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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

from :	the General Secretariat of the Council
to :	the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council

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Subject :	Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth

RESOLUTION
ON COMMON OBJECTIVES FOR A GREATER UNDERSTANDING AND
KNOWLEDGE OF YOUTH

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

WHEREAS

1. The Commission White Paper entitled "A new impetus for European youth" presented on 21 November 2001 sets out a new framework for European cooperation in the youth field;
2. In its Resolution of 27 June 2002¹ the Council adopted the open method of coordination as a new framework for cooperation in the youth field and endorsed four priorities i.e. participation, information, voluntary activities and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth;
3. In its Resolution of 25 November 2003² the Council adopted common objectives for the first two priorities i.e. participation by and information for young people;
4. In its Communication of 30 April 2004³, the Commission proposed common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth based on the replies of the Member States to a Commission questionnaire and after consulting young people and researchers;
5. The Council of 28 May 2004 confirmed the importance of the priority concerning a greater understanding and knowledge of youth;

¹ OJ C 168 of 13.07.2002, p. 2.

² OJ C 295 of 5.12.2003, p. 6.

³ doc. 9183/04 [COM (2004) 336 final]

(i) CONSIDER THAT

1. The priority a “greater understanding and knowledge of youth” is of paramount importance for policy making in the youth field since in order to meet the needs and expectations of young people, policies are to be based on the best available knowledge and understanding of their needs and expectations and good practices;
2. A knowledge based approach to policy making is particularly relevant and useful when dealing with rapidly evolving realities such as the situation of younger generations in Europe;
3. It is all the more essential at a stage where Member States have adopted common objectives on the themes of participation and of information for young people and are currently designing implementation policies;
4. Knowledge held by youth policy-makers, youth researchers, organisations of and for young people and young people themselves must be adequately taken into consideration in order to ensure a better knowledge and understanding of youth;
5. A better knowledge and understanding of youth includes understanding the differences in the life situations of young women and young men and the circumstances that bring these about.

AGREE upon the following common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth:

For timely, efficient and sustainable policy making, it is important to encourage the development of a coherent, relevant and qualitative knowledge area in the youth field in Europe and to anticipate future needs, through exchange, dialogue and networks:

- (1) Identify - including at local and regional level - existing knowledge in priority areas of the youth field namely, participation, information and voluntary activities and implement measures to supplement, update and facilitate access to it;
- (2) In a second stage identify - including at local and regional level - existing knowledge in further priority areas of interest to the youth field such as autonomy, non-formal learning, the fight against discrimination, education & training, employment, entrepreneurship, creativity, transition from education to employment, social inclusion and health, and implement measures to supplement, update and facilitate access to it;
- (3) Ensure quality, comparability and relevance of knowledge in the youth field by using appropriate methods and tools;
- (4) Facilitate and promote exchange, dialogue and networks to ensure visibility of knowledge in the youth field and anticipate future needs;

A non-exhaustive list of the possible lines of action for the above common objectives is set out in the annex hereto;

RECALL that implementation must be flexible, incremental and appropriate for the youth field and must respect the powers of the Member States and the principle of subsidiarity;

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES TO

- specify implementing and follow-up measures, in the light of their particular circumstances and their national priorities with regard to those common objectives;
- inform to that end the Commission of the concrete achievements resulting from the implementation of the two first common objectives respectively by the end of 2005 for participation and information, by the end of 2006 for voluntary activities and by the end of 2008 for the other themes;

- within the above reports, inform the Commission of the steps taken in order to fulfil the third and fourth common objectives respectively relating to quality of knowledge and to networks;
- consult and encourage the participation of young people and their associations, researchers, as well as national and regional youth councils - if appropriate - for the elaboration of those reports;

NOTE THAT THE COMMISSION INTENDS TO

- prepare, on the basis of the above reports on the national contributions to the implementation of the common objectives, a progress report for submission to the Council in order to encourage mutual exchange of information and good practice concerning a greater understanding and knowledge of youth, in consultation with the European Youth Forum, while not excluding other forms of consultation;
- propose, if appropriate, amendments to the common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth;
- suitably inform the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions;

INVITE THE COMMISSION TO

- convene, when appropriate, representatives of the national Administrations in charge of youth, in order to promote the exchange of information on the progress made and on best practices;

TAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE

The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council will take the necessary initiatives within the framework of the common objectives in order to facilitate their implementation. They will adapt and, when appropriate, amend the common objectives on the basis of the progress report and the amended drafts submitted by the Commission.

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**MEASURES FOR ACHIEVING THE COMMON OBJECTIVES
FOR A GREATER KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF YOUTH**

In the light of the actual circumstances and the priorities of each Member State, the following non-exhaustive list of lines of action may be pursued:

1. Identify - including at local and regional level - existing knowledge in priority areas of the youth field and implement measures to supplement, update and facilitate access to it.

At national level

- (a) Identify and organise existing knowledge in the youth field for participation, information and voluntary activities;
- (b) Supplement and regularly update knowledge on such themes, also taking into consideration practical knowledge;
- (c) Facilitate access to knowledge on such themes and information on the corresponding actors;
- (d) Ensure user-friendliness of relevant information;

At European level:

- (e) Make the best use of any relevant instrument available at European level - such as the current and future programmes in the youth field, Eurobarometer surveys, Eurostat and the current and future research framework programmes;
 - (f) Disseminate collected information to interested actors;
 - (g) Make the best use of any relevant instrument being developed by the Commission in co-operation with the Council of Europe.
2. In a second stage identify - including at local and regional level - existing knowledge in further priority areas of interest to the youth field and implement measures to supplement, update and facilitate access to it.

At national level

- (a) Identify and organise existing knowledge in further priority areas of interest to the youth field such as autonomy, non-formal learning, the fight against discrimination, education & training, employment, entrepreneurship, creativity, transition from education to employment, social inclusion, and health – subject to clarification and adaptation of those themes by relevant stakeholders in the youth field meeting at European level;
- (b) Supplement and regularly update knowledge on such themes, also taking into consideration practical knowledge;
- (c) Facilitate access to knowledge on such themes and information on the corresponding actors;
- (d) Ensure user-friendliness of relevant information;

At European level

- (e) Make the best use of any relevant instrument available at European level - such as the current and future programmes in the youth field, Eurobarometer surveys, Eurostat and the current and future research framework programmes;
 - (f) Disseminate collected information to interested actors;
 - (g) Make the best use of any relevant instrument being developed by the Commission in co-operation with the Council of Europe.
3. Ensure quality, comparability and relevance of knowledge in the youth field by using appropriate methods and tools.

At national level

- (a) Develop appropriate tools and methods to reinforce understanding and knowledge of young people and facilitate exploitation of results;
- (b) Promote education and training of youth researchers and experts - especially the young - as well as of any other actors developing knowledge in the youth field;

At European level

- (c) Cooperate to identify and define common concepts and a minimum core content in order to reinforce a common understanding of the identified priority themes;

- (d) Cooperate to determine quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods to exploit and compare results on commonly identified themes;
 - (e) Cooperate to better identify indicators to evaluate the impact of the current and future programmes in the youth field.
4. Facilitate and promote exchange, dialogue and networks to ensure visibility of knowledge in the youth field and anticipate future needs

At national level

- (a) Develop national networks between policy makers, researchers, young people and their organisations;
- (b) Within these national networks, discuss future needs, trends and identify new priorities and methods;
- (c) Promote cross-sectoral cooperation, exchanges and dialogue between different sectors and knowledge areas through conferences, seminars and events;

At European level

- (d) Coordinate the above-described national networks through the setting up by the Commission, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, of a European Union Network of Youth Knowledge.