



PARIS – 5, 6 AND 7 OCTOBER 2000
**EUROPEAN
YOUTH
GATHERING**

**RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE 450
YOUNG DELEGATES**

Directorate-General for Education and Culture



European Commission



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A young man with dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark brown hoodie and light blue jeans, stands in the foreground, speaking into a silver microphone. He is looking slightly to his left. Behind him, a group of young people are seated, looking towards the speaker. The background is a dark blue wall with several bright, out-of-focus star-shaped lights. The overall atmosphere is that of a formal yet youthful event.

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RECOMMENDATIONS
450
of the
YOUNG DELEGATES



In November 1999, when I announced a Commission's White Paper in the Youth field, I wished its elaboration were preceded by a wide-ranging consultation, of young people in particular. Indeed we want to draw a Youth policy not only for young people, but above all, together with young people.

The European Meeting held in Paris gathered 450 young people. These were youth who had attended the conferences organised in each member state. Young people from the third countries associated to our Youth programme were also present. At this gathering I noticed the enthusiasm, the seriousness and the commitment of all the actors involved. I also noted the expectations and the demands.

In November 2000, on the occasion of the Council of Ministers, the results of this Gathering were set out to the Ministers and to me by 18 young people. It was, once again, a good opportunity for a profitable dialogue. I really want to keep this debate alive.

The proposals made during the Gathering involve various levels of decision-making - local, regional, national, European -. The suggestions must be treated at all these levels.

In so far as the European Union is concerned, the White Paper will be one of the key actions in the Youth field in years to come. Thus, it also will open a new space for debate, forward-looking for Europe and its young people. This is my conviction.

Ms. Viviane Reding

***MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE***



In order to build Europe together with all the people who live in the Member States, it is necessary to create recognised areas of dialogue where citizens can elaborate collective choices. This holds especially true for the young who want fervently to be considered as full members of our society. The Europe-wide consultation of young people about the policies that concern them has established this as a fact. These young Europeans were very keen not only to testify, but also to imagine and propose concrete measures, and to verify how effectively their proposals will be taken into account.

The gathering that my ministry organised in Paris in October 2000, with the help of Commissioner Viviane REDING, has allowed 450 young people to come together and reflect on all areas of their lives.

A delegation born of this meeting has presented its recommendations directly to the Youth Ministers of the 15 Members States. Some of these suggestions have already been taken up in the resolution that aims at making social integration easier for the young, which was adopted by the council of Youth Ministers of the European Union on 9 November 2000, following the proposal from the French Presidency.

Moreover, I have officially transmitted the whole of the present document to the concerned Presidencies-in-Office of European councils of ministers, as I had pledged I would.

New steps must be taken in order for Europe to benefit fully from the contribution of young people. Institutional actors must have a permanent will to make their participation in public life easier. This document can contribute to this process by becoming a tool for dialogue, so that many recommendations materialise.

Marie-George Buffet

**FRENCH MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS
IN THE NAME OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**



THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

OF THE YOUNG DELEGATES AT THE EUROPEAN YOUTH GATHERING IN PARIS

THE COMMISSION has launched a vast consultation exercise in order to prepare the ground for a White Paper on youth policy in Europe, the idea of which had been welcomed at the Council meeting of Youth Ministers on 23 November 1999. As part of this exercise, a dialogue with young people was initially conducted through national consultations held between May and July 2000. These consultations gave thousands of young Europeans the chance to express their views in a wide variety of forms (decentralised meetings, questionnaires, the Internet, consultation of associations, etc.) and covered a very wide range of concerns and suggestions.

This was followed by a European gathering in Paris on 5, 6 and 7 October 2000, which was jointly organised by the European Commission and the French Presidency and which brought together 450 young people from more than 30 countries. This European gathering was therefore a key part of the consultation of young people. Its main objective was to gain a better idea of young people's expectations and proposals. In addition, an exchange of views was held with politicians during the closing session.

The young people's work was organised through workshops on the five main topics identified in the previous consultations:

- Participation;
- Work, vocational training, social integration;
- Education (formal and non-formal);
- Well-being, personal autonomy and culture;
- European values, mobility and relations with the rest of the world.



This document sets out the main recommendations made at this gathering.

In spite of the document's rather condensed form, it is designed to be as complete as possible and, above all, to provide a true reflection of the spirit in which all the discussions were conducted.



Participation



Participation

Young people have a very strong desire for participation, but they consider the existing channels to be inadequate, inaccessible or purely symbolic.

For example, one of the participation channels is young people's organisations. Unfortunately, in order to set up organisations of this kind, legal difficulties (legal basis) and procedural difficulties (complexity) have to be overcome. Furthermore, these organisations rarely operate in a network and are therefore unable to exchange "their good practices". Moreover, in certain countries the fact of belonging to organisations of this kind can even be "politically" dangerous.

AT SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY, young people want to take part in the life of their establishment on an equal footing with the other partners and with complete freedom of expression. They wish to strengthen democracy by displaying material, producing publications, the right of association, the right of representation, the uncensored production of school media, etc., and to receive the necessary financial support to do so. Citizenship and politics must be taught in schools in order to encourage young people to take the initiative and participate. But this teaching must not be provided by members of political parties and hence by people who are partisan. It must be fully independent. Be that as it may, in all areas that are at all

linked to their everyday lives, and regardless of the geographical level, young people wish to be consulted on a permanent basis and to take part in the decisions that concern them. They also call for these rights to apply to disabled young people as well.



Detailed suggestions and proposals of the workshops

- Ensure that young people have the right to vote and be elected at the age of 18 years. In general, the participation of young people should be authorised long before the statutory voting age.
- The right to vote should be given to anyone who has been resident for more than five years in a given country.
- Set up young people's councils in each country of the European Union.
- Encourage governments to make it easier to set up young people's organisations.
- Ensure that schools play their role of providing training for citizenship: for example, through education in politics and citizenship as part of school curricula, in order to encourage young people to take part in public life.
- Establish a group of young people at the European Commission in order to inform young people in the EU about their rights and the opportunities on offer. This group would also play the role of an observer.
- Decentralised information systems, which are useful in particular for disadvantaged young people, together with the establishment of a European database accessible via the Internet. Each young person should be able to have access to the Internet and the other media.
- Given the role played by young people in the applicant countries, the European Union should pay particular attention to them, for example through greater funding of their projects.
- A congress along the lines of the European gathering of young people should be organised every two years or every year.
- Abolition of military service and its replacement by voluntary service of general interest.
- Young people wish to be consulted throughout the process of the White Paper.
- Ensure transparency concerning the European funds used for young people.



Work, employment,
vocational training, social integration



Work, employment, vocational training, social integration

Work and (paid) employment are one of the pre-conditions for economic independence. They are also a source of social recognition and a way of realising one's own plans. And yet, it is really hard for young people to gain access to the labour market.

THAT IS WHY YOUNG PEOPLE want to see much stricter European social legislation that takes account of their difficulties. They therefore call for the introduction of a right to a minimum wage. In the same way, they seem extremely concerned about the discrimination - of whatever form - that can occur on the labour market.



Detailed suggestions and proposals of the workshops

■ To ease the transition from school to the labour market:

- In-company training schemes should be encouraged.
- Opportunities for training and gaining skills should be improved, including, for apprentices, a European status, and assessment and tutoring during apprenticeship.
- Development and increase of the funding of European programmes like Leonardo.
- Mutual recognition of qualifications and working experience in all European countries.
- Introduction of an end-of-education allowance.
- Development and support for non-formal education and lifelong learning.
- Provision of financial and logistic support for young entrepreneurs.

– Improvement of the career guidance provided to young people.

– Recognition of the qualifications and experience acquired in non-formal education.

■ Social rights:

- Unemployment should be considered to be an infringement of human rights. Social Europe must become a reality. For this to happen, the social rights should be incorporated into the Treaty.
- Full employment of young people must be the main objective of the governments of the Member States, but also of the European Commission.
- A minimum wage indexed to the cost of living should be introduced.
- In order to tackle job insecurity and the exclusion of young people, stricter labour law is needed (e.g. maximum limit on the duration of the working week, written employment contracts, equal pay for equal work).

Work, employment, vocational training, social integration

Detailed suggestions and proposals of the workshops (...)

- Exploration of the options for using the reduction in working time to help young people to enter working life.
 - More frequent contacts with trade unions. Trade unions must take greater account of the needs and expectations of young people in order to make these organisations more attractive.
 - Incorporation of the concerns of young people into the European Charter of Basic Rights.
- Information:
- Establishment of a European information site that can be accessed through the Internet.
 - Establishment of a European employment agency in order to provide better information on employment opportunities, working conditions and pay in the other Member States of the Union, and to assist job-seekers.
 - European countries should recognise school and working experience and qualifications acquired in other European countries.
 - Better use of the media, with a communication and information provision strategy adapted to the needs of young people; young people should be involved in producing information so that they can reflect the concerns of their generation.



Education



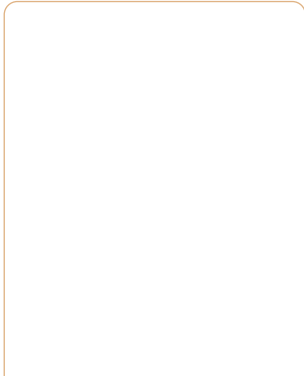
Education

Overall, the formal education system comes in for a lot of criticism.

As well as wishing to be true citizens in their schools

(cf. the proposals on participation), young people stress the essential role of education in becoming citizens.

They point out, however, that there are too many social and economic obstacles to education. They would like to see education structures take account of the diversity of societies in each country.



Detailed suggestions and proposals of the workshops

- In order to be more effective, schools and universities must be given more funding.
- Take greater account of the importance of non-formal education for young people by providing more financial support and introducing standardised rules established in cooperation with NGOs in order to make progress in the recognition of acquired skills. The dovetailing of formal and informal education needs to be improved, and the achievements of young volunteers should be validated.
- Step up the initiatives to ensure that the most disadvantaged young people are integrated into the various education systems, for example by making education free everywhere from primary school through to university.
- Drafting of a European Charter of the rights of pupils and students: compulsory schooling up to the age of 16 years at least, free education, right to be consulted, entitlement to decent housing near to the place of study, specific support for young people with disabilities, access to new information technologies, medical assistance, choice of courses based on the abilities and skills of each person rather than on developments in the economy in general, regular evaluation of schools and universities.

Detailed suggestions and proposals of the workshops(...)

- Mobility during studies: the need to facilitate the transition between education systems in different countries:
 - Implementation of the Bologna Declaration establishing standard university studies in three stages (bachelor's degree, master's degree, PhD).
 - The “European Community Course Credit Transfer System” (ECTS) should be encouraged.
 - Action programmes such as Erasmus and Socrates should be further strengthened.
- Renewal of teaching practices: more interactive courses, teaching with an enhanced practical dimension, smaller classes.
- Right to assess the skills of teaching staff.
- Intensification of the teaching of foreign languages.
- Creation of more effective tools in order to help pupils to make the right decisions about their future (e.g. through the Internet).



Well-being,
personal autonomy and culture



Well-being, personal autonomy and culture

Young people expressed considerable concern about ecology and food safety.
Well-being - both individual and collective - is also a major area of concern.

“We, the young people of Europe, are against racism and xenophobia. We are against violence wherever it may occur, in Europe or anywhere else in the world. We believe in Europe, we believe in democracy and we believe in the institutions of Europe. There are risks which can arise from certain approaches. Death and destruction can threaten our democracies and our methods of living together. We as young people dealing with welfare feel that development and health are not simply a matter of increasing the gross domestic product. Some countries within Europe are suffering in this area. We have to have solutions which can be implemented. We all have to have the most basic rights: the right to live, and to live free. Unfortunately, this only happens in some places in Europe, at present.”

This Declaration was read at the plenary session.

Detailed suggestions and proposals of the workshops

■ General right to information on matters of health, the environment, etc.:

- Improved access to the new information technologies, but also through information campaigns intended for young people and run by the young people themselves (including on questions such as contraception, HIV, abortion, etc.).
- Opening of information centres at times that suit young people's schedules (in the evenings and at the weekends), or information provision through itinerant information structures.
- Establishment of an information centre managed by the young people themselves and dealing with all the problems that are of particular concern to them (e.g. housing, education, employment, health, etc.).

■ On health matters:

- Request for national versions of European information campaigns to be conducted at local level on matters such as drugs and drug addiction, dietary problems, sexually transmissible diseases, etc.
- Full, objective information needs to be provided in schools on the various drugs (their content, their physical and mental consequences, the legislation in force, etc.).
- Desire for national consultations on the question of legalising "soft" drugs.
- Programmes and places for rehabilitating drug addicts, together with qualified staff, should be set up in the countries in which they do not yet exist, and improved in terms of quality and access in the other countries.

Well-being, personal autonomy and culture

Detailed suggestions and proposals of the workshops(...)

■ On environmental/ecological matters:

- Encourage environmentally friendly behaviour by organising interactive environmental education to which young people could contribute.
- The Union should strengthen its rules on recycling, nuclear energy (especially concerning safety and waste management), etc., develop non-polluting forms of energy and establish a system of taxes or rewards depending on whether enterprises cause pollution.
- Increase the density of the public transport network in order to encourage young people's mobility, while at the same time slowing the development of motorways.
- Europeans must be guaranteed a healthy diet, especially by encouraging organic farming and through a commitment to comply with the rules adopted on genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The countries of Europe should promote the development of eco-labels which make it possible to see whether genetically modified organisms are present in ordinary food products.

– Transparency concerning all developments in the area of genetic engineering, especially cloning, should be guaranteed.

– Fair trade with disadvantaged countries should be developed.

■ Combating discrimination:

– Improved promotion and implementation of equal opportunities in everyday life, including by abolishing certain national laws (e.g. those that discriminate against homosexuals).

– Equal pay for equal work, especially between men and women.

– Improve the provision of information and assistance to the victims of discrimination, for example by setting up a free help line for victims of discrimination.

– At the legal level, there is a need to reverse the burden for proof for victims of discrimination.

- The combating of all forms of discrimination should be given a far higher profile and backed up by much stronger obligations in the European Charter of Basic Rights.
- Establish an active group of European observers concerned with discrimination and human rights in order to ensure that equal opportunities are guaranteed for all young people living in Europe, regardless of their nationality of origin.
- The European Union should also develop education programmes so that immigrants and minorities are considered to be a constructive part of society and treated as such by all European citizens.
- European countries should promote the development of neighbouring States and of countries of emigration.

■ Autonomy

- A fairer housing policy (establishment of a ceiling for rent, State action against private owners who leave property unoccupied and in a poor state of repair, etc.). Easier access to housing for young people.
- A minimum income for young people should be introduced in order to facilitate their emancipation.





European values,
mobility and relations with the rest of the world



European values, mobility and relations with the rest of the world

Young people expect a lot from Europe, although they are quite well aware that it is up to them to build “this Europe”. “Europe” also means carrying out many measures on the ground, often at local level.



Detailed suggestions and proposals of the workshops

■ Mobility:

- Improve and simplify the European mobility programmes: for example, all education levels should be eligible, and they should be extended beyond the Member States of the EU and be open to all categories of young people.
- Provide more information on these programmes.
- Support this mobility by teaching foreign languages from a very early age.

■ Human rights:

- Creation of a post of European mediator with responsibility for monitoring compliance with anti-discrimination law.
- Teachers, civil servants and policemen should receive specific training in order to raise their awareness of this problem.

- The basic rights should also apply to migrants and refugees.
- Homosexual couples should have a similar right to get married as heterosexual couples. The same applies to the right to adopt children.
- Schools should provide comprehensive, compulsory courses on human rights (combating racism and all other forms of discrimination).
- Schools should provide sex education lessons covering all forms of sexual practice, including homosexuality.
- NGOs that carry out major awareness-raising work should be given greater support.

European values, mobility and relations with the rest of the world

Detailed suggestions and proposals of the workshops(...)

- Relieve the debt of third-world countries and step up efforts to give the populations of these countries the same opportunities for well-being and development:
 - Implement the UN proposal to devote 0.5% of GDP to State development aid for developing countries.
- Closer cooperation between the European Union and the Council of Europe in order to coordinate more effectively and intensify European youth policy. Decisions should be taken in the interests of Europe, rather than of one country or another.
- Peace and security:
 - Establishment of a body for preventing conflicts in Europe or in the immediate vicinity of the European Union.
 - Opposition to any military intervention (especially “forceful” intervention by NATO; only the UN should be given responsibility for taking action in this area).
 - Young people should be able to contribute to peace and security in Europe through prevention programmes.

MAIN EVENTS

regarding the White Paper in 2001:

- From January to April 2001, in each capital city: bilateral meetings will take place between the European Commission and the Member States.
- 20 February 2001, in Brussels: hearing of the civil society on youth policy, jointly organised by the European Commission and the Economic and Social Committee, in cooperation with the European Youth Forum.
- 16 and 17 March 2001, in UMEA (Sweden): a seminar on conditions for young people in Europe today will be jointly organised by the Swedish Presidency of the European Union and the European Commission.
- April 2001: the European Commission will hear the European Parliament about youth policy.
- 28 May 2001: Council meeting of Youth Ministers of the European Union
- 26 - 28 November 2001: the White Paper on youth policy in the European Union will be introduced during the colloquium in GAND (Belgium), which will be jointly organised by the Belgian Presidency of the European Union and the European Commission.

PARIS – 5, 6 AND 7 OCTOBER 2000

EUROPEAN YOUTH GATHERING

The 450 YOUNG DELEGATES

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THE 450 YOUNG DELEGATES (...)

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http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/educ/index_fr.html

Internet site of the White Paper on youth policy in the European Union

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/youthpolicy>



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