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Public consultation on the future development of European Union programmes in education, training and youth

The European Commission has launched a large-scale public consultation on the development of new European programmes in education, training, and youth. These will replace the existing Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes when they end in 2006.

The consultation runs from 4 November 2002 to 28 February 2003.

The consultation is designed to give the Commission a full picture of the needs, ambitions and wishes of those involved in education, training and youth at European level. The results of the consultation will feed into the legislative proposals for new programmes that the Commission will prepare next year.

The basis for the consultation is a document which can be downloaded here (pdf files) :

[es](#) [da](#) [de](#) [el](#) [en](#) [fr](#) [it](#) [nl](#) [pt](#) [fi](#)

You are strongly encouraged to send your replies to the consultation via a web-based online response form which will be available **here** from the start of December 2002.

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Education and Culture

***THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION EDUCATION, TRAINING
AND YOUTH PROGRAMMES AFTER 2006***

A PUBLIC CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

*European Commission
Directorate General for Education and Culture
Brussels, November 2002*

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Foreword by Mrs Viviane Reding, Member of the European Commission

This is a vital time for the future of education, training and youth policies at European level. Their role in underpinning economic success, in equipping people with the skills to respond to the challenges of new technologies and globalisation, in combating social exclusion, and in promoting understanding between different cultural groups, has never been more important. The idea of lifelong learning is becoming firmly established as a core principle underlying education and training systems. The importance of continuing to update and improve these systems was explicitly recognised by European Heads of Government at their summit in Lisbon in 2000.



European countries are coming increasingly to appreciate how much we can gain from working together and how much we can learn from each other's education, training and youth systems. That is why the past few years have seen a whole host of new actions in the field, including the definition of common objectives for European education and training up to the year 2010.

The European Union's programmes Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth have for years been the most important means of supporting and promoting co-operative action in education, training and youth within the EU and beyond, and, most importantly, of bringing a European experience to millions of individuals in these countries. Open also to the candidate countries, our programmes have played an important part in their preparations to join the European Union.

The current phase of these programmes runs out at the end of 2006. We want to know the views, wishes and ambitions of all our stakeholders – programme participants and potential participants – before the Commission puts forward its formal proposal for the new phase of programme action to start in 2007.

That is why I am today launching this public consultation exercise. This document sets out thirteen key questions about future programme action. I warmly invite all those with an interest to respond and so to help us develop a new generation of programmes which respond better to your needs and which reinforce the quality of education, training and youth activities in Europe. We need to be creative and flexible to design worthy successors to Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth that will work well more than ten years from now. Please take advantage of this opportunity to contribute to our thinking!

*Viviane REDING
Brussels, November 2002*

1. *The consultation process*

- 1.1 The European Commission is starting to prepare its proposals for the future of European co-operation in the fields of education, training and youth. These proposals will build on the achievements of the existing Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes, which expire at the end of 2006.
- 1.2 The Commission's proposals will also support the significant policy developments that have taken place in these fields following the 2000 Lisbon European Council meeting, which set a strategic goal for the European Union by 2010 *"to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."* Education, training and youth policy have important roles to play in achieving this goal. The policy developments that have already taken place are outlined in Section 3 of this document.
- 1.3 The present document is designed to invite all those with a direct or indirect interest in action at European level in education, training and youth to give us their views on what the new programmes should contain, how they should be structured, and what individuals and institutions they should target. We invite responses from:
- ◆ regional and local authorities of EU Member States;
 - ◆ national, regional and local authorities of other countries, including the EEA and candidate countries;
 - ◆ educational/ training/ youth institutions and individuals for whom the existing programmes are designed (whether they have taken part in the programmes or not);
 - ◆ European associations and foundations in the fields covered by our programmes;
 - ◆ social partners (employers' and employees' organisations), teacher/trainer associations, relevant NGOs, cultural associations and other groups making up civil society;
 - ◆ partners in the voluntary sector, particularly those promoting exchanges of young people or voluntary service for young people;
 - ◆ all those with an interest in our activities, even – especially – if they have not so far taken part.
- 1.4 The Commission's proposals will take the form of one or more draft Decisions of the European Parliament and of the Council, which will provide the legal base for the programme actions.

2. *What we have achieved so far: the Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes*

- 2.1 Our existing programmes in education, training and youth are based on Articles 149 and 150 of the Treaty establishing the European Community.¹ These articles define the Community's role: to support and to supplement action in the Member States by fostering co-operation between them. The Treaty reaffirms Member States' sole responsibility for the content and organisation of education and training systems. It defines a number of actions to be undertaken at European level, but requires that they stop short of harmonisation of Member State laws and regulations.
- 2.2 When we look at the past or the future of our programmes, we must remember that this legal framework emphasises the primary responsibility of the Member States when it comes to education, training and youth policy. EU programmes encourage national policy co-operation in Europe on a complementary not an alternative basis.
- 2.3 European Community action in education, training and youth started in the 1970s and expanded into several programmes – Erasmus, Comett, Youth for Europe, Lingua, Petra, Force, Eurotecnet – during the 1980s and early 1990s. In 1995, a major restructuring of this activity led to the creation of just three programmes – Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth for Europe – encompassing all the previous programmes and adding important new activities such as adult education. In 1996, the programme Youth for Europe was complemented by the European Voluntary Service initiative. The European Year of Lifelong Learning in 1996 played a key role in the establishment of lifelong learning as the essential overarching theme of education and training policy in the EU and in its Member States.
- 2.4 The first phase of the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth for Europe programmes ran from 1995 to 1999. They were renewed, with some substantial changes – such as the integration of the different youth actions into one single Youth programme – for a further phase covering 2000 to 2006. The new phase of the programmes introduced 'joint actions' to implement initiatives that go beyond the scope of a single programme.
- 2.5 The question of how best to link the different programmes and adopt an integrated approach was a key issue in the discussions leading to the renewal of the three programmes. It remains one of the major questions for the current consultation, particularly given the important policy developments that have taken place recently such as the Council Resolution on lifelong learning as a guiding principle for education, training and youth policies.

¹ With the exception of the Tempus programme, which is based on Article 308, a general provision, which permits Community action in areas not otherwise covered by the Treaty

Impact

- 2.10 A detailed report on the implementation of the first phase of Socrates was published in 2001, and can be consulted online.⁴ There is a consistent pattern of remarkable progress on the one hand and persisting difficulties on the other, which sets the agenda for the future.
- 2.11 The impact of student, pupil and teacher mobility goes deep and extends beyond the topic of study or teaching. Studies have shown that Erasmus students, in general, returned with the view that the study period abroad was a culturally and linguistically valuable experience, led to substantial academic progress and offered them advantages in the job market. With the creation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in 1989 the EU developed a powerful tool for recognising students' achievements abroad. This system has steadily expanded across universities in Europe and beyond and has done much to make mobility more feasible and rewarding. It is now being extended to other areas, such as training and lifelong learning, and is being complemented by a Diploma Supplement to improve understanding of what students have actually studied, as well as the transferability of university diplomas between institutions.
- 2.12 Difficulties remain, however. The limited budget and increasing demand for Socrates means that Erasmus student grants have fallen steadily since the early 1990s (average EUR 190 per month in 1991; EUR 146 per month in 2001), and this increases the risk of inequality between students and exclusion of those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds.⁵ There continue to be problems integrating study abroad into the student's programme of studies at the home university. There are imbalances between countries, with the candidate countries sending out far more students than they receive and the UK and Ireland receiving far more than they send. There are significant obstacles to teacher mobility at both school and university level, mainly concerning the coverage of absences and the recognition of the work done abroad, which keep these numbers low. The administrative processes are still too complicated. These difficulties must be tackled in the future programme.
- 2.13 Another important result of the Socrates programme has been to make a European dimension a reality not only in universities but increasingly in schools, in teacher training and among adult educators. This has been done by supporting transnational project work, where several institutions co-operate to develop a product such as a curriculum, language teaching tools or a joint course. Such work ranges from large high-level European networks and projects bringing together the key specialists in a particular subject area, to small groupings of schools or adult education institutions in different countries, often in remote or disadvantaged areas. This brings a direct experience of Europe and opens new horizons to a vast number of our citizens.

⁴ COM(2001)75 final

⁵ See the Commission's survey into the socio-economic background of Erasmus students (COM(2000)4)

encouraging the transfer of the know-how that stimulates and improves academic development, including the development of new curricula in disciplines such as law, economics and politics, the involvement of institutions in international co-operation, the acquisition of management skills by academic and administrative staff, and the opening up of partners' education systems to civil society, thereby reinforcing it. This last aspect has gained importance throughout the years and has become a crucial component of the programme. For a large number of partner countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia), reform in education was part of their preparation for access to the European Union. These countries are now in the pre-accession process and no longer participate in Tempus. The extension of Tempus to the Meda countries has served to confirm not only the educational value of the programme but also its validity as an instrument to further intercultural dialogue.

Impact

- 2.17 Tempus has, as envisaged, had a positive impact on the higher education systems of partner countries. University curricula were reworked into modular structures and internationally compatible formats. Staff were retrained. Tempus grants helped partner institutions gain access to the Internet and other new information opportunities. Between 1990 and 1997, almost 100,000 international staff and student exchanges were carried out with Tempus funding. By helping to establish new personal and institutional relationships, Tempus supported the reconstruction work that took place in the partner countries in the latter part of the 1990s. The programme has been instrumental in training a generation of academics and administrators who are now beginning to gain political, social and economic responsibilities in the candidate countries. The programme has created new opportunities for institutions in the partner countries and in the EU to benefit from co-operation.
- 2.18 Challenges remain, however. Some have expressed concern that the programme may have encouraged brain drain in some partner countries. At administrative level, the contractual framework needs to be simplified and the administrative load on participants reduced.

Key data – Tempus

Since 1990, the Tempus programme has supported thousands of projects and provided opportunities for co-operation and exchanges in the field of higher education to thousands of institutions from the EU. Over 2,200 Joint European Projects (consortia involving as a minimum two EU higher education institutions and one institution from partner countries), almost 17,000 individual mobility grants, and over 750 other types of projects were funded between 1990 and 2000. The programme has supported almost 180,000 mobility flows over this period, of which 135,000 staff and 45,000 students.

candidate countries where the Leonardo da Vinci projects contribute strongly to the evolution and adaptation of national training systems in preparation for the accession to the Union.

Key data – Leonardo da Vinci

In the first phase of the programme 127,000 young workers/trainees had a period of training in another country (an average of about 25,000 per year); more than 77,000 organisations successfully worked on projects financed by the programme; 2,500 pilot projects of different sorts were financed with an average Community financial contribution of EUR 120,000.

During the first two years of the second phase of the programme 75,500 young workers/trainees took part in mobility actions (an increase to about 37,500 per year, reflecting the priority now given to these actions); 496 pilot projects were financed with an average Community financial contribution of EUR 340,000; about 7,000 organisations have been involved in project work, 16 % of which were SMEs, reflecting the efforts made to improve their participation in the programme's activities.

Youth

Development

- 2.24 The Youth programme,⁸ established for the period 2000-2006 with a budget of EUR 520 million, includes activities from previous programmes such as Youth for Europe (short-term group exchanges) and European Voluntary Service and new actions such as 'youth initiatives', joint actions (together with Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci), intercultural dialogue and specific support measures. The programme is based on non-formal education, the concept of lifelong learning and the development of skills and competencies which promote active citizenship, the spirit of initiative and the fight against racism and xenophobia.
- 2.25 New priorities are established yearly. Priority themes are mainstreamed throughout the programme's different actions and activities. Since 2001 a key priority has been to help young people with fewer opportunities gain access to the Youth programme.
- 2.26 Following the 2001 action plan for EU regions bordering candidate countries in the build-up to enlargement, additional funds have been allocated to the programme as of 2003. These funds for cross border co-operation will allow for financing exchange projects, voluntary service and support measures involving border regions. Participation in the programme is not restricted to Member States, EEA and candidate countries. Other countries in the Mediterranean region – which are already targeted by the specific sub-programme EuroMed Youth – in south-eastern Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are also at the heart of the Youth

⁸ Decision No 1031/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2000 establishing the "Youth" Community action programme

3. *Other European policy developments in education, training and youth*

Lisbon summit

- 3.1 The development of education, training and youth policy at European level is not achieved only through the programmes just described. Coordinated action in these areas has increasingly been recognised by Member State governments as important to social and economic development in Europe. This has led to some very significant actions within the structures of the EU and at intergovernmental level, which should be taken into account in designing the future programmes.
- 3.2 The most important single event was the 2000 Lisbon European Council, at which the Heads of State or Government set the new strategic goal for the decade to 2010 cited in section 1 above.¹⁰ An integrated approach involving structural reforms, more and better jobs, social inclusion and environmental action has been launched. Education and training have a major role to play in creating the conditions necessary to achieve this goal. The strategy will be implemented using a range of policy tools from legislation and programmes to an "open method of co-ordination" between Member States, which was launched in Lisbon. This new instrument has the potential to pave the way for coherent policies in areas such as education where a formal common policy is not appropriate but where enhanced co-operation and mutual learning at European level can add real value.
- 3.3 Following the Lisbon summit, the Commission is also working to strengthen the links between education and research. A series of forthcoming Commission Communications will set out the strategy in more detail. An important issue for the design of the new programmes will be to achieve better articulation between them and the Community's Framework Programmes for research and technology development.

Future objectives of education and training systems

- 3.4 Responding to the challenge set at Lisbon requires major efforts to strengthen co-operation on education and training policy. At the request of the Stockholm European Council in 2001, a set of 13 future objectives of education and training systems was defined and a work programme agreed, the fulfilment of which will constitute a large step towards the Lisbon goal.¹¹ This detailed work programme will be implemented using the open method of co-ordination between Member States. The Barcelona European Council in March 2002 underlined these ambitions by pointing out that education was one of the bases of the European "social model" and that Europe's education

¹⁰ "To become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion." Lisbon Presidency Conclusions paragraph 5

¹¹ COM(2001)59 and COM(2001)501

transparency of vocational qualifications and competences, and to increase co-operation in vocational education and training.

- 3.10 The issue was debated at a conference held in June 2002 in Brussels with the participation of Member States, EEA countries, candidate countries and social partners. A consensus emerged to increase voluntary co-operation, focusing primarily on the issues of transparency, recognition, quality and guidance. Among the tools to be developed are: a single instrument supporting transparency of qualifications and competences; a system for credit transfer for vocational education and training at all levels; and a set of common principles for the validation of non-formal learning.

A new framework for co-operation in the field of youth

- 3.11 The Youth White Paper resulted from the observation that existing co-operation on youth matters was not responsive to the challenges created by demographic, sociological, economic and cultural changes in our societies. The Commission therefore decided in 1999 to conduct wide-ranging consultations leading to a White Paper on youth policies. The consultation exercise was not only considerable in scale, but also led to great many proposals. From spring 2000 to March 2001, it involved young people themselves, organisations working for and with them, researchers, and national, political and administrative authorities.
- 3.12 The White Paper *A new impetus for European youth* was adopted in November 2001 and led, six months later, to a Council resolution on the framework of European co-operation in the youth field. This framework focuses on two complementary themes: the application of the open method of co-ordination to the thematic priorities of the youth field (participation, information, voluntary service and research); taking more account of the youth dimension in other policies (such as education and training, the fight against racism and xenophobia, and employment). This impetus given to youth policy is also relevant for the preparation of the enlargement of the EU.

eEurope and eLearning

- 3.13 The Internet, multimedia learning resources, applications, services and infrastructures for learning were the focus of the eEurope initiative launched in December 1999. Its aim is to help bring Europe online. The recently approved action plan *eEurope 2005: An information society for all* proposes a set of actions ranging from broadband connections in schools to re-skilling for the knowledge society, including a proposal for an eLearning programme.
- 3.14 The use of ICT in education and training (eLearning¹²) is leading to changes as part of the modernisation of Europe's education and training systems. In 2000 and 2001 the Commission adopted an initiative and an action plan called *eLearning: Designing tomorrow's education*.¹³ This targets areas of work to be

¹² In the Action Plan, eLearning has been defined as "the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration."

¹³ COM(2000) 318 final, 24.05.2000 and COM(2001)172 final, 28.03.2001

4. *The scope of European Union action in education, training and youth*

- 4.1 The Treaty establishing the European Community sets the framework for, and in large part defines, the scope and purpose of action that can be supported through our programmes.
- 4.2 The emphasis in the Treaty is on strengthening the quality of education, training and youth work in Europe, and on developing their European dimension. The types of action it envisages include: encouraging mobility and exchanges across national boundaries; strengthening recognition arrangements for attainments gained abroad; promoting co-operation between educational, training and youth establishments; using vocational training to facilitate adaptation to industrial changes; exchanging information and experience on common issues.
- 4.3 A number of core aims for our existing programmes follow naturally from the Treaty and these will continue to be central as we develop the new generation:
- ◆ To reinforce quality in education, training and youth work and to foster innovation.
 - ◆ To develop the European dimension, notably by encouraging networking and co-operation between institutions and individuals.
 - ◆ To offer better opportunities to learn, work or undertake voluntary service in another country, and to have this experience fully recognised throughout Europe.

To achieve these strategic aims, the programmes must be designed as effectively as possible to further equal opportunities, to promote intercultural dialogue and to foster personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability.

- 4.4 Moreover, the recent policy developments outlined in the previous section, notably the 'objectives' process, the lifelong learning framework and the White Paper on youth, present a new context and new challenges for the next generation of programmes. These programmes will be important instruments for realising these policy goals, and need to be designed to do so. At the same time, they must build on the achievements of the past programmes, and address their weaknesses.

How can they harness best practice in different countries, to achieve an outcome greater than the sum of all the parts?

- A.4 How can our programmes better encourage innovation and its transfer into mainstream activity?

B. Geographical coverage

Context

The Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes have expanded to cover the candidate countries.¹⁴ In recent years, the EU has strengthened its links with third countries in the education and youth fields in particular – e.g. successive extensions of Tempus,¹⁵ Euromed Youth, the new proposal for Erasmus World – and the nature of these links has changed with co-operation activities gaining in importance alongside the provision of aid. The introduction of programmes with the United States, Canada and Latin American countries (Alfa), has extended the scope of education co-operation between the EU and third countries.

The Youth programme is even open to other regions, such as the CIS countries, south-eastern Europe and Latin America. In the research area, through the sixth Framework Programme, the EU's co-operation activity has been opened up worldwide. The European Council at Barcelona has placed a new emphasis on establishing European education and training systems as a reference for the rest of the world. The opening of the education, training and youth programmes also help reinforce intercultural dialogue. The new generation of programmes should promote a more profound cultural interchange and understanding between developed and developing countries.

Topics for consultation

- B.1 What types of action in education, training and youth are most relevant for co-operation with "third countries" (i.e. those beyond the 31 EU, EEA and candidate countries)?
- B.2 Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci essentially reflect the needs of Europe's own citizens; but Tempus (and other Community activities) use education to build relations between the EU and third countries, even as a tool for development aid. Do we currently have the balance right between these two types of action? Should the EU promote more links between its own education and training institutions and the rest of the world, or should it concentrate on intra-European links?
- B.3 Should we retain separate programmes broadly targeting (1) EU, EEA and candidate countries, and (2) the rest of the world? Or should third countries be included in the main education, training and youth programmes? If so, how?

¹⁴ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia. Negotiations are under way to extend the programmes to Turkey.

¹⁵ To the former Soviet Union, to the western Balkans and most recently to the southern Mediterranean

6. *How to respond to the consultation*

- 6.1 The consultation period runs from 4 November 2002 to 28 February 2003.
- 6.2 You are invited to send your replies to us via an online response form, which will be on the DG EAC web-site from the end of November 2002 at:
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/newprogconsult>
All data relating to individuals is anonymous. Respondent organisations are asked to identify themselves. Acknowledgements will be sent by email if a valid email address is supplied.
- 6.3 Responses may also be sent to us in writing. They should be addressed to:
- "New programmes consultation"
European Commission – DG EAC
rue de la Loi 200 (B-7 7/64)
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium
- 6.4 We strongly encourage respondents to use the online response form. It will help us make a more detailed and useful analysis of your replies.