning opportunities in Europe) will take better account of the needs of young people, and a Commission study will produce recommendations for extending the mobility card for young people in Europe. The Commission will promote exchange of good practice in mobility, for example, the French 'Jobs d'été' initiative, which may be extended across Europe after an evaluation of the initial results.

Actions promoting mobility

- Member States are invited to provide more transparency and information to make it easier to work and study abroad

¹⁵ COM(2004) 21.

¹⁶ OJ L 215, 9.8.2001.

- European Year of Worker Mobility 2006 to include special actions for young people
- Commission to develop tools such as EURES and PLOTEUS to improve possibilities for young people to work and study abroad
- Commission to produce in 2005 recommendations on a mobility card for young people in Europe
- In 2006, Commission to study extension of the ‘Jobs d’été’ initiative
- In 2007, Commission & Member States to implement new forms of EVS
- From 2007, actions improving the geographical and occupational mobility of young people in the follow-up to Action Plan for skills and mobility

2.2.3. *Measures for reconciliation of family life and working life*

The Integrated Guidelines invite Member States to take action for achieving better reconciliation of family and working life. A better family and work balance can also help to tackle the problems associated with demographic ageing, and in particular the challenge of a low birth rate. This includes the provision of childcare facilities, as well as care for other dependants. Particular attention will be paid to developing innovative, family-friendly forms of working arrangements. Reconciliation of work and private life is key in promoting gender equality for young women and men.

Following the Green Paper on Europe’s changing demographics, the Commission has launched a consultation with the aim of identifying policies to be pursued or reinforced, at European and national level.

Actions for reconciling family life and working life

- Member States to provide more accessible, affordable and quality childcare facilities and care for other dependants
- Member States, supported by Commission, to develop new forms of work organisation, e.g. flexitime, tele-working, maternity, parental leave etc.
- Commission consultation in 2005 on the impact of demographic change and possible policy responses

3. THE ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The focus of the open method of coordination (OMC) is the active citizenship of young people. The White Paper on youth took note of the widening gap between young people and public affairs. To improve participation, information, voluntary activities and knowledge of youth issues, the Council adopted 14 common objectives in 2003 and 2004 (see Annex 3)¹⁷.

¹⁷ OJ C 295, 5.12.2003.
Council Resolutions 13996/04 and 13997/04 of 15.11.2004.

In its Communication in October 2004¹⁸, the Commission evaluated positively the activities carried out at European level, while stressing the need for suitable measures at national level to implement the common objectives.

Member States are due to report on the common objectives for participation and information by the end of 2005. Reports on voluntary activities and better knowledge of the youth field will follow in 2006. In each case, the Commission will submit a progress report to the Council.

The participation and information of young people, voluntary activities and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth remain key in building healthy societies. Given that the common objectives have only recently been adopted by the Council, their implementation by the Member States has just started and should be the focus of Member States action under the Youth OMC. The Commission is of the opinion that these existing priorities should be maintained and consolidated.

Regarding participation, the emphasis should continue to be placed on increasing participation at the local level, within representative democracy, and providing greater support for learning to participate. Improving access to information, providing more quality information and increasing the participation of young people in preparing and disseminating information, have all to be reinforced.

The political aim of strengthening youth volunteering in the EU as a means of participation and of personal development of young people remains valid. The contribution that volunteers make to society continues to be highlighted, as recent natural disasters, and the need for long-term rehabilitation of the areas affected, have shown.

As a result of the Pact and its follow-up within the Lisbon governance cycle, a greater understanding and knowledge of youth in the targeted areas, namely, youth employment, youth inclusion, youth entrepreneurship, youth mobility, recognition of youth work, should be achieved through the Lisbon mechanisms. Better use of the results of research in these areas should enhance evidence-based policies.

Actions to strengthen active citizenship of young people

- Commission confirms priorities of active citizenship of young people (participation, information, voluntary activities)
- Better knowledge in areas of youth employment, inclusion, entrepreneurship, mobility and recognition of youth work, resulting from the inclusion of the Pact in the Lisbon governance cycle

4. INCLUDING THE YOUTH DIMENSION IN OTHER POLICIES

While youth-related issues are relevant for the majority of policies developed at European level, the Commission recommends concentrating on the policy areas of the European Youth Pact.

¹⁸ COM(2004)694.

Other policies with relevance to young people include the following:

The Commission will also continue its actions against racism and xenophobia at youth level. The EU-wide campaign 'For Diversity – Against Discrimination'¹⁹ has been extended to young people from 2005, promoting the active involvement of young people and raising awareness about EC legislation and policies for tackling discrimination.

The Commission will also pay attention to the health of young people, for example in the areas of nutrition and obesity, alcohol and drugs use, and strategies for promoting good health. A European initiative on the health of children and young people is planned for 2006.

Specific research on youth will be undertaken under the Sixth Research Framework Programme, on the attitudes, lifestyles and forms of participation adopted by European youth. Under the Seventh Research Framework Programme youth research could focus on the impact of young people's participation in representative democracy and in voluntary activities.

The Commission will launch a public consultation on possible actions the Union could undertake in the area of sport, regarding the educational and social values of sport, and the lifestyle of young people.

Actions that emphasise youth in other policy areas

- Commission to promote involvement of young people in 'For Diversity – against Discrimination' campaign from 2005
- Commission to launch a European initiative in 2006 to promote good health for young people and children
- Commission to launch a public consultation on sport in 2005, with a view to reinforcing its educational and social values for young people

5. SUPPORTING POLICY THROUGH PROGRAMMES

Policy actions targeting young people should also be accompanied by programmes supporting projects that encourage young people to become active, involved citizens and that are aimed at helping them develop their capacities. Such projects should be developed at local, regional, national and European level.

A number of European programmes promote such projects (see Annex 4):

- European Social Fund
- European Regional Development Fund
- Rural Development Funds

¹⁹ Five-year pan-European information campaign supported by the Commission Action Programme to Combat Discrimination. www.stop-discrimination.info

- Youth and Youth in Action
- Integrated Lifelong Learning
- Citizens for Europe
- Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme
- Marie Curie Programme
- European Science Education initiative

6. INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The White Paper on youth sets out a method of consulting young people, with the aim of underpinning the participation of young people and their organisations.

The European Council underlined that, to be successful, the Pact requires the involvement of all actors, first and foremost, of youth organisations, as well as regional and local authorities and the social partners. Young people and their organisations should be consulted on the development of measures for this initiative within the national Lisbon reform programmes, and on following up implementation. While it is up to each Member State to define how to involve young people, national youth councils should be among those consulted.

The Commission also intends to organise a consultation of young people, and of the European Youth Forum, on youth policy. This consultation will culminate in the Youth ‘Etats généraux’, to be held in 2005. In preparation, the Commission will organise a wide-ranging Internet consultation of young people and will invite Member States to hold debates at national level. The Commission intends to follow up the Etats généraux by holding an ‘annual encounter’ between young people and Commissioners.

This direct dialogue with young people is not a substitute for the social dialogue, but is a valuable complement. It would be articulated with other Commission consultation initiatives aimed notably at developing ‘ownership’ of the Lisbon goals by civil society.

Actions for consulting young people

- Member States to consult young people on measures for the Pact by autumn 2005
- Commission to organise Internet consultation of young people in 2005
- Commission to hold Youth ‘Etats généraux’ in 2005 and follow up with annual encounters with young people

7. CONCLUSIONS

Adoption of the European Pact for Youth has complemented the development of the active citizenship of young people through the OMC in the youth field, by taking on board the concerns of youth within the policies that support the Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs.

For the first time, the European Union can employ a truly integrated policy approach to young people. In order to put the streamlining policy approach into practice:

- At national level, Member States, in consultation with young people, should develop measures for the Pact within the national Lisbon reform programmes.
- At European level, the Commission will, in accordance with the forthcoming Community Lisbon Programme, take action in the areas specified in this Communication.
- The Commission considers that the priorities of the OMC in the youth field should be confirmed and consolidated.
- The Commission will continue to include a youth dimension in other relevant policies.
- The Commission underlines the importance of the programmes that facilitate lifelong learning, mobility, entrepreneurship and citizenship of young people, within the framework of the financial perspectives.
- The consultation and involvement of young people and youth organisations are essential for implementing all the measures presented in this Communication.

The Commission calls on the Council to endorse these conclusions. It will transmit this Communication to the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

ANNEXES

Communication from the Commission to the Council

on European policies concerning youth

Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe – implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship

Annex 1

The European Youth Pact

Annex 2

Extracts from the Commission proposal for integrated guidelines 2005-2008 reflecting European Council action lines for the European Youth Pact

Annex 3

Common objectives in the framework of the open method of coordination in the youth field

Annex 4

Community programmes relevant to youth policy

European Youth Pact

(Annex 1 of Presidency Conclusions of the European Council, Brussels, 22 and 23.3.2005
(7619/05))

Against the background of Europe's ageing population, the European Council sees a need for young Europeans to benefit from a set of policies and measures forming a fully integrated part of the Lisbon Strategy. The Youth Pact aims to improve the education, training, mobility, vocational integration and social inclusion of young Europeans, while facilitating the reconciliation of working life and family life. The Pact should ensure the overall consistency of initiatives in these areas and provide the starting point for strong, ongoing mobilisation on behalf of young people. Its success depends on the involvement of all parties concerned, first and foremost national, regional and local youth organisations as well as the European Youth Forum, regional and local authorities and the social partners.

The European Council calls on the Union and Member States, each within the limits of its own powers and in particular under the European employment strategy and under the social inclusion strategy, to draw upon the following lines of action:

Employment, integration and social advancement

- specifically monitoring policies for the sustained integration of young people into the labour market, in the context of the mutual learning programme on employment;
- endeavouring to increase employment of young people;
- giving priority under national social inclusion policy to improving the situation of the most vulnerable young people, particularly those in poverty, and to initiatives to prevent educational failure;
- inviting employers and businesses to display social responsibility in the area of vocational integration of young people;
- encouraging young people to develop entrepreneurship and promoting the emergence of young entrepreneurs.

Education, training and mobility

- ensuring that knowledge matches the needs of a knowledge-based economy and, to this end, encouraging the development of a common set of core skills; in this context, concentrating primarily on the problem of drop-outs from the school system;
- expanding the scope for students to undertake a period of study in another Member State;

- encouraging mobility of young people by removing obstacles for trainees, volunteers and workers and for their families; for researchers, stepping up ongoing initiatives under the Marie Curie programme;
- developing, between Member States, closer cooperation on transparency and comparability of occupational qualifications and recognition of non-formal and informal education.

Reconciliation of working life and family life

- promoting the reconciliation of working life and family life by sharing the responsibility between partners, particularly by expanding the child care network and developing innovative forms of work organisation;
- considering child-friendly policies, in the light of discussions on the Commission Green Paper on demographic change.

Extracts from the Commission proposal for integrated guidelines 2005-2008 reflecting European Council action lines for the European Youth Pact

(From Commission Communication on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005-2008), COM(2005) 141, 12.4.2005)

Microeconomic reforms

Guideline - Promote a more entrepreneurial culture & create a supportive environment for SMEs

- Member States should reinforce entrepreneurship education and training

Guideline – Increase and improve investment in R&D

- Member States should further develop the mix of measures to foster business R&D through, amongst others, ensuring a sufficient supply of qualified researchers by attracting more students into scientific, technical and engineering disciplines and enhancing the career development and the transnational and intersectoral mobility of researchers

Employment guidelines

1 Attract and retain more people in employment and modernise social protection systems

Guideline – Promote a lifecycle approach to work

- Renewed endeavour to build employment pathways for young people
- Reduce youth employment
- Eliminate gender gaps in employment, unemployment and pay
- Better reconciliation between work and private life
- Provision of childcare facilities

Guideline - Ensure inclusive labour markets for job-seekers and disadvantaged people

- Early identification of needs
- Job search assistance, guidance and training as part of personalised action plans
- Provision of social services necessary to support labour market inclusion of disadvantaged people

Guideline - Improve matching of labour market needs through

- Modernisation and strengthening of labour market institutions, notably of employment services
- Greater transparency of employment and training opportunities at national and European level to facilitate mobility across Europe

2. Improve adaptability of workers and enterprises and the flexibility of labour markets

Guideline – Ensure employment-friendly wage and other labour cost developments

- Reviewing the structure and level of non-wage labour costs and their impact on employment, especially for the low-paid and those entering for the first time the labour market

3. Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills

Guideline - Expand and improve investment in human capital

- Significantly reduce the number of pupils leaving school early
- Increased access to initial vocational, secondary and higher education including apprenticeships and entrepreneurship training

Guideline - Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements

- Better identification of occupational needs and key competences, and anticipation of future skill requirements
- Broadening the supply of education and training tools
- Developing frameworks to support the transparency of qualifications, their effective recognition and the validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Ensuring the attractiveness, openness and high quality standards of education and training systems

14 OBJECTIVES FOR YOUTH COMMITMENT

(From Council Resolutions of 25.11.2003 and 15.11.2004)

Participation²⁰

To develop participation by young people, by introducing and supporting action to encourage them to exercise their citizenship actively and by enhancing their effective participation in democratic life:

1. Increase the participation by young people in the civic life of their community
2. Increase participation by young people in the system of representative democracy
3. Greater support for various forms of learning to participate

Information²¹

To develop information for young people, by improving access for young people to information in order to increase their participation in public life and facilitate the realisation of their potential as active, responsible citizens:

4. Improve access for young people to information services
5. Increase provision of quality information
6. Increase participation by young people in youth information, for example, in the preparation and dissemination of information

Voluntary activities of young people²²

With a view to enhancing active citizenship and solidarity of young people, voluntary activities should be developed, facilitated, promoted and recognised at all levels:

7. Encourage the development of voluntary activities of young people with the aim of enhancing awareness of the existing possibilities, enlarging their scope and improving their quality
8. Make it easier for young people to carry out voluntary activities by removing existing obstacles

²⁰ Council Resolution of 25.11.2003 on common objectives for participation by and information for young people (OJ C 295, 5.12.2003).

²¹ Ditto.

²² Council Resolution of 15.11.2004 on common objectives for voluntary activities for young people (13996/04 JEUN 89).

9. Promote voluntary activities with a view to reinforcing young people's solidarity and engagement as responsible citizens
10. Recognise voluntary activities of young people with a view to acknowledging the value of their personal skills thus acquired and their engagement for society and the role that voluntary activities play in terms of facilitating the transition from education to work and adult life

Greater understanding and knowledge of youth²³

For timely, efficient and sustainable policy making, it is important to encourage the development of a coherent, relevant and qualitative knowledge area in the youth field in Europe and to anticipate future needs, through exchange, dialogue and networks:

11. Identify – including at local and regional level – existing knowledge in priority areas of the youth field namely, participation, information and voluntary activities and implement measures to supplement, update and facilitate access to it
12. In a second stage identify – including at local and regional level – existing knowledge in further priority areas of interest to the youth field such as autonomy, non-formal learning, the fight against discrimination, education & training, employment, entrepreneurship, creativity, transition from education to employment, social inclusion and health, and implement measures to supplement, update and facilitate access to it
13. Ensure quality, comparability and relevance of knowledge in the youth field by using appropriate methods and tools
14. Facilitate and promote exchange, dialogue and networks to ensure visibility of knowledge in the youth field and anticipate future needs.

²³ Council Resolution of 15.11.2004 on common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth (13997/04 JEUN 90).

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES RELEVANT TO YOUTH POLICY

- The European Social Fund supports projects targeting young people, in the areas of employment, training and social inclusion.
- The community programmes financed by the European Regional Development Fund cover fields of development in which projects intended for young people can be supported, for example, education and training, university research, entrepreneurship, health, culture, urban regeneration.
- Under the Rural Development Regulation (EC) N° 1257/1999 young farmers can benefit from several measures: support for the initial setting-up of their business, increased aid rates for further investments in their agricultural holdings and the acquisition of the necessary skills and know-how through the training measure. These tools are also included in the proposal for a Council regulation on rural development for the next programming period (COM (2004) 490 final).
- The Youth and proposed Youth in Action programme will contribute both to the Pact, in particular regarding mobility, non-formal learning and youth entrepreneurship, and to the active citizenship of young people.
- The Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme has set ambitious new targets for participation in European education and training programmes (Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci), and thus is a major instrument for implementing the Pact.
- The Citizens in Europe programme will give citizens, including young people, the opportunity to interact and experience cultural diversity, forging a European identity, and improving mutual understanding.
- The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme will promote youth entrepreneurship.
- The Marie Curie Programme and the underlying integrated policy to make European more attractive to researchers support initiatives for training, mobility and career development of researchers, including at the early stage of their careers, and encourage interest among young people in science and technology as well as in a career in research.
- The European Science Education Initiative seeks to stimulate young people's interest in science at the primary and secondary level by helping teachers to access and use best practice, science demonstrations and learning objects.
- The Commission supports activities specifically aimed at the inclusion of disadvantaged groups – including young people with a handicap, different ethnic groups, young women, and young people from disadvantaged or outlying and remote regions – in the processes that lead to careers in science.

- The revised Sustainable Development Strategy will pay attention to education for sustainable development.