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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION

**TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE
AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**on the implementation, results and overall assessment of
the European Year of Lifelong Learning
(1996)**

**submitted in accordance with Article 8 of European Parliament and Council
Decision No 2493/95/EC**

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ON THE IMPLEMENTATION, RESULTS AND OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE
EUROPEAN YEAR OF LIFELONG LEARNING (1996)**

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The theme of lifelong learning has now become central to policy debate throughout the European Union. The Commission's communication *'Towards a Europe of knowledge'* directly linked its proposals for education, training and youth programmes for the period 2000 to 2006 to the aim of promoting lifelong learning. Other initiatives including the most recent reform of the Structural Funds and the national employment plans also show that lifelong learning has been adopted as a key element in the European Union's strategy in dealing with the challenges facing society on the eve of the third millennium.

The extent to which lifelong learning has gained acceptance in public opinion and political discourse indicates clearly that the European Year was a timely initiative which has helped to change society and attitudes fundamentally, and that it can be claimed to have been one of the more successful initiatives of this type.

The European Year set out to promote lifelong learning by acting on both the demand and supply sides – raising awareness among the general public of the need and the desirability of continuing to learn, and stimulating debate on how delivery systems can cater for the new learning needs.

The Commission attached great importance to implementing it on a decentralised basis and in close partnership with the bodies designated by the participating countries. The budget of 8.34 million Ecus cofinanced some 550 projects (representing 5 000 events) at Community, national, regional or local level, to a total value of 34 million Ecus. Press coverage is estimated to have been some 4 000 articles, and there were 80 000 visits to the internet site.

The policy debate was supported by two studies, one on the economic dimension and the other on the budgetary implications of education and training, a reflection paper on the importance of lifelong learning and an opinion poll to gauge public opinion on lifelong learning. It received a further impetus from the publication of the Commission White Paper *Teaching and Learning - Towards the Learning Society* which set out a series of objectives to generalise lifelong learning throughout European society. The Action Plan *Learning in the information society* presented by the Commission in October 1996 situated the educational challenges and opportunities presented by new information technologies clearly in the context of lifelong learning opportunities for all. At the end of the European Year, on 20 December 1996, the Council adopted *Conclusions on a strategy for lifelong learning* which present a set of principles underpinning a strategy for lifelong learning and a framework of areas for further development.

Many new initiatives launched during 1996 or since then in the Member States – in addition to the projects which were cofinanced within the framework of the European Year – have taken up the theme of lifelong learning. These have included major reforms of the education and training systems, measures focusing on educational participation by underrepresented groups, pilot actions and Government policy documents. The European Year also helped to promote cooperation between agencies responsible for different parts of the education and training system.

As a lasting heritage of the European Year, the Amsterdam Treaty has enshrined the principle of lifelong learning in the preamble to the EC Treaty, whereby the Contracting parties state that they are *'determined to promote the development of the highest possible level of knowledge for their peoples through a wide access to education and through its continuous updating'*.

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Parliament and Council Decision¹ proclaiming 1996 as the European Year of Lifelong Learning stems from the Commission White Paper '*Growth, competitiveness, employment*', which proposed a European Year focussing on education. In following up this idea and placing the emphasis on the "lifelong" aspect, the Commission chose a dimension which highlights the complementarity and continuity between education and vocational training in terms of personal development, integrating people into society, employability and economic competitiveness. The eight themes selected² offered a range of possibilities among which choices could be made in the light of the different situations in the participating countries.³ The Commission attached great importance to implementing the year on a decentralised basis and in close partnership with the bodies designated by the participating countries in order to take the utmost account of these specific situations.

The information, awareness-raising and promotional activities undertaken during the year were designed, in accordance with Article 1 of the European Parliament and Council Decision, to promote the "personal development and sense of initiative of individuals, their integration into working life and society, their participation in the democratic decision-making process and their ability to adjust to economic, technological and social change." The aim was not only to create awareness among the public but also to stimulate policy debate on adapting education and training provision to an increasingly diversified demand.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Actions undertaken

2.1.1 Budget

A budget of eight million Ecus was allocated to the European Year, plus the contributions from Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein (amounting to 0.34 million Ecu). In line with the spirit of the Decision it was decided to earmark half of this to funding national or local projects. With the backing of the *ad hoc* Committee, the Commission opted to maximise the number of projects supported, even if the amount granted to each was very low (an average of 10 500 Ecu, involving amounts ranging from Ecu 700 to 150 000). The average rate of Community cofunding was thus below 20% of associated costs, thus well within the 50% ceiling authorised for these projects.

¹ Decision 2493/95/EC, OJ No L 256, 26.10.95, p.45

² Cf. annex.

³ The 15 Member States of the European Union and the three EFTA countries of the European Economic Area.

This approach was justified on two counts:

- the large number of high-quality projects sent to the Commission via the national bodies;
- the high level of motivation among the promoters. Despite the modest level of Community cofunding and the unavoidable complexity of procedures for organisations often unfamiliar with Community workings, the budget of the European Year generated activities amounting to approximately Ecu 34 million, i.e. over four times the Community budget allocated.

	Proportion of Total EU Funding	EU Funding (000 ECU)	Total Resources (000ECU)
'National Projects'	49%	3,936	21,931
'European Projects'	17%	1,375	5,327
'Media Projects'	6%	518	3,561
Launch and Closing Conferences	6%	442	816
Multimedia Competition	2%	181	395
Communication	16%	1,350	1,350
Studies EU Level	4%	500	500
Total	100%	8,302	33,880

2.1.2 Projects

Despite a very tight schedule between the final adoption of the Decision and the closing date for submitting projects, the national agencies received over 2 000 projects. Strategies varied from one country to another, some giving priority to an institution-based campaign and others preferring information campaigns targeting the general public.

All in all, the Commission selected 454 national projects. To these must be added 88 European projects and 10 media projects. Among the projects not selected, several hundred projects nevertheless received the authorisation to use the logo for the Year through the national bodies.

2.1.2.1 National breakdown

Country	Proposals Received	Activities Co-financed by the EU	Other Activities not receiving EU funding
Austria	74	26	34 other projects
Belgium	30	28	23 other projects took place in the Flemish and the German communities
Denmark	26	10	
Finland	16	10	205 events used the logo in total
France	125	46	

Country	Proposals Received	Activities Co-financed by the EU	Other Activities not receiving EU funding
Germany	157	58	Workshops, seminars and conferences took place without funding
Greece	105	20	
Ireland	100	17	
Italy	130	36	At least 100 additional events took place, some with National Co-ordination Unit sponsorship
Luxembourg	12	9	4 more projects financed by national funds
Netherlands	6	6	
Portugal	187	19	6 additional event took place in 1997 pertinent to EYLL
Spain	300*	45	100+ organisations have used the logo
Sweden	116	12	Education festivals in Uppsala and Norrköping
UK	1500*	89	Other events took place without EU funding
Iceland	15	10	
Liechtenstein	8	6	
Norway	19	7	20 conferences in total took place, using the logo and promotional material
Total	2103*	454	

* approximately

Many projects included more than one event or activity (e.g. a series of regional conferences constituting a single project), so that in all it can be estimated that over 5 000 events were organised in the framework of the European Year.

2.1.2.2 Type of activities

Variety in all respects, is the most striking characteristic of the activities supported during the EYLL. Most of the projects carried out throughout the EYLL involved a combination of separate activities for all types of activities funded. Approximately 70% of activities, however, either included or wholly consisted of a conference, seminar or workshop on one or more of the themes associated with lifelong learning.

More than one in five of all activities produced a publication⁴. This is frequently the case with reports outlining conference proceedings. For example EYLL funding paid for the publication "Opportunities for Black People in Higher Education" which reports the proceedings from the conference "Education for Transformation: Opportunities for Black People" which took place in Leeds, UK in March 1996.

Many of the projects contained an awareness-raising element -18% included press/mass media activities and another 18% were information/public relations campaigns. Examples include a campaign lasting throughout the Year in the Spanish region of Navarra, which aimed to raise awareness of lifelong learning through dissemination activities and various cultural events in the region. Also, the 'Ligerius' competition which was a result of inter-regional co-operation between the French *Pays de la Loire*

⁴ Publication of this report was initially delayed with the intention of including in it a synthesis of the conclusions of these publications. Their volume and diversity however rendered this impossible given the staff resources available.

region and the Italian *Emilia Romagna* region aimed at identifying examples of good practice and raising awareness of lifelong learning.

Development of innovative education and training activities and the development of education and training products formed part of a further 18% and 15% of project activities respectively. A similar proportion of projects involved the undertaking of a study/survey on aspects of lifelong learning.

Particular mention should be made of the opening and closing conferences held in Venice and in Dublin respectively within the framework of the Italian and Irish presidencies of the Council. On the occasion of these conferences, the Ministers for Social Affairs and Education held joint informal meetings to discuss issues of common concern under the general theme of lifelong learning. Launch conferences were also held at national level in the participating States.

2.1.2.3 Target groups

The breakdown of events across the different target groups confirms the wide range of the applications which emerged during the preparatory phase. The breakdown implemented on the basis of the projects receiving a financial contribution from the Commission was effected as follows:

- Organisations from the world of education and training: 27%
- Organisations dealing with young people, women and the elderly: 19%
- Public groups, professional associations, social partners: 16%
- Organisation specialised in equal opportunities and addressing the problem of exclusion: 13%
- The business sector, particularly the SMEs: 13%
- Other: 11%

This breakdown again highlights the twofold dimension covered by the concept of lifelong education and training, i.e.:

- firstly, the human and social aspects linked with individual fulfilment, and the role of the individual in society (citizenship, democracy, tolerance);
- secondly, the acquisition and updating of knowledge and skills with a view to getting into or getting back into the employment market (employability).

2.2 Management

The EYLL was organised by a small team within DGXXII (Education, Training and Youth) of the European Commission, which worked in contact with DG V (Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs), DG X (Information, Communication, Culture and Audio-visual Policy) and DG XIII (Telecommunications, Information Market and Exploitation of Research). The Commission was advised by an *ad hoc* Committee

comprising representatives of all participating countries. National Co-ordinating Bodies (NCBs) were designated by all participating countries and these worked closely with the Commission team on the practical implementation of the Year. Many participating States also appointed some form of national consultative body.

2.2.1 Project selection

The Commission developed a framework for the assessment of the proposals received for EU funding. This same framework was used for all types of projects and was circulated to all NCBs. Activities were selected for funding under the EYLL on the basis of the following broad considerations:

- **general eligibility** - whether the proposal contained: a detailed action plan and financial statement for a communication project; promoted the concept of lifelong learning; was scheduled to take place during 1996; and did not overlap with activities within LEONARDO DA VINCI and SOCRATES;
- **activity type** - conferences, seminars or workshops; innovative education or training activities; radio or press activities; multimedia activities; and competitions or miscellaneous activities;
- **selection criteria** - quality (appropriateness, clarity), innovation and originality, actions which cut across the traditional education and training boundaries, the cost effectiveness of community intervention.

The selection procedures adopted made good use of the resources of the Commission Services to carry out an independent appraisal of proposals from the different national contexts. These procedures assisted in the selection of a varied set of activities, which were supported by the EU. This selection process ensured that across the participating countries as a whole all themes and target groups were covered.

2.2.2 Promotional material: Brochures, Contact 96 Newsletter, Compendium

The Commission distributed a general information brochure in three language versions (a total of 63 100 copies) and four issues of the Contact 96 Newsletter (50 000 copies per run including 10 000 in German, 25 000 in English and 15 000 in French) designed to create and organise the network of promoters. Most countries supplemented this European newsletter by producing specific publications giving further details on national events.

5 000 copies of a compendium listing the main themes of the Year, giving a few examples of best practice, and a list and the particulars of all the promoters was sent out in three languages (1 000 in German, 2 000 in English, 2 000 in French). An additional 1 000 copies in English and 1 000 in French were published at the start of 1997 in order to meet demand. The aim of this publication was to encourage the networking of promoters.

Other communication material:

200 000 format A1 posters publicising the year in eleven languages.

31 200 flags in 11 languages.

All this material bore the logo of the European Year. The imagery of the logo was also made available for incorporation in additional publicity material produced at national or local level.

The logo was generally regarded as effective in terms of what it communicated and how it was used. The logo was especially popular in Finland, Germany (although acceptance here was gradual), Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Liechtenstein whereas it was believed to have communicated less effectively in Austria and Portugal .

In general, most of the promotional materials prepared for the EYLL were well received and widely distributed across the participating countries. The range and quality of the materials available were identified as particularly helpful for the NCBs. The brochures, posters and flags, available in all Community languages, were considered to be the most useful promotional tools. The availability of the Compendium and the four Contact '96 Newsletters in only three languages, and of the "step-by-step guide" in English only, limited widespread usage and effectiveness. There is little evidence to show that the video was widely used or broadcast across the participating countries, apart from Norway and Iceland. On the other hand, video/television material was produced nationally and locally in a number of countries.

It was not possible to appoint the companies to manage and implement this information and communications strategy until November 1995 after the legal decision on the year had been formally adopted. This meant that the timing of the arrival of the promotional materials and the volume of materials distributed did not always match the needs of some NCBs.

2.2.3 *Studies*

In order to fuel the debate on education and training systems and have a solid information base, the Commission organised:

- two studies, one on the economic dimension and the other on the budgetary implications of education and training; these two studies each include a summary report and a volume containing the national reports in English, with a summary in three languages. The full text of the summary report has been put on the Internet;
- a reflection paper on the importance of lifelong learning;
- an evaluation study of how the European Year was covered in the media;
- a report on the external evaluation of the European Year; this study, conducted by an external consultants bureau, brought out the impact of the European Year and has been taken into account in the drafting of this report.

2.2.4 *Eurobarometer survey*

A poll (Eurobarometer 44.0 and 44.1 autumn 1995) among young people and adults was carried out in order to gauge their opinion on lifelong learning. The results provided fresh insight into the attitudes and behavioural patterns in relation to lifelong learning, and were widely reported.

This survey illustrated the interest of Europeans in lifelong learning: 70% of the 20 000 people interviewed hoped to become involved. Conversely, fewer than 22% of

the people interviewed said that they had actually undertaken any training in the twelve-month period prior to the survey.

Some of the questions from this first poll were included in Eurobarometer 47.1 (spring 1997). This second survey brought out and broadly confirmed the results of the first. Obviously, no great shift could have been expected in the short term, and the few slight fluctuations noted did not go beyond normal statistical variations. The "contradiction" between attitudes and actual behaviour mentioned above continues to exist. Nevertheless, an encouraging trend is to be noted among people, who said they had undertaken some training during the previous twelve months, this category showing a two-point increase and reaching over 24%.

More targeted questions pinpointed certain requirements:

- the majority (60%) of the over 55s, for instance, hoped to carry on training throughout their retirement (mainly in order to occupy their leisure time and improve their general level of knowledge);
- the questions concerning the learning of new technologies revealed the same differences between attitudes and actual behaviour;
- overall, lifelong learning is a topical theme for nearly 70% of Europeans and the main vectors of this notion are deemed to be the media (television, press).

2.2.5 *Internet site*

A few figures:

- total of visits to the site (maintained up until mid-June 1997): 80 307;
- number of requests for electronic copies of the logo: 121;
- number of visits monthly: approximately 6 000 on average throughout 1996, with a peak of 12 893 in June;
- number of persons recorded as users of the site: 218.

In order to interpret these figures, it should be noted that the site was completely overhauled in June 1996 to make it more user-friendly and enhance accessibility which had initially proved too restricted.

A few comments:

- the opening of the site extended promotion of the Year throughout the whole day: 30% of visitors to the site indeed consulted it outside working hours;
- the site, visited by a wide range of Community users (organisations, groups, associations, schools and universities, the business sector, public administrations) was also visited by parties from countries not taking direct part in the European Year (Eastern Europe, USA, Africa, Asia).

The Internet site thus, after a slow start, made a big contribution to the readability of the Year's actions and to promoting lifelong learning.

2.2.6 Dissemination of press releases and reviews

There was very extensive coverage of the European Year's events in the media. On top of the general media interest in educational problems came the novelty of events carried out by small groups and the topical nature of lifelong learning.

All in all, over 1 128 topical articles were recorded between January and October 1996 by a body designated for this purpose, but which was by no means in a position to record all articles which appeared in the regional and local press, and in the professional reviews and the specialised press. The level of coverage varied from country to country depending on media customs and culture in the countries concerned. An extrapolation of the figures on the basis of information sent directly by the promoters puts the number of press articles at an estimated 4 000. The breakdown of articles recorded is as follows:

- Regional dailies: 420
- National dailies: 236
- Regional weeklies: approximately 200
- Specialised publications (business sector): approximately 200
- Magazines: approximately 70

The articles mostly provide information (82%) on events; feature articles represent approximately 17% of the total, there were eight editorials and five letters to the editor.

The articles concentrated on three main subjects: the European year itself (40%), general education problems (30%) and national initiatives (30%). The messages were focused on two main themes: "The Year prompts us to pursue our education/training" and "The Year illustrates the role of the social partners".

2.2.7 European competition for multimedia educational software

As part of the Year the Commission for the first time organised at European level a competition for multimedia educational software.

This initiative was designed to develop creativity among pupils and students in Europe and their teachers, by prompting them to tap the teaching potential of the information society. It thus corresponded to one of the specific aims of the Year.

Despite organisational problems stemming from the very short deadlines, this action, which received the active support of the Member States, generated substantial enthusiasm in most countries (over 350 products received and selected at national level). 79 projects were submitted to the Commission for evaluation at European level.

Two categories of projects were in competition:

- *Category A: Primary and secondary schools*

Primary and secondary schools could submit either a scenario or a finished product (this latter solution being adopted in most cases). The pupils wanted more often than not to present their school or village or to make a CD-ROM based on reading sheets. The first prize went to "*L'étrange école de la Rue Rose*", submitted by the *Collège du Plateau* in Lavans, France.

- *Category B: Universities and multimedia schools*

This category provided for finished products corresponding to a pre-professional level of skill. The products were of high quality and definite teaching value. The first prize went to "Anatomia e rappresentazione artistica del volto", a CD-ROM on the anatomy of the face, intended for art schools and submitted by the IAL Liguria, Genoa, Italy.

The winners were handed their prizes (multimedia material donated by Hewlett-Packard and IBM) at the closing conference of the European Year in Dublin on 6 December 1996. All the projects submitted at European level were awarded a diploma and teaching CD-ROMs.

The competition was held again in 1997 under the action plan "*Learning in the information society*".

3. RESULTS AND OVERALL ASSESSMENT

3.1 The Impact of the EYLL on Policy Debates at EU and National Levels

Two specific issues are considered here:

- the extent to which the EYLL has influenced or informed policy debates or policy developments;
- whether new networks or institutions have developed as a result of EYLL-funded activities.

It has to be recognised that, with some variations in terminology, the lifelong learning debate has been underway in a number of international organisations (UNESCO, Council of Europe, OECD, Nordic Council of Ministers) and in some participating States for several decades, and that it is difficult to demonstrate the specific separate impact of the European Year. Nevertheless, one can confidently assert that the European year brought this debate from the realm of the education and training specialists to a wider public and raised its political profile.

3.1.1 *EYLL's Influence Concerning Policy Debates and Policy Developments*

The debate at European level throughout the European Year received a further impetus from the publication of the Commission White Paper *Teaching and Learning - Towards the Learning Society* which set out a series of objectives to generalise lifelong learning throughout European society. The Action Plan *Learning in the information society* presented by the Commission in October 1996 grew out of a related reflection process generated by the work of the Educational Multimedia Task Force, and situates the educational challenges and opportunities presented by new information technologies clearly in the context of lifelong learning opportunities for all of Europe's citizens. At the end of the European Year, on 20 December 1996, the Council adopted *Conclusions on a strategy*

for *lifelong learning* (97/C 7/02)⁵ which present a set of principles underpinning a strategy for lifelong learning and a framework of areas for further development.

At the national level, one of the most visible policy initiatives associated with the EYLL was the commitment made to reform the education system in Italy, announced by the Italian Minister of Education at the EYLL closing conference in Dublin. Other positive policy impacts have included the injection of new ideas and perceptions concerning vocational training policy (Finland, France), the existence of a common theme which can be discussed across the policy domains of several government ministries (Austria), and a commitment to adult education, the development of an open university and state language schools in Greece. In some countries, where the concept of lifelong learning was well-established and more widely understood, the policy impact was concentrated on particular groups, such as non-traditional learners in the United Kingdom.

Examples of Impact and Influence of the EYLL on the National Policy and Legislative Framework

Country	Evaluators' Comments
Finland	The influence of the EYLL is seen in a recent proposal for training allowances for non-compulsory training, put forward by a Government task force. The proposal put forward options concerning access to training for people who are long term unemployed, other unemployed people and adults in employment. A pilot is scheduled to start to deliver training for long term unemployed people in October 1997.
Belgium	In the Flemish community, EYLL raised awareness of the need for lifelong learning especially among the older generations. In the French community, no impact was reported, probably due to political and media attention being focused on budgetary difficulties at the time. In the German-speaking community, the EYLL arrived at the right time as a reform on education and training was being prepared; while it is difficult to evaluate objectively the impact that it had, commentators have suggested that it was significant.
France	A law proposal on training, putting particular emphasis on lifelong learning, was about to be discussed before the dissolution of the Parliament. EYLL had been a powerful lever to put forward this subject.
Denmark	The Year coincided with the launch of the Government's ten-point programme to promote lifelong learning opportunities, and also provided an opportunity for holding a major conference of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Copenhagen.
Germany	The national and Länder Committee for the planning of education, training and research issued a joint position on European education and training policy.
Greece	There is a growing commitment to adult education, for the first time in Greece with plans to establish the first open university and state language schools.

⁵ OJ No C7/6 of 10.1.97

Country	Evaluators' Comments
Ireland	White Papers on education, human resource development and adult education were influenced in part by the EYLL.
Italy	The relationship between education and training and working life and the introduction of a decentralised vocational training system have been identified in the proposal submitted concerning education reform.
Luxembourg	EYLL had a great impact on the legislative agenda as an input to the discussions on a law on training.
Sweden	New legislation introduced in relation to adult education coincided with the EYLL, however it built on existing policies addressing lifelong learning rather than as a result of the Year.
UK	The present Government appointed a minister at the DfEE who has lifelong learning as a part of his portfolio of work. This is not a direct consequence of the Year (a division of the Department having worked on lifelong learning for a number of years), however the interest and awareness which EYLL generated may have played a contributory role.
Norway	Current work on the reform of continuing education has been influenced by the EYLL.

There was a very strong impact, for many activities, on the policy debate at the local and regional level. This is consistent with the description outlined in the Annex to the Council Decision, which identified that local, regional and national activities should be supported.

3.1.2 *New Organisations and Relationships Between Activities*

The activities undertaken during the EYLL, to a large extent, have helped to build links and co-operation between organisations and institutions and in some cases have led to the development of new products. An example of an activity which built new relationships nationally and transnationally is the Danish conference "Education is Partnership" which built links between organisations with responsibility for learning for children and young people. The conference aimed:

- to raise parents' awareness of the importance of education and training, their roles and responsibilities and the professionalisation of teachers;
- promote the co-operation between education and training institutions and businesses;
- the promotion of personal development and a sense of initiative for children and young people and encourage their participation in the democratic decision making process;

- define and discuss structures for the future European co-operation in the field of research and development about parents in education.

Speakers at the event came from Denmark, the European Union and the United States and the contacts made have been sustained in a commitment to continue to explore issue concerning education for children and young people and its relationship with the world of work.

An example of a project which led to the development of a new product was the project from the French Community in Belgium "*Le Chemin du Livre*" which produced a video for parents to encourage them to introduce books and written text to their infants before they enter compulsory education.

Several initiatives in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK helped to explore the positive relationship between lifelong learning and the integration of immigrant populations or the fight against adult illiteracy.

Around 15% of activities led to the development of new organisations, one of which was a project from the Flemish Community in Belgium which organised innovative training activities for senior citizens and created an "Academy of Seniors" with partners in other European countries.

This and a number of other projects, notably in Italy, provided an element of continuity with the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations (1993) which included education for active ageing as one of its themes.

3.1.3 *New Relationships Resulting From EYLL Between Policy Actors at the National Level*

At the individual country levels, lifelong learning cuts across traditional boundaries of ministerial responsibility and provides a common theme around which Ministries of Education and Labour/Employment have established cooperation and have placed a new emphasis on access to learning opportunities for all citizens. Officials in several participating States reported that the European Year had provided new opportunities for closer cooperation between Ministries or between different levels of government. Other relationships and networks which have been facilitated by the EYLL included the relationship between social partner organisations and government on the question of lifelong learning.. There are some issues where common agreement has not been reached within the relationships which have developed as a result of EYLL activity, but the agreement to enter and sustain the dialogue can be considered a significant outcome from the EYLL.

3.1.3.1 National Networking and Other Organisational Changes Resulting from EYLL

Country	Networking and Organisational Change
Austria	An education platform " <i>Bildungsplattform</i> " has been established where different institutions involved in vocational education and training policy, across different fields can start a constructive dialogue.

Belgium	In the German-speaking community, some links have been created, especially between the FOREM and the Training School in order to share training practices. In the French community, EYLL developed synergies between the different bodies in charge of education and training. In the Flemish community, the impact was rather limited.
Finland	The influence of the EYLL can be seen in efforts to establish advice, guidance and counselling services; in the development of relationships across different disciplines, and networking opportunities between projects.
France	The impact of EYLL on national networking is difficult to assess as the NCBs were not able to achieve the necessary follow-up . But there is reason to believe that some links were created at local level. The <i>Entretiens Condorcet</i> (3.000 participants) provided a focus for discussion of the issues at all levels of training and social organisation.
Germany	The link between the Ministry of Education, Science and Research and the Länder was already established but it has been strengthen during the EYLL.
Greece	Relationships established between the Ministries and the NCB and other policy actors are expected to continue in the future, particularly between the Ministry of Education, the National Labour Institute and the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Labour.
Luxembourg	Numerous synergies between firms and schools as well as between ministries have been created thanks to EYLL. A "cyberhighschool" had been developed on internet.
Netherlands	Members of the counselling committee have agreed to continue working together post EYLL. Regional co-operation between education suppliers and businesses is also expected to continue.
Portugal	The relationship between the Ministries of Education and Qualification and Employment has been strengthened as a result of the EYLL.
Sweden	EYLL has helped to consolidate the relationships between the organisations and institutions dealing with education and training issues at the national level. New networks have been established as a result of some of the conferences held during the year, for example Aurora Borealis and Linköping.
UK	EYLL facilitated a policy debate which brought together employee and employer representative bodies, namely the Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industry; provided "keynote" speaking opportunities for ministers at 35 events associated with the EYLL during the year (two thirds of which are estimated to be "additional"); and the development of learning cities and learning towns (endorsed by the then Secretary of State).

Liechtenstein	Training experts, the Minister of Education and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, <i>Schulamit</i> and LEONARDO da Vinci participated in a round table on lifelong learning. This resulted in a policy paper on training.
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3.2 Sustainability - Continuing Activities at Project and National Level

It is anticipated that around two-thirds of all activities assessed have continued and will continue in some form in the future. This can mean:

- an activity similar to the one co-financed by the EU is run again, for example a follow-up to the conference led by the University of Newcastle, which targeted researchers from the UK, the EU and third countries and which concerned the policy debate on lifelong learning, was repeated November 1997, without further EU co-financing; Weekly lifelong learning segments on a daytime TV programme in Ireland (RTE "Live at Three"), featuring women who have successfully re-entered working life via education, were continued after the end of the European Year.
- the relationships created between organisations and institutions are sustainable and will be used to continue to disseminate and exchange information and experiences. An example here is the Swedish project 'Aurora Borealis' in the county of Norbotten, where the colleges, secondary schools and SMEs responsible for the project have committed to sustaining the networks developed and will continue to disseminate information about their activities
- research completed during the EYLL is being used to inform future planning. An example of which is the Italian study undertaken in the Varese region which aimed to identify the continuous education and training needs for women in SMEs and crafts professions. This study is being used to plan appropriate education and training opportunities.

The future for approximately 15% of activities is uncertain and just under 20% will not continue. Uncertainty, in most cases, results from promoters' lack of access to alternative funding sources. This is the case for a project organised by the Patronat Catala Pro Europa, in Spain, co-financed during the EYLL by the Catalan Regional Government. During the EYLL they organised a group of activities including an essay competition on lifelong learning for secondary schools in Catalonia and a study trip to Brussels for the winning school. While they would like to undertake similar projects in the future, they have experienced difficulties in raising the necessary funding to continue the activities.

Examples of activities continuing as a result of or linked to the EYLL:

	Activities
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Research	<p>A European research network on parents in education is being supported in Denmark.</p> <p>The city of Espoo has established a working group to explore the necessary preconditions (basic skills) for lifelong learning.</p>
Strategy and Policy Development	<p>A committee has been appointed to prepare a national strategy for lifelong learning in Finland and are looking specifically at aspects of good practice.</p> <p>Regional lifelong learning strategies have been prepared to promote lifelong learning in Sweden.</p> <p>Learning line (a helpline service), which had its origins in Adult Learners Week is introduced in the UK in September 1997.</p> <p>In France, there is a reflection process going on about how to put into effect the experience acquired.</p>
Ministerial Co-operation	<p>The organisations which participated in the management of EYLL are continuing to co-operate and have issued a call for tender for new projects concerning training and re-training in Greece.</p>
Promotion and Dissemination activities	<p>A series of conferences and publications have been issued to further promote and raise awareness about lifelong learning in Germany.</p> <p>National and local learning campaigns have been introduced in Sweden.</p> <p>Organisations that developed training products or have raised awareness about learning opportunities for older workers in Italy and the Netherlands respectively, have continued to promote them. In addition a conference on new functional basic skills took place in June 1997 in the Netherlands.</p> <p>The internet site established by the Department for Education and Employment is still running.</p>

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Dissemination and Follow-up at the National Level

The experience of the EYLL has emphasised the benefits of lifelong learning and the importance of increasing commitments to lifelong learning by individuals, employers and governments alike. This can be further pursued through:

- increasing the awareness of the benefits of and opportunities for lifelong learning;

- improving the incentives for investment in lifelong learning; and
- adaptation of the supply of education and training opportunities to the needs of lifelong learning..

More particularly, activities which improve access to information on learning opportunities, identify the economic and social benefits associated with lifelong learning or stimulate demand at the local level would be of benefit. Concurrent initiatives to further improve the perception of lifelong learning amongst individuals, including both traditional and non-traditional learners, and employers could also be pursued.

The many examples mentioned in Chapter 3 indicate that policy debate in the participating States generally is now taking account of lifelong learning, and of the need for education and training systems to respond in innovative and imaginative ways to new, more diverse demands.

4.2 Follow-up at EU level

At European level, lifelong learning is now an essential dimension which pervades discussion of education and training issues.

The Amsterdam Treaty enshrines the principle of lifelong learning in the preamble to the EC Treaty, whereby the Contracting parties state that they are

determined to promote the development of the highest possible level of knowledge for their peoples through a wide access to education and through its continuous updating.

On 12 November 1997 the Commission presented a communication entitled "*Towards a Europe of knowledge*" (COM(97) 563 final). The purpose of this communication was "to set out the guidelines for future Community action in the areas of education, training and youth for the period 2000-2006". The Commission thereby announced that the implementation of the Community programmes in these areas (Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth) would be "directly linked to the aim of developing lifelong learning which the Union has set itself and which has been incorporated into the Amsterdam Treaty". Other initiatives including the most recent reform of the Structural Funds, the Information Society Technologies research programme and the national employment plans also show that lifelong learning has been adopted as a key element in the European Union's strategy in dealing with the challenges facing society on the eve of the third millennium.

4.3 Overall conclusions

The European Year set out to promote Lifelong Learning by acting on both the demand and supply sides – raising awareness among the general public of the need and the desirability of continuing to learn, and stimulating debate on how delivery systems which are essentially organised at national, regional and local level can cater for the new learning needs.

Carrying on the operation simultaneously throughout the European economic area gave it added weight, facilitated transnational communication of ideas and exchange of good

practice and strengthened the voice of advocates of a lifelong approach to learning in the ongoing education debate in the participating States. The European Union contribution to the worldwide debate on lifelong learning was marked by a broad concept embracing a "cradle to grave" approach which does not subordinate learning to economic imperatives and gives a full place to issues such as personal fulfilment, participation in the democratic decision-making process, recreational learning and active ageing.

The situations encountered in the different States varied considerably as regards both the pre-existing level of penetration of the idea of lifelong learning into general consciousness and the availability of lifelong learning opportunities. Nevertheless, whether it was in areas where the concept was scarcely known or in areas with well-established traditions of lifelong learning, the response encountered was one of enthusiasm, and above all one of motivation to improve on the status quo.

At 8.4 million ECU for fifteen Member States and their three partners in the European economic area, funding was modest, and could do no more than generate a set of activities to illustrate and nourish the debate. Irrespective of the level of funding, the precise impact of the Year cannot really be scientifically measured, as the situation without it having taken place is a matter for conjecture. There is, however, plenty of evidence to support the claim that the initiative has improved the situation in Member States and achieved lasting results.

The commitment which now forms part of the Union Treaty is one lasting record of the Year. The principles adopted by the Council at the closing of the Year are an admirable mission statement for education and training systems throughout the Union. One cannot but be struck by the number of measures which have been taken within the national systems since the start of 1996 and which in one way or another invoke the principle of lifelong learning. The Commission would not claim that sole credit for these is due to the European Year. Nevertheless, the extent to which lifelong learning has gained acceptance in public opinion and political discourse indicates clearly that the European Year was a timely initiative which has helped to change society and attitudes fundamentally, and that it can be claimed to have been one of the more successful initiatives of this type.

ANNEX 1

AIM AND THEMES OF THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF LIFELONG LEARNING

The aim of the European Year of Lifelong Learning was the promotion of personal development and sense of initiative of individuals, their integration into working life and society, their participation in the democratic decision-making process and their ability to adjust to economic, technological and social change.

The themes were as follows :

1. the importance of a high quality general education, open to all without discrimination of any kind, including the ability to learn by oneself, as a preparation for lifelong learning;
2. the promotion of vocational training leading to qualifications for all young people, as a precondition for a smooth transition to working life and as a basis for further personal development, for re-adaptation in the job market and for achieving equality of opportunities between men and women;
3. the promotion of continuing education and training, in harmony with school education and initial vocational training and in relation to new requirements in the world of work and society, whilst ensuring the quality and transparency of such education and training;
4. motivation of individuals for lifelong learning and developing such learning for the benefit of groups of people who have hitherto hardly or not at all benefited from it but who particularly need it, such as girls and women;
5. further cooperation on education and training between institutions in these areas and the economic world, in particular small and medium enterprises;
6. the raising of awareness of the social partners of the importance of the creation of, and participation in, new opportunities for lifelong learning in the context of European competitiveness and a highly employment-intensive economic growth;
7. the raising of awareness of parents of the importance of education and training of children and young people in the perspective of lifelong learning and the role that they can play in this respect;
8. the development of the European dimension of initial and continuing education and training, the promotion of mutual understanding and mobility in Europe, as well as a European area for cooperation in education; the raising of awareness among European citizens of the activities of the European Union, particularly with regard to the academic and vocational recognition of diplomas and qualifications in accordance with the systems of the Member States and the promotion of linguistic abilities.

ANNEX 2

PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING A STRATEGY FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

The principles underpinning a strategy for lifelong learning are derived from the fundamental aim of education and training to serve individual, cultural, social and economic well-being and to enhance the quality of life for all citizens. In this respect, the development of a strategy for lifelong learning should be informed by the following principles:

- lifelong learning initiatives should strike an appropriate balance between personal, cultural, civic and social dimensions, and economic and employment concerns. In addition, they should also include democratic principles and human rights values,
- each stage of education and training should contribute appropriately to the continuum of lifelong learning,
- lifelong learning should be based on a wide range of learning opportunities, allowing all individuals to progress in their education according to their social, cultural and economic interests and needs,
- initial education and training are fundamental to lifelong learning and should include, in addition to the core basic skills of literacy and numeracy, a broad base of knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience that will encourage and support learning throughout life,
- lifelong learning should aim to promote individual abilities, enhance employability, make the best use of available human resources talent as well as contribute to the promotion of gender equality, the elimination of social exclusion and the promotion of active participation in democratic society,
- lifelong learning requires the development of flexible and innovative approaches to education and training, including family involvement, in order to promote a sense of inquiry, initiative and motivation of individuals in the learning process,
- lifelong learning demands that individuals, as learners, develop an increasing responsibility for their own education, training and personal development and in this regard appropriate guidance or counselling should be available to adult learners,
- the continuum of lifelong learning should have as a central objective at all stages the promotion of equality of opportunity,
- collectively, individuals, institutions, enterprises, regional authorities, central governments, the social partners where appropriate, and society in general should, within their own areas of responsibility create conditions for and engender a positive attitude to lifelong learning in all its aspects and minimize obstacles to participation in education and training and other learning activities.

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