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(Information)

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 14 February 2002

on the promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning in the framework of the implementation of the objectives of the European Year of Languages 2001

(2002/C 50/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

the Nice European Council, which states that the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity;

RECALLING:

- (1) the Council Resolution of 31 March 1995 on improving and diversifying language learning and teaching within the education systems of the European Union ⁽¹⁾, according to which pupils should, as a general rule, have the opportunity of learning two languages of the Union other than their mother tongue(s);
- (2) the responsibility of Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity;
- (3) the Commission's 1995 White Paper entitled Teaching and learning: Towards the learning society;
- (4) the Council Conclusions of 12 June 1995 on linguistic diversity and multilingualism in the European Union;
- (5) the Council Resolution of 16 December 1997 on the early teaching of European Union languages ⁽²⁾;
- (6) the Presidency conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000 which include foreign languages within a European framework for the definition of basic skills;
- (7) Decision No 1934/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 on the European Year of Languages 2001 ⁽³⁾;
- (8) Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 7 December 2000 ⁽⁴⁾, welcomed by
- (9) the Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 14 December 2000 on the social inclusion of young people ⁽⁵⁾, which was approved by the Nice European Council;
- (10) the Council Decision of 19 January 2001 on Guidelines for Member States' employment policies for the year 2001 ⁽⁶⁾ and in particular the horizontal objective concerning lifelong learning;
- (11) the Report of the Education Council of 12 February 2001 on the concrete future objectives of education and training systems which was submitted to the Stockholm European Council and which explicitly includes improving foreign language learning as one of its objectives, and the Council Conclusions of 28 May 2001 on the follow-up to be given to the Report;
- (12) the Commission's 2000 Memorandum on lifelong learning which has given an impetus to a broad discussion, both at European level and in the Member States, on how to implement broad and coherent strategies for lifelong learning, *inter alia* in the field of language learning;
- (13) the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers ⁽⁷⁾;
- (14) the activities developed by the Council of Europe in the field of the promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 207, 12.8.1995, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 1, 3.1.1998, p. 2.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 232, 14.9.2000, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 364, 18.12.2000, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 374, 28.12.2000, p. 5.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 22, 24.1.2001, p. 18.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ L 215, 9.8.2001, p. 30.

EMPHASISES THAT:

- (1) the knowledge of languages is one of the basic skills which each citizen needs to acquire in order to take part effectively in the European knowledge society and therefore facilitates both integration into society and social cohesion; a thorough knowledge of one's mother tongue(s) can facilitate the learning of other languages;
- (2) knowledge of languages plays an important role in facilitating mobility, both in an educational context as well as for professional purposes and for cultural and personal reasons;
- (3) knowledge of languages is also beneficial for European cohesion, in the light of EU enlargement;
- (4) all European languages are equal in value and dignity from the cultural point of view and form an integral part of European culture and civilisation.

RECALLS THAT:

the European Year of Languages 2001, organised in cooperation with the Council of Europe, is stimulating awareness of linguistic diversity and the promotion of language learning;

the Report of the Education Council of 12 February 2001 on the concrete future objectives of education and training systems, which explicitly includes improving foreign language learning as one of its objectives, should be implemented via a detailed work programme to be defined in a joint report which the Council and Commission will present to the Barcelona European Council.

REAFFIRMS:

the objectives set out in Article 2 of Decision No 1934/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 on the European Year of Languages 2001, with a view to the further implementation of these objectives.

INVITES the Member States within the framework, limits and priorities of their respective political, legal, budgetary, educational and training systems:

- (1) to take the measures they deem appropriate to offer pupils, as far as possible, the opportunity to learn two, or where appropriate, more languages in addition to their mother tongues, and to promote the learning of foreign languages by others in the context of lifelong learning, taking into account the diverse needs of the target public and the importance of providing equal access to learning opportunities. In order to promote cooperation and mobility across Europe, the supply of languages should

be as diversified as possible, including those of neighbouring countries and/or regions;

- (2) to ensure that study programmes and educational objectives promote a positive attitude to other languages and cultures and stimulate intercultural communication skills from an early age;
- (3) to promote the learning of languages in vocational training, thereby taking into account the positive impact of language knowledge on mobility and employability;
- (4) to facilitate the integration of non-native speakers in the educational system and in society as a whole, including through-measures to improve their knowledge of the official language(s) of instruction, respecting the languages and cultures of their country of origin;
- (5) to promote the application of innovative pedagogical methods, in particular also through teacher training;
- (6) to encourage future language teachers to take advantage of relevant European programmes to carry out part of their studies in a country or region of a country where the language which they will teach later is the official language;
- (7) to set up systems of validation of competence in language knowledge based on the common European framework of reference for languages developed by the Council of Europe, taking sufficient account of skills acquired through informal learning;
- (8) to stimulate European cooperation in order to promote transparency of qualifications and quality assurance of language learning;
- (9) to bear in mind the wealth of linguistic diversity within the European Community in the context of the abovementioned objectives, and thus to encourage, *inter alia*, cooperation between official centres or other cultural institutions for the dissemination of the languages and cultures of the Member States.

INVITES the Commission:

- (1) to support the Member States in their implementation of the abovementioned recommendations;
- (2) to take into account, in this context, the principle of linguistic diversity in its relations with third and candidate countries;
- (3) to draw up proposals by early 2003 for actions for the promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning while ensuring consistency with the implementation of the report on concrete future objectives of education and training systems.