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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO
THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Proposal for a

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DECISION

establishing the Community action programme
"European voluntary service for young people"

(presented by the Commission)

EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission proposes a Community action programme geared towards the integration of young people into active life through transnational activities that are of benefit to the community. This proposal, forming part of the objectives of a youth policy, offers young Europeans an educational experience allowing them to gain skills and abilities and to act as responsible citizens.
2. The Commission therefore wishes to provide an appropriate framework for the development of a European voluntary service for young people, to help young people to become more mobile within the framework of active citizenship, to open up new prospects for partnerships in the actions conducted within each Member State and to promote exchanges of experience, transfers of good practice and cooperation between all those involved in the integration of young people.
3. Through this new approach based on local and transnational partnerships between actors from the public and private sectors, the Commission's aim is to give a European dimension to formative experiences for a larger number of young people. A further aim is to ensure an impact and spin-off effects that are as far-reaching as possible among young people themselves and among structures, organisations and partners in the economic world.
4. The idea of establishing a European voluntary service was mooted long ago without, however, leading to any real Community initiative or action on this issue¹. A new political will has gradually emerged, however, over the last few years.
5. At European Union level, the second phase of the programme "Youth for Europe" (1992-1994)² made it possible for the Commission to promote voluntary service activities in a Community context across the Member States. One of the main results of this second phase was undoubtedly to raise awareness in the Member States. This type of activity was retained, at the proposal of the Commission, in the third phase of the programme (1995-1999). The specific context surrounding the programme's objectives means that the range of action is very limited and is largely in the form of awareness campaigns, spin-off effects and incentives to develop the concept within the Member States. Moreover, implementation is carried out centrally.
6. The European Parliament has always supported the idea of a voluntary service at Community level. In its 1991 framework report on policies for young people in

¹ Report by the Ad Hoc Committee on "A People's Europe" - Bulletin of the EC, Supplement 7/85 - see, in particular, the proposal to establish a programme for "Community trainee volunteer development workers".

² OJ L217 of 6 August 1991.

Europe, it proposed an enlargement of "voluntary activities" for young people³. On 22 September 1995, it adopted a Resolution⁴ which considered that a European civilian service could consolidate and complement exchanges between young European volunteers and also stressed the need to develop increasingly close cooperation with the countries of central and eastern Europe as well as the "growing need for significant actions on behalf of developing countries". In this Resolution, the European Parliament asked the Commission to submit a communication on the establishment of a European voluntary service in order to open up full consultation with the non-governmental organisations concerned and to initiate thinking on the practical means for its implementation.

7. During its Presidency of the Council of Ministers (June-December 1994), the German government gave priority to voluntary service. Discussions led to the adoption of the "Conclusions of the Council and Ministers of Youth on the promotion of voluntary service periods for young people"⁵.

These Conclusions bear out the growing interest of all the Member States in the development of voluntary service activities at European level. They also stress, in particular, the potential contribution that voluntary service could make to the commitment of young people to the construction of Europe and ask the Commission to "propose practical measures to promote cooperation between the countries taking part in the Youth for Europe III programme as well as between the organisations dealing with voluntary service".

In addition, the Council Resolution on cooperation in the area of youth with third countries, adopted at the instigation of the Spanish Presidency on 5 October 1995, stresses the need to step up cooperation - particularly for voluntary service - with those third countries with which the Community has association or cooperation agreements.

8. Prompted by these requests, which were also relayed by youth organisations, and the very limited extent of existing experience, in January 1996 the Commission adopted, at the initiative of Mrs E. Cresson, a working document "Towards a European Voluntary Service for Young People", which laid the foundations for testing the arrangements for decentralised implementation of long-term voluntary service activities in anticipation of the multi-annual programme envisaged, in order to give a clear Community added value to existing or planned actions in the various Member States.

³ Report of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Media and Sport on Community policies and their impact on young people - A3-142/91.

⁴ B4-1127/95 (PE 193.734).

⁵ OJ C348 of 9 December 1994, p 2.

9. The Parliament supported the Commission's proposed strategy and, in 1996, gave a clear policy signal by channelling ECU 15 million into a new budget heading⁶. The Commission, applying the principles of the SEM 2000 programme (sound and efficient financial management)⁷, has accordingly gone ahead with this pilot action in which some 2500 young people aged between 18 and 25 should take part. This pilot action has already made it possible to establish the soundness of a range of working approaches which are very important for the proposed programme, particularly as regards the feasibility of decentralised management of long-term activities, the need to provide for support measures, the importance of ways of promoting new types of partnership (pilot networks), the key role of the training of the various operators in the success and the quality of the projects. These aspects, along with other more tangible information on the progress of implementation of the pilot action, are described in detail in the preliminary progress report attached⁸. Furthermore, monitoring will yield pointers for the day-to-day running of this type of action and thus provide a tried and tested operational framework for the implementation of the multi-annual programme from its outset. Lastly, an independent *ex ante* evaluation has also confirmed the importance of these elements for the architecture of the programme proposed.
10. The Commission is responsible for implementing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the pilot action under the principle of cooperation set out in Article 126 of the Treaty. It is for this reason that the Member States have all designated measures responsible for implementing this action at national level, as proposed by the Commission. In order, moreover, to involve them more closely, from the outset, in all levels of implementation, the Commission has taken the initiative of setting up a working party made up of representatives appointed by the relevant Ministers and has met individual delegations from each Member State and from Norway and Iceland in order to discuss developments and prospects in this area. These meetings provided a forum for free and in-depth discussion of all general aspects of this action, the implementation of the pilot action and legal and administrative obstacles. Lastly, the Commission has also continued its dialogue with non-governmental youth organisations, particularly the Youth Forum.
11. For the monitoring of this action the Commission has already put in place the structure needed for continuous assessment, in anticipation of the multi-annual programme. The Member States and the European Parliament will be regularly informed of the findings. Moreover, the Commission will submit a second report on the progress of implementation of the pilot action both within the Community and with non-Community countries. Special attention will also have to be paid in this context to activities with third countries, both in order to take account of experiments in progress as part of the pilot action and in order to have pointers

⁶ B3-1011.

⁷ SEC (95) 1814/5

⁸ Annex 2.

for any scope for subsequent development and ways of involving young people in these countries. This will provide the basis for starting the external section for activities in non-EU countries after specific evaluation as part of the pilot action. This report will be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission will take due account of the outcome of discussions under the co-decision procedure relating to the draft decision and will put forward any amendments deemed to be necessary, particularly as regards activities with third countries.

12. The proposal on which this document is based also takes full account of the principles formulated by the Commission in respect of the second stage of the SEM 2000 ("Sound and Efficient Financial Management") programme⁹. The proposed action is based on the findings of an ex-ante evaluation whose results are given in the Annex¹⁰, and on the initial results of the current pilot action and which are set out in the preliminary progress report attached to this document. These findings and results confirm that the architecture of the programme proposed has a solid legal and financial foundation.
13. This proposal forms part, like the Youth for Europe programme, of a Community youth policy. Without prejudging the future, the Commission considers that the interactions and synergies between these two programmes will need to be analysed very carefully so that youth policy at Community level can be developed in an integrated way.
14. As this is an initiative that forms part of youth policy, three further points also need to be made to avoid any misinterpretation:
 - Positive steps should be taken in the framework of the present programme in order to facilitate access by young people who have most difficulty in participating in programmes at European, national, regional or local level. The programme should give such young people the chance to reveal their potential and capabilities and to take part in a recognised educational experience. European Voluntary Service is not an elitist programme, a programme for disadvantaged young people or a programme to combat exclusion. The Commission, whose approach has been borne out by the findings of the ex-ante evaluation, stresses that it does not intend to treat disadvantaged people as a wholly separate group, which would marginalise them even further, but to open the programme to all young people without pre-conditions. Every effort must therefore be made to help those young people for whom participation in action programmes - at Community and at national, regional or local level - and all programme activities raises




⁹ SEC 595 1814/5.

¹⁰ The ex-ante evaluation of the Multiannual European Voluntary Service Programme for Young People - Report prepared by the Tavistock Institute, UK, October 1996.

serious problems and to allow them to discover their potential, their abilities and receive a high-quality formative experience. .

- European voluntary service is the result of a voluntary commitment and of the individual decision of each young person concerned. It is not a substitute for military service, the alternative service formulae available in particular for conscientious objectors or the compulsory community service that exist in Member States and for which they have exclusive competence. National legislators must decide whether or not to allow conscientious objectors to take part in European voluntary service following the conclusion of agreements between European voluntary service and national civilian services.
- These activities do not replace potential or existing paid employment.

15. This document contains:

- a Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament;
- a draft Decision of the Council and the European Parliament establishing the Community action programme of European Voluntary Service and its annexes;
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The Communication will successively:

- look at the issues raised by the proposed action
- examine the Community added value of the proposed strategy
- present the "European voluntary service for young people" programme.

1. THE ISSUES AT STAKE

16. The Treaty on European Union aimed to mark a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe¹¹. The Florence European Council stressed the importance¹² of helping young people to become integrated into active life and, in this respect, noted with interest the idea of a European voluntary service. Several ideas about European voluntary service are also being discussed at the Intergovernmental Conference as part of efforts to enhance European citizenship.
17. Young people do not perceive the European Union as a natural community shaped by a desire to live and work together; in the long term this may call into question what has already been achieved from the point of view of the construction of Europe.
18. Young people in our European societies are increasingly in temporary and precarious situations. It is no longer easy for young people to move from school or university to permanent employment. For tens of thousands of today's young Europeans, envisaging the future has become increasingly problematic as a result of economic difficulties, increasingly individual behavioural patterns, growing inequalities, etc. Young people have, however, a substantial capacity for mobilisation.
19. This is supplemented by the fact that young people nowadays face a fundamental contradiction which needs to be resolved: while they are the minority that is most threatened by exclusion, they are, at the same time, the social group that is expected to oversee the operation and well-being of our future societies.
20. A twofold challenge therefore needs to be addressed: taking account, as far as possible, of young people's expectations while meeting the needs of society. From this point of view, the originality of the proposed approach lies in the fact that it attempts to reconcile the active citizenship of young people in a European context with the acquisition of abilities and skills validated at European level and in the fact that it provides support for partners who back up the actions undertaken by these young people. All public bodies and associations involved in the integration of young people may in effect be genuine "social levers".
21. Being young citizens and protagonists of European society cannot be restricted to the area of the European Union, since interactions with citizens living outside the Union's frontiers must also be taken into account. In this way third countries can benefit from the know-how of young Europeans who can, in their turn, learn

¹¹ Treaty on European Union - Title I, Article A.

¹² Treaty on European Union - Article B, paragraph 1.

about and understand other social realities that are as valid as their own. Taking part in an action outside Europe together with other Europeans is also an excellent way of discovering one's European roots.

22. For young people, lack of experience is one of the main barriers to their integration into society. Making it possible for them to carry out work that is of benefit to the community in another Member State of the European Union - as this document proposes - may help them to become integrated into active life.
23. European Voluntary Service is a genuine educational experience that everyone can put to good use in their personal or even professional development:
 - From a personal point of view: young people can learn to be the prime movers of their own decisions, to take responsibility, to develop a critical sense, to become more independent and improve their communication skills, through a transnational experience that brings Europe to life.
 - From the point of view of society itself: it offers them the opportunity to take an active and practical role in the creation of European solidarity and thus to discover, in daily life, the notion of the interdependence of human beings and to become aware that collective interests exist alongside individual interests, at both local and European level. From a more specific point of view, it is also important to stress that a Community action such as European voluntary service promotes an understanding between young people and citizens as a whole that extends beyond frontiers.
 - From the point of view of intercultural learning: it provides young volunteers with an opportunity to understand the wealth and limits of their own traditions and cultures, to look at other cultural, social and economic realities and to make them more aware of other cultures. In this context, the fight against racism and xenophobia is an important added value of the proposed action.

II. THE ADDED VALUE PROVIDED BY COMMUNITY ACTION

24. From the point of view of cooperation on youth issues, the Community's role complements that of the Member States. The approach proposed in this Decision is based on the principle of subsidiarity which will chiefly entail improved cooperation with the competent authorities at all levels. It will also take concrete shape through the establishment of partnerships at both local and transnational level that will build bridges not only between the initiatives of Member States but also between young people everywhere. As the ex-ante evaluation stresses, moreover, an expectation that is frequently expressed is that the multiannual programme should contribute to the development of youth policies in the Member States.
25. The European voluntary service programme aims to encourage young people to become citizens of the European Union and to enhance their contribution to European society. The programme is intended to be a means of making more visible and illustrating what it actually means to be a young citizen in European society today.
26. The local dimension is one of the key factors around which European voluntary service is structured. Helping young people to take charge of their futures has to start at local level. Successful experience in a local context also means that follow-up will have a greater chance of success. This is true both for young people, who will have learnt more about and better understood their relationship with their initial environment, and for the local communities involved in the experience who can build on the contribution provided by this experience and enhance or even enlarge their scope of action.
27. The initiative proposed by the Commission therefore places the local level on a par with the European level and makes it possible to demonstrate and help people practically to understand that Europe is a opportunity to be seized by all young people. It also presupposes that the relationship between young people and their immediate environments is a key factor in larger-scale development.
28. As the following points show, the initiatives that the Commission proposes to support through this Decision are of a type likely to provide a clear added value, at different levels, to existing or planned actions in the Member States.
29. From a general point of view, these initiatives should make it possible to:
- enhance existing experiments in the Member States by giving them an added Community dimension;
 - encourage and support projects of this type that are being prepared in other Member States or even to encourage initiatives of this type in Member States where no such projects yet exist;

- promote the values of the European Community among young people;
- encourage exchanges of experience, contacts, transfers of good practice and cooperation between all those involved in the integration of young people;
- work towards a minimum framework for these actions that removes some of the obstacles that exist at national level and that curb the development of transnational voluntary service experiments;
- encourage the transnational mobility of young people as a complement to other Community exchange programmes.

30. From a specific point of view:

- Young volunteers: these initiatives make it possible for them to gain skills and abilities from an educational experience in an environment other than their normal environment; they will also be able to discover, on the spot and in practice, how European society is being constructed. Validation of this experience and the prospect of follow-up further enhance the added value of the Community action proposed in this document.
- People concerned: in addition to the direct benefits that they are likely to gain from the action and its spin-off effects, the proposed activities also make it possible, through transnational partnerships, to build more permanent bridges between young people in the EU and with young people in non-EU countries.

31. The aim of these initiatives is therefore:

- on the one hand, to develop links between experiments conducted at national level and at Community level;
- on the other hand, to encourage experiments that are not just national, but also transnational, and that bring young people from different countries of the Community into teams working towards specific objectives that are of benefit to society.

32. From this point of view, four important features of the programme - partnership, validation, monitoring and mobility - are likely to make a particular contribution to the added value of the Community action set out in this document.

Partnership

33. The principle of partnership - in which the young person is considered as a full partner - is one of the cornerstones of the approach set out in this document: local partnerships within host and sending projects between a range of partners concerned by the needs that these projects attempt to resolve (between one or more organisations dealing with youth, protection of the environment, heritage conservation, training or information etc., the inhabitants of a town or village, local authorities, administrations); tripartite partnerships at transnational level between young volunteers, host projects and sending projects.
34. Moreover, the European Voluntary Service programme may bring about new relationships between partners who learn to work together even though their concerns differ. In this respect, the ex-ante evaluation stresses that there are large numbers, throughout Europe, of local development projects, projects by youth organisations, municipalities and new social movements as well as a whole range of solidarity schemes. These initiatives are rarely linked, however, and in some cases even run counter to one another. From this point of view, the dynamic brought about by European voluntary service actions may have spin-off effects at various levels:
- associations, bodies, authorities or institutions which have entered into a partnership on this occasion can continue to cooperate on other projects. A European voluntary service action, if it proves to be of benefit, may lead to the creation of similar spin-off initiatives. It may also pave the way for professional work on sites improved by volunteers or on similar sites;
 - local initiatives will be able to establish transnational contacts with similar initiatives at European level. Both host and sending projects will therefore benefit from transfers of good practice which could lead to the creation of project networks taking the same approach and benefitting the populations concerned;
 - participation in the European Voluntary Service programme will make these projects more visible, will enhance their work and their initiatives and will also provide them with an opportunity to discover what young people can learn from their action and then to help other young people in their immediate environment or elsewhere to benefit from this learning potential. This participation will also make the local community better known in wider circles and will highlight its dynamic nature. Under this programme, projects will therefore be able to take on and try out an international dimension.
35. Lastly, it should be stressed that the principle of partnership - local, regional and national as well as transnational - does not stop with European voluntary service per se, but extends beyond this by following up the young person's activity, building on what he has learnt and helping him to become integrated.

Validation and follow-up

36. The objectives of the programme proposed in this document and its expected spin-off effects make it necessary to recognise the contribution made by young volunteers and to validate the skills that they have acquired. While diplomas are not the answer in this context, the European Union must make the European dimension of this programme visible so that young people can make the most of their experience in their CVs. As the ex-ante evaluation shows, this validation and visibility may well be important for many participants. The Commission therefore proposes to organise European validation in cooperation with the Member States.
37. The European voluntary service activities promoted by this proposal offer fertile ground for initiative: they are intended to stimulate a spirit of enterprise as regards both social projects and projects of a more economic nature or even business creation. For Europe, which wishes to promote the integration of young people into active life, a Community programme like the European voluntary service programme cannot stop at the very moment at which its action is starting to bear fruit. Building on the experiences of young volunteers should therefore be one of its components.
38. An innovative approach is envisaged for the integration of young people into active life. Specific mechanisms will have to be established to provide them with help, at the end of their service, with jobseeking, the creation of new economic activities or placement in education and vocational training systems.
39. From this point of view, the partners - both host and sending projects - could play a supporting role. This support - be it from a person, an enterprise or an association - should help young people wishing to set up a venture to resolve the obstacles that stand in the way of young people's projects. Human help and logistical support for projects are the most immediate forms of help. It is often enough for a piece of information or a contact with a new partner to change the face of an environment that had up to then been considered hostile to the venture.
40. The Commission also considers that the complementary aspects of actions supported by this programme and local employment initiatives should be developed as far as possible. These could, for instance, provide new jobs in which young people who have been on European voluntary service could build on the experience that they have gained.

This future capital will, in many cases, be a way of setting in motion long-term integration.

Mobility

41. Point II of the Commission's working document "Towards a European Voluntary Service for Young People" describes a number of administrative and legal obstacles to young people's participation. The multiannual programme to which this draft Decision relates is based on Article 126 of the Treaty on European Union which rules out any harmonisation in this area and cannot therefore resolve the problems raised by these various obstacles which hamper the development of a European voluntary service at transnational level. The solution to these problems is largely the responsibility of the Member States. The Commission's Green Paper on "Education, training, research: obstacles to transnational mobility" should also sustain and contribute to discussions on the free movement of volunteers.
42. Detailed discussions of the various aspects of the problems that rights of residence, social protection and compulsory contributions raise for a European voluntary service, in particular the bilateral discussions that the Commission has organised with Member States' delegations, show that in most cases administrative measures could be taken by the Member States to overcome some of these obstacles so that the maximum possible number of young people can take part in European voluntary service. The Commission has, in this respect, opted for a pragmatic and progressive approach and has put forward the draft Resolution attached as an annex to the draft Decision¹³. This draft Resolution entails a strong commitment by Member States.
43. The preceding sections show that European voluntary service for young people is an educational project whose aim is to contribute to the personal development of young volunteers through their participation in activities which are of benefit to the local community. European voluntary service cannot therefore be assimilated with paid work. This also means that the relationship between the volunteer and the host project is in no way comparable to the relationship between an employer and an employee. Lastly, the programme, as proposed in this document, ensures that young volunteers are not a burden on the host country. The Commission also plans, in this respect, to enter into agreements in the insurance field in order to avoid any potential problems and ensure the social coverage of all young volunteers taking part in the programme.
44. It is on this basis that the Member States should envisage administrative and legislative provisions that recognise the special status of the young volunteers taking part in the European Voluntary Service programme. There are already solutions in some Member States. The exchanges of experience and good practice that the programme wishes to promote could also take place at this level for the benefit of young people.

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45. The Commission considers that the freedom of movement that applies to nationals of Member States must also apply to nationals of third countries legally resident in a Member State, even if particular arrangements have to be envisaged, particularly from the point of view of social security and rights of residence.

Cooperation with third countries

46. Cooperation with third countries will in the first instance involve countries with which the Community has signed Association Agreements. Voluntary service will be opened up to external actions gradually and on the basis of a specific evaluation. It will also differ as a function of the geographical areas concerned. In general, there are four different groups:
- 1) associated countries and applicant countries;
 - 2) non-EU Mediterranean countries;
 - 3) developing countries: ACP/LAA
 - 4) other countries: CIS, non-associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, South Africa, former Yugoslavia.
47. For the first group, the Europe agreements or the additional protocols signed with the associated countries establish the principle of participation in Community programmes with a legal basis. Any countries who so wish can thus participate subject to the conditions set out in the association agreements.
48. For the non-EU Mediterranean countries, exchanges of young people are already an objective of the "MEDA" regulation and the Barcelona Declaration.
49. For other countries, European voluntary service will have to be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the specific political contexts in each country. European youth organisations and other associations are already active in South Africa, the former Yugoslavia, other countries eligible under the PHARE and TACIS programmes, LAA and ACP countries.

III. THE PROGRAMME

50. The Commission proposes the adoption by the Council and the European Parliament of a Decision, based on Article 126 of the Treaty, relating to the establishment of a multiannual programme of European Voluntary Service for young people. It is proposed that the programme develops in a progressive and planned way in order to ensure its quality and its long-term impact. The Commission has not, at this stage, gone into operational detail but has put forward a framework that is flexible enough to be in keeping with the situations of young people and the various other partners. From this point of view, it should be stressed that the implementation of the programme should be based on the lessons learnt from the pilot action and an analysis of the ex-ante evaluation. Moreover, as the preliminary findings of the pilot action progress report attached to this document stress, a substantial proportion of the programme should take place in a largely decentralised way, applying a bottom-up approach in order to cater more effectively for the needs of the players in the field.
51. As the ex-ante evaluation stresses, a programme concerned with personal development entails an individual approach: individual choices must be supported by a process through which the needs of young people, voluntary service activities and the needs of projects can be matched. This is borne out by the experience with the pilot action. It is also for this reason, again on the basis of the findings of the ex-ante evaluation backed up by the initial results of the pilot action, that the programme is structured so that it can provide an answer to the individual needs of young people: provision is made for different forms of voluntary service, of differing durations, and the option of combining different educational options (Articles 1 and 2 of the draft decision). The five sections of the programme (Annex to the draft decision) are therefore designed in an integrated way, form a whole and cannot be reduced to a set of isolated actions or measures.
52. European voluntary service activities, carried out within the Union by young people (in principle those aged 18 to 25) resident in the Community form the core of the programme. Long-term activities represent its most important part. They are supplemented by short-term activities through which access to this type of activity can be extended and young people can be made aware of the potential that this type of activity offers.
53. Long-term and short-term activities are also envisaged in the third countries with which the Community has signed association and cooperation agreements. These activities will be built up gradually.
54. Lastly, three other types of venture are proposed: assistance with innovative networks in order to meet the contemporary demands of young people in the most appropriate way; support for the spirit of initiative and enterprise in order to build

on the experience acquired; complementary measures to develop the quality and the European dimension of all the programme's activities.

55. Lastly, on the basis of experience gained from its action in the areas of education, training and youth, as well as the analysis of the ex-ante evaluation and its recommendations, and the preliminary results of the pilot action, the Commission proposes positive measures (which have been proposed) to help those young people for whom participation in existing action programmes at Community and at national, regional and local level, raises the most problems for cultural, social, economic, physical and geographical reasons. It also proposes that efforts should be made to ensure that the programme does not replicate or intensify inequalities between men and women (Articles 1 and 4 of the draft decision).

The pilot action also confirms the need for decentralised structures as the basis for a common approach and has enabled Member States to propose structures which have been given the task of implementing the decentralised part of this pilot action. Still in connection with cooperation with the Member States, the pilot action has clarified what should be done to remove obstacles to the mobility of young volunteers (Article 7 of the proposal for a Decision and draft Resolution attached).

56. As regards financial aspects, co-financing will be applied. Public and private funds at European Union level and at national, regional and local level may contribute financial assistance in addition to Community support.

SECTION 1: INTRA-COMMUNITY

57. This section covers support for European voluntary service activities carried out within the European Union by young people resident in the Community.

58. It has quickly emerged from the pilot action that long-term activities alone could not cater for the needs and constraints of various target groups, particularly those who have little or no transnational experience and/or those not in a position to commit themselves to longer-term activities. Moreover, the findings of the ex-ante evaluation, which takes account *inter alia* of the results of Community action in the areas of education, training and youth, corroborate this and show that it is also important to provide support for short-term activities. The Commission has accordingly included support for short-term activities in this section. These activities will make it possible for young people to familiarise themselves with European voluntary service activities and to discover their potential and impact. They will also help young people that cannot normally participate because of their regular work activities or socio-economic circumstances to take part in the action:

- in the case of young people, especially the most disadvantaged, who have never had a European experience, these short-term activities will allow them to gain this initial experience and may well be a stepping stone towards longer-term European activities;

- in the case of young people who have not had an opportunity to take part in longer-term activities because of their family, health, financial circumstances, etc., they will provide an opportunity to take part in an action involving responsible citizenship and to be recognised as responsible citizens.
59. Lastly, they will allow local projects which have little or no European experience to lay the foundations for a longer-term transnational action.
 60. In contrast to long-term activities, short-term activities will give priority to support for projects for groups of young people, although support for individual actions will not be excluded, particularly for activities lasting over one month. In the case of short-term activities, living in a multi-cultural group is an important starting point for promoting intercultural learning and provides support - by acting as a peer group - for young people who have never had a transnational experience and even more for disadvantaged young people.
 61. The educational project on which European voluntary service activities are based requires sound preparation and supervision of young volunteers so that these young people can be readily integrated into these projects. In the particular case of long-term projects, specific measures need to be envisaged to bring together young volunteers, to enhance the European dimension of activities and, in particular, to promote language and intercultural learning. As mentioned in the interim pilot action progress report, preparation and supervision are already part of the pilot action.
 62. From the point of view of follow-up at the end of European voluntary service, measures to help young volunteers to formulate and clarify their longer-term personal plans should also be envisaged.

SECTION 2 - THIRD COUNTRIES

63. The activities covered by Section 2 are voluntary service activities carried out by young people from the Community in non-EU countries.

Activities within this section, which is in keeping with the general objectives of the programme, entail gradual stepping up of cooperation with third countries geared towards intercultural learning and cooperation between young people; towards understanding, exchanges of ideas and peace between the European Union and third countries; towards improved knowledge and awareness among young people of the realities of life in third countries; towards the discovery and comprehension by young people from the EU and young people from third countries of the cultural and social values and heritage of their respective countries; towards the diversification of partnerships between European and third-country projects as well as inter-regional cooperation within these countries.

64. Given that this Section covers a very complex field and that experience in this field is more limited than in the case of intra-Community action, the Commission proposes that development should be progressive and pragmatic. The approach for developing this external section will be described in a specific evaluation after the pilot action. On this basis, short-term activities and measures to support ventures whose aim is to lay the foundations for the development of significant long-term activities will be organised as a first stage. Due account should be taken of the specific features of these activities in the monitoring of the programme as described in particular in par. 85.
65. Lastly, the comments made above in point 61 on the preparation and supervision of young volunteers also apply to activities in third countries.

SECTION 3 - INNOVATIVE NETWORKS

66. The response to the calls for expression of interest and the Commission's many bilateral contacts with potential pilot networks and European voluntary service organisations under the pilot action point to the need for a long-term effort to diversify the range of activities likely to best match the current demand from young people. This concerns both the opening up to European voluntary service of networks active in several areas connected with social development and the opening up existing networks of voluntary service organisations to other approaches. The crucial importance of this diversification and this opening is also stressed in the *ex ante* evaluation report.
67. This Section covers both intra-Community activities and activities with third countries and is accordingly based on these findings. It is intended to support the opening up to European voluntary service of networks active in a number of fields connected with the development of society; to encourage endeavours to set up voluntary service organisations and to persuade groups having values to which young people themselves give priority to take part in the programme. The ongoing evaluation systems that will be integrated within each of these networks will also help to bring the programme and its implementation into line with the contemporary demands of young people.

SECTION 4 - DEVELOPING A SENSE OF INITIATIVE AND ENTERPRISE

68. The pilot action soon showed that the national authorities and the various field operators see this aspect as one of the most significant added values of European voluntary service. Although the pilot action includes ways of testing practical arrangements, it is clear that both European validation and follow-up of young people upon completion of their period of service require a proper legal framework which implies the cooperation of the Member States and a long-term approach. The Commission has therefore provided for a specific section to cater for these requirements and has devoted an article (Art. 8) of its draft decision to validation.

The support provided under this Section takes the form of follow-up assistance for young volunteers on the basis of the projects of the young people concerned, sponsored by partners. Grants and premiums are not therefore paid directly to young volunteers. These projects may take a wide range of forms, including the launch and creation of ventures, businesses, etc., or additional vocational training or academic education.

69. It should be stressed, as regards the launch or creation of businesses, that this type of support takes account of the age of the entrepreneurs which is seen as an asset and not as a handicap.
70. Lastly, this section will also serve as a very important indicator for the evaluation of the programme in terms of follow-up and impact.

SECTION 5 - COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES

71. The pilot action and the ex-ante evaluation highlight the need to include certain complementary measures in the programme. The ex-ante evaluation stresses in particular the need for central and decentralised strategies to support the recruitment, preparation and counselling of volunteers, and ways of finding partners for projects and organisations. It also recommends that an action be included in the programme to foster local, regional and national cooperation between institutions/organisations and between sectors of activity (partnerships). This is borne out by the preliminary progress report on the pilot action. The actions covered by Section 5 are accordingly intended to support the development of the quality and European dimension of all the programme's activities. They cover preparation and supervision, support for the development of European partnerships and information on and evaluation of all aspects of the programme's activities and their spin-off effects. Three actions are proposed for this purpose:
- 5.1 Preparation and supervision
 - 5.2 European partnerships
 - 5.3 Information and evaluation

5.1 Preparation and supervision

72. It quickly emerged from contacts with operators at various levels under the pilot action that there was a need to allow certain education players (mentors, contacts, etc.) and project managers to train up to the tasks implicit in supervising and preparing young volunteers in an international context. As indicated below, while ad hoc experiments will be conducted under the pilot action, clearly a pluri-annual programme alone - in that it permits a long-term approach - can fulfil this requirement. The actions envisaged in this connection seek to cater for this requirement.

Two target groups are envisaged:

- supervisors;
- European project leaders.

73. It will also be necessary to support and promote the production of educational materials specifically designed for short-term and long-term European voluntary service activities within the European Union and in third countries.

Supervisors

74. Long-term young volunteers as well as the projects in which they are working need to be overseen by supervisors:

- mentors for young volunteers within host projects;
- reference persons, independent of host projects, at local, regional or national level.

75. Host projects will have to provide the necessary guarantees as regards the supervision of young volunteers throughout their service. It should be stressed in this respect that this supervision will be provided by personal mentors responsible for the educational and personal support that young people are likely to need during their service.

76. In addition to these tutors, systems independent of host projects should be established in each Member State with a team of reference persons who can, in all confidentiality and confidence, deal with the various problems that young people, young people's supervisors and host project leaders may encounter.

77. Mentors and reference persons therefore have a key role to play in the success and the quality of European voluntary service activities. From this point of view, Section 5.1 is in particular intended to allow the various mentors and supervisors to acquire the skills and resources needed to supervise young people in an international context, especially within long-term activities.

European project leaders

78. The success of European voluntary service projects also depends on the quality of their management. Local projects wishing to take part in the programme's actions often have little or no experience of managing transnational projects. For this reason, the Commission considers that it is essential to provide opportunities for training at European level so that this target group can gain the experience and resources needed efficiently to manage such projects.

5.2 Partnerships

79. At this stage in the proceedings the pilot action confirms that local projects, which are the foundation of European voluntary service, do not have the European contacts they would need to be able to identify potential partners on their own. The pilot action provides an ad hoc response to this need and makes it possible to try out practical solutions. The fact remains, however, that this is a long-term task which needs specific measures - not feasible given the resources and framework of the pilot action - as part of a long-term approach and within a clearly-defined legal framework. The Commission has therefore made provision for a specific complementary measure in the programme proposed.

This action of the programme is not intended to duplicate other types of assistance and initiatives to support local development (LEDA, etc.) or European partnerships between local communities (twin towns, etc.). In the light of the findings of the ex-ante evaluation, the Community needs to contribute to Member States's efforts to encourage local/regional/national partnerships between public and private partners that are geared towards European voluntary service and could well take the form of European partnerships. A further aim of this action is to facilitate and promote the establishment of these transnational partnerships.

80. Support for the preparation, launch and operation of these partnerships is essential, bearing mind that local projects often lack the European contacts that they need to locate potential partners themselves.
81. As the ex-ante evaluation notes, it will also be necessary to create mechanisms helping to bring the various partners into contact, in order, in particular, to involve the maximum possible number of small local associations and young people not belonging to associations. Some of the paths that the pilot action has taken are intended to create these conditions. It is for this reason that the Commission has targeted both specialist organisations and the establishment of pilot networks.

5.3 Research, information and evaluation

82. Cooperation, at European level, in the area of research, information and evaluation will play a key part in the success of the Community action. As the ex-ante evaluation notes, a system will need to be set up for the continuous collection and dissemination of data on the operation of the programme.
83. In the area of information, the creation of systems which, at local, regional and national level, provide information and advice on the various aspects of the programme, including legal and administrative aspects, for as many young people as possible, will need to be encouraged and supported. As the ex-ante evaluation notes, priority needs to be given to simple and readily accessible mechanisms of the "local information counter" type and, in this context, to the promotion of a wide range of private as well as public information channels - commercial and

public channels such as the media, municipalities, leisure facilities and employment offices and other places frequented by large numbers of young people - in order to contact young people who are not members of the conventional networks of organisations or associations. As the ex-ante evaluation also stresses, disseminating information on past experiences of European voluntary service and, in particular, on the pilot action should play a part, through discussions and transfers of experience, in highlighting the European added value of the proposed action.

84. Studies should make it possible to highlight a number of aspects linked to the programme's objectives and in particular aspects connected with the exercise of responsible citizenship and the integration of young people into active life. Moreover, as the ex-ante evaluation stresses, feasibility studies of voluntary service conducted by young people themselves should also be possible in this Section.
85. The ex-ante evaluation rightly stresses the evaluation problems that are raised, in general, by innovative programmes. In the case of the European Voluntary Service programme, the report notes that these problems are aggravated by the intangible nature of the results and processes linked to the programme. Concepts such as, for instance, enhanced personal development or the promotion of responsible citizenship are difficult to place on an operational footing.
86. The report also notes that account should be taken of links between the proposed programme and other youth programmes, especially the Youth for Europe programme. From this point of view, and in keeping with the recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation, the Commission considers that a more general evaluation framework for youth programmes needs to be prepared as part of Section 5.3, as an integral part of the evaluation of the multiannual programme. It also considers that the evaluation of the pilot action should be seen as an integral part of the evaluation of the programme. Lastly, Article 10 of the draft decision stipulates that sometime in the second year of implementation of the programme the Commission will submit to the Council and the European Parliament an evaluation report which can if need be serve to define new guidelines and arrangements for implementation.
87. Lastly, the Commission also takes up the ex-ante evaluation's recommendations that it is important for young people from different backgrounds to take part in the evaluation process and for the various partners to be pro-actively involved in formulating the programme's evaluation framework.

DECISION
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

establishing the Community Action Programme
"European voluntary service for young people"

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Articles 126 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission¹,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee²,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions³,

Acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189b of the Treaty⁴,

Whereas the Essen European Council, meeting on 9-10 December 1994, and the Cannes European Council, meeting on 26-27 June 1995, stressed the need to undertake new actions to promote the social and occupational integration of young people in Europe;

Whereas the conclusions of the Florence European Council (21-22 June 1996) stressed the importance of helping young people to become integrated into active life and, in this respect, noted with interest the idea of a European voluntary service;

Whereas the Council requested the Commission to propose practical measures to promote transnational cooperation in the field of voluntary service⁵;

Whereas the Council, in its Resolution of 5 October 1995 on cooperation with third countries in the youth field, stressed the need to step up cooperation, particularly with regard to voluntary service, with third countries with which the Community has concluded association and cooperation agreements;⁶

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5 Conclusions of the Council and the Ministers of Youth of 30 November on the promotion of voluntary service periods for young people, OJ C348 of 9.12.1994.

6 Council Resolution of 5 October 1995 on cooperation with third countries in the youth field (OJ No C296 of 10.11.1995)

Whereas the European Council of 25-26 June 1984 asked Member States to take steps to encourage young people to take part in projects organised by the Community outside its frontiers, and whereas they recommended that Member States take on board as one of the objectives of their social policies the incorporation of social protection for development volunteers or the correction of shortcomings;

Whereas the Parliament has also expressed its support, on many occasions, for the development of a voluntary service at Community level, in particular in its Resolution of 22 September 1995 on the establishment of European civilian service⁷;

Whereas voluntary service activities also exist in a range of forms in several Member States and a number of non-governmental organisations are working in this field;

Whereas, despite these experiences, transnational voluntary service actions remain limited;

Whereas it is necessary to create new opportunities for the transfer and application of experience and good practice and to promote new partnerships;

Whereas the pilot action launched in January 1996 and still in progress is designed *inter alia* to test the arrangements for decentralised implementation of long term voluntary service activities looking ahead to the multi-annual programme envisaged, and whereas the initial results of this pilot action are described in an interim progress report;

Whereas an independent *ex ante* evaluation for a multi-annual programme of voluntary service has been carried out in accordance with the principles put in place by the Commission for the second phase of its SEM 2000 ('sound and efficient management') programme⁸;

Whereas this interim report already provides a basis for the programme's legal and financial structure, and a framework for its administrative management; and whereas the Commission will scrutinise the results of the pilot action at the half-way stage (second progress report) before taking full stock of the final results upon completion of the pilot action for the purpose of the discussions to be held as part of the co-decision procedure on the proposal for a decision and will, if need be, submit amendments to its proposal, particularly in relation to activities in non-EU countries;

Whereas a number of legal obstacles stand in the way of the development of voluntary service;

Whereas this Decision therefore establishes a Community framework which is intended to overcome these obstacles and to promote the development of transnational voluntary service activities;

⁷ B4-1127/95 (PE 193.734).

⁸ SEC(95)1814/5

Whereas participation in voluntary service activities by young people is an educational experience that may promote their integration into active life;

Whereas it is necessary to reinforce the links between the actions undertaken by this programme and those pursued within the framework of social policy, particularly action on training and access to employment for young people supported under the European Social Fund (both mainstream and the 'Employment-Youthstart' Community Initiative), the fight against racism and xenophobia, and cooperation with third countries;

Whereas, in order to facilitate this transition into active life, complementary links need to be established between European voluntary service and local employment initiatives;

Whereas voluntary service may help to meet new social needs and may also reveal new kinds of professions and activities;

Whereas participation in the voluntary service actions covered by this Decision takes place on a purely voluntary basis, since these activities are non-profit-making and the volunteer/host project relationship can in no case be assimilated with the employee/employer relationship;

Whereas young volunteers taking part in this programme will have adequate means of subsistence and will not, therefore, represent a burden to the host country;

Whereas European voluntary service activities are not a substitute for military service, for the alternative service formulae provided in particular for conscientious objectors or for the compulsory civilian service that exist in Member States and are not a substitute for potential or existing paid employment;

Whereas all young people resident in a Member State may apply to take part in European voluntary service, without discrimination;

Whereas the participation of young nationals of third countries legally resident in a Member State also needs to be promoted;

Whereas implementation of this programme must be based on decentralised structures designated by Member States in close cooperation with the national authorities responsible for youth questions, with a view to ensuring that Community action supports and complements national activities whilst respecting the principle of subsidiarity, as defined in Article 3b of the Treaty;

Whereas in its Communication of 13 June 1995 on "A European strategy for encouraging local development and employment initiatives"⁹, the Commission notes that local development and employment initiatives are spreading throughout the European Union as they are found to provide a genuine response to current aspirations;

Whereas European voluntary service activities directly involve local and regional authorities, bearing in mind the role they will play in direct support for projects as well as in the development of local information and in following up young people at the end of their service;

Whereas the social partners should play an important role in the development of a European voluntary service not only to avoid any activity that is a substitute for potential or existing employment but also to build on the experience acquired in order to help young people to become integrated into active life;

Whereas the Agreement on the European Economic Area¹⁰ sets out enlarged cooperation in the field of education, training and youth between the European Community and its Member States, on the one hand, and the countries of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area, on the other hand, and that Article 4 of Protocol 31 states that the countries of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area shall take part, from 1 January 1995, in all Community programmes in the field of education, training and youth that are already in force or have been adopted;

Whereas the programme "European voluntary service for young people" is open to the participation of the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, in accordance with the conditions set out in the Additional Protocols to the Association Agreements on participation in Community programmes to be concluded with those countries; whereas this programme is open to the participation of Cyprus and Malta on the basis of additional appropriations under the same rules as apply to the EFTA countries, in accordance with procedures to be agreed with those countries;

Whereas the Association and Cooperation agreements provide for exchanges of young people;

Whereas this Decision establishes for the full duration of the programme a financial framework which constitutes the preferential point of reference for the budget authority during the annual budgetary procedure within the meaning of Point 1 of the Joint Declaration of 6 March 1995 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission;

Whereas the Community's financial perspective is valid up until 1999 and will have to be revised for the period beyond that date;

Whereas an agreement on a *modus vivendi* between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission concerning the implementing measures of the acts adopted pursuant to the procedure referred to in Article 189b of the Treaty took place on 20 December 1994;

HAVE DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

¹⁰ OJ L1 of 3.1.1994, p 3.

Article 1

Establishment of the programme "European voluntary service for young people"

1. This Decision establishes the Community action programme "European voluntary service for young people", as described in the Annex and hereinafter referred to as the "programme", concerning European voluntary service activities for young people within the Community and in third countries.

The programme is adopted for the period from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2002.

2. This programme comes within the context of the general objectives of a cooperation policy in the youth field as set out in the programme Youth for Europe (Article 1, paragraph 2). It is intended, while respecting equal opportunities for men and women, to encourage mobility among young Europeans as part of an active citizenship, to give them the chance of an educational experience in a variety of sectors of activity, to promote their active contribution to the construction of Europe and cooperation between the European Union and third countries, through their participation in transnational activities of benefit to the community.

Article 2

Framework, objectives and resources

1. This programme, based on increased cooperation between the Member States, offers young Europeans a recognised educational experience, at transnational level, involving both the acquisition of skills and abilities and the demonstration of responsible citizenship in order to help them to become integrated into active life.
2. In accordance with the general objective set out in Article 1, the specific objectives of this programme shall be as follows:
 - a) to step up participation by young people resident in a Member State in long-term or short-term transnational activities of benefit to the community, within the Union and in third countries;
 - b) to promote an educational experience accredited at the European level;
 - c) to encourage a spirit of initiative and enterprise among young people in order to promote their integration into active life and their contribution to the development of the objectives of the programme;
 - d) to promote access to the programme for all young people;

3. For this purpose, and in accordance with the general objective set out in Article 1, and the specific objectives described in the previous paragraph, the main elements of this programme shall be as follows:
- a) to support long-term or short-term transnational activities of benefit to the community, within the Union and with third countries;
 - b) to support networks of innovative initiatives, particularly in the social, environmental and cultural fields and with regard to the fight against different forms of exclusion;
 - c) to support projects that help to build on the experience acquired and are intended to further the follow-up of these young people;
 - d) to develop and support the preparation, particularly linguistic and intercultural, and the supervision of young volunteers, in particular long-term volunteers, "mentors" and European project leaders so that the young volunteers can benefit from high-quality actions connected with the objectives of the programme;
 - e) to support the quality of all the programme's activities, the development of their European dimension and to contribute to cooperation in the youth field by supporting Member States' endeavours to improve services and measures linked to European voluntary service, particularly through measures to provide young people with information on the objectives of the programme and through studies and continuing evaluation through which the operation and guidelines of the programme can be brought into line with the needs of target groups.

Article 3

Financial provisions

1. The financial framework for the implementation of the programme during the period 1998-1999 shall be ECU 60 million, in keeping with current financial perspectives. Proposals shall be put forward in accordance with the procedure set out in Article 10 in order to determine the financial framework for the final three years of the programme (2000-2002).
2. The budget authority shall determine the appropriations available for each financial year within the limits of the financial perspective.

Article 4

Positive action to facilitate access to the programme

1. Special attention shall be paid to ensuring that all young people can have access, without discrimination, to the programme's activities.

2. The Commission and the Member States shall ensure that special efforts are made for young people who experience the most difficulties in being included in existing action programmes at both Community and national, regional and local levels, due to cultural, social, physical, economic or geographical reasons. These efforts shall be proportional to the problems encountered by this target group.

Article 5

Participation by associated countries

This programme shall be open to the participation of the associated countries of central and eastern Europe (CCEE) in accordance with the conditions set out in the Europe agreements and the Additional Protocols to the Association Agreements on participation in Community programmes that have been or are to be concluded with those countries. This programme shall be open to the participation of Cyprus and Malta on the basis of additional appropriations under the same rules as apply to the EFTA countries, in accordance with the procedures to be agreed with those countries.

Article 6

Links with other Community actions and cooperation with the relevant international organisations

1. The Commission and the Member States shall ensure that the programme is compatible with and complementary to other actions undertaken for young people by the Member States and the Community.
2. They shall promote cooperation relating to this programme to allow complementarity of the programme with the relevant international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe.

Article 7

Cooperation with Member States

1. The Commission and the Member States shall take the necessary measures to develop the structures set up at European, national, regional and local level for achieving the objectives of the programme, for facilitating the access of young people and other partners at local level to the programme, for evaluating and monitoring the actions set out in the programme and for applying consultation and selection mechanisms.
2. Each Member State shall endeavour to adopt the measures necessary to ensure that the young people participating in the programme do not encounter obstacles, especially as regards the right of residence in the host Member State for the period of the voluntary service and the maintenance of their entitlements, in particular those linked to their social protection.

Article 8

Validation

Young volunteers shall receive a European certificate, drawn up by the Commission in cooperation with the Member States, attesting to their participation in European voluntary service and the experience and skills that they have acquired during this period.

Article 9

Committee

1. The Commission shall implement this programme in accordance with this Decision.
2. In the performance of this task, the Commission shall be assisted by a committee composed of two representatives appointed by each Member State and chaired by the representative of the Commission.
3. The representative of the Commission shall submit to the committee, in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraph 4, a draft of the measures to be taken in respect of:
 - the committee's internal rules of procedure;
 - the annual plan of work for the implementation of the actions of the programme;
 - the general balance between all the sections of the programme;
 - the criteria for determining indicative allocation of funds among the Member States;
 - the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the programme.
4. The Committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft measures referred to in point 3 within a time limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter. The opinion shall be delivered by the majority laid down in Article 148 (2) of the Treaty in the case of decisions which the Council is required to adopt on a proposal from the Commission. The votes of the representatives of the Member States shall be weighted in the manner set out in that Article. The chairman shall not vote.

The Commission shall adopt measures which shall apply immediately. However, if these measures are not in accordance with the opinion of the committee, they shall be communicated by the Commission to the Council forthwith. In that event:

- a) the Commission may defer application of the measures which it has decided for a period of two months from the date of that communication;

- b) the Council, acting by a qualified majority, may take a different decision within the time limit referred to in point a).
5. The Commission may consult the committee on any other matters relating to the implementation of this programme.
 6. The representative of the Commission shall submit to the committee a draft of the measures to be taken. The committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft within a time limit which the Chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote.

The opinion shall be recorded in the minutes; in addition, each Member State shall have the right to ask to have its position recorded in the minutes.

The Commission shall take the utmost account of the opinion delivered by the committee. It shall inform the committee of the manner in which its opinion has been taken into account.

Article 10

Monitoring and evaluation

1. On implementation of this Decision, the Commission shall take the necessary measures to ensure the monitoring and continuous evaluation of the programme, taking account of the general objective referred to in Article 1, the specific objectives defined in the Annex, the provisions laid down in Article 4 and any input provided by the committee set up under Article 9.
2. During the course of the second year of this programme, the Commission shall present to the European Parliament and to the Council an evaluation report which will serve to define any new implementing guidelines and methods, and a new budget framework for the final three years of the programme.
3. In the light of the evaluation report referred to in paragraph 2 and the proposals made by the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council shall envisage the possibility of adjusting the programme, extending some actions or making provision for new actions.

Article 11

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its publication in the Official Journal.

Done at,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

ANNEX

In order to promote mobility among young people within the framework of active citizenship, their practical participation in the creation of European solidarity and their integration into active life, the Community shall support European voluntary service activities within the Union and in third countries, projects to follow up these activities and European cooperation measures to develop their quality and their European dimension.

The basic principles on which the Community action is based are as follows:

- local partnerships between the various public/private partners involved in the integration of young people into active life;
- transnational partnerships between host projects - validated by the Member States and the Commission - and sending projects;
- guarantees from the point of view of the preparation and supervision of young volunteers and their physical conditions, insurance and social protection;
- the inclusion, within host projects, of "mentors" having an important role to play in the supervision of young volunteers and in the validation of the skills acquired and the preparation of measures following up the experience;
- validation of the educational experience;
- follow-up for young volunteers and the enhancement of the skills that they have acquired.

In order to meet these basic objectives, the Community is organising the current programme which is made up of five main sections. These five sections are interlinked and are flexible enough to meet the needs of the young people concerned in the most appropriate way.

SECTION 1 - INTRA-COMMUNITY

1. The Community shall support long-term (in principle for six months to one years) and short-term (in principle from three weeks to three months) transnational projects allowing young people - aged between 18 and 25 - resident in a Member State to play an active part in activities which help to meet the needs of society in a wide range of fields (social, environmental, cultural, etc.) and which are likely to have a direct impact on the well-being of the populations of the host communities. The aim of these projects shall be to provide young people from the Union with an educational experience and to bring them into contact with other cultures and experience new ideas and projects in an intercultural context.
2. The assistance awarded under this section should not exceed 50% of the total expenditure incurred, subject to point 3.

3. In accordance with Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Decision, efforts shall be made to help young people facing cultural, social, economic, physical or geographical difficulties. These efforts must be proportional to the difficulties that participation in existing action programmes raises for this target group. In this context, financial assistance greater than the 50% set out in point 3 may be awarded, or support, where appropriate, for other activities likely to facilitate participation by this target group, including preparation and follow-up actions.
4. Assistance shall be awarded to:

LONG-TERM ACTIVITIES

5. Long-term activities shall place the emphasis on the acquisition of appropriate experience from European voluntary service projects and on the follow-up of young volunteers' activities.
6. The Commission shall certify, at European level, the skills acquired from this formative experience and from the follow-up of young volunteers at the end of these activities.

PREPARATION AND SUPERVISION

7. Actions intended (particularly as regards language, intercultural development, etc.) to build on the European dimension of activities, to prepare young long-term volunteers prior to departure and to promote their integration during these activities and at the end of European voluntary service.
8. Actions (particularly training in setting up projects etc...) to promote the development of follow-up projects for young volunteers at the end of their European voluntary service.

SHORT-TERM ACTIVITIES

9. The Community shall support short-term transnational projects intended to make young people genuinely aware of the potential of actions linked to the principle of active citizenship, the impact that these activities may have on their lives and to familiarise all the partners with the concept of active citizenship.
10. These projects will initially involve groups of young people. Support for individual participation in a host project may be envisaged depending on the length of the project, its nature or the profile of the young volunteer.

SECTION 2 - THIRD COUNTRIES

1. The Community shall support long-term (in principle 6-12 months) and short-term (in principle from three weeks to three months) transnational projects allowing young people - aged between 18 and 25 - resident in a Member State to play an active part in third countries in activities which meet the needs of society in a wide range of fields (social, environmental, cultural, etc.) and which are likely to

have a direct impact on the well-being of the populations of the host communities. The aim of these projects shall be to provide young people with an educational experience and to bring them into contact with other cultures and experience new ideas and projects in an intercultural context.

2. The appropriations awarded under this Section shall in principle cover the costs of the activities of young people residing in the Member States.
3. Assistance shall be awarded for:

LONG-TERM ACTIVITIES

4. Long-term activities shall place the emphasis on the acquisition of appropriate experience from European voluntary service projects and from the follow-up of young volunteers' activities.
5. The Commission shall certify, at European level, the skills acquired from this formative experience and from the follow-up of young volunteers at the end of these activities.

PREPARATION AND SUPERVISION

6. Actions making it possible to lay or consolidate the foundations needed for the development of transnational European voluntary service projects with third countries, in particular long-term activities.
7. Actions intended (particularly as regards language, intercultural development, etc.) to build on the European dimension of activities, to prepare young long-term volunteers prior to departure and to promote their integration during these activities and at the end of European voluntary service.
8. Actions (particularly training in setting up projects etc...) to promote the development of follow-up projects for young volunteers at the end of their European voluntary service.

SHORT-TERM ACTIVITIES

9. The Community shall support short-term transnational projects intended to make young people genuinely aware of the impact that these activities may have on their lives and to familiarise all the partners with the concept of active citizenship.
10. These projects will initially involve groups of young people. Support for individual participation in a host project may be envisaged depending on the length of the project, its nature or the profile of the young volunteer.

SECTION 3 - INNOVATIVE NETWORKS

1. Assistance shall be awarded for actions coordinated by innovative networks, particularly in the social, environmental and cultural fields and with regard to the fight against different forms of exclusion.
2. This assistance shall cover innovative networks of initiatives both within the Union and with third countries.
3. Support for these innovative networks shall be intended to help, on the one hand, these networks to develop practical European voluntary service activities and, on the other hand, to help these networks to take on a European voluntary service dimension.

SECTION 4 - DEVELOPING A SENSE OF INITIATIVE AND ENTERPRISE

1. Assistance may be awarded for projects intended to build, in a concrete way, on the experience that young people have acquired from European voluntary service and thus to promote their integration into active life.
2. This assistance will allow young volunteers to develop their sense of initiative and enterprise by helping them to:
 - launch complementary training projects;
 - develop voluntary service initiatives that follow on from the activities that they have undertaken;
 - launch economic activities, including business creation.
3. Special attention should be paid to the commitment of (public and/or private) partners to these projects in order to support, help and sponsor young people's strategies of integration into active life.

SECTION 5 - COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES

5.1 Preparation and supervision

1. In addition to actual voluntary service activities, assistance will also be awarded for actions intended to underpin the work of "mentors" and European project leaders. These actions shall concern activities supported at intra-Community level as well as in third countries. They are intended, on the one hand, to ensure that the content of the formative experience is of high quality and, on the other hand, to help to develop certification methods.
2. The term "mentors" means people supporting and supervising young volunteers during European voluntary service activities within hosting projects and those who act as contact points for young volunteers and projects within relay structures at national, regional or local level.

Special attention shall be paid to projects having little or no experience of transnational activities.

Mentors

3. Activities intended to prepare and support mentors from the point of view of their tasks of supporting and supervising young volunteers during transnational voluntary service activities.

European project leaders

4. Activities intended to develop the ability of European project leaders effectively to carry out their administrative tasks in a European context (financial and administrative management and follow-up of European projects, legal aspects, etc.).

5.2 Partnerships

1. The Community shall support activities to promote partnerships at local/national/regional level - between public and private partners - geared towards European voluntary service and leading potentially to transnational partnerships.
2. Assistance shall be awarded for activities to facilitate and promote the creation of transnational partnerships between local/regional/national partnerships wishing to work together within the framework of this programme either within the Union or with third countries.
3. Special attention shall be paid to local projects/initiatives which have little or no experience of or opportunity for contacts at European level.

5.3 Research, information and evaluation

1. Support for activities to launch awareness, information and advisory systems at local, regional, national and transnational level to promote and support the objectives of the programme.
2. In the particular area of studies and evaluation connected with the objectives of the programme, the Community will concentrate its efforts on the analysis and dissemination of data and the promotion of Community cooperation in this field. The Commission will, in cooperation with the Member States, monitor and evaluate this programme in an ongoing way in order, when necessary, to bring it into line with needs arising during implementation.

PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL RESOLUTION

The Council considers that the following steps should be taken for the effective implementation of the programme "European voluntary service for young people".

A. Right of residence

As the programme of European voluntary service for young people provides participants with adequate means of subsistence and adequate social coverage and since they do not therefore represent a burden for the host country, the Member States shall take the steps necessary for participants:

- **in the case of nationals of Member States:**

automatically to be awarded a residence permit

- **in the case of nationals of third countries legally resident in a Member State:**

to be awarded a residence permit without difficulties and, where necessary, a visa for the duration of the voluntary service; and to retain, on their return from European voluntary service, the right of residence in the Member State in which they are normally resident

- **in the case of nationals of third countries resident in third countries:**

to benefit from simplified formalities for the award of a residence permit and, where necessary, a visa for the duration of the European voluntary service

B. Social protection

1. General remarks

Member States shall ensure that volunteers under this programme are given proper social cover for the duration of their service.

Member States shall take all the steps necessary for young volunteers - both nationals of EU countries and nationals of third countries legally resident in a EU country - taking part in the programme to retain, for the duration of their voluntary service, their social security entitlements, including their entitlements to any non-contributory benefits.

2. Specific provisions

Since European voluntary service for young people is an educational experience in the context of an informal education programme, the Member States shall take all the steps necessary:

a) as regards entitlement to unemployment benefits


for jobseekers - nationals of Member States or of third countries legally resident in a Member State - not to lose, at the end of European voluntary service, their acquired entitlements to unemployment benefits and, during the period of voluntary service, to be exempt from the obligation to be available for work.

b) as regards family allowances

for the parents of young volunteers - nationals of Member States or of third countries legally resident in a Member State - to continue to receive family allowances.

C. Tax and social security contributions

The Member States shall endeavour to take all the steps necessary to ensure that European voluntary service activities for young people are not assimilated with paid work or employment and therefore that such activities are not subject to mandatory taxation and social security schemes.



**European voluntary service
for young people**

Multiannual programme for European voluntary service

Financial Statement

1 TITLE OF OPERATION

European voluntary service

2 BUDGET HEADING INVOLVED

B3-1011

3 LEGAL BASIS

Article 126 of the Treaty on European Union.

European Parliament and Council Decision No 97/..... of

4 DESCRIPTION OF OPERATION

4.1 General objective

The aim of the programme proposed is to promote voluntary service activities for young people aged 18-25 both within the European Union and in non-EU countries (associated countries, Mediterranean countries, developing countries, etc.). The European voluntary service programme will provide young people with a educational experience which will be accredited by a European certificate, will be recognised by the players of the social and business sectors, and will consist of short-term (3 weeks – 3 months) or long-term (6 – 12 months) voluntary service activities benefitting the hosting communities. These activities could, for example, involve assistance to people; social services; environmental protection; the preservation and enhancement of heritage; tackling drug abuse; the fight against racism or xenophobia; activities in the arts, sports or culture, etc.

The idea is to use routes other than the traditional educational or vocational training pathways to give young people an original way of integrating into society while at the same time offering them the opportunity to make a real contribution to building Europe – and with it a sense of European identity and citizenship – and also to demonstrating solidarity between EU and non-EU countries.

The programme comprises five sections, the first four of which will directly involve young people through:

- long- or short-term voluntary service activities performed within the European Union and involving young people resident in the EU (Section 1);

- long- or short-term activities involving young people from Member States in non-EU countries (Section 2); short-term activities involving young people from different Member States in a project in a non-EU country;
- voluntary service activities in innovative networks (Section 3);
- projects following up voluntary service activities with support for the spirit of initiative and enterprise in order to build on the experience acquired (Section 4).

Section 5 will consist of a range of complementary measures designed to ensure the smooth running of the programme and to enhance its quality and the European dimension (preparation/supervision, coordination, information, studies, evaluation, partnerships).

4.2 Period covered and arrangements for renewal or extension

Five-year action programme (1998-2002).

Renewal and revision as a function of the programme evaluation findings.

5 CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE

5.1 Non-compulsory expenditure

5.2 Differentiated appropriations

5.3 Type of revenue involved

None

6 TYPE OF EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE

The general principle applied for most of the projects is that of granting a subsidy for co-financing with other sources from the public or private sector (institutional partnerships involved: NGOs, local authorities, private initiatives, the business sector) to a maximum of 50% of the cost. Consideration may be given to a higher subsidy in the case of young people finding it difficult to gain access to existing action programmes or in the case of an innovatory project.

By way of exception, subsidies of over 50% may be paid for information or study activities carried out by third parties and for activities to support initiative and entrepreneurial spirit.

7 FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1 Method of calculating total cost of operation (definition of unit costs)

7.1.1 Method of calculation and type of activity

The total cost of the operation is calculated partly on the basis of an estimate of unit costs for each of the actions envisaged depending on their specific features, and partly on the basis of their frequency or anticipated scope. The total cost required for the action is thus the result of applying these unit costs to the activities which can be perceived in a strictly quantitative way (point 1 below) or of extrapolating data from the pilot experiments in progress and data derived from related activities implemented as part of Community exchange and mobility programmes, as regards activities defined in terms of scope (point 2 below).

1. The quantitative approach can be used for the following activities:
 - long- or short-term EU voluntary service activities
 - long- or short-term voluntary service activities in non-EU countries
 - voluntary service activities within innovatory networks
 - support for the spirit of initiative and enterprise
 - training up of education players and project managers (mentors, coordinators, advisers).

2. The global approach is more appropriate for the following activities:
 - partnerships
 - studies, information, evaluation
 - structures for the coordination/implementation of the programme (at central and decentralised levels).

7.1.2 Associated unit costs

Long- and short-term voluntary service activities within and outside the European Union

The basic principle for these activities is that of Community co-financing which may not, as a rule, exceed 50% of the total cost of the project.

For activities falling within the section for non-EU countries, only expenditure connected with young volunteers resident in one of the EU countries will be covered by the appropriations earmarked for the European voluntary service programme.

Long-term

The Commission's financial aid will be used to co-finance the following eligible expenditure for a period of voluntary service:

- payment of an allowance to young volunteers
- insurance cover against sickness, accidents, invalidity, third party liability
- accommodation
- food
- preparatory activities (particularly language tuition and intercultural preparation)
- travelling costs
- administrative management and back-up (field supervision and support) throughout the period of voluntary service, plus miscellaneous costs (specific programme costs).

The Commission's financial contribution may not exceed 50% of the overall budget for the programme. The estimated average costs, based on what has been learned from the pilot action, are as follows:

EU/LT	ECU
Volunteer's allowance	2 200
Insurance	250
Accommodation	2 500
Food	2 800
Preparation	1 400
Travelling costs	500
Supervision/Administration /other	750
TOTAL	10 400
Community contribution	5 200

Non-EU countries/LT	ECU
Volunteer's allowance	1 400
Insurance	800
Accommodation	2 000
Food	2 200
Preparation	1 400
Travelling costs	1 000
Supervision/Administration/ other	1 300
TOTAL	10 100
Community contribution	5 050

The bulk of non-Community co-financing can reasonably be expected to cover accommodation and subsistence (notional accounting of contributions in kind). The Community contribution could thus be devoted to certain elements essential for the implementation of the project: travelling, insurance, volunteers' allowances, preparation, supervision.

Short-term

Short-term activities will in principle be group-based in order to keep costs down while still giving prominence to the opportunities for cross-cultural learning.

Exchanges under the *Youth for Europe* programme show that the daily cost for a young person, excluding insurance and travelling, is approximately ECU 25. Assuming an average duration of 60 days, subsistence and programme costs for a volunteer would thus be 1 500 Ecus, giving a total per capita cost for short-term activities as follows:

EU/short-term	ECU
Subsistence and programme costs	1 500
Travelling costs	500
Insurance	100
TOTAL	2 100
Community contribution	1 050

Non-EU countries/short-term	ECU
Subsistence and programme costs	1 500
Travelling costs	1 000
Insurance	200
TOTAL	2 700
Community contribution	1 350

Innovatory networks

The sums needed for this section are based on the experience with pilot networks set up as part of the European voluntary service pilot action. The cost per volunteer is substantially higher because of the specific features involved (innovatory and experimental dimension, integrated projects in terms of preparation, supervision, back-up and evaluation). The first networks organised under the pilot action suggest that the Community contribution per volunteer would be ECU 8 000 for this type of activity, calculated on the basis of around 40 volunteers per network. The unit cost per network would thus be ECU 320 000.

Support for the spirit of initiative and enterprise

Average assistance for supplementary/additional training: ECU 4 000 (possible reference = average amount of aid spent on training for job seekers in France in 1996: FF 5.31 billion for 236 000 training periods, i.e. FF 22 500 per training period or ECU 3 468).

Average aid for the creation of a new activity/implementation of an initiative: as this is more complex to implement than a training action, it is once again assumed that the cost would be higher. The unit cost is thus put at ECU 6 000.

Complementary measures

Supervision. Experience since the start of the pilot action and that gained through other Community actions make it possible to:

- calculate the cost of arrangements for decentralised implementation (national structures) and for back-up/central coordination (operational support structure) of the programme for the different types of supervisory activities;
- estimate the average unit cost of training up mentors, coordinators, advisors, project managers: ECU 30 000 per seminar for 30 people.

Partnership: to calculate the amount to be allocated under this heading the parallel has been drawn with similar action to assist networking and cooperation between structures conducted in the area of education, training and youth.

Information-studies-evaluation: the amount necessary for these actions has been extrapolated from experience with programmes in the areas of education, training and youth and in that of implementing the European voluntary service pilot action.

7.1.3 Explanatory information on the calculations (Sections 1 and 2)

The calculation is therefore as follows (the hypothesis used for the exact number and the distribution of volunteers is given in 9.1.3):

EU Long-term		No of volunteers	x	Unit cost		Total (ECU)	Rounded off (million ECU)
for 1998		2 870	x	5 200	==	14 924 000	14.9
for 1999		3 575	x	5 200		18 590 000	18.6
EU short-term		No of volunteers	x	Unit cost			
for 1998		1 080	x	1 050	=	1 134 000	1.1
for 1999		2 205	x	1 050		2 315 250	2.3

Non-EU long-term		No of volunteers	x	Unit cost		Total (ECU)	Rounded off (million ECU)
for 1998		pm	x		==		
for 1999		360	x	5 050		1 818 000	1.8
Non-EU short-term		No of volunteers	x	Unit cost			
for 1998		pm	x		=		
for 1999		220	x	1 350		297 000	0.3

7.2 Itemised breakdown of cost

BREAKDOWN	1998	1999	2000	2001	2001	TOTAL
Section 1 INTRACOMMUNITY						
A1 Long-term activities	14.9	18.6	-	-	-	-
A2 Short-term activities	1.1	2.3	-	-	-	-
Sub-total Section 1	16.0	20.9	-	-	-	-
Section 2 NON-EU COUNTRIES						
B1 Long-term activities	pm	1.8	-	-	-	0.0
B2 Short-term activities	pm	0.3	-	-	-	-
Sub-total Section 2	pm	2.1	-	-	-	-
Section 3 INNOVATORY NETWORKS						
C Support for innovatory networks	1.6	2.2	-	-	-	-
Section 4 The spirit of initiative and enterprise						
D Aid to initiatives and training	1.7	2.4	-	-	-	-
Section 5 COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES						
E. Preparation and supervision (training, coordination)	3.6	4.6	-	-	-	-
F. Partnerships	0.7	1.0	-	-	-	-
G. Information/Studies/Evaluation	1.4	1.8	-	-	-	-
Sub-total Section 5	5.7	7.4	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	25.0	35.0				

7.3 Operational expenditure on studies, expertise, etc., included in part B of the budget

In million ECU

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
Studies	0.4	0.6				
Experts' meetings	0.3	0.3				
Conferences and congresses	0.2	0.2				
Information and publications	0.5	0.7				
TOTAL	1.4	1.8				

7.4 Schedule for commitment/payment appropriations

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002+	TOTAL
Commitment appropriations	25.0	35.0	-	-	-	-
Payment appropriations						
1998	17.5					17.5
1999	7.5	24.5				32.0
2000		10.5				10.5
2001						
2002 +						
TOTAL	25.0	35.0				60.0

8 FRAUD PREVENTION MEASURES

All contracts, agreements and legal commitments concluded between the Commission and the beneficiaries of payments allow for first- and second-degree checks *in situ* (i.e. on the direct beneficiary of the Community subsidy or the second-degree beneficiary in the case of an activity managed in a decentralised manner) by the Commission and the Court of Auditors. Moreover, the recipients of aid in respect of actions are obliged to submit

financial reports and accounts which are analysed both from the point of view of contents and from the point of view of eligibility of expenditure in accordance with the objective of Community financing and taking due account of the contractual obligations and the principles of sound and efficient financial management.

The agreements between the Commission and the organisations designated to manage the decentralised activities will include a number of clauses which these organisations must incorporate in the agreements with the final beneficiaries in order to guarantee the highest level of protection possible in respect of the interests both of the final beneficiaries and of the Community.

9 ELEMENTS OF COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

9.1 Specific objectives; target population

Basic position

Voluntary service activities already exist to some extent in certain Member States, but their scope is still limited as are their contents, transnational aspects, tangible results in terms of social integration, their interaction with other institutional players in civil society. Furthermore, there is no consistency in this area at Community level, although the introduction of a European dimension into this type of activity could substantially enhance interest and impact, and at the same time boost the understanding and commitment of young people in relation to the construction of a Europe which tomorrow they will have to support and carry forward.

Alongside this lack of a common purpose in the area of voluntary service is the fact that in many countries action taken for the benefit of priority target groups – particularly young people - and implemented at the national level has failed. And the proliferation of such arrangements is reflected in an increasing marginal cost for an ever declining marginal effectiveness.

The arrangements for integration through employment are sometimes hampered by undesirable effects; these include the 'windfall' effect (i.e. the measure is used by beneficiaries but they would have acted in the same manner without it); substitution effect (use of financial assistance or a grant to the detriment of people not receiving a grant: no net creation of employment or activity); 'shift' effect (assistance targeting a problem population but displacing the problem to another population group). These three effects in combination generate a dilution effect. In other words, when it comes to jobs, the number of jobs actually created is lower than the number of jobs subsidised. The specific features (emphasis on creation of activities and new services) and the individualised back-up in European voluntary service and their proximity in local terms means that these activities should be less vulnerable to such effects. This makes them more attractive and is a guarantee of greater effectiveness.

Overall impact

The European voluntary service programme takes a new look at the problem of integrating young people into working life by seeking to address the issue from a broader standpoint than that of employability of young people in the strict sense, and by taking action which directly benefits the young people rather than the different players or intermediaries (mainly in the economic context) traditionally given the role of facilitators of their integration.

This approach will permit bridges to be established between employment policies and social and public policies, particularly those targeting young people, in order to take better account of the changes in the world of work (alternation between paid employment, social activities, leisure time, etc.).

Numerous aspects set European voluntary service activities apart from existing national arrangements (assisted contracts, training aid, voluntary activities):

- the European dimension (or international dimension for activities with non-EU countries); added value in terms of language and cross-cultural learning;
- tangible contribution to the active development of the concept of European citizenship and to defining its content among and by young people;
- local anchoring and matching of volunteer tasks to requirements hitherto unsatisfied within a local community (creation of activities); flexibility and adaptability of the arrangement, quality of individual back-up of the young volunteer;
- possibility of repatriation to the sending country or of extension within the host country of experience acquired, and possibility of starting up a new activity upon completion of the period of service thanks to assistance for initiative and training;
- the arrangement is not focused exclusively and immediately on the employability or the qualifications of the young people, but on all-round stimulation of their social aptitudes: reawakening their energies, and a positive attitude by giving meaning to the social content through solidarity, the building-up of responsibility within an environment ("the foreigner") marking a break with habit. The point is to offer young people an experience capable of re-establishing their sense of belonging to a community, and re-awakening their conscience as citizens; these are effects which are difficult to measure in economic terms but which are essential in terms of social cohesion;
- preparation of young people for a working life which will be renewed and reshaped in relation to the traditional order we know and which implies the well-trodden path of education-work-cessation of work-retirement;

- local impact: knock-on activities, strengthening of the social fabric, leaving behind the stereotypes born of lack of knowledge about other people; etc.

Notion of critical mass

If the European voluntary service programme is to have the desired impact the volume of activity – primarily meaning the number of young volunteers involved – must reach an adequate level and achieve the critical mass without which this impact will fall below expectation and the number of players involved will be too small in relation to the scale of the problem addressed (number of beneficiaries and potential institutional partners out of proportion in relation to the actual volume of activity) and the European dimension and the ethos of the programme will be lost in the mass of other arrangements targeting young people.

The action's multiplier effect cannot take off at European level unless a minimum number of partners (young people, local authorities, associations, the business sector, etc.) are involved. If we can get the right number to act, to innovate and to change their habits, to form new partnerships, then the action envisaged is likely to generate significant and durable effects, to bring about a radical change in behaviour and to create an impetus and a degree of autonomy specific to the activities of European voluntary service.

Given the programme's ambitious nature (in terms of preparation, back-up, adaptation to the needs of young people and in terms of final objectives), there has to be substantial initial investment taking account *inter alia* of the critical mass of activities to be achieved if the infrastructures to be set up are to be cost-effective and if interest is to be elicited at the local level and subsequently generate a knock-on effect. The external ex-ante evaluation conducted as part of the preparation of this proposal confirms the substantial potential that exists for activities in the area of voluntary service; this is also borne out by the initial results of the pilot action (over 700 host projects – many of which involve several volunteers – recorded in three months by the operational support structure coordinating the decentralised section of the pilot action).

This critical mass cannot be achieved with the budgetary constraints stemming from the current financial perspective (1995-1999). Be that as it may, this critical mass must be built up to gradually as the programme picks up momentum. The target figures for the first two years as regards the volume of young volunteers and are in the following ranges:

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number of young people	4 000 - 4 400	6 500 - 7 000	-	-	-

Experience and good practise learned from the pilot action conducted by the Commission in 1996 and 1997 should, from 1998, lend a greater dimension to the programme. Considering the starting point (experimental stage), it is reasonable to set as a target for 1998, the first year of the programme, a number of young volunteers which is almost twice that of the pilot action, thereafter pursuing an increment of 50% for the following year.

The build-up of the programme to a critical mass in terms of activities generated and young people involved will really take hold during the third year. This build-up could be swift and on a large scale, for two years of pilot action and two years of the actual programme will have made it possible to build up networks, to raise awareness among potential partners, to run in infrastructures and to prepare projects in line with this planned build-up.

The evaluation of the voluntary service programme during the second year will probably point to the need to emphasise certain activities: studies on young people, providing information for young people and the different players involved, training, networking, types of activity, etc. This therefore implies providing for possible revision and redirection of certain activities or certain objectives, along with the establishment of new budget amounts for the remainder of the programme (as from the year 2000).

Additional comment

While the European voluntary service programme will involve numerous activities, its cornerstone will be the activities which involve young people directly. In this connection, it is interesting, by way of introduction, to place in a proper perspective the total cost of a volunteer for the Community budget in relation to that of a young non-active person for national budgets. The total average cost for the Community budget of a long-term volunteer is put at ECU 5 200. By way of comparison, here are some figures for:

- public expenditure per student in the countries of the European Union

Public expenditure per student (1992) (third cycle)

COUNTRY	Average expenditure (ECU)	COUNTRY	Average expenditure (ECU)
Germany	5 046	France	4 638
Austria	4 483	Ireland	5 600
Belgium	5 277	Italy	4 507
Denmark	5 169	Netherlands	6 718
Greece	-	Portugal	-
Luxembourg	-	United Kingdom	7 989
Spain	2 904	Sweden	5 485
Finland	6 664	Non-weighted average	4 707

The above figures do not include public financing contributing to the subsistence expenditure of students.

- the minimum annual guaranteed income (irrespective of age, but applicable to young people fulfilling conditions of eligibility).

**Annual minimum guaranteed income
(1992)**

COUNTRY	Guaranteed income (ECU)	COUNTRY	Guaranteed income (ECU)
Germany	3 096	France	3 792
Austria	-	Ireland	3 624
Belgium	5 400	Italy	3 000
Denmark	4 464	Netherlands	6 396
Greece	-	Portugal	-
Luxembourg	7 788	United Kingdom	2 988
Spain	-	Sweden	-
Finland	-	Non-weighted average	4 505

9.1.1 Sections 1 and 2: long-term and short-term activities

The ex-ante evaluation stresses that in the interests of consistency the programme should be geared to the individual needs of young people and therefore have a flexible structure. The evaluation accordingly concludes that the European voluntary service programme should provide not only for long-term activities but also for short-term activities in order to enable young people to combine different options.

The existence of a section of short-term activities will make it easier to involve in the programme young people for whom it is difficult to gain access to existing programmes (because of their economic or social circumstances, their level of education or training, handicaps, etc), and for whom a period of long-term voluntary service would therefore be inappropriate. The ex-ante evaluation stresses that interest in an experience of life and activity in a foreign country often goes hand in hand with academic achievement and high income and that young people facing problems (ethnic minorities, low income groups) are less likely to undertake a long-term voluntary service experience.

Target population: the programme primarily targets young Europeans aged 18-25.

While the action potentially targets all this population, the core of the target is more restricted: young people seeking an alternative experience before commencing their careers, young people sidelined from the traditional education and training tracks, young job seekers, young people who have no qualifications, young people with problems (for geographical, social, cultural, physical, economic and other reasons). Various studies quoted by the ex-ante evaluation show that depending on the country concerned 12-42%

of young people take part in voluntary service activity (in the broader sense of the term and irrespective of duration). The target population is potentially at least equal to this percentage of young people which already takes part in voluntary activities.

Specific objectives: to involve young people resident in EU countries and aged 18-25 in voluntary service activities throughout the countries of the European Union and in non-EU countries with which the EC has established association and cooperation agreements.

The aim of these voluntary service activities is to offer young people new ways of personal development and integration into working life by taking part in activities of direct benefit to a host community and introducing every young person – unshackled from the constraints/inflexibility/formalism specific to the traditional education and training pathways – as a fully-fledged player within this host community.

The non-EU country section will make it possible to promote activities involving non-EU countries as an area of action for young people, in order to foster among these young people the values of solidarity, tolerance and interest in other people.

Sample distribution of young volunteers in Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the programme, used for the purposes of calculations:

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	5 years
Short-term	1 080	2 425	-	-	-	-
EU	1080	2 205	-	-	-	-
Non-EU countries	pm	220	-	-	-	-
Long-term	2 870	3 935	-	-	-	-
EU	2 870	3 575	-	-	-	-
Non-EU countries	pm	360	-	-	-	-
Total Sections 1 and 2	3 950	6 360	-	-	-	-
Innovatory networks	200	280	-	-	-	-
Total number of young people	4 150	6 640	-	-	-	-

The projected distribution between long term and short term projects is in the ratio of 40 to 60. The distribution between EU projects and non-EU projects is in the ratio of 90 to 10 because of the increased cost and the complexity peculiar to projects implemented on the territory of non-EU countries.

Budget for Sections 1 and 2 of the programme

BREAKDOWN	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	TOTAL
SECTION 1: INTRA-COMMUNITY						
A1 LONG-TERM ACTIVITIES	14.9	18.6	-	-	-	-
A2 SHORT-TERM ACTIVITIES	1.1	2.3	-	-	-	-
SUBTOTAL FOR SECTION 1	16.0	20.9	-	-	-	-
SECTION 2: NON-EU COUNTRIES						
B1 LONG-TERM ACTIVITIES	pm	1.8	-	-	-	-
B2 SHORT-TERM ACTIVITIES	pm	0.3	-	-	-	-
SUBTOTAL FOR SECTION 2	pm	2.1	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	16.0	23.0	-	-	-	-

These figures do not take account of the different support measures needed to accompany the running of the programme and implemented under Section 5 of the programme.

In order to keep costs down, thought could be given to associating private players more closely, e.g. firms attracted by the European dimension of the educational experience offered by European voluntary service activities could become involved in the long-term activities of the programme by having some of their young employees or trainees take part. The firm would then be asked to match the Community contribution in funding the expenditure in respect of the volunteer. A further incentive in this connection would be to allow the firms concerned to deduct this contribution from the various charges and taxes they pay for training (apprenticeship tax, trading tax, 1% training levy, etc.).

The cost for this category of young people would thus not burden the programme's appropriations either for the costs directly linked to activities or for costs connected with supervisory measures.

The volume of volunteers could thus be stepped up for instance as follows.

Sabbatical year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	5 years
Number of volunteers	100	250	-	-	-	-
of which EU (80%)	80	200	-	-	-	-
of which non-EU countries (20%)	20	50	-	-	-	-

In addition, it is essential for the business sector to contribute in terms other than monetary to the European voluntary service programme. They could play a very useful role in backing and following up young volunteers by giving them advice, help in kind, mentoring. This would be advantageous all round. It would be an opportunity for firms to show their commitment to the fabric of society, the host community would benefit

from this integrating role played by the firm, the young person will see his energy channelled to good effect through the commitment around him.

9.1.2 *Innovatory networks*

The pilot action has highlighted what the ex-ante evaluation has confirmed, i.e. the need to encourage organisations and institutions involved in voluntary service to take part in an innovatory way, particularly by endeavouring to make specific adjustments to cater for the current expectations of young people and society (environment, fight against racism, fight against drug abuse, etc.).

Specific objectives: to step up cooperation between the Member States, interregional and interlocal cooperation (establishment of transnational relations starting from the local level) and cooperation between the Commission and the Member States through exchange of experience, development of common initiatives, the creation and strengthening of networks and links at intra-Community level for the benefit of young people, the implementation of concerted action for young people and benefitting them directly; to foster the development of new interinstitutional partnerships involving associations, local authorities, the business sector locally and Europe-wide.

Target population: NGOs, local authorities, institutions belonging to networks or eager to form a network in order to implement integrated transnational voluntary service projects around a theme and/or major innovation.

Budget:

Innovatory networks	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	5 years
Number of networks	5	7	-	-	-	-
Number of volunteers (ca. 40 per network)	200	280	-	-	-	-
Cost (in million ECU)	1.6	2.2	-	-	-	-

9.1.3 *Support for the spirit of initiative and enterprise*

The activities under the European voluntary service programme have basically been designed with a view to the long term. The point is to provide a profitable experience, a springboard or a bridge for the creation of future activities. When constructive and dynamic projects can emerge after completion of voluntary service, it is essential for its promoter not to be hampered in his initiative, meaning also financial obstacles (initial investments, start-up capital, etc.). Otherwise the philosophy underpinning the programme and which is seeking to achieve long-term integration of young people in durable social activities, would be at odds with the instruments it makes available.

Armed with the skills acquired, his training and the self-confidence built up during the period of European voluntary service, the young volunteer will, through the section "Support for the spirit of initiative and enterprise" be offered the wherewithal to use his experience in a tangible and appropriate fashion.

Target population: young people having participated in the activities under the pilot action or the European voluntary service programme. Notionally, it is hoped to provide follow-up support for around 10% of long-term activities and 2.5% of short-term activities under this section.

Specific objectives: to support projects and initiatives by young people during or after their voluntary service and on the basis of the experience acquired during this service, to foster their access to additional training activities identified during their service; to allow young people to benefit from their experience in terms of social, vocational and occupational integration, and, in this context, to make the best use of the educational experience acquired by issuing young people with a European certificate upon completion of their period of voluntary service; to enable local authorities to create and strengthen new social approaches, to stimulate the emergence and development of new sources of jobs or social activities and to try out new forms of integration of young people.

Two types of aid will be available as a function of the lessons learned and the needs identified by the young person after his/her voluntary activity:

- Aid for the creation or launching of initiatives: such aid will not be a subsidy for setting up a business but rather an incentive to initiative in overcoming specific start-up problems which all too often stifle young people's initiative.
- Aid for training or additional training: such assistance would be given with the idea of providing an appropriate response to the need emerging during and then articulated after the period of voluntary service to undertake fresh or additional training.

The criteria for allocation of such aid will be determined in order to select projects on their merits (i.e. their prospective viability and durability) and their dependence on Community funding (i.e. likelihood of being a non-starter without Community aid).

Budget (reminder of unit costs: aid for training = 4 000 ECU; aid to initiative = 6 000 ECU)

YEAR	1998		1999		2000		2001		2002		5 years	
	Number	MIECU	Number	MIECU	Number	MIECU	Number	MIECU	Number	MIECU	Number	MIECU
Type of aid												
Initiative	165	1.0	235	1.4								
Training	165	0.7	235	1.0								
TOTAL	330	1.7	470	2.4								

9.1.4 Complementary measures

The pilot action highlights what the ex-ante evaluation has confirmed, i.e. the need to implement as part of the programme certain additional measures. It stresses inter alia the need to develop at centralised and decentralised levels systems of aid for recruitment and support for the preparation and counselling of volunteers (national structures) and clearing house arrangements for projects and organisations (centralised structure in conjunction with the national structures). It also recommends the incorporation into the programme of action to encourage cooperation locally, regionally and nationally between institutions/organisations and between sectors of activities (partnerships).

Additionally, the pilot action confirms the need for decentralised (designation of national structures in each Member State) and centralised structures (setting-up of an operational support structure) in order to develop a common approach and implement and coordinate the different sections of the programme (*inter alia* through the use of electronic communication networks and the development of common data bases) from the European level to the local level.

Specific objectives: it will therefore be necessary to support national structures with this as their mission, through a Community contribution to their operating expenditure.

The pilot action has enabled Member States to propose structures whose task will be to implement the decentralised section of this pilot action. Most of these national structures are in fact the national agencies set up under the *Youth for Europe* programme, which will (as is already the case under the pilot action) permit substantial gains in effectiveness and savings. But the number of activities envisaged and the need for more painstaking individual back-up than with exchanges of young people mean that the human and material resources will have to be stepped up considerably within these agencies in conjunction with the Member States.

An operational support structure to back up and coordinate the national structures is also needed at the central level in order to lead the network of national structures, to secure genuine consistency in their activities and to take part in the establishment of support and guidance mechanisms capable of coping with both routine and contingency circumstances,

as recommended by the ex-ante evaluation. This operational support structure will provide no technical or administrative assistance whatever to the Commission and is intended to serve the national structures with which it will cooperate closely in order to collect, analyse, aggregate and disseminate all sorts of facts and figures on the different activities within the programme, taking care to set up a computerised system enabling the national structures to monitor and keep abreast of activities virtually continuously (particularly as regards supply and demand of sending/hosting projects and volunteers).

The partnerships will endeavour to stimulate, for European voluntary service and against a transnational backdrop, local/regional/national cooperation between players in the public and private sectors.

Target population: the target population are the various players involved in the implementation, monitoring, coordination and supervision of projects: national structures designated by the Member States to carry the Community torch for certain missions (stimulating projects, informing the target publics, coordinating preparatory and supervisory activities, assisting and following up projects, taking part in the inter-agency network, relations with local authorities, etc.), public and private institutional partners likely to become involved at different levels (local/regional/national) in the area of European voluntary service activities.

The preparatory and supervisory measures included in the section on supervision are targeted at all players involved in the implementation, operation and monitoring of projects. These include mentors for the volunteers, project coordinators and managers, advisers, trainers.

The information/studies section is intended for the whole of the population targeted by the programme (as a target for information and as an area of investigation for studies): young Europeans aged 18-25 and other players/leaders in the area of youth policy.

Budget (million ECU)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	5 years
Section 5: COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES			-	-	-	-
D Supervision	3.6	4.6	-	-	-	-
E Partnership	0.7	1.0				
F Information/studies/monitoring/evaluation	1.4	1.8				
Subtotal for Section 5	5.7	7.4	-	-	-	-

These estimated costs are based on the experience under the 1996 pilot action and that of Community action in the area of education, training and youth, and also, as regards the preparatory and supervisory activities, on the number of persons concerned and per capita cost (cf. details below).

Community contribution to the financing of national and centralised coordination structures (for reference, use has been made of the amount of financing for national structures under the voluntary service pilot action, i.e. ECU 1.6 million in 1996, and the financing granted to the operational support structure for the pilot action, i.e. ECU 0.6 million in 1996).

Coordination, information and operational support structures for programme implementation	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	TOTAL
National level (co-financing by the Member States)	1.8	2	-	-	-	-
Central level	0.6	0.8	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	2.4	2.8	-	-	-	-

Training activities: cost and calculation base

Cost

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	5 years
Training	1.20	1.80	-	-	-	-
of which, training for educational players	0.60	0.90				
of which, training for coordinators	0.60	0.90				

Calculation base

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	5 years
Number of seminars for educational players	20	30	-	-	-	-
Number of seminars for coordinators	20	30				
Cost of seminar (ECU)	30 000	30 000				

9.2 Grounds for the operation

9.2.1 In the current climate of economic and social gloom for many young Europeans (uncertain job prospects, threat of social exclusion, new requirements in terms of education and training) great attention must be focused on the period of transition to adulthood. The European voluntary service programme has been designed mindful of this context which is common to most Member States. It endeavours to explore and use the concept of voluntary service within a context open to the transnational dimension (both within Europe and looking at non-EU countries) in order to offer young people fresh possibilities for finding their way into working life and discovering what European citizenship can involve.

- 9.2.2 The Commission has long since been aware of increasing demand from the Member States, the European Parliament and the NGOs for specific measures to be adopted to improve and bolster European activities in connection with voluntary service for young people as part of European cooperation in the field of youth. The ex-ante evaluation carried out in accordance with the financial directives of the SEM 2000 approach has confirmed that the circumstances are conducive to the introduction of a multiannual programme of voluntary service: support from the Member States, support from the organisations which could be involved, genuine interest among young people.
- 9.2.3 The guidelines of the Commission White Paper *Growth, competitiveness, employment*, the conclusions of the European Councils of Essen (December 1994), Cannes (June 1995), Florence (June 1996) stress the need to encourage regional and local initiatives to create jobs which cater for the new requirements and on the need to step up measures to fight against social and vocational exclusion of young people, *inter alia* by developing voluntary service activities. The Commission feels that the initiative it intends to promote through this proposal can help to identify these new requirements more clearly and bring an appropriate response.
- 9.2.4 It makes sense to place cooperation in the area of youth within a global perspective and an all-round social project. The European voluntary service programme will make it possible to establish more bridges between youth activities, being an active citizen and the issue of social integration of young people.
- 9.2.5 The multiannual programme will thus provide an essential instrument of integration and revitalisation of the social link for many young Europeans for whom the future looks increasingly bleak on account of the persistent economic problems, the increasing egocentricity of behaviour, the constant widening of disparities, etc.
- 9.2.6 European voluntary service activities will simultaneously provide an opportunity for acquiring aptitudes and skills accredited by a European certificate, and for coming to terms with citizenship in danger of erosion from day-to-day reality, and usually in a multicultural society.
- 9.2.7 Against this background European voluntary service programme seeks to bring a tangible and appropriate response for young people in line with the need – stressed in the ex-ante evaluation – to take account singly of the specific requirements of the different categories of young people who will take part in the programme.
- 9.2.8 Activities under the programme will thus propose innovatory responses to the new demands in terms of education and training, to the problems of social integration of young people, to the specific difficulties inherent in the transition to adulthood and the responsibilities of working life. Anchoring the programme locally – but

as part of an overall transnational approach – will make for better adaptation to the ever-varying facets of a constantly changing world, while the role of fully-fledged player given to the young people will make it possible to truly match their specific needs to the action proposed, as recommended by the ex-ante evaluation.

- 9.2.9 The activities will be based on active and tangible participation in the life of a new community and on the creation of solid social links within this host environment, and will seek to enable young people to develop their social and occupational skills while making a contribution to the wellbeing of their host community. The opportunity to actually try out active and responsible citizenship in another country, another environment, within a culture other than that of their countries of origin will enable them to speed up the process of their own integration in a changing society while making an active contribution to the emergence of a European identity which is positive and consistent.
- 9.2.10 This experience will thus help to reconcile young people with the idea and the reality of being a citizen in a community in which the individual can fit in, while at the same time helping to consolidate the construction of the Community through the emergence of a European concept of citizenship. The work they perform for the benefit of the local host community will enable young volunteers to experience directly what it means to be a citizen of Europe.
- 9.2.11 The nature of the action envisaged and the large volume of young volunteers means the proposed programme will bring substantial benefit to society in terms of economic development and social cohesion: providing a stimulus to initiative, raising skill levels, enhancing employability, encouraging mobility, creating new activities, etc.
- 9.2.12 European voluntary service activities will enrich the local socio-economic fabric through their immediate impact (additional activity) but also in the longer term by the knock-on effects in quantitative (gross volume of activity generated) and qualitative (stimulation of new forms of activity) terms, benefiting the young volunteer (long term integration) and the host community (generation of wellbeing) alike.
- 9.2.13 The momentum generated by European voluntary service activities may indeed have a knock-on impact: associations, organisations, authorities or institutions having entered into a partnership on this occasion may wish to pursue their cooperation on other projects. After demonstrating its worthwhile nature, European voluntary service activity may lead to the creation of other initiatives along the same lines.
- 9.2.14 The range of measures envisaged by the programme are all geared to the objective of transnational cooperation which provides substantial value added (particularly in terms of language and cross-cultural learning) to the actions operated by the Member States or by the organisations active in the area of voluntary serv

- 9.2.15 Its openness and integrated approach means that the European voluntary service programme will provide young people suffering de facto exclusion (owing to their lack of education, their low level of qualifications or their low incomes) with the opportunity to be mobile at European level.
- 9.2.16 The activities implemented will make young people the tangible instrument whereby access to the European dimension and networking at European level are opened up locally.
- 9.2.17 While certain countries have a long and well-established tradition of voluntary service, it is virtually non-existent at European level. The activities promoted by the Commission will therefore stand as new forms of activities in relation to those which already exist in each Member State and which they will complement and enhance by injecting new practices and broader horizons.
- 9.2.18 A multiannual programme of voluntary service activity with a European dimension will constitute a laboratory for creating a European status for young volunteers; as stressed in the ex-ante evaluation, this would substantially reduce the obstacles to optimum development of the action proposed and enable it to fulfil its potential.
- 9.2.19 The approach for the action proposed as part of this proposal for a decision is based on the complementarity of the role of the Community and the Member States which will open on to intensified cooperation with the competent authorities at all levels (Community, national, regional and local). It will also give rise to institutional partnerships at the local and transnational level, thus facilitating initiatives involving Member States and non-EU countries and their respective citizens. The ex-ante evaluation lays heavy emphasis on the importance of organising this type of partnership and network in order to improve the quality of the programme and open up access to organisations and institutions of all sizes.
- 9.2.20 Community action will help to bring genuine European dimension for activities at local as well as at national level, and to secure greater cohesion in the distribution of resources and in terms of the results.
- 9.2.21 In accordance with the lessons learned from the pilot action and in line with the recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation, the arrangements for implementing the action have been designed in order to combine decentralisation, effectiveness and economy of means and intermediaries optimally so that the bulk of appropriations will benefit young people directly.

- 9.2.22 Community action will permit pooling of financial resources, expertise, partners and networks (clearing house mechanism for projects, development of preparation modules) and will give the teaching content of the activities a European dimension (language and cross-cultural learning). It will thus offer a financial advantage (economies of scale, pooling of resources) and an educational advantage (international and cross-cultural dimension), which are significant compared to the isolated initiatives undertaken by the Member States in this context.
- 9.2.23 The co-financing required for implementing the programme's activities will be centred mainly on the host project. The programme will therefore burden national budgets only slightly. The ex-ante evaluation points out that this funding mechanism, which spares the cash-strapped public sector, is a very positive aspect of the programme proposed.
- 9.2.24 Placing the transnational dimension at the heart of European voluntary service activities is, looking ahead to a society in which internationalisation and globalisation will be a systematically more integral part, a crucial asset in preparing young people for working life.
- 9.2.25 The international dimension of the action will lend greater consistency and credibility to the drive to assemble private funds and to negotiations aimed at keeping certain costs (transport, insurance) down. The establishment of a foundation to attract additional resources particularly from the private sector (big European companies) would make a substantial contribution to keeping the financial impact of the action down or to increasing the annual intensity of voluntary service activities.
- 9.2.26 The programme enhances the individual's personal development. Its functional organisation (community life), the knowledge and breadth it generates (language, geographical, historical, social, occupational environment, etc.), the cultural exchanges it enhances (between social milieux, ages, nationalities, etc.) make the European voluntary service programme a "holistic" educational method suited to the complexity of people as individuals, permitting discovery of one's self and others as the prelude to responsible citizenship.
- 9.2.27 The European voluntary service programme is simultaneously an opportunity for learning and practising citizenship. It assembles around a common project individuals from different geographical, cultural or social backgrounds and thereby permits the shouldering of responsibility, self-reliance and solidarity. It contributes to making each participant a player who will then have a new vantage point as regards life as a citizen, thus enabling him to play his full active part.

9.2.28 The activities they will undertake will enable young volunteers:

- on a personal level, to learn to make their own decisions, to stand on their own two feet, and to develop judgement, self-reliance and the ability to communicate; the learning process driven by the European voluntary service programme is one which is in line with the needs and aspirations of young people and not something which is foisted upon them;
- for society, to experience what solidarity means on a daily basis and thus be able to discover the concept of the interdependence of human beings and the need to consider the interests of the community at large at the same time as the interests of the individual;
- socially, to better perceive and understand certain social requirements and their origin, the function of social structures, how to become involved in them, and the demands on professionals in the areas where these activities are performed;
- for cross-cultural learning, to appreciate the limits of their own traditions and cultures and to have contact with cultural, social, economic situations which are different and to develop their understanding accordingly.

9.2.29 European voluntary service activities are based on a partnership between associations, the inhabitants of a town or village, local elected representatives, administrations and the business sector. Rallying around a host project young people from elsewhere to contribute to the wellbeing of their own environment, the European voluntary service programme prompts new partnership relations between institutions, something the ex-ante evaluation considers very important.

9.2.30 As regards activities with non-EU countries, the cooperation with DGs I and VIII can help to develop complementarity and synergy and to test out new ways of cooperation and voluntary activity.

9.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the programme

In accordance with Article 10 of the draft decision establishing the European voluntary service programme, when this decision is implemented the Commission will take the measures necessary to ensure the continuous monitoring and assessment of European voluntary service, taking into account the main objective and the specific objectives.

Monitoring

Programme implementation will be continuously monitored by the Commission from the point of view of its effectiveness and efficiency. Commission monitoring will include:

- regular reports which the coordination structures and the various institutional partners must submit to it;
- the contributions from the young people themselves benefiting from the programme; the intention is to associate young people closely in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme in a number of ways to be defined, e.g. participation in seminars, interviews, a diary to be kept by the volunteer, etc.

Moreover, aid given under the section "Support for the spirit of initiative and enterprise" will *per se* (activity monitoring a voluntary service activity) itself be a monitoring instrument (particularly Sections 1, 2 and 3).

Performance indicators

The following indicators, some of which are advocated by the ex-ante evaluation, may be used to monitor and evaluate the programme:

Output indicators

Quantitative

General:

- number and origin of young people taking part in the programme
- percentage of young people in difficulty taking part in the programme
- equal participation by men and women

Specific:

- number and origin of young people taking part in each section
- number of host and sending projects submitted to the Commission (Sections 1 and 2)
- balance between long-term and short-term activities and average duration of activities (Sections 1 and 2)
- balance between intra-EU and non-EU country activities (Sections 1 and 2)
- rate of conversion of voluntary service activities into initiatives/training (Section 4)
- failure rate of voluntary service activities (Sections 1, 2 and 3)
- failure rates of aid to the spirit of initiative and enterprise (Section 4)

Qualitative

General:

- typology of sectors in which the activities are performed
- geographical distribution of activities; balance of partnerships (north-south, regional links)

Specific:

- quality of educational content (Sections 1, 2 and 3)
- language skills acquired (Sections 1, 2 and 3)
- innovatory dimension of the project (Sections 3 and 4)
- benefit for the host community (Sections 1, 2 and 3).

Impact indicators

Quantitative

General:

- rate of creation of new activities by the young people themselves
- rise in demand from volunteers and in provision of activities by the various institutional partners

Specific:

- rate of recruitment of young people having completed a period of voluntary service (Sections 1, 2 and 3)
- number of unmet requests for voluntary service (Sections 1 and 2).

Qualitative

General:

- tailoring of activities to individual requirements
- rate of penetration of voluntary service in countries with no tradition thereof
- participation by young people and the extent to which they are willing to shoulder responsibility
- contribution to defining and developing the notion of European citizenship; awareness of the European dimension by the different partners involved

Specific:

- contribution to local development (Sections 1, 2 and 3)
- typology of skills acquired by the volunteer (Sections 1, 2 and 3)
- persistence of the social impetus generated by their action after the volunteers have left (Sections 1, 2 and 3)
- utilisation of the experience acquired during the voluntary service period (Sections 1, 2 and 3)

- harnessing of the experience acquired during a follow-up activity (Section 4)
- maintenance of transnational partnerships upon completion of voluntary service activities (Sections 1, 2, 3 and 5).

Details and frequency of planned evaluations

Article 10 of the decision stipulates that the Commission will during the second year of implementation of the programme submit to the European Parliament and the Council an evaluation report which will be used to define any new arrangements for implementation and a new budget for the final three years of the programme. This evaluation will also take account of the results of the evaluation of the pilot action and the final evaluation of the *Youth for Europe* programme.

As stated above, there will be an evaluation of the programme during the second year. The relevant report, submitted by the Commission, will be based *inter alia* on an external evaluation by an independent organisation. The evaluation will also take into account (through the processing of data relating to the various indicators referred to above) the opinion of the young people themselves (self-assessment) and that of various persons directly involved in the projects (coordination of structures, institutional partners) or beneficiaries of the projects (community members, associations, districts, villages, etc.) who have benefitted from the presence of the young volunteers. The findings of a comparison between a group of young people who took part in the programme and a control group of young people who did not will also form part of the evaluation.

10 Administrative expenditure

The administrative resources needed will be assembled on the basis of the annual Commission decision on the earmarking of funds, taking account *inter alia* of the staffing levels and additional amounts allowed by the budgetary authority.

10.1 Impact on the number of staff

TYPE OF JOB		STAFF TO BE ALLOCATED FOR ADMINISTERING THE ACTION		OF WHICH		DURATION
		Permanent jobs	Temporary jobs	Through use of existing resources	Through use of additional resources	
Officials or temporary agents	A	8		8		as from 1998
	B	1	2	3		
	C	2		2		
Other resources						
TOTAL		11	2	13		as from 1998

10.2 Overall financial impact of additional human resources

(in ECU)

	AMOUNT	METHOD OF CALCULATION
Officials		
Temporary agents		
Other resources (specify budget heading)		
TOTAL		

Additional expenditure linked to the additional human resources necessary for the implementation of this initiative will be covered through the mobilisation of existing resources: 11 officials, 2 temporary agents (headings A1, A2, A4, A5) which represents 1,300,000 ECU/year.

10.3 Increase in other operating expenditure generated by the operation

(in ECU)

BUDGET HEADING (NO AND DESCRIPTION)	AMOUNT	METHOD OF CALCULATION
A 2510 Cost of committee meetings	46 200	2 meetings yearly of the Committee (2 representatives per Member State)
TOTAL	125 400	

The programme will additionally require expenditure for meetings (heading A 2500 - three meetings yearly of the national structures: ECU 36 000 based on 3 x 15 members x ECU 800) and mission expenses (heading A 1300 - three missions yearly per Member State: 36 000 ECU based on 3 x 15 missions x ECU 800). This expenditure will be met from existing resources.

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