

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(90) 79 final

Brussels, 13 March 1990

Proposal for a  
COUNCIL DECISION  
amending Decision 84/636/EEC establishing a third joint programme  
to encourage the exchange of young workers within the  
Community

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YOUNG WORKERS' EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

REPORT 1988-1989

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(presented by the Commission)

## EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The third joint programme to encourage the exchange of young workers within the Community is the latest version of the oldest youth exchange programme launched by the EEC Commission (1964). Several other programmes for young people have been introduced, especially in the 1980s, also directly aimed at young people or in support of the main activities that are proposed and supported, (COMETT, ERASMUS, PETRA, and most recently, LINGUA). The Youth for Europe action programme adopted in 1988 for three years, of which the first year of implementation has just ended seeks only to promote exchanges of young people living in the Member States of the Community.

The Commission communication to the Council, education and training in the European Community - medium-term guidelines: 1989-1992 (COM(89) 236 final) with respect to the third programme to promote exchanges of young workers and the Youth for Europe Action Programme states that "the Commission intends to examine the scope for simplifying the presentation of the opportunities available to the youth public by these two programmes and also to streamline their administration. For this reason, the phasing of two schemes will be synchronized to permit a more coordinated approach in future by the Commission to youth exchanges of all kinds. For any new arrangements to be introduced in good time for an integrated scheme, the Council will have to decide on the Commission's proposals not later than June 1991."

Generally speaking, it would be useful to recall that young people throughout the Community should be seen in the light of certain common factors, whatever their relative demographic weight, namely:

- the young population is the most seriously affected by the economic recession (1 in 4 young men and 1 in 3 young women are unemployed and/or in a precarious social economic situation);
- most Member States are faced with problems linked to the existence on their territory of a growing number of young people who are not nationals of the country and are frequently of non-Community origin, whose de facto position in our

societies cannot be called into question on historical, ideological or legal grounds, and whose cultural contribution is an asset for our countries;

- the young people are is the key to European construction, hence the importance attached to their education, vocational training and enhancing their awareness of Europe which will increase their sense of responsibility towards the building of Europe in which they live and which they will carry forward.

In this general context, and more particularly with a view to completion of the internal market in 1993, sufficient time must be allowed the Commission to make an overall assessment and formulate coordinated proposals regarding programmes for exchanges of young people. This assessment of proposals will in particular concern:

- the role of the Community as a promoter of exchanges,
- development of the effects of programmes of exchanges of young people, especially with regard to the principle of subsidiarity and therefore national undertakings in this field,
- the access of young people as a whole to exchanges organized with Community support;
- an administrative and financial framework providing a coherent approach, a realistic policy and fair access to Community activities for young people.

To this end, it is therefore important to extend by one year the period of validity of the programme and the review by the Council of the exchange programme for young workers until 31 December 1991. The Commission will prepare an assessment by this date and proposals relating to the two programmes in accordance with the above considerations.

Proposal for a  
COUNCIL DECISION

amending Decision 84/636/EEC establishing a third joint programme  
to encourage the exchange of young workers within the  
Community

**THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,**

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community,  
and in particular Article 235 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament<sup>1</sup>,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee<sup>2</sup>,

Whereas the Community is called upon to take practical measures to help  
young workers;

Whereas it is the responsibility of the Member States, under Article 50 of  
the Treaty, to encourage the exchange of young workers within the framework  
of a joint programme;

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Whereas Council Decision 84/636/EEC<sup>3</sup> establishes a third joint programme to encourage the exchange of young workers within the Community;

Whereas the Council also adopted the action programme, Youth for Europe under Council Decision 88/348/EEC<sup>4</sup>;

Whereas the European Council on 28 and 29 June 1985 adopted the conclusions of the ad hoc Committee for a People's Europe recommending the promotion of youth exchanges within the Community and the establishment of a genuine network of exchanges in each Member State and between the Member States;

Whereas there is a need to enable young people to envisage and carry out exchanges in a coherent framework, and thus for the Commission to present possibilities for exchanges under the fourth exchange programme for young workers and the Youth for Europe action programme in this context;

Whereas it is necessary to extend for one year the validity of the programme of exchanges for young workers to make possible this synchronized and coherent development;

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

Article 12 of Decision 84/636/EEC is replaced by the following:

"Article 12

The Council shall review this Decision, on a proposal from the Commission, by 31 December 1991."

Done at

For the Council

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<sup>3</sup>OJ No L 331, 19.12.1984, p. 36.

<sup>4</sup>OJ No L 158, 25.6.1988, p. 42.

FINANCIAL RECORD

Extension by one year of the third joint programme to encourage  
the exchange of young workers in the Community  
(no changes are made to the body of the basic decision)

1. Budget item and title of the operation

B-6630

Third joint programme to encourage the exchange of young workers within the Community.

2. Legal basis

Article 8 of Council Decision 84/636/EEC of 13 December 1984.  
Article 235 of the EEC Treaty.

3. Proposed classification

Non-obligatory expenditure  
Non-dissociated appropriations

4. Description

Objectives: to encourage the exchange of young workers within the Community

Target group: young workers aged 18 to 28 years.

5. Justification

Under Article 50 of the EEC Treaty, the Member States are responsible, within the framework of a joint programme, for promoting the exchange of young workers to enable them to extend, in a Member State other than their country of residence, their vocational training, cultural and linguistic skills and knowledge of human nature.

6. Financial impact of the programme on operational appropriations

6.1. The appropriations considered necessary to extend the programme through 1991 will be included in the future appropriation for this financial year in the framework of the present financial prospects for 1988-1992, jointly agreed by the three institutions in June 1988, and their development.

6.2. Nature of expenditure

Flat rate weekly contribution per trainee, contribution to the cost of language courses and travel, technical assistance for the administration of the programme.

Average subsidy per participant per week is ECU 115 (1989). The flat rate weekly contribution per participant was raised by ECU 10 in 1989.

These are short periods of training (three weeks to three months) or longer periods (4 to 18 months).

6.3. Calculation: average cost per participant and total budgetary impact

- Short courses (per participant : 1.496.77) : 3.700.000 ECUs
  - Long courses (per participant : 2.359.73) : 1.800.000 ECUs
  - Technical assistance, assessment 500.000 (see point 10)
- out of a total indicative amount of 6.000.000 ECUs in 1991.

7. Fiscal implications

None

8. Type of monitoring

(a) Financial control is assured by the competent Commission departments with respect to the conformity of expenditure and execution of the budget;

(b) technical control is provided by the competent Commission departments, especially the Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth.

9. Financial implications on staff and operating appropriations

None

10. Technical assistance

The Commission has drawn up a technical assistance contract with an outside organization to be responsible for the following tasks:

(a) to assist the Commission in the development and monitoring of detailed criteria for making grants;

(b) to prepare, in all the Community languages, information and documentation on the operations in question;

(c) to prepare working documents in selected Community languages to assist the Commission in developing and reviewing policy orientations;

(d) to prepare seminars, workshops, information and other meetings on instructions from the Commission, including meetings of Advisory groups;

(e) to provide such clerical, translation and secretarial assistance in the operation of this programme as the Commission may deem necessary;

(f) to assist, on instructions from the Commission, with the development by Member State authorities of effective mechanisms for the implementation of Community policies in this sector; and to monitor the effectiveness of such mechanisms;

(g) to process enquiries as to the availability of grants; to analyse applications and to provide advice to the Commission in the scrutiny of such applications as are received;

(h) to operate, on instructions from the Commission, a payment system for such grants as the Commission shall determine;

(i) to assist the Commission with the development and application of evaluation processes;

(j) to assist the Commission with the development of working materials for the "European" dimension of the programme;

(k) to advise the Commission on the potential impact of the extension of the programme to cover young people in other occupations (e.g. vocational training, etc.).

IMPACT ON COMPETITIVENESS AND EMPLOYMENT

I. What is the main justification for the measure?

To promote the exchange of young workers within the Community (about 3 000 participants per year).

II. Characteristics of the firms concerned, in particular:

(a) Are many small businesses involved?

All enterprises are concerned.

(b) Have any concentrations been observed in regions

. eligible for regional aid from the Member States?

. eligible under the ERDF?

No.

III. What obligations are directly imposed on firms?

None.

IV. What obligations may be indirectly imposed on firms via the local authorities?

None

V. Are there any special measures for small businesses? Describe them

None

VI. What is the foreseeable effect on

(a) the competitiveness of firms?

The reception by firms of young trainee workers who are nationals of other Member States will lead to a broadening of horizons and will develop practical knowledge about technical developments, vocational training and the labour market at European level.

(b) employment?

The language and occupational skills acquired during a training period in another Member State will have a positive impact on the stability of the individual's employment and on the skills of workers in general.

VII. Have the two sides of industry been consulted? What are their views?

No.

YOUNG WORKERS' EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

REPORT 1988-1989

INTRODUCTION

The Third Joint Programme to encourage the exchange of young workers was adopted by the Council in its decision of 13 December 1984 and covers the period 1985-1990.

In general terms, this programme of exchanges for young workers is intended to provide an opportunity for participation in a Community scheme offering experience of living and working conditions in other Member States, fostering the skills necessary for adult and working life - including the development of vocational knowledge and practical skills as well as the skills of interpersonal communication between individuals from different cultural backgrounds - and enabling participants to find interests in common with young people from other Member States and, above all, to develop an awareness of a shared European identity.

The Commission sets the rules and guidelines of the scheme, but the running of individual projects is mainly the responsibility of the exchange organisers. Any organisation can apply for grants for Young Worker Exchanges so long as these comply with the guidelines. In each Member State there is a government representative who acts as a national coordinator for the exchange programme.

EXCHANGE ORGANISERS

Being entrusted with the responsibility of organising and implementing the exchanges, the exchange organisers remain the most important element in the structural framework supported by the Commission. The relationship between the Commission and each organiser is governed by contracts covering the individual exchange projects. These contracts define the conditions for implementing the exchanges, the obligations of the body or group involved and the financial responsibilities.

The programme is open to young people between 18 and 28 years of age, who are either employed or available for employment and who have completed basic vocational training or have similar work experience.

The exchanges range from the short-term, lasting 3 weeks to 3 months and which include study visits, work placements and a brief experience of the working environment, to the longer term, lasting 4 to 16 months and which are mainly work placements preceded by a language and orientation course.

The majority of exchange organisers fall into two categories - those operating at European level and those operating primarily at national level but which have acquired a Community dimension. The organisers are principally involved in exchange programmes, vocational training programmes or a variety of social, cultural and educational projects aimed at target groups from particular professional or industrial sectors which have been networking for the purpose of developing exchanges of young people. This wide range of organisations has greatly contributed to the variety of sectors in which exchanges have been run within the programme.

In 1989 a total of 29 organisations have received grants for Young Worker Exchanges.

In 1988/89, there were three meetings with exchange organisers involved in the programme :

- 23 March 1988 : a one day meeting in Brussels to clarify the existing administrative procedures with exchange organisers.
  
- 24/27 September 1988 : a "brainstorming meeting" at Lago Maggiore, Italy, with the purpose of gathering together both representatives of the main organisers and a number of outside experts to discuss :
  - \* options for the long-term development of the programme and
  - \* guidelines for the two remaining years of the Third Programme.
  
- 26/27 October 1989 : a two-day meeting in Brussels to discuss the administrative and financial aspects of the programme for 1990, to consider the statistical evaluation of the programme carried out by the Commission and to exchange points of view on the context and scope of the fourth programme.

#### NATIONAL COORDINATORS

The Commission is particularly anxious that exchange organisers liaise with coordinators to discuss exchange plans and that a copy of each project submitted to the Commission be sent to the pertinent national coordinator.

A meeting was held with the national coordinators in Brussels on 24 October 1988 to inform them of developments and to outline the perspectives of the fourth programme.

No meeting of the national coordinators was held in 1989; a next meeting is planned for the beginning of 1990.

## PRACTICAL RESULTS 1988-89

From 1987 to 1988 the annual budget for the programme remained at 4.5 mio ECUs and in 1989 there was an increase of 500.000 ECUs to 5 mio ECUs. Despite this situation, the number of participants has increased from 2304 in 1987 to 2676 in 1988 and approximately 2995<sup>(1)</sup> in 1989. It should also be noted that in 1989 the flat-rate contributions per participant per week were increased by 10 ECUs allowing for an increase in the grant per participant per week.

The average cost per participant per week in 1988 amounted to 141 ECUs and in 1989 this amount has increased to 154 ECUs and the average grant per participant per week increased from 117 ECUs in 1988 to 125 ECUs in 1989.

The slight increase in both average cost and grant reflects, on the one hand the ability of organisers to reduce costs and, on the other, the ability of some organisers - essentially those new to the programme - to secure other sources of income and thus reduce the grant required.

Projects are in principle approved on a biannual basis - at the beginning of and in June each year. This system has the advantage of allowing for a mid-year funding review. Organisers inform the Commission of any under-utilization of monies granted; excess funds can therefore be recouped immediately and allocated to another project.

## SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM EXCHANGES

As the Council Decision provides, exchanges are divided into short-term and long-term programmes, each having its own particular objectives within the overall guidelines.

In 1988 and 1989 there was a decline in long-term exchanges. This is a result of several factors :

- Increasing difficulty of finding work placements in general and particularly for foreign nationals in the different Member States.
- Reluctance of young people who are employed to leave jobs, albeit temporarily, to participate in the Programme.
- An increase of "medium-term" exchanges, usually of 13-16 weeks' duration and often preceded by a very short language course. These combine the objectives of short-term and long-term exchanges, while many of the difficulties involved in the long-term programmes are eliminated.

(1) The 1989 figure is based on planned participant numbers of detailed applications and not, as for the preceding years on final, actual numbers.

The Commission will, of course, continue to promote both types of exchange while ensuring that the programme is open to the maximum number of young people possible and that a relative balance is maintained between the economic sectors in which exchanges take place.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

There is still a degree of over-concentration at the centre of the Community; however, efforts to redress this imbalance are proving successful, and one of the priorities of the programme is to encourage the participation of young people from peripheral or disadvantaged regions.

The Commission endeavours to ensure a general balance between the number of young workers received and those sent abroad on exchanges from each Member State. This principle of balance operates for the majority of exchanges and the Commission is anxious that it continues to underpin the basic aims of the programme wherever feasible.

#### SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION

Although in earlier years of the programme, the primary and secondary sectors dominated exchanges, the development of the tertiary sector of the Community's economy is reflected in the Young Worker Exchange Programme, and this sector is now the largest in the programme.

#### PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Since unemployed young people were made eligible to participate in the programme, the proportion of unemployed participants has increased steadily from 46% in 1987 to 47% in 1988 and 49% in 1989, i.e. almost half of the participants in the programme are job-seekers.

Another priority of the Third Programme is to offer equal opportunities to men and women. The Commission has endeavoured to ensure that young men and women are equally represented and that women are encouraged to participate in exchanges in new technology areas. In both 1988 and 1989, this aim was achieved, i.e. equality was complete and young women represented approximately 50% of all participants in the programme.

#### TRAINING CONTENT OF THE PROJECTS

The Third Joint Programme is not intended to offer the young person concerned basic vocational training and experience in another Member State

but rather provides a complement to the training and experience already acquired in his/her own country. The Commission continues to believe it is crucial that even short-term exchanges should have a genuine work experience content and that the work experience provided during long-term projects should be of sufficiently high quality and value to encourage employers and workers alike to participate in the scheme.

#### FUNDING OF THE PROGRAMME

Both in 1988 and 1989, the Commission had to refuse funding for a large number of exchange projects for budgetary reasons. The Commission's financial support of the exchange programme was always intended to act as an incentive to the development of young worker exchanges within the Community. It was never intended to cover the entire costs of each exchange project, although this is in fact the case in the majority of the exchanges. This situation obviously leaves much to be desired as it ultimately means that the number of young people who can participate in the programme is not as high as it might otherwise be.

If we are to extend the programme and make it less dependent on Community funds it is vital for exchange organisers, in cooperation with national coordinators, to explore all possible sources of complementary funding, be they governmental, regional, local or private. The Commission considers that the Member States should continue their support at national level and their action if the programme is to have a real impact on young workers throughout the Community.

The Commission will continue to encourage new exchange initiatives via subsidies other than the existing flat-rate weekly contribution. This practice will make it possible to achieve partially the aim of co-financing exchanges, since the subsidy system requires that the organisers seek other sources of funding.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

As mentioned earlier, there has been a progressive increase in the number of participants eventhough there has only been a limited increase in the budget. The Commission is also happy to note the constant increase in the number of new exchange organisers (in 1989 19 new organisations applied for a grant, 10 of these received grants).

The impact of the information materials disseminated since 1986 is becoming evident and it should also be noted that requests for information from individuals, as well as from organisations, are still increasing. In 1989 an in-depth evaluation of the programme took place, inter alia to prepare the way for the 4th Programme.

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