

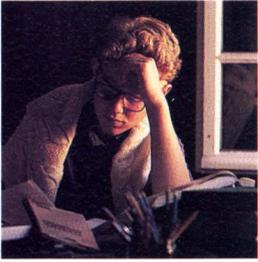
# YOUTH EXCHANGES IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



Series!



Europe  
on the move



**T**here are more than 60 million young people in the European Community aged between 15 and 25. They are the generation which will lead the Community in the early years of the 21st century. For all of them, the EC is a fact of life. They are even more committed to the idea of European integration than their elders. Young people today travel within Europe as never before on holiday or to study or work. The removal by the Community of frontier barriers (both physical and administrative) has helped their mobility. But more travel by young people and more exchanges are needed. Nearly 30% of 15 to 25-year-olds have never left their home country. Young people from poor or disadvantaged backgrounds have less chance to travel than others. The same is true for the young unemployed and the handicapped. The European Community has acted in recent years to make it easier for young people to visit and to learn about each others' countries. Nearly 200 000 young people took part in EC programmes in 1992. This is only a fraction of the young people who could qualify for these programmes and the Community is steadily increasing the number of participants. The demand is there: for instance, there are currently five applicants for every place on the Community's Erasmus student exchange programme.

## YOUNG EUROPEANS ON THE MOVE

Millions of young people visit another European country every year. They do so on their own initiative, or as part of an organized visitor exchange programme. Their travel is made easier by the availability of cheap tickets on European rail systems and accommodation networks (like youth hostels and university residences) which cater specifically for young people. They travel for a host of reasons: work, pleasure, study, a desire to meet people, or out of sheer curiosity.

They learn first-hand of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Community. But at the same time, they come to appreciate the common interest they share with peer groups in other EC countries. This gives them a breadth of insight into the Community and its goals which is greater than that of earlier generations. It is important for them to be able to identify with the broader Europe of which the Maastricht Treaty on European Union also makes them citizens.

The European Community expects its young people to be mobile: to move around to get a job, to learn other

peoples' languages and to get to know their neighbours. As part of its single market programme, the Community has established their freedom to work or study abroad as a right. It has put in place a system where their own national diplomas and professional qualifications are accepted in other Community countries.

*The barriers between 'men's work' and 'women's work' are fast disappearing. The NOW programme promotes equal opportunities in business and industry for men and women.*

*Job-hunting can be a heartbreaking process.*

*The European Community's youth programmes help young people to get better qualifications so that they have more chance of finding work and making a successful career.*



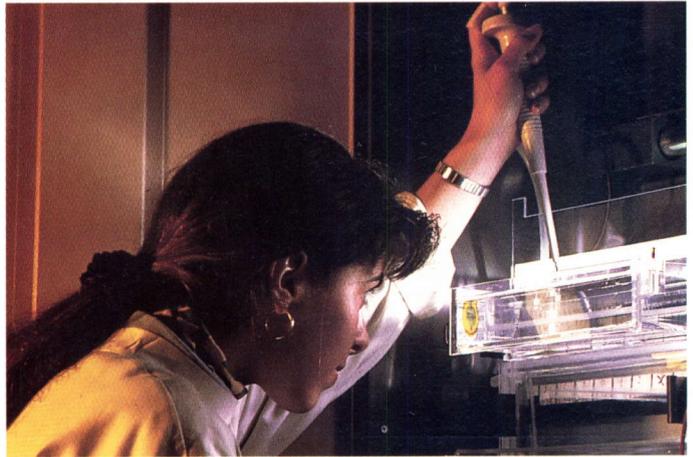
In general terms, the elimination of national frontiers is broadening the horizons and increasing opportunities for young people. It brings them into contact with new people and new ideas, but also with new technologies and new types of social and economic cooperation.

But this 'Opportunity Europe' is not open to all young people in the same way. The Community, pushed in particular by the European Parliament, has realized it has to do more to enable certain categories of young people to benefit from the new framework it has created. These include students and young people from less favoured backgrounds.

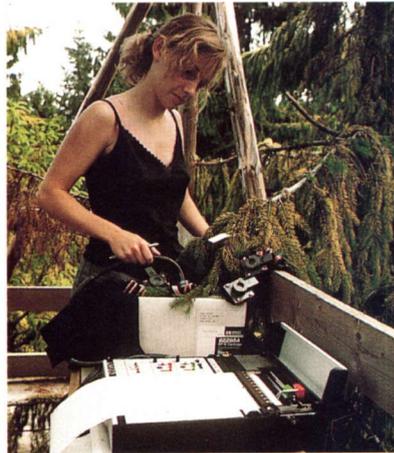
Contacts and solidarity between young people across Europe will be an important element in combating the feelings of extreme nationalism and violence that have arisen as a result of immigration flows into the European Community.

## KNOWLEDGE KNOWS NO FRONTIERS

Europe's universities were international seats of learning from the time the first ones were set up 700 years ago, attracting scholars from across the continent. The Community is reviving this tradition through its appropriately named Erasmus programme which was launched in 1987. The ultimate aim of Erasmus is to enable 10% of the eight million students in higher education in the Community to spend at least part of one academic year studying in another EC country.



*High-level training is provided for women under the IRIS programme.*



*Distance learning is made possible by the DELTA programme. The latest in new technology enables research and learning to be done where it is convenient.*

The average period spent abroad under the Erasmus programme is seven months. Erasmus funding covers the extra costs for a student to study in another EC country: travel costs, language tuition and a contribution towards compensating for cost of living differences. A total of 52 000 students attended foreign universities in 1992/93 with Erasmus support. The target level is 150 000 a year. The Erasmus programme is permanently oversubscribed. There are currently five applications for each place.

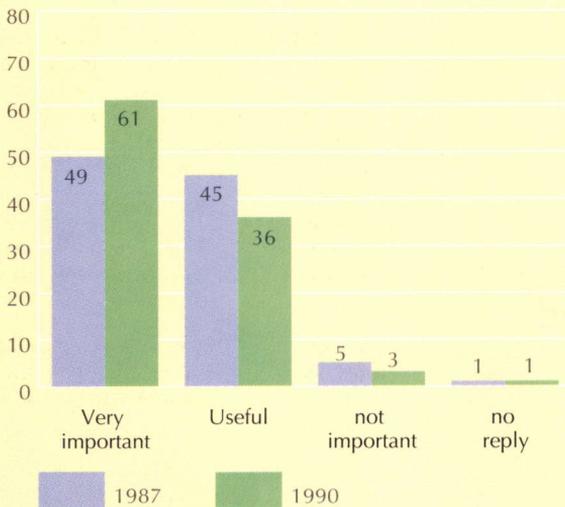
The Community has put in place a second programme — Comett — whose aim is to give an international

## The importance of foreign languages

More than three out of five young Europeans think that it is very important to speak foreign languages. Over a quarter (26%) think it useful, 3% do not think it important, and 1% have no opinion. This is one of the findings of an opinion survey of young people aged between 15 and 24 in the 12 Member States of the European Community. The survey was conducted in December, 1990.

Three years earlier, in 1987, only 49% of young people had felt that it was very important to speak foreign languages (i.e. 12% less than in 1990).

### What young people aged 15 to 24 think about learning foreign languages (%)

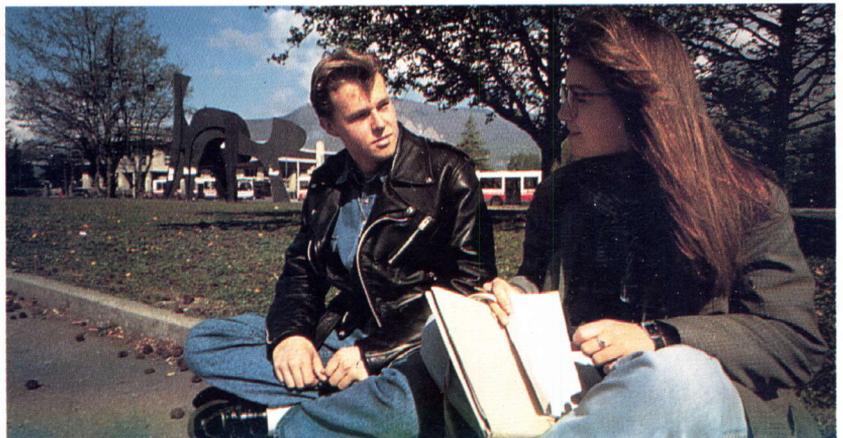


Source: Survey 'Les jeunes Européens en 1990', Commission of the European Communities.

dimension to cooperation between universities and industry. Through the Comett programme, the European Commission offers scholarships for students attending a university in one Member State who take up an in-house traineeship for work experience in a company in another EC country. The duration of the internship can vary from three months to a year.

The traineeship should give the student experience in advanced technologies or in their application. In addition, it should, wherever possible, be part of the student's normal study course in his home-country university. As with Erasmus, Comett grants are meant to cover travel costs and language tuition with a subsistence allowance as an additional element.

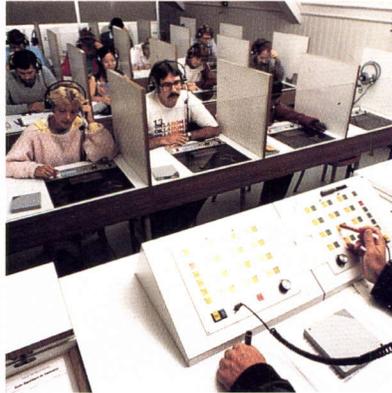
*The real point of student exchanges — getting to know other students, one's contemporaries, in other countries.*



Language training as such is the object of the Community's Lingua programme. This programme is open to young people aged between 16 and 25, and is therefore aimed at a wider target group than just university students.

It covers so-called joint educational programmes set up between language-teaching establishments in different Member States. In this way, young people taking part in a Lingua language course participate in an exchange visit to the country of the language they are learning. Lingua programmes can be of varying duration with a minimum of two weeks.

Special conditions apply to facilitate the participation of young people who come from less well-off backgrounds or who suffer from a physical handicap.



*Young handicapped people are given professional training under the Horizon programme.*

*In a Community with nine official languages and many regional ones, the teaching of languages assumes a major importance. The Lingua programme promotes language teaching, encouraging people to learn more languages and to speak and write them better.*

More information concerning the programmes referred to in this leaflet can be obtained by writing to any of the offices of the European Commission listed on the back page or from the offices in Brussels responsible for each programme:

**Bureau Erasmus:** rue Montoyer 70, B-1040 Brussels

**Comett Technical Assistance Bureau:** rue Montoyer 14, B-1040 Brussels

**Lingua Assistance Bureau:** rue du Commerce 10, B-1040 Brussels

**Bureau PETRA/Jeunesse:** Place de Luxembourg 2-3, B-1040 Brussels  
(This is a combined bureau for the PETRA and Youth for Europe programmes)

**Bureau Tempus:** avenue des Arts 19H B-1000 Brussels

**Commission of the European Communities  
Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth:**  
rue Joseph II 37, B-1040 Brussels

## YOUNG PEOPLE IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Community's PETRA programme of vocational training for young people includes provisions for work experience or traineeships in another EC country. It is open to young people up to the age of 28 who do not have a university degree. To qualify for participation in PETRA, candidates have to be in vocational training, or have a job or be available for work in their home country. PETRA enables them to take part in vocational training programmes or to obtain an internship with a company located in a Community country other than their own.

The PETRA programme runs from 1988 to 1994. The aim is to enable 100 000 young people to benefit from the scheme during this period. PETRA has created a European network of training partnerships which has run nearly 400 cross-border projects.

## For the 15 to 25 age-group

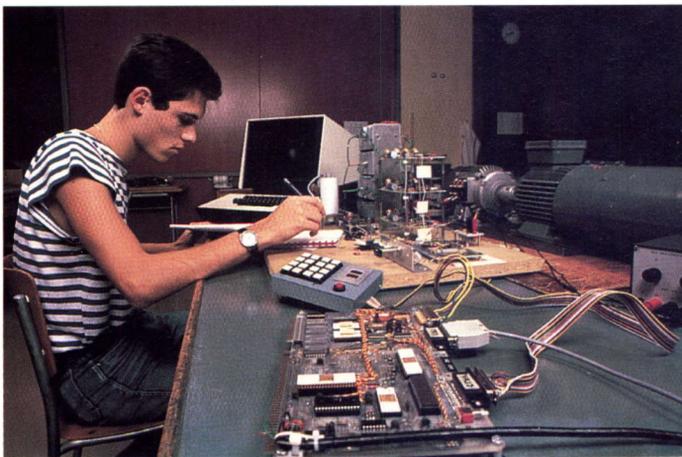
Fifteen to 25-year olds, or some 60 million persons in the European Community, are an important target public for the Community. In 1992, 41 500 young people took part in the Youth for Europe programme and in the priority activities described in this leaflet. But this is less than 1% of the target public. Much more information is therefore needed, as are more activities and funds to enable a greater number of young people to join in the programmes which interest them and which will be useful to them.

## YOUTH FOR EUROPE

Outside the established education, training and work structures, the Community has set up a general programme, Youth for Europe, which gives young Europeans from all walks of life the chance to work together on joint projects. It is estimated that during the period of the programme (1988-94) about 200 000 young people in the 15 to 25 age-group will have participated.

At least one third of the total budget of Youth for Europe is set aside to help young people who do not normally have access to international programmes to participate in cross-border projects. The exchanges generally last for one to three weeks.

*The PETRA programme helps provide young people with professional training and prepares them for adult working life.*



The programme is also targeted at youth organizations, youth workers, volunteers and organizations which help to promote and organize youth exchanges. Youth for Europe is managed on a largely decentralized basis by national agencies designated by the authorities in the Member States and has helped to develop new types of cooperation between them and with non-governmental organizations.

## REACHING OUT BEYOND THE EC

Participants from EFTA countries have been taking part in Comett since 1990. Erasmus was extended to include them in 1992. The Youth for Europe programme will be extended to most of the EC's neighbours in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) who will be linked with the Community from 1994 through the creation of the European Economic Area (EEA). In this way, the trans-European nature of these programmes has been enhanced. In addition, from 1995, all EC education and training programmes will be open to participants from all EEA countries.

Besides the Youth for Europe programme, priority actions in the youth field provide support for other youth cooperation projects involving young people from outside the Community. Nearly 100 exchange visits have been organized with young people from the Maghreb countries of north Africa, republics of the former Soviet Union and from the Latin American States.

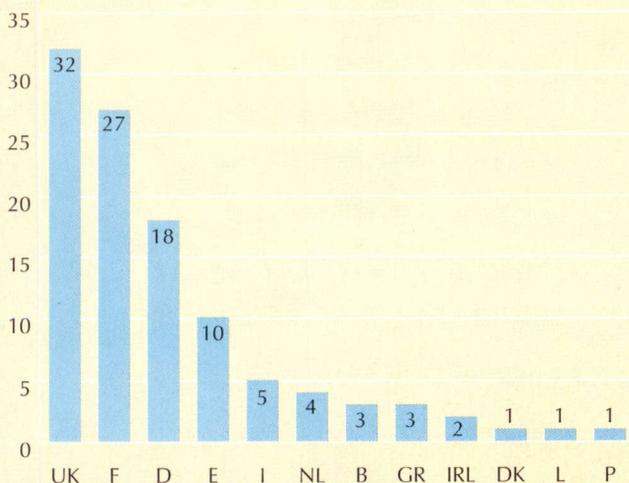
The Community's biggest programme in favour of young people from outside the EC is the Tempus programme

### Destination of Europe's youth exchanges

The five biggest countries of the European Community are also the five playing host to the largest number of young people on European youth exchanges, according to an opinion survey of young people aged between 15 and 24 in the 12 Member States of the EC.

Almost a third go to the United Kingdom, 27% to France, 18% to Germany, 10% to Spain and 5% to Italy. Next come the Netherlands with 4%, Belgium and Greece with 3%, Ireland 2% and Denmark, Luxembourg and Portugal with 1%.

### The Community countries to which young people go on youth exchanges (%)

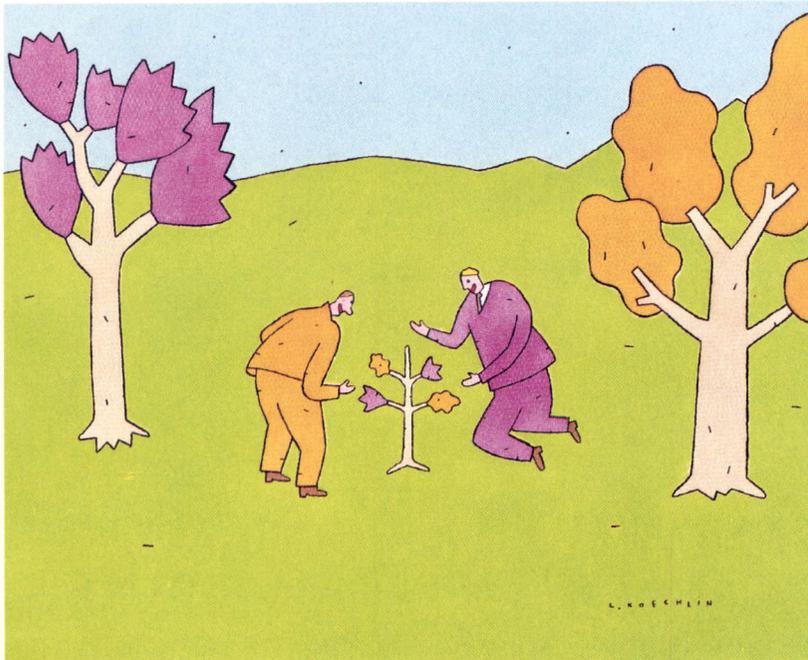


Source: Survey 'Les jeunes Européens en 1990', Commission of the European Communities.

for university students and teachers in the former communist States of Central and Eastern Europe. Scholarships under Tempus are available for students from universities participating in trans-border Joint European Projects. More than 600 of these projects have been set up in order to upgrade and restructure higher education in 11 Central and East European countries, involving 1 800 institutions from both East and West. More than 17 000 students and university teachers have so far benefited from Tempus grants. Eligible countries are Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Slovenia and the three Baltic Republics.

## European Parliament support

The European Parliament gives active support to the Youth for Europe programme and to all other Community activities for young people. Members of the European Parliament show in their reports and in a good number of parliamentary questions that they believe that today's young people will create the citizens' Europe of tomorrow. It is also the European Parliament that has put flesh on Council resolutions by inserting funds for youth activities into the Community budget, activities such as cooperation between Member States' youth services, information for young people, encouraging youth initiatives and training for youth leaders.





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This booklet appears in all the official Community languages – Spanish, Danish, German, Greek, English, French, Italian, Dutch and Portuguese .

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39 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2 — Tel. 671 22 44

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