

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**on the follow-up of the Commission White Paper entitled 'A new impetus for European youth'**

(2002/C 119/04)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Whereas:

- (1) The Commission White Paper entitled 'A new impetus for European youth' is the outcome of an extensive consultation process which has been ongoing since the end of 1999. This initiative, which has received the unqualified backing of the Member States, successive presidencies and the European Parliament, suggest a new framework for European cooperation in the youth field.
- (2) The Council (Education and Youth) of 29 November 2001 under the Belgian Presidency welcomed with considerable interest the publication of the White Paper and the proposals contained in it and proposed further in-depth discussions aimed at defining the framework for future cooperation.
- (3) The White Paper was presented at the seminar in Ghent from 26 to 28 November 2001, where its importance as a first stage in the process of establishing a more comprehensive, consistent and intersectoral youth policy was emphasised, in particular by the young.
- (4) At the Director-Generals' meeting on 10 December 2001, discussions on the priorities and methods proposed in the White Paper, consultations with the young and the desire to involve candidate countries in the debate were taken a stage further and the need to define positions and to adopt decisions in so far as is possible under each Member State's internal consultation process was put forward,

HAVING REGARD TO the answers given by the Members States to the questionnaire established by the Presidency on the key issues of the White Paper:

1. RECOGNISES that the European Commission's White Paper 'A new impetus for European Youth', drafted following extensive consultation with all the relevant actors in the youth sector and welcomed by the Council (Education and Youth) on 29 November 2001, implies the creation of a new European cooperation in youth affairs and provides the basis for initiating a framework in this sector.
2. CONSIDERS that the approach proposed by the Commission, namely cooperation in the youth field using the open method of coordination in a specifically adapted way, and taking the youth dimension into account in other sectoral policies are both appropriate and feasible with a view to intensifying cooperation among States and making the youth dimension more visible and transparent among young people throughout Europe.
3. AGREES with the importance of the priorities proposed by the White Paper in the specific youth field: participation, voluntary service, information and research.
4. WELCOMES the adaptation to the youth field of the open method of coordination proposed by the White Paper, the implementation of which is still to be defined by the Council, while fully respecting Member States' competence and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, in order to strengthen the policy of cooperation in youth affairs using a flexible approach.
5. STRESSES the need to include the youth dimension in sectoral policies and programmes both at national and European level, in accordance with the priorities set out in the White Paper, and the need to explore further the concept of autonomy of young people with a view to adopting appropriate measures.
6. RECOGNISES the importance of the role of young people in participating in the cooperation process both at the national and at the European level.
7. AFFIRMS moreover that the candidate countries be included, as appropriate, in the cooperation process in the youth field proposed by the White Paper.
8. UNDERTAKES to pursue work towards drawing up a framework (common goals, timetable, working methods and follow-up) for cooperation in youth affairs with a view to adoption at the Council (Education and Youth) at its forthcoming meeting on 30 May 2002.