



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 19 May 2004 (24.05)  
(OR. fr)**

**9659/04**

**JEUN 43**

**NOTE**

from :	French and German delegations
to :	Education, Youth and Culture Council
No. prev. doc. :	9341/04 JEUN 38
Subject :	Final declaration of the European Youth Conference on voluntary activities in an enlarged Europe

Delegations will find attached the final declaration of the European Youth Conference<sup>1</sup>, to be presented by the French and German delegations, under "Other business", at the meeting of the Education, Youth and Culture Council on 27 and 28 May 2004.

---

<sup>1</sup> The French and German delegations have provided the English and German translations of this declaration.

**Conférence européenne des Jeunes 13 - 17 avril 2004, Marly-le-Roi / Paris**

**Europäische Jugendkonferenz, 13. – 17. April 2004, Marly-le Roi / Paris**

**European Youth Conference, 13 – 17 April 2004, Marly-le-Roi / Paris**



## **Presentation of the final declaration on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2004 at the Assemblée nationale in Paris**

We, the participants in the first European Youth Conference, are proud to present the results of our discussions, which took place at the National Institute of Youth and Popular Education at Marly-le-Roi from April 13th to 17th 2004. This conference was organized in view of the forthcoming enlargement of the European Union and brought together young people from 25 European countries. We are aware of our generation's responsibility as far as future youth voluntary commitment is concerned.

### **1. *Voluntary activities and mobility of young people in Europe***

- *Being aware of many young people's fear at the idea of leaving for a stay in a foreign country and wishing to make the information an integration of volunteers easier,*

we propose:

- the creation of efficient hosting structures in each country, composed of people experienced in European voluntary work, able to assist young people in facilitating administrative purposes and providing language and cultural awareness training in the host country;
  - the supplying of young people with more detailed information about mobility programs through specifically trained staff. This should be done by secondary schools, employment agencies and job centres.
- *Aware of the often difficult financial situation of young people involved in European voluntary work, and wishing to facilitate voluntary work and mobility for all young people in Europe,*

we require:

- that all young people involved in voluntary activities enjoy systematic reductions of 50 % on all means of transports within Europe
- the improvement of existing transport systems, so that disabled people get an easier access to

them ;

- *Aware of the difficulties of young people in obtaining the documents required, and wishing to make the involvement of young Europeans in international solidarity programs easier,*

we require:

- that European associations and institutions working with young volunteers be allowed to guarantee for a youth involved in international activities and thus make the process of application for a visa easier for him/her
- *Aware of the lack of information of young people about European institutions and their activities, and wishing to encourage young people to participate in voluntary programs,*

we require:

- the launching of a European information campaign about European voluntary programs, in order to encourage young people to get involved in European projects;

## ***2. Information about and promotion of voluntary activities***

- *Realizing that young people are not sufficiently addressed by information about voluntary activities,*

we require:

- a more efficient application of the Eurodesk-project (European database of existing projects and funding) and its development in all European Union states.
- the further development of information and exchange centres in the running of whom young people should be involved.
- *Regretting that many young people lack experience or qualification enough to draw up projects,*

we require:

- the creation of training centres supporting projects run by young people (fund research, languages, public relations, speaking in public, computer skills, etc.) and making the preparation, follow-up and evaluation of these projects easier ;
- the involvement of young people in running these training centres ;
- that these facilities make it possible for young people to present their projects, in order to encourage other young people to get involved too ;
- that the training provided by these centres be integrated into volunteer programs.

- *Regretting the lack of interest of the media in young people's voluntary activities,*

we require:

- the creation of a European fund for the promotion of youth initiatives through the press ;
- the creation of a public European TV channel,
- that the media be obliged to keep space for information on voluntary youth activities.

- *Regretting that voluntary commitment is not always recognized and has a poor image,*

we suggest:

- the patronage of young volunteers by experienced young people ;
- the creation of a European agency for the promotion of voluntary activities (aimed at public administrations, educational institutions, companies, etc.),
- the initiation of a "European Day of Voluntary Activities" which may be on December, 5th of each year (corresponding to the "International Day of Volunteers for Economic and Social Development", initiated in 1985 by the United Nations). The initiatives put forward within the context of these two days might be gathered.

### ***3. Recognition and certification of voluntary activities***

- *Aware of the need to harmonize the certification of voluntary commitment in Europe,*

we propose the creation of:

- an independent agency composed of experts from civil society, whose role would be to develop and promote concepts in agreement with the official European regulation institutions;
- a European portfolio containing an overview of the existing projects and of those which have already been completed. This portfolio would be delivered by this agency to any volunteer.

- *Regretting the lack of legal recognition of voluntary activities,*

we ask the European authorities:

- to draw up a document defining the legal status, rights and obligations of a European volunteer;
- to initiate a European volunteer identity card guaranteeing the access of any volunteer to the various social benefits and making the obtaining of a residence card for volunteers easier. This European identity card should be recognized in all European Union member states.

- *Regretting the lack of support of educational institutions and industrial companies to volunteer activities, and being concerned about the declining interest in such activities and their declining quality,*

we ask for the adaptation of working conditions to voluntary activities:

- by offering young people who wish to participate in voluntary activities the possibility to take a

sabbatical leave;

- by considering young people's voluntary commitment when deciding on tuition fees;
  - by integrating voluntary commitment into the system of ECT credits;
  - by mentioning voluntary commitment on marks sheets.
- *Considering the reduction or even absence of financial support to voluntary activities in certain European Union member states,*

we suggest:

- the creation of a financing system based on existing structures, accessible to volunteer organisations through a simplified administrative procedure, and supporting high-quality and sustainable projects;
- to encourage the research of private funds for voluntary activities, in particular for the financing of volunteers' travels. These funds should however not create a dependence nor replace the indispensable public funds;
- the allocation, in the long term, of part of the European budget to the supporting of voluntary activities.

#### ***4. Voluntary activities and international solidarity***

- *In view of the numerous problems and obstacles in financing, information, education and training, and the difficulties related to complex administrative procedures,*

we propose:

- the creation of a comprehensive insurance covering all the accidents likely to happen to volunteers during their stay abroad (for instance : accident insurance)
- that people who take part in voluntary activities are being given a guarantee that they will get their job back when they return from their voluntary service.
- the drawing-up of a guidebook aiming at facilitating intercultural understanding and exchanges in the country where the volunteer is doing his/her service. This guide should not only contain information about the culture of the 25 member states but also some kind of philosophy or ethical code for young European volunteers.

#### ***5. Voluntary activities and the fight against discrimination***

- *In view of the discrimination of young people with regard to the transferring of responsibilities and know-how between generations, and regretting the unequal access of candidates to voluntary activities according to their social and geographical background,*

we propose:

- the creation of recruitment forums for volunteers from socially disadvantaged backgrounds,

- the organization of inter-generational meetings about voluntary activities,
- the use of intercultural media, the launching of advertising or information campaigns in order to improve intercultural relations and fight against discrimination. This information should be spread by educational institutions, associations and other institutions.

- *In view of the discrimination likely to result from a lack of knowledge about institutional processes,*

we suggest:

- the simplification of administrative processes.

- *In order to improve mutual understanding between the executive power and victims of discrimination ,*

we suggest:

- the creation, in cooperation with the European governments and institutions, of a commission composed of members of various volunteer organisations, to support and represent victims of discrimination at a local level.

- *Being fully aware that the fear of others, and the fear of difference may lead to discrimination,*

we require:

- that an “International Day Against Discrimination” be initiated. This day should be aimed at improving the knowledge and understanding of other European cultures and at raising citizens’ awareness of the various forms of discrimination. This day should be organized by volunteers, in cooperation with public institutions (financial and possibly legal support).

- *Aware of the major role of education in the fight against discrimination,*

we require:

- the creation of a “Culture Caravan” composed of 25 volunteers from EU member states who will present their voluntary activities in educational institutions and try to raise young people’s interest in voluntary commitment.

We also require:

- the constitution of a committee in charge of the follow-up of the European Youth Conference. This committee should also be aimed at answering possible questions of ministers and ministry officials; its members would be representatives of the working-groups built at the European Youth Conference and should be originated from all European Union member states.

**Note:**

**This statement refers to all forms of voluntary commitment, be it limited or long-term. We would also like to point out that long-term voluntary commitment shall not be restricted to the European Volunteer Service but comprises all forms of voluntary services.**

---