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THE YOUTH FOR EUROPE PROGRAMME

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I INTRODUCTION

1. The Youth for Europe Programme is an action programme designed to promote youth exchanges in the European Community. The second phase of the programme was adopted by the Council Decision of the 29 July 1991, and covers the period 1 January 1992 to 31 December 1994¹.
2. In 1993, the Commission presented a report detailing the first year of implementation of the second phase of the Programme².
3. The present report covers the second operational year of the second phase and is based on the information provided by the National Agencies responsible for the implementation of the Programme at national level in the Member States.

II THE STRUCTURE AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

4. The second phase of the Youth for Europe Programme comprises a range of incentive measures to promote the development of youth exchanges in the European Community, by increasing their number in all Member States and by according particular attention to the involvement of young people who have little opportunity to meet young people from other Member States.
5. The Programme is designed, in particular, to stimulate the participation of young people whose personal circumstances have previously prevented them from taking part in existing exchanges between Member States.
6. The Programme is also aimed at improving the quality of youth exchanges by diversifying the type of projects, achieving a better balance between the Member States and by providing youth workers involved in these exchanges with relevant training.
7. Youth for Europe exchange projects are aimed at young people aged between 15 and 25 years. Additional measures are aimed at those able to generate a multiplier effect so that young people can derive the maximum benefit from their participation in exchanges.

¹ Decision 91/395/EEC of 29 July 1991, OJ L 217, p.25

² COM (93) 524

8. During its second phase, the Programme comprises various actions designed to support and achieve its general objectives across the Member States :

- Action I.1 : direct support for youth exchanges;
- Action I.2 : voluntary service activities;
- Action I.3 : support for the organization of short study visits for youth workers;
- Action I.4 : support for training activities for youth workers, particularly at European level;
- Action I.5 : pilot projects;
- Action II : support for infrastructures designated by the authorities in each Member State as responsible for the coordination of the Youth for Europe Programme at national level (National Agencies).

An estimated budget of 25 million ECU was initially earmarked for the financing of the second phase of the Programme from 1992 to 1994. Operational Community budgetary provision for the period covered by this report amounted to 9.5 million ECU.

III THE OPERATIONAL AND ADVISORY INFRASTRUCTURE

9. According to article 4 of the Council Decision, the Youth for Europe Programme is implemented by the Commission in active cooperation with the Member States.

The Youth for Europe Advisory Committee

10. The Commission is assisted in the implementation of the Programme by an Advisory Committee comprising two representatives from each Member State, appointed by the Commission following nominations by each country. The Council of Europe and the Youth Forum of the European Communities are invited to attend the Committee's meetings as observers.
11. The Advisory Committee met three times during the period covered by this report. It was consulted on the overall development of the Programme in the various Member States, in particular with regard to budgetary, evaluation and training aspects, the access of the EFTA/EEA countries to the Programme and the preparation of the third phase of the Youth for Europe Programme. The Committee was also informed about the implementation of the Priority Actions in the Youth Field by the Commission. In the light of the enlargement of the Programme to the EFTA/EEA countries, the Commission invited representatives from those countries to attend the Advisory Committee meetings as observers, the discussions focusing on the procedures to be established, breakdown of the overall funds available for the Programme and detailed budget per Action, and the measures and timing for the implementation of the Programme.

The National Agencies

12. The Youth for Europe Programme was the first largely decentralized Community programme. According to the terms of the Council Decision, the Member States are responsible for the promotion, coordination and co-financing of its actions and accompanying measures. Each country was required to designate structures to this end (National Agencies). In Belgium, there are three "National" Agencies, one for each of the three language communities.
13. These structures were set up during the first operational year of the first phase of the Programme. Their essential task was to implement the Programme, establishing direct contact with young people in their own country, and providing advice on the Programme, as well as its administration.
14. In the light of the future enlargement of the Programme to include the EFTA/EEA countries, the designated future National Agencies of the Programme were invited, from the beginning of the year covered by this report, to make preparations for their access to the network of the National Agencies and to ensure that the necessary steps were taken for the implementation of the Programme at national level. In 1993, the Commission organized a training course for these new National Agencies focusing on the operational procedures for all the Actions of the Programme and on the inter-agency consultation procedure.
15. The priorities of the National Agencies have changed since the first phase of the Programme. With the development of the Programme and its acknowledgement by young people at all levels, the National Agencies played an important role in the provision of counselling and guidance for young people and youth organisations wishing to participate in the Programme. The National Agencies have played a very relevant role in providing information on the Programme, other existing possibilities at European level and on the envisaged future perspectives.
16. Two joint working meetings of the National Agencies were organised in 1993, dealing mainly with operational aspects of the Programme and the enlargement of the Programme to include the EFTA/EEA countries. Particular attention was paid to the development of the National Agencies network in terms of communication and cooperation. Representatives of the designated future National Agencies attended both working meetings.
17. The National Agencies also took part in two study visits to the EFTA/EEA countries at the invitation of the designated National Agencies in the respective countries. The first visit was held in Finland, Sweden and Norway, and the second in Austria and Liechtenstein. Both provided the National Agencies with an opportunity to become acquainted with youth work and youth structures in the countries concerned, to meet representatives of National Youth Councils and youth organisations, and to have an overall view of the youth policy and future perspectives in each of the countries visited.
18. The Portuguese National Agency invited the new EFTA/EEA National Agencies to take part in a study visit designed to provide participants with an in-depth view of the youth work situation and youth structures in Portugal, and to further develop cooperation between youth organisations in the countries concerned. This type of activity has proved to be particularly successful in terms of developing contacts with countries with which no youth exchange tradition exists.
19. The Italian National Agency and the Commission co-organised a thematic seminar on information, in Rome in October 1993. The seminar focused on the importance of quality

information provision in relation to the development of youth exchanges, and on proposals for the further development of various models such as inter-agency communication, a centralized partner-finding system, and information activities to be supported at local, regional, national and European level. Discussion on participation criteria and aims, and methodological and didactic contents resulted in a series of recommendations to the National Agencies which should be implemented in the third year of the second phase.

Technical Assistance Unit

20. The Commission is assisted in the overall implementation of the Programme by a technical assistance unit, the Petra/Youth Bureau.
21. The Petra Youth Bureau was established to assist the Commission in the implementation of the second phase of the Youth for Europe Programme and the Priority Actions in the youth field, in addition to the implementation of the second phase of the Petra Programme.
22. In 1993, the Youth Unit of the Petra Youth Bureau continued to assist the Commission, in the dissemination of information about the Youth for Europe Programme, the processing of grant applications submitted by European non-governmental organisations to the Commission, the central management of Action I.3, the general monitoring and evaluation of the Programme, the overall coordination of European-level training courses, and the preparation and follow-up of Advisory Committee and National Agencies' meetings. In addition, the Youth Unit provided advice to the National Agencies in all aspects related to the implementation of the Programme, assisting in particular the designated EFTA/EEA National Agencies in preparing their access to the Programme.

IV DEVELOPMENT AND RESULTS OF THE ACTIVITIES WITHIN ACTIONS OF THE PROGRAMME

Action I.1 : direct support for youth exchanges

23. Support is accorded to bi-, tri- or multilateral project-centred exchanges lasting at least one full week and involving a group of 16 to 60 young people aged between 15 and 25 years, residing in the Member States. The projects must have an educational purpose and be theme-related. As explicitly stated in the Council Decision, priority in allocating support is given to exchanges which :
 - are specially designed for young people with disadvantaged backgrounds;
 - bring together young people with different social, economic and cultural backgrounds;
 - make young people aware of the European dimension, for example through their multilateral nature;
 - stress the active participation of young people from the beginning of the project;
 - concern regions of the Community where few opportunities for exchanges are available;
 - concern young people living in peripheral areas and/or linguistic areas having a limited coverage.
24. According to the decentralized nature of the Programme, in 1993 the National Agencies received the major part of the overall budget - 76.6% - for the direct support of youth exchanges (see Annex 1).

25. The particular importance of Action 1.1 in the context of the Programme should be emphasized. This Action enabled young people throughout the Community to become involved in multinational youth projects thus enabling them to raise their awareness and deepen their knowledge of other European countries and their cultures. The National Agencies' working infrastructures were adapted to meet the increasing demand, the result showing an improvement in the numbers and in the quality of the projects supported.
26. In quantitative terms, the applications for youth exchange projects increased and the National Agencies thus had to assess applications in even greater detail to establish their relative quality.
27. The Programme had a greater impact on youth organisations throughout Europe and the National Agencies were obliged to apply priorities in the allocation of grants, due to the disparity between the number of applications received and the financial means available. The National Agencies played an important role providing advice and guidance and this contributed, to a large extent, to the general improvement in the quality of the projects.
28. The provisional reports from the National Agencies indicate that some 40.000 young people have benefitted directly from the Programme in 1993, an increase of 33% on the 1992 participation figures. Concerning the gender of the participants, the equal participation of young men and women in the Programme in 1993 followed the trend identified in the previous year.
29. National Agencies' reports also indicate that amongst the participants who benefitted from the Youth for Europe Programme were young people who were not members of youth organisations and associations, and that new organisations were involved in the Programme, the demand coming mainly from regional and local level.
30. The most popular type of projects within Youth for Europe continued to be bilateral exchanges. However, as youth organisations develop their international contacts and enlarge their networks, trends indicate that tri- and multilateral exchanges will increase.
31. Due to the higher costs incurred in supporting multilateral exchange projects, and the significant impact on the National Agencies' financial provision, National Agencies which have already allocated 20% of their exchange budget to multilateral activities can forward further multilateral projects to the Commission for selection and grant allocation at central level.
32. In 1993, the Commission received 60 applications for multilateral exchange activities, 31 from European NGOs and 29 forwarded by National Agencies. The Commission funded 42 projects, of which 25 concerned European NGOs and 17 concerned National Agencies. Overall, some 1,788 participants were involved.
33. The projects supported reflected a wide range of interests and priorities among young people across the European Community. Themes varied, the predominant ones being environmental issues, the media, artistic expression and European awareness, but all provided an opportunity for communication between young people in a multicultural setting.
34. The Council Decision clearly states that one third of the budget should be allocated to exchanges for participants who are disadvantaged for socio-economic, geographical, cultural or physical reasons. The figures provided by the National Agencies demonstrate that this proportion has in fact been surpassed.

35. An increase of bilateral youth exchange projects between countries with little exchange tradition, mainly on the periphery of the Community, and also more diversified regional participation within Member States should be noted. Considerable efforts were made by the National Agencies to promote bilateral contacts between youth organisations and organized bilateral training courses for youth leaders, in particular with the EFTA/EEA countries, in view of the future enlargement of the Programme, thus continuing to ensure and further improve regional balance in youth exchanges across the Member States.
36. The efforts made by the National Agencies in finding appropriate partners abroad contributed to a large extent to the increase of regional balance. The partner-finding system set up during the first phase of the Programme improved in efficiency during the period covered by this report. A working group of the National Agencies dealing with this specific subject was set-up and its recommendations, discussed in detail with all the National Agencies in a working meeting held in Rome, in October, will be implemented before the end of the second phase of the Programme.

Action I.2 : voluntary service activities

37. The Council Decision states that : "... Grants shall be made available on a experimental basis to support transnational projects enabling young people to take part in voluntary service activities in another Member State". In this context, "voluntary service activities" means activities in which young people devote their time and efforts to a cause of value to society, excluding similar activities which exist in some Member States in the framework of compulsory military service or as an alternative thereto".
38. In the light of the activities supported, the experience gained in 1993 will be a basis for the future and recommendations to adapt the established guidelines, to meet the needs and requests from young people for new types of projects, will be taken into account for future use.
39. The activities supported by the Commission were not only limited to practical work, but also allowed for interaction between the participants and the hosting community. The quality of participants' preparation before departure was one of the main selection criteria for grants, and importance was attached to the monitoring and support of the young people during their stay. Also, emphasis was placed on the multiplier effects and the benefit to the volunteer's community upon his return, as well as the follow-up and thorough evaluation of the projects.
40. Voluntary service activities were managed at central level during the experimental phase. The National Agencies, however, played an important role providing participants and organisations with detailed information, advice and counselling, and were informed of the Commission's decisions on the projects supported.
41. In 1993, the Commission supported 42 voluntary service projects. Time and effort of young people was devoted to a variety of projects in the field of environmental protection, development of youth exchange projects and youth networks, assistance to the elderly, local community work, street work, drugs prevention, the fight against racism and xenophobia. It should be noted that the reduced participation in this Action demonstrates the continuing difficulties encountered by young people when travelling and working outside their own country; the existing legislation at national level not yet being adapted to encourage youth mobility. A thorough evaluation of the impact of this Action within the Programme will be presented in the near future.

Action I.3 : short study visits

42. This Action contributes to a large extent to the development of international contacts between youth workers and youth organisation officers, with a view to developing contacts thus encouraging youth organisations to become involved in youth exchange projects which may be implemented under Action I.1. Multilateral groups of youth workers, interested in the same topics and issues, are given the possibility of meeting potential partners and discussing joint projects.
43. In 1993, the Commission allocated 400 bursaries to the National Agencies. The recruitment, selection and preparation of the participants, as well as the contents and the practical organisation of the visits were the responsibility of the National Agencies.
44. The National Agencies are assisted in the organisation of short study visits by bodies familiar with youth work. As the programme became known, different types of organisations, mainly at regional and local level, applied to the National Agencies for the organisation of the short study visits. The National Agencies can ensure diversification, the current situation showing a wider regional spread than in previous years. The evaluation questionnaires completed by the participants strongly emphasize the value of this Action particularly in the context of youth exchange projects which emerged from the contacts made during the visits.
45. The demand for participation in short study visits increased significantly during the period of this report. Due to the disparity of the applications received and the number of bursaries available, the National Agencies applied stricter criteria when selecting the participants. It should also be noted that the EFTA/EEA countries have sent participants to study visits during this year at their own expense, thus preparing in advance their full participation when the Programme is enlarged.

Action I.4 : support for training activities

46. Activities supported under this Action include training activities of youth workers from two or more Member States, or training related to youth exchanges.
47. The activities supported by the Commission included : multilateral training activities submitted by European NGOs, and training courses organised by the National Agencies. Of the 21 applications received, 17 were approved, 10 of which were submitted by European NGOs and 7 by the National Agencies, involving a total of 378 participants. Particular attention was paid by the National Agencies in the organisation of bilateral training courses, involving youth workers and trainers from countries or regions with reduced cooperation to date.

Action I.5 : pilot projects

48. The Council Decision provides aid "... for pilot projects relating to youth workers, with the chief aims of :
- making them aware of the situation of young people in other Member States;
 - enabling them to establish the contacts necessary for the organisation of exchanges;
 - promoting intercultural training".
49. Two main areas of activity were launched : training and information material and the systematic exchange of information between youth worker trainers and training institutions. Furthermore, other pilot projects directly linked to the development of youth exchanges and mobility in the European Community could also be submitted for funding.
50. The projects supported by the Commission included : 10 projects in the field of publications, pilot projects for disadvantaged young people, cross-cultural youth exchanges evaluation and projects illustrating models of good practice amongst young people involved in youth exchanges.
51. The Commission will draw particular attention to the reports of the activities carried out under this Action, in order to learn from a broad variety of experiences which may lead to the diversification of future activities. An overall evaluation will be available during the third year of the second phase.

Action II : support to National Agencies

52. The Council Decision specifies that the Commission shall provide support for the National Agencies in connection with the development of information, consultation facilities, coordination of activities, and the administration of grants for projects within the Youth for Europe Programme.
53. The dissemination of information continued to be a priority of the National Agencies. Efforts were made to provide information on the Programme to the potential target groups, young people, exchange organisers and relevant bodies at local, regional and national level, decentralising this provision and meeting specific needs and interests.
54. The National Agencies are often identified by young people in general as the main source of information related not only to youth affairs, but also to other specific interests of young people like vocational training, education, job opportunities, etc. As a consequence, the National Agencies played a major role as providers of advice and guidance to young people and youth organisations, having to adjust their working structure to meet the increasing demand. Several types of information activities were held by the National Agencies : courses at regional and national level, bringing together youth workers and those responsible in youth structures; bilateral training courses bringing together youth organisation representatives from two different countries, in order to encourage the development of bilateral youth exchanges; multilateral training courses at European level, mainly focused on the development of intercultural learning.
55. Particular attention was paid to the preparation of the enlargement of the Programme to include the EFTA/EEA countries, i.e. by producing information material on the subject. Preparatory measures, which were discussed in the working meeting of the National

Agencies held in Rome, also included the setting-up of an enlarged partner finding system, the planning of specific study visits and training courses, the consultation procedures for the Priority Actions in the Youth Field, and practical measures enabling them to deal with this enlargement. Special financial support was provided by the Commission to each National Agency.

V FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

56. The Programme confirms its leading role in the promotion of European youth exchanges in general. The consolidation of the existing framework and the emergence of new networks and links in the field of youth mobility and exchanges are already foreseen.
57. The support to youth exchange projects and the measures considered to be of great value and complementarity for its development and the increase of its quality will continue. Particular attention will be paid to the assessment of an increase in demand for Community financial aid already envisaged in the years to come.
58. The future enlargement of the Programme to the EFTA/EEA countries will imply that, as from 1994, these countries will participate fully in the Programme, thus enlarging the range of Actions and possibilities for young people to increase their mobility throughout Europe.
59. In the light of the enlargement of the current phase, and the preparation of the third phase of the Programme, the Commission launched a call for tender for the external evaluation of the Programme, covering the first phase and the first year of the second phase. The aims of the evaluation were to assess to what extent the objectives of the Programme have been met; to identify the European dimension and the added value of the Community's involvement in the Programme; and to identify and recommend new approaches and measures which could make the Programme more effective. The external evaluation report was published in the second half of the year, and was presented to the Advisory Committee and to the National Agencies of the Programme.
60. On a quantitative level, the conclusions of the report indicate increasing numbers of participants in all Member States as the second phase continues, with particular emphasis placed on reaching disadvantaged young people and enabling them to participate in the Programme. On a qualitative level, the report underlined that the active participation of young people is considered to be a very strong point of the Programme. Youth exchange projects with an explicitly educational purpose stimulate ongoing links between participants and develop young people's awareness of the European dimension. Furthermore, it is apparent that the Programme brought added value to international youth exchange activities, encouraged discussion of global issues related to youth policy at Community level and raised the standing and image of youth work and international youth exchanges in many Member States.

YOUTH FOR EUROPE PROGRAMME

BUDGET 1993

Action I.1	Direct support to youth exchanges	7.280.000 ECU *
Action I.2	Voluntary service	120.000 ECU
Action I.3	Study visits	360.000 ECU
Action I.4, I.5	Professional development for youth workers and Pilot projects	340.000 ECU
Action II	European level activities and technical support	500.000 ECU
	National Agencies	900.000 ECU
Total estimated budget available for expenditure in 1993		9.500.000 ECU

* : this sum includes support for multilateral activities submitted by National Agencies and European NGOs (10%)

	Action I.1 : Financial aid for youth exchanges ⁽¹⁾ by Member State	Action I.3 : Number of grants for the organisation of short study visits by Member State
B	273.246	25
D	1.097.055	55
DK	218.395	15
E	824.476	50
F	822.765	55
GR	332.803	50
I	1.002.292	50
IRL	214.396	15
L	149.721	50
NL	356.921	25
P	351.712	25
UK	908.218	55
EC	728.000	
TOTAL	7.280.000	400

⁽¹⁾ : Grants calculated according to the parameters set down in article 3.A. of the appendix to the Council Decision of 29 July 1991 (91/395/EEC)

**YOUTH FOR EUROPE PROGRAMME
ACTION L1 - Direct support to youth exchanges**

	Number of participants in 1993 per National Agency	Number of projects accepted in 1993 per National Agency
B/FI	1.088	25
B/Fr	766	33
B/De	39	1
D	6.933	191
DK	1.494	84
E	3.672	210
F	5.742	180
GR		
I	3.835	138
IRL	1.656	57
LUX	1.203	29
NL	782	50
P	2.544	100
U.K.	10.016	576
EC TOTAL1	39.770	1.674

¹ : Projects allocated centrally

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DOCUMENTS

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