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*(Information)*

## COUNCIL

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

of 8 February 1999

on youth participation

(1999/C 42/01)

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

Taking due account of the United Nations Convention  
on the rights of the child, in particular Articles 12 to 15;

Considering the Conclusions of the European Council of  
Cardiff on 15 and 16 June 1998, which seek to bring the  
European Union closer to the people and make it more  
transparent;

Recalling the Lisbon Declaration on youth policies and  
programmes<sup>(1)</sup> which postulates that the active partici-  
pation of youth is to be encouraged in all spheres of  
society and in decision-making processes;

Considering the resolution on measures to protect  
minors in the European Union, adopted by the European  
Parliament on 12 December 1996<sup>(2)</sup>, which calls upon  
the Member States to promote the political participation  
of young people and, in particular, to support the esta-  
blishment of representative youth parliaments at the  
local, regional and national levels, and to encourage the  
participation of children in democratically governed  
organisations and associations;

Bearing in mind Recommendation R(97)3 of 4 February  
1997 and Recommendation 1286 of the Council of  
Europe of 24 January 1996 which advocate a change in  
attitude to young people as individuals with rights of  
their own and favour their active and responsible partici-  
pation in the family and in society;

Taking note of the debate which took place at the  
informal meeting of EU Ministers of Youth in Cork in  
1996, which put the inclusion of youth in institutions of  
social, political, cultural and economic life and the  
promotion of personal development in the foreground,

NOTE that both the substance and the time horizons of  
the decisions taken at the Community level and at  
national levels have a long-term impact on the future  
prospects and opportunities for the young generation;

REGARD the increased active participation sought by  
young people as one of the central challenges in the  
process of shaping European society;

RECOGNISE the importance of young people having a  
say in all aspects of society, in particular in political,  
social, economic and cultural affairs;

Therefore CONSIDER it desirable to grant young people  
in the European Union a wider scope for active partici-  
pation in European and national civic society and  
political affairs, the objective being to enable young  
people, on a step-by-step basis, to assume their share of  
both opportunities and responsibilities and to encourage  
them to become active citizens;

ENCOURAGE the European Institutions and the Member  
States of the European Union to consider how to  
associate the citizens more closely with the shaping of  
European policies, to enable young people to participate  
in all aspects of active citizenship, including their  
political participation and their mobility within the  
European Union, thereby involving the young citizens in  
the process of further European integration;

<sup>(1)</sup> Adopted at the World Conference of Ministers responsible  
for youth, Lisbon, August 1998.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 20, 20.1.1997, p. 170.

CALL UPON young people to avail themselves of the existing participatory opportunities and to bring in their contributions to active citizenship;

Expressly INVITE the youth associations and youth organisations as well as the young people themselves to forward their views in general and specific proposals for the promotion of participatory projects;

Considering the above, the Council and the Ministers of Youth meeting within the Council HEREBY ADOPT the following Resolution:

#### Youth participation at the Community level

The Commission is invited:

- to focus on young people's interests as a guiding principle for action to be applied to all relevant policy areas and, where appropriate, to assess the potential effects of measures to be launched at the Community level on the living conditions of young people, and to show ways and means of taking the interests of young people into account,
- to promote the involvement of young people in the development, execution and evaluation of youth activities and programmes at the Community level by utilising the interest young people take in shaping the Europe of today and tomorrow,
- to promote the performance of studies to examine the possibilities and conditions of participation for young people in Europe, the exchange of experience, information and the documentation of activities in this field,
- to enter into dialogue with young people in the areas outlined above, and to take the opinion of young people into consideration in the development of Community programmes and activities in these areas,
- to enhance at Community level an exchange of experience on measures or projects aiming at promoting the participation of young people.

#### Youth participation in the Member States

The Council and the Ministers of Youth meeting within the Council advocate the full participation of Europe's

youth in the political, economic, social and cultural potentials of the Member States, and strive to ensure this within their respective scope of action. They welcome and support the efforts made in the Member States to involve young people to a greater extent in decisions of relevance to the development of politics and society.

In the further pursuit of existing efforts, having regard to the competence of the Member States and in the context of their own legal system as regards the reception and implementation of the following objectives, the Council and the Ministers of Youth meeting within the Council agree to the importance of:

- supporting the creativity of young people to develop different forms of participatory dialogues in civic society,
- encouraging in the best possible way innovative participatory projects and structures,
- encouraging the participation of young people in democratic processes at local, regional and national level,
- promoting the integration of innovative participatory projects and learning opportunities in democratic decision-making structures,
- encouraging the active participation of young people in the development of the local community, in particular for young people with little experience of such involvement,
- facilitating adequate access for young people to participatory opportunities so as to strengthen the social involvement of youth initiatives and innovative networks and young people outside of organised structures,
- encouraging within existing youth associations and youth organisations opportunities for cooperation and participation with open access to all young people,
- recognising the valuable contribution provided by youth associations and organisations to the development of channels for youth participation at local, regional and national level.

The Member States are invited to focus on the young people's interests as a guiding principle of action to be applied to all relevant policy areas and, where appropriate, to assess the potential effects of measures to be launched on the living conditions of young people.