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Annex to the

Communication from the Commission to the Council

**”Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe –
implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship”**

Impact Assessment

{COM(2005)206 final}

1. INTRODUCTION

A new context

The adoption of the European Pact for Youth by the Spring 2005 European Council¹ is a recognition that the improved integration of young people in society and working life is essential for ensuring a return to consistent and sustainable growth. The adoption of the Pact has underlined and drawn attention to the importance of youth issues and opened up a new policy approach.

The timing of the Pact coincides with the completion of the first cycle of implementing the Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field, as proposed in the White Paper on a new impetus for European youth² and concretised in the Council Resolution of 27th June 2002³. In its Communication of October 2004⁴, the Commission presented an evaluation of the main achievements of this first cycle, drew attention to the challenges ahead, and proposed to open a discussion on different aspects of the Framework for Cooperation with a view to launching the next step in the White Paper process.

This new context creates fresh challenges that have to be addressed. The way the EU will implement the European Pact for youth needs to be clarified. Taking a holistic overview of the youth field should minimise the risk of a lack of coherence and avoid any imbalance between the different political instruments involved. These potential risks have already been highlighted by youth organisations.

The new situation calls for a reappraisal of the entirety of activities at European level in the youth policy field, and for this reason it is both timely and appropriate for the Commission to present a Communication that provides a comprehensive overview of the entire field of youth policy.

2. WHAT PROBLEM IS THE COMMUNICATION DESIGNED TO TACKLE?

In making their proposal to the November 2004 European Council for a European Pact for Youth within the Lisbon Strategy, the heads of state and government of France, Germany, Spain and Sweden based their proposal on an analysis that identified four principal issues affecting young people:

- their vulnerability in modern society;
- the need to develop solidarity, in an aging society, across the generations;
- the need to equip young people through education and training to meet the challenges they face;

¹ Annex 1 of Presidency conclusions of the European Council 22-23 March 2005, (7619/05)

² COM(2001) 681 final of 21/11/2001

³ Council Resolution 2002/C 168/02 of 27 June 2002 regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field (OJ C168, 13.7.2002, p. 2).

⁴ COM(2004) 694, 22.10.2004

- the need for better coherence across all policy areas that concern young people.

The Commission White Paper on youth already presented a similar diagnosis.

Risk from poor follow-up to the European Pact for youth

The Pact needs by its nature a transversal approach covering different policy areas. It is thus essential to put into perspective these different approaches in order to make easier for stakeholders and policy makers to act in an informed way. The European spring Council Conclusion of 2005 invite Member States and the European Union to take the action lines into consideration. In that context, the Communication by highlighting the importance of youth in the Lisbon strategy will encourage decision makers to take informed steps when acting on integrated guidelines.

Risk of incoherence

At EU level, youth issues are tackled through different perspectives or policies. In particular, education, employment and health are policies of special importance to young people. The Framework for European Cooperation in the youth field is a political instrument that focuses, in its Open Method of Coordination (OMC) strand, on active citizenship. The other strand of the Framework focuses on the youth dimension in other policies. The establishment of the European Youth Pact will have a significant impact on its evolution, given that the Pact and the policy areas which it addresses are fully integrated in the new Lisbon governance cycle.

It is also worth recalling that the competences of the EU concerning youth are within article 149 of the Treaty, which only provides for the promotion of mobility of young people.

A range of diverse instruments support youth policy in their specific areas.

- the proposed "Youth in Action" programme within the youth policy field⁵;
- the proposed Integrated Action Programme in Lifelong Learning within the educational policy field⁶;
- the proposed Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme⁷;
- the Marie Curie Programme;
- ESF interventions;
- the forthcoming Community Lisbon Action Plan, which will outline action to be taken at European level

Overall, this situation could entail a risk of incoherence between the different political instruments involved. It is also necessary to ensure a balanced approach toward youth issues: for example, the relevance of active citizenship should not be overshadowed by the establishment of the European Youth Pact.

⁵ COM(2004) 471, 14.7.2004

⁶ COM(2004) 474, 14.7.2004

⁷ COM(2005) 121, 6.4.2005

3. WHAT ARE THE COMMUNICATION'S MAIN OBJECTIVES?

The Communication has four major objectives:

- The first objective is to clarify how the European Pact for Youth will be implemented in practice and thus encourage involvement of relevant actors. This implementation should be in full coherence with the governance principles retained in the revised Lisbon strategy.

Concerning implementation the Communication recalls the mechanisms of the revised Lisbon strategy at national level, as they relate to the Pact, and how it should be taken into account at EU. But a set of actions should also be initiated at European level as proposed in the Communication.

- The second objective is to understand the influence the Pact will have on the Open Method of Coordination in the youth field in particular to examine whether the priorities of the OMC need to be up-dated or modified to ensure coherence and synergies between the different political instruments involved in the youth field and ensuring a balanced approach towards youth issues.

Regarding citizenship, the development of the priorities of the OMC in the youth field is examined.

- The third objective concerns the impact of the Pact on the implementation of other political priorities of the Framework for European Cooperation in the youth field that are outside the Lisbon strategy.

The "youth dimension in other policies" will have also to be reviewed in the light of the European Youth Pact.

- The fourth objective aims to examine the question of how to continue to involve young people, in the context both of the Pact and of the fields covered by the OMC.

It will prepare for the opening up of discussions on different aspects of the Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field. The Communication will be a reference-point for the consultation and involvement of young people and youth organisations at local, regional and national levels. It will also be the basis at European level for a large consultation of young people that will take place in a conference, the Youth "États Généraux" taking place in December 2005.

4. WHAT ARE THE MAIN POLICY OPTIONS?

Option 1 "no action option"

The no action option has not been considered as both the European Pact for youth and the Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field are already existing instruments. Doing nothing, in the face of Conclusions of the European Council that have already been taken up by the principal stakeholders, would mean not meeting the expectations of either the political leaders or of the stakeholders.

Option 2 “no Communication option”

Although the OMC and the Pact are existing instruments, it was not considered appropriate not to present a Communication, as this situation could generate incoherence. In addition, for the sake of transparency and awareness of these instruments by stakeholders it was not possible to contemplate this option.

Option 3 “integrating the Youth OMC into the Pact”

It would have been interesting to have a Pact covering all the different policies that concern young people. However, “citizenship” is not a priority covered by the Lisbon strategy and the streamlining Lisbon strategy insisted on not creating new structures for the management of the Lisbon strategy. So that option could not be contemplated.

Option 4

The timing of the Pact coincides with the completion of the first cycle of implementing the Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field, established by the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002. It is thus appropriate, before a second cycle is launched, for the Commission to present a comprehensive overview of existing activities in the youth field. This Communication will be followed up by a large consultation of stakeholder during the Youth "États Généraux".

The Communication focuses on the articulation of existing political instruments, namely the European Pact for Youth and the OMC.

For this reason, at this stage no other options are considered appropriate, and furthermore, the Commission will not propose the establishment of any new instrument in the context of this Communication.

5. WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS EXPECTED FROM THE COMMUNICATION?

The Communication puts into perspective the different activities that contribute to the youth field. The Communication is expected to have an important impact on the development of the Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field, which should guide political action in this area in the coming years. The Communication will refocus the development of the youth field taking into consideration the adoption of the Youth Pact.

The Communication is also expected to clarify responsibilities and mechanisms for the implementation of the European Pact for youth at national and European level.

Another important impact will be related to structuring the involvement of young people in the development of the European Youth Pact for Youth and the OMC in the youth field.

No negative effects related to these activities are envisaged.

6. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Concerning the European Youth Pact

During the European Council of 4-5 November 2004, the heads of state and government of France, Germany, Spain and Sweden put forward a proposal to develop a European Youth Pact in the context of the Mid-Term Review of the Lisbon Strategy.

This initiative presented in a very broad way what a European Youth Pact could be. On the basis of this, the Commission decided to consult young people and Directors General in charge of youth issues during a conference in Rotterdam on 29 November 2004.

Young people have supported the proposal from the beginning at the European Youth event held in November in Rotterdam. The European Youth Forum has also supported this initiative, calling for the implementation of concrete goals, targets and effective measures addressing the challenges young people face in the fields of education, training, employment, social inclusion, and mobility, but also housing and accommodation, but also “active citizenship” and “participation” and the autonomy of young people.

In addition, the Dutch presidency set up a high-level, ad hoc working group on the Pact, and prepared a discussion paper to help the Council in its "youth, education and culture" configuration to give its contribution to the Pact.

Finally, the Youth Council, in its conclusions of 21 February 2005, called on the European Council to include, in the framework of the Mid-Term Review of the Lisbon Strategy, the initiative of a European Pact for Youth, encompassing particularly the fields of employment, social cohesion, education, training, mobility and the reconciliation of family and professional life.

Given that these consultations were carried out in accompaniment with the policy reflections, it was possible for them to be taken into account while developing the policy approach. Moreover, the Communication will itself be the main document on which to base a thorough consultation of the stakeholders in the coming months.

Concerning the Open Method of Coordination.

The active citizenship of young people is both an objective and a methodology of the OMC. The different stakeholders, and young people in particular, have been closely involved, as was foreseen in the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002. In addition, every Presidency organises youth events that allow the Commission to have a running consultation process with young people, their organisations and policy-makers.

Finally, it is important to note that the Communication will be the subject of a substantial consultation, in particular during the Youth "États Généraux" in December 2005, and that regular dialogue with young people and their organizations is promoted within the Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Pact will be implemented and evaluated in the context of the Lisbon strategy.

The Commission adopted in October 2004 a Communication⁸ concerning the evaluation of activities conducted in the *Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field*, as foreseen in the Council Resolution of May 2002. Concerning the priorities of the OMC, the Member States will submit reports on implementation of common objectives and on the basis of these reports the Commission may propose to adapt priorities.

8. DRAFT PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION

Adoption of the European Youth Pact by the Spring 2005 Council coincides with the completion of the first cycle of implementing the Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field.

These factors call for a reappraisal of the entirety of activities at European level in the youth field. The Communication presents a comprehensive overview of the entire field of youth policy, taking into account the impact of the Pact, and, as such, will be a reference document for the further development of the youth field at EU level.

⁸ COM(2004) 694, 22.10.2004