

Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on implementing the common objectives for participation by and information for young people in view of promoting their active European citizenship

(2006/C 297/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES, MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

whereas

- (1) In its Resolution of 27 June 2002 ⁽¹⁾ the Council adopted the open method of coordination as a new framework for European cooperation in the youth field and endorsed the four thematic priority areas for youth highlighted in the Commission's White Paper of November 2001 entitled 'A new impetus for youth', namely participation, information, voluntary activities and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth;
- (2) In its Resolution of 25 November 2003 ⁽²⁾, the Council adopted common objectives for participation by and information for young people under the open method of coordination and agreed to report on the implementation of those objectives by the end of 2005;
- (3) The European Council of March 2005 ⁽³⁾ adopted the European Youth Pact as one of the instruments contributing to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives;
- (4) In its Resolution of 24 May 2005 ⁽⁴⁾ on implementing the common objectives for youth information, the Council agreed to focus on increased networking among youth-oriented information structures and on the continuous training of those involved in the youth information field;
- (5) In its Resolution of 24 May 2005 ⁽⁵⁾ on increasing participation by young people in the system of representative democracy, the Council agreed to meet in 2006 to review progress on this objective on the basis of national reports on the participation priority;
- (6) In its Resolution of 24 May 2005 on the evaluation of activities conducted in the framework of European cooperation in the youth field ⁽⁶⁾, the Council agreed upon measures to further develop procedures for implementing the open method of coordination;
- (7) In its Resolution of 15 November 2005 ⁽⁷⁾ on addressing the concerns of young people, the Council invited the Commission to develop a structured dialogue and called on the Commission and the Member States to evaluate the framework of European cooperation in the youth field in 2009;
- (8) In its Communication of 20 July 2006 ⁽⁸⁾, the Commission proposed to confirm the relevance and validity of the common objectives on participation by and information for young people and to adapt and to intensify implementation of the adopted lines of action. The Commission also proposed concrete actions for structuring dialogue with young people and reinforcing the governance of the open method of coordination;

noting that

1. In its European Youth Information Charter the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency lays down a number of guidelines for minimum standards and quality measures which may serve as elements of a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to youth information work, which is a part of youth policy;
2. In its revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, the Council of Europe highlighted the importance of creating the conditions for genuine dialogue and partnership between young people and local and regional authorities and enabling young people and their representatives to be full actors in the policies affecting them;

EMPHASISE THAT

1. the socio-economic and cultural challenges posed by the decline in the proportion of young people in the European population should be reflected in EC policies on youth and generations;
2. cross-sectoral youth policies are of great importance to the efficient implementation of the Lisbon Strategy objectives for growth, jobs and citizenship policies;
3. the common priorities for participation by and information for young people have provided an impetus for national youth policies and remain essential for promoting active citizenship among young people, especially those with fewer opportunities;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 168, 13.07.2002, p. 2.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 295, 5.12.2003, p. 6.

⁽³⁾ 7619/1/05. Conclusion 37

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 141, 10.06.2005, p. 5.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 141, 10.06.2005, p. 3.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 141, 10.06.2005, p. 1.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 292, 24.11.2005, p. 5.

⁽⁸⁾ 11957/06.

4. youth organisations play a key role in facilitating and promoting youth participation and supporting young people in achieving their full potential;
5. for the development of youth policies, it is essential to engage young people, those active in youth work and youth organisations, as well as youth researchers — recognising their respective areas of competence — in policy-shaping discussions on matters affecting young people;
6. the concept of active citizenship should be broadened to encompass not only its social and political dimensions, but also its cultural, economic and evolving technological aspects;
7. the various forms of active citizenship which exist should be considered as an opportunity for enhancing democracy and bringing new topics to the political agenda;
8. the open method of coordination in the youth field should be reinforced as a means of better implementing the common objectives, when developing national youth policy programmes and strategies.

AGREE THAT

1. the relevance and validity of the common objectives for participation by and information for young people adopted in 2003 are confirmed;
2. the lines of action adopted for the common objectives for participation by and information for young people, as described in the Annex hereto, will be adapted and improved;
3. fora for debate and dialogue with young people, those active in youth work and youth organisations, and youth researchers, should be better structured and further developed, from the local to the European level;
4. the opinions and concerns of young people should be taken into account through both bottom-up and top-down dialogue processes, in order to ensure the inclusion of those aspects of young people's lives which they themselves consider relevant;
5. due account should be taken of this structured dialogue and its outcome in policy-making at the relevant levels;
6. an informal forum composed of representatives of young people, the current and future Council Presidencies, the European Parliament and the Commission should be set up and should meet regularly, in order to ensure consistency and continuity between agendas in the youth field;

7. in order to increase young people's sense of European citizenship, advantage should be taken of other initiatives such as the Commission's Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate (1);
8. the priority themes to be discussed until 2009 within this structured dialogue are social inclusion and diversity in 2007, intercultural dialogue in 2008 and perspectives for continued cooperation in the youth field in 2009. These issues should be discussed in parallel with the priority themes tackled under the Youth OMC and the European Youth Pact, as well as with horizontal priorities agreed upon in the youth field, such as anti-discrimination and health. These themes would be further defined by the Presidencies in accordance with their particular agendas.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES TO

1. identify, by the end of March 2007, those lines of action for participation and information on which they intend to concentrate and to define concrete measures and/or action plans for their implementation;
2. set up preparatory and follow-up mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of the common objectives in cooperation with the relevant actors, *inter alia* young people, youth organisations, youth researchers and local and regional authorities;
3. promote the common objectives for participation and information amongst regional and local authorities, youth organisations and young people and closely cooperate with regional and local authorities in order to ensure the fullest possible implementation of those objectives;
4. indicate, when reporting on the common objectives for greater knowledge and understanding of youth at the end of 2008, how the identified lines of action for the common objectives for participation by and information for young people have been implemented.

NOTE THAT THE COMMISSION INTENDS TO

1. launch a youth-specific Eurobarometer;
2. mobilise European youth information networks (2) to support the structured dialogue;
3. further develop the European Youth Portal;

(1) 14775/05 and 9393/06.

(2) Such as ERYICA, EURODESK and EYCA

4. organise together with relevant partners in the participating countries, and on a regular basis, a European Youth week with the participation of Commissioners and representatives of the other European institutions, preceded by a European youth portal consultation whenever possible;
5. arrange encounters with young people who do not usually have contacts with the European institutions.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO

1. ensure that the process of the open method of coordination remains open and transparent and that the best possible use is made of the information provided by that process;
2. develop and support a continuous and structured dialogue aimed at ensuring a timely and effective contribution by young people and other relevant actors in the youth field towards the formulation of policies relevant to young people's lives;
3. collaborate with the relevant actors, *inter alia* local and regional authorities, as well as with educational institutions and non-governmental organisations, in setting up this structured dialogue;
4. endeavour to ensure that the structured dialogue brings together those involved in youth issues either directly or

indirectly, in order to develop a more coherent and cross-sectoral approach to such issues;

5. encourage an inclusive approach to this dialogue involving young people engaged in various and innovative forms of active citizenship, non-organised young people and young people with fewer opportunities and create conditions for the equal participation of all young people;
6. encourage peer learning activities on information for and participation by young people, where appropriate involving European countries which are not members of the EU;
7. set up on a voluntary basis a working group at European level to consider practical means of assessing the impact of implementation of the common objectives for participation by and information for young people. The Commission is invited to report back to the Council on the results achieved by this working group;
8. make the best use of the 2007 — 2013 'Youth in Action' programme to support this structured dialogue;
9. discuss the implementation of this structured dialogue at national and European level in the context of the evaluation of the framework of European cooperation in the youth field in 2009.

ANNEX

MEASURES TO REINFORCE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON OBJECTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION BY AND INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Depending on the circumstances and priorities of each Member State, and without prejudice to the different responsibilities of the national, regional and local authorities within the Member States, the following non-exhaustive list of lines of action may be pursued:

INFORMATION**1. Access for young people to information services**

- (a) establish and promote — notably through the improved coordination of information services in their territory — coherent, overarching youth information strategies which address all issues relevant to young people;
- (b) develop web-based information and counselling services and other innovative approaches to youth information, such as mobile youth information units, so as to facilitate the access to information of young people with fewer opportunities;

2. Quality information

- (c) provide education and training opportunities for those responsible for youth information;
- (d) further develop individual information and counselling services;
- (e) develop youth information and counselling services suited to the needs of young people themselves, and use those information channels that are most frequently used by young people;
- (f) make the best use of existing guidelines for minimum quality standards and/or develop quality standards in order to ensure high quality information;
- (g) improve the evaluation of the quality of the information;
- (h) endeavour to ensure that the findings of youth research are available in an understandable and user-friendly manner;

3. Participation by young people in information activities

- (i) encourage youth organisations to disseminate information about their central role in building civil society;
- (j) enhance the participation of young people in producing and evaluating public information strategies;
- (k) encourage young people to participate in the collection, production and dissemination of information targeted at them and of interest to them, and in related counselling activities.

PARTICIPATION**1. Participation by young people in civic life**

- (a) create suitable conditions for the functioning of youth organisations and youth action groups, for instance by providing financial support or facilities for their activities;
- (b) encourage the provision of wide-ranging and equal opportunities for all young people to participate;
- (c) encourage young people and youth organisations to establish global partnerships;
- (d) identify new forms of participation and support pilot projects to underpin these new forms;
- (e) promote structured dialogue with young people on issues that are of concern to them, involving both national youth councils and young people engaged in new forms of active citizenships, such as networks and action groups, in the consultation process;
- (f) support the development of and networking between local participative structures, such as youth councils, which systematically involve young people in local decision-making bodies and mobilise the support of regional and local authorities;

- (g) ensure that young people are systematically consulted on matters concerning them and encourage the development and the implementation of local youth initiatives;
- (h) create cross-sectoral policies at national level and involve young people in their implementation;
- (i) study the possibilities for establishing web-based associations;
- (j) develop tools to promote participation, such as guidelines for participatory mechanisms or interactive policy participation fora on the Internet.

2. Greater participation by young people in the system of representative democracy

- (k) develop practical measures to ensure the increased participation of young people in the institutions of representative democracy, whilst respecting the values of human dignity, freedom, democracy and equality;
- (l) make better use of information technology to facilitate the participation of young people in elections at local, national, regional and European levels;
- (m) where appropriate, consider debating the voting age and make full use of the experience gained in some Member States;

3. Support for various forms of learning to participate

- (n) develop synergies with actions that are undertaken in the education field. At European level this can be achieved through closer links with the open method of coordination in education and training. Appropriate measures at national, regional and local level, for instance active citizenship initiatives with schools, should be developed within the Member States;
 - (o) provide young people with non-formal learning opportunities that will increase their participation in the development of civil society and strengthen the links between school and civil society, youth organisations and local youth work. Special attention should be paid to young people with fewer opportunities;
 - (p) develop, assess and disseminate best practices on democracy education and youth participation.
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