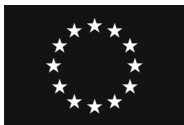


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Committee on Culture and Education

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WORKING DOCUMENT

on implementation of the Youth in Action programme for the period 2007 - 2013

Committee on Culture and Education

Rapporteur: Lissy Gröner

Proposal for a decision by the European Parliament and the Council on implementation of the Youth in Action programme for the period 2007 to 2013

THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL

The proposal to be considered is part of the total package for the new generation of programmes in the area of youth, education, the audiovisual media and culture, which was adopted by the Commission in July 2004.

The successor to the current Youth action programme has a budget of €915 million, is simpler than its predecessor and is open to young people between the ages of 13 and 30 in the Member States and third countries.

The proposed programme comprises the following five action programmes with a total budget of €915 million.

		proposed budget
Action 1	Youth for Europe	€310 m
Action 2	European Voluntary Service	€291.5 m
Action 3	Youth of the world	€60 m
Action 4	Youth workers and support systems	€198.9 m
Action 5	Support for policy cooperation	€20.151 m.

RAPPORTEUR'S COMMENTS AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Your rapporteur supports the Commission proposal, which makes an important contribution to young people becoming **active members of society** and to giving them **a deeper sense of belonging to Europe and can thus create considerable European added value**.

In comparison to its predecessor, the new youth programme has been greatly simplified, for example it is **more flexible** and applying for funds involves **less bureaucracy**, which is in line with one of Parliament's demands. In addition the programme is now funded from **one budget heading** rather than four as previously. Its projects will be managed decentrally.

Another positive aspect is that it supports informal education in the widest sense and thus it ties in with the **Lisbon process**, to make Europe by 2010 the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world. This is also an objective of the 'European Pact for Youth' initiative, which various heads of state and government have started, to combat youth unemployment and to highlight the active role to be played by young citizens in implementing the Lisbon objectives.

Your rapporteur welcomes the fact that this proposal has been drawn up following an objective **interim evaluation** and a broad **consultation process**, involving young people, youth organisations, researchers on youth issues and the political authorities at regional, national and European levels, which is also in line with the general objectives of the White

Paper on youth policy¹ (2001).

Also welcome is the fact that, as Parliament requested, this programme is open to the new neighbouring countries and comprises the 'Youth of the World' action.

It is welcome in principle that the age limits are now more flexible and run from 13 to 30. The main target group should however be those aged 15 to 25. The emphasis of the Youth in Action programme should be on youth exchanges; voluntary service should not be extended to become a civilian community service.

The use of the terms 'youth worker' or 'socio-educational instructor' throughout the text of the action programme causes a terminological problem, as they mean different things in different countries, and this may lead to avoidable misunderstandings. The term '**qualified workers in the youth service and youth organisations**' should be used instead.

Your rapporteur proposes the following **amendments**.

1. Young people in Europe must play an active role. The **financial framework for implementing the programme is insufficient** in the context of the EU's aim to fulfil the Lisbon Strategy objectives and the European Pact for Youth, and in view of current and future EU enlargements. This could mean a loss of momentum for the positive experiences from the previous programme.
2. The **budget for European Voluntary Service, Action 2 in the annex to the programme**, should be **limited to 25%** of the total budget for the five actions for the period 2007 to 2013. In the new Commission proposal, Action 1 takes up 35% of the total budget and Action 2 takes up 33%. Since Action 1 can reach a larger number of young people and includes better support for disadvantaged young people, e.g. disabled people, this should be the key part of the programme. In the new Youth programme, 25% is enough for Action 2, particularly as Action 3 covers some of the same ground. For this reason, **Action 1 should receive a higher proportion, 40%**, of the total budget, rather than the present 35%. In addition, **Action 5 should receive 3% more** for funding the European Youth Week initiative (see Point 6).
3. In order to ensure that the **European Youth Forum** continues to function effectively as an **umbrella organisation for youth organisations**, in line with Parliament's report A5-0358/2003, the **annual appropriations should be set at €2 million as a minimum**.
4. In order to increase the number of participants and further consolidate the Youth in Action programme, **bodies active on youth issues at European level should be given appropriate funding**.
 - Annex, Action 4, Point 4.1, paragraph 8
In the interest of the sustainability and continuity of youth organisations founded pursuant to Decision 790/2004/EC of the European Parliament, and the Council meeting of 21 April 2004, the minimum annual amount for measure 4.1 shall be €2.3

¹ Commission White Paper COM(2001) 681 entitled 'A new impetus for European youth', submitted on 21 November 2001, not published in the OJ

million.

5. As well as continuing support for youth exchanges, **support** should also be given to interactive and innovative **youth seminars** as long as they are concerned with local, national and European topics with relevance for European citizenship and promote social and political engagement. Through support for youth seminars, young people should be encouraged and supported to develop their involvement in Europe as a political, social and cultural community.

- Article 4, Point 1

The aim of this action is to support exchanges of young people in order to increase their mobility, to support the organisation of youth seminars on political, social and cultural topics of interest to young people, and to support youth initiatives and projects and activities concerning participation in democratic life, in order to develop young people's citizenship and mutual understanding.

In this connection your rapporteur proposes including youth seminars in the text of the annex as well.

- Annex, Action 1, Point 1.2 a

Youth seminars

Youth seminars enable youth organisations and workers to organise European seminars on political, social and cultural topics, such as globalisation, peacekeeping and conflict solving, environmental problems, equality of women and men, immigration, social justice, racism, unemployment, etc. Youth seminars should primarily provide young people with a forum for exchanges of views at European level.

6. In view of the success of the European **Youth Week**, it should become **an annual event as an established part of European youth policy**. The European Youth Week should be incorporated in the action programme under Action 5, and 3% of the total budget of the action programme should be earmarked for this purpose, as indicated at Point 2 of this working document. The following activities should always be included in European Youth Week:

- organisation of an introductory and preparatory event for participants, providing an overview of the EU's institutional system;
- an introductory day under the title 'Youth Parliament', to give young people the opportunity to get to know democratic procedures in Parliament and hold discussions with MEPs;
- ongoing involvement of MEPs and the participating young people in European Youth Week activities;
- a prizegiving for the best youth projects supported by the Youth Programme;
- decentralised, local activities to make the programme better known.

7. The following amendments are concerned with ensuring that **disadvantaged young people can participate in the programme on equal terms** and associated **anti-discrimination** measures.

- Recital 12

There is a need to promote active citizenship and to this end, implementation of the action lines must reinforce efforts to combat all forms of exclusion and discrimination, including

on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, in accordance with Article 13 of the EEC Treaty.

- Article 3, paragraph 1, point (g)

(g) facilitating participation in the programme by disadvantaged young people, including young people with disabilities;

- Article 3, paragraph 4, point (d)

(d) contributing to the improvement of information for young people, including paying special attention to improved access to information for disabled young people;

- Article 8, paragraph 6, point (b), indent (iii)

(iii) it must have an appropriate infrastructure available, in particular with regard to ICT equipment and means of communication, taking account of accessibility for disabled people;

- Article 14, paragraph 7

Access to financial reserves should be facilitated for disadvantaged participants with special needs, particularly disabled young people.

8. The programme's general objectives should be **extended to include promoting the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe**, to take account of the draft Treaty on the Constitution for Europe, Article III-282, 1(e).
 - Article 2, paragraph 1, point (f)(f) to promote participation by young people in democratic life in Europe and in voluntary activities;
9. A further proposal concerns an addition to the programme's specific objectives. An extra point should be added on **providing informal education opportunities and opening up innovative ways to exercise active citizenship**, to encourage young people to inform themselves about Europe and the same time to play an active part in building up European democracy.
 - Article 3, paragraph 1, point (i)(i) providing informal education opportunities with a European dimension and opening up innovative ways to exercise active citizenship.
10. The states of the southern Caucasus should be included in the action programme and, to **keep it up to date** and flexible, the partner countries should be the countries designated as **neighbours under the European Neighbourhood Policy**.
 - Annex, Action 3, Point 3.1, paragraph 1This measure supports projects with the programme's partner countries, which are deemed to be the neighbouring countries listed under the provisions of the European Neighbourhood Policy.
11. This amendment aims to introduce an additional measure to enable young people to be **more involved in the programme's actual decision-making processes and, through consulting Parliament and the other organisations, to ensure ongoing monitoring of the programme's objectives and its implementation**.
 - Article 8, paragraph 3 aThe Commission and the participating countries shall consult the European Parliament, young people, youth organisations and other organisations concerned with project

implementation with regard to defining the programme's objectives and implementation and on other decisions taken by the national agencies concerning the programme.

12. To **optimise procedures, speed up** the time taken by supported projects and further **reduce bureaucracy** in connection with the programme, **accounts should be settled** and **financial aid that has been granted should be paid out as quickly as possible**.
 - Article 14, paragraph 3 a
The Commission shall pay out grants to projects normally within two months and no more than three months after award of the grant has been agreed.
13. In order to increase the efficiency of European Voluntary Service, your rapporteur proposes setting a minimum period of two months.
 - Annex, Action 2, Point 2.1, paragraph 2
The service lasts for at least two months. In duly justified exceptional cases, in particular to facilitate or enable the participation of young people with less opportunities, shorter periods may be allowed.
14. The **age range** for the **programme's main target group should remain 15–25 years** and not generally be extended to 13–30. To take account of the different rates at which young people go through the phases from childhood to adulthood, your rapporteur at the same time supports the proposal to allow flexibility, possibly subject to quotas, in extending the range to 13–30 in duly justified exceptional cases.
15. The following amendments are concerned with some changes to the terminology.
 - Recital 10
The Community's action includes a contribution to high quality education and training and must seek to eliminate inequalities and promote equality between **women and men**, pursuant to Article 3 of the Treaty.
 - To take account of the concept of participation by young people in shaping the programme, throughout the text of the action programme the term 'beneficiaries' should be replaced by 'participants'.