

- audiovisual sector, especially with respect to the cultural dimension of the audiovisual media.
- (c) Proposals for new actions should entail re-examination of existing priorities and activities, so that such new proposals can be given due weight.
 - (d) Support to networks should concentrate on concrete artistic and cultural projects to be carried out by them, with a view to improving innovation and dialogue.
 - (e) The Council assumes that the Commission will retain its current practice in regard to public aid to promote culture and heritage conservation Article 92 (3) (d).
6. The Council again emphasizes that cultural measures at European level must be organized with a view to maximum efficiency in the context of the financial perspectives.
 7. Pending the consideration of the Commission proposals for Community action from 1996, and taking into account the need to avoid any interruption in Community cultural action which has already begun, the Council invites the Commission to continue its activities in 1995 on an interim basis, without prejudicing decisions regarding the content of future actions.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS OF YOUTH MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

of 30 November 1994

on the promotion of voluntary service periods for young people

(94/C 348/02)

Under the policy of cooperation in matters relating to youth and having regard to the competence of the Member States in regard to voluntary services, the Council and the Ministers of Youth meeting within the Council examined the possibilities for developing trans-national voluntary service periods for young people.

The Youth for Europe III programme (now being examined under the co-decision procedure) ⁽¹⁾ acknowledges this cooperation policy by including a specific measure (A II 2) which can give new impetus to periods of voluntary service.

The recommendation by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the Member States of that organization concerning the promotion of voluntary service ⁽²⁾ can also result in a boost for these actions.

The Council and the Ministers have, however, found that the existing laws and regulations in the Member States can, when they are applied in practice, constitute restrictions on voluntary service in another Member State, in particular for periods of medium- and long-duration.

Considering that the voluntary service periods undertaken in Europe by the young:

- take the form of public service activities undertaken by voluntary organizations which promote, *inter alia*, the development of the personality of the volunteers and give them an opportunity to demonstrate their sense of responsibility to society and to the construction of a new Europe;
- are based on the free personal decision of the volunteers concerned,
- are not in place of compulsory national service, where this exists, and are developed and carried out by and under the responsibility of voluntary organizations,
- represent a voluntary unpaid commitment to the community and are considered desirable by that community,

the Council and the Ministers note that a number of measures exist which fall within the jurisdiction of the Member States and which should help to overcome any

⁽¹⁾ (Common position) OJ No C 232, 20. 8. 1994.

⁽²⁾ Council of Europe, R(94) of 4 May 1994.

obstacles to undertaking periods of transnational voluntary service, in particular for periods of more than three months.

Member States should therefore consider, in the context of their own legal systems, the desirability of:

- facilitating, for young volunteers living in one or several Member States taking part in the Youth for Europe III programme, entry to and residence in the Member State concerned for the exclusive purpose of completing a period of voluntary service,
- encouraging volunteers, on the basis of agreements between organizations which may deal with voluntary service in their own Member State and in the partner country, to take up activities of this kind,
- allowing, in accordance with the regulations of the country of origin of the volunteer or of the country in which the period of service is worked, for:
 - adequate social protection for volunteers, regarding insurance for sickness, accident and civil liability (*),

— recognition (where such a procedure is required) of organizations which may deal with voluntary service, their rights and their responsibilities,

— granting due importance to voluntary service periods within the framework of the national youth assistance, education and training system, where this system exists,

— facilitating the performing of these activities, among other things by granting, where appropriate, aid compatible with the existing system in the Member State concerned, in view of the public service character of such activities.

The aim of implementing such measures should be to build up the voluntary services in order to meet growing demand, to promote in different areas a commitment to Europe which may take various forms and develop, as far as possible in equal measure, bilateral and multilateral exchange relationships.

(*) On the suggestion of the Spanish delegation, statement by the Council for the minutes:

'The Council considers that the reference to adequate social protection for volunteers will not be obligatory in Member States whose legislation does not provide such protection, and such Member States will not be obliged to bring in a regulation in the future.

If appropriate, Member States will be able to ensure this protection in accordance with principles of equality of treatment, reciprocity and in case it should be necessary, reimbursement of costs recognized by the legislation of the State of reception.'

The Council and the Ministers ask the Commission, in the context of these conclusions, to report on the development of the situation regarding voluntary service periods for young people and to propose practical measures to promote cooperation between the countries taking part in the Youth for Europe III programme, as well as between the organizations dealing with voluntary service.