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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

from : the General Secretariat of the Council

to : the Council

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Subject : Draft Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on Social Integration with regard to Young People

Delegation will find enclosed a text of the above Draft resolution as they result from the Permanent Representatives Committee on 14 May 2004. At the end of the meeting, the Chairman found that, apart from a DK Parliamentary scrutiny reservation, there was a unanimous agreement on the text.

Should this agreement be confirmed, the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council could adopt the enclosed resolution.

Draft Resolution
of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments
of the Member States, meeting within the Council,
on Social Integration with regard to Young People

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES, MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

Recalling that:

1. The European Commission White Paper entitled “A new impetus for European Youth” presented on 21 November 2001 proposes a new framework for European Cooperation on Youth Affairs.
2. At the Council (Education and Youth Affairs) meeting held on 14 February 2002, the Council recognised the White Paper as the starting point for the establishment of a framework for European cooperation on youth affairs.
3. The Council (Education and Youth Affairs) and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, in their Resolution of 27 June 2002 establishing a new framework for cooperation in the youth field, recognised that in this new framework, the Commission’s White Paper on Youth identified a number of horizontal issues in the context of taking greater account of youth in other policies. These areas are
 - Education, Lifelong Learning
 - Mobility
 - Employment
 - Social Integration
 - Combating racism and xenophobia
 - Autonomy

4. The Lisbon European Council of March 2000 set in place "an open method of coordination", to be used, amongst other areas, as a basis for policies for combating poverty and social exclusion with the aim of making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010.
5. The report of the Employment Task Force¹, chaired by Mr. Wim Kok, in setting out the basic challenges in attaining the Lisbon objectives, stresses the importance of more and better investments in human resources, in particular reducing the rate of early school leaving and promoting the access of young people to university studies.
6. The Council Conclusions of 25 November 2003 on the development of human capital for social cohesion and competitiveness in the knowledge society also stressed the importance of investments in human capital, and recalled the need to combine social cohesion and competitiveness.
7. The Council Resolution of 25 November 2003 on making school an open learning environment to prevent and combat early school leaving and disaffection among young people and to encourage their social inclusion recognised that it is advisable to strengthen cooperation and increase complementarity between the various Community instruments including the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth Programmes, the European Social Fund and the guidelines on social inclusion, in order to render more efficient the integration of measures.
8. The Nice European Council of December 2000 adopted a European strategy against social exclusion and all forms of discrimination. This strategy had four (4) objectives to combat poverty and social exclusion ie: to facilitate participation in employment and access by all to resources, rights, goods and services, to prevent the risk of exclusion, to help the most vulnerable and to mobilise all relevant interests.
9. Following on this, a Resolution on the social inclusion of young people was adopted by the Education and Youth Council on 14 December 2000.

¹ "Employment in Europe". Report of the employment Task force, Wim Kok, November 2003.

10. Furthermore, a resolution on promoting young people's initiative, enterprise and creativity: from exclusion to empowerment, was adopted by the Education and Youth Council on 28 May 2001.
11. The Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning took into consideration the youth dimension and referred specifically to the horizontal issues contained in the EU Commission White Paper on Youth.
12. The Youth Community action programme established by the decision of 13 April 2000, has as one of its objectives, the purpose of encouraging young people to take an active role in society.
13. The European Council of 25 and 26 March 2004 insisted on the need for increased investment in human capital with a view to growth and productivity as well as to develop integration and social inclusion.

INVITE the Member States, in pursuance of the social integration horizontal issues contained in the White Paper on Youth to develop strategies and proposals to ensure that meaningful social inclusion measures are developed in the context of policies related to youth, bearing in mind the following issues: -

- (i) The social condition of young people relates directly to the success or otherwise of social inclusion policies or measures. Public policy should, therefore, seek to support opportunities and possibilities and take steps to minimise risk to and vulnerability of young people.

- (ii) Poverty and social exclusion take complex and multi-dimensional forms which require the mobilisation of a wide range of competent policies and actors.
- (iii) In 2001, 19% of young people between the ages of 16 and 24 were classified as being at risk of poverty. This is 4% higher than the average for all age groups and the same as that for 0-15 year olds and those over 65¹.
- (iv) Where young people experience social exclusion, the possibility for securing commitment to constructive participation in civil society by these young people is weakened or significantly diminished.
- (v) The reasoning behind plans and decisions must be based on a gender perspective. In other words, it must be centred on the differences between the needs of girls and boys, young women and young men.

CALL FOR THE MEMBER STATES TO:

Take particular account of the measures appropriate in a social integration context to young people. In this regard it is desirable that there be more coherence, coordination and cooperation in the formulation of policies of a social nature, with particular regard to the youth sector. These measures may be adopted at any appropriate level (national, regional or local) in order to ensure activity is closely linked to young people.

¹ Commission staff working paper: Draft Joint Inclusion Report - Statistical Annex. SEC(2003) 1425 (doc. 16241/03 ADD 1).

Consider the following non exhaustive list of measures in the development of their Social Integration policies: -

- (i) Take into account the specific needs of the young people in the implementation of objectives concerning the fight against poverty and social exclusion.
- (ii) Take further steps to increase the participation rate of young people especially from disadvantaged and marginalised communities in the formal school system.
- (iii) Enhance support for young people, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, in making the transition from school to work.
- (iv) Support programmes and activities that facilitate access to employment and the improvement of employability of young people, especially through counselling and professional training actions that include the development of social skills and personalised guidance.
- (v) Provide opportunities whereby young people can re-enter education or training appropriate to their needs, aspirations and abilities, taking into consideration the needs of the labour market, and help young people to participate in activities that lead to their personal and social development.
- (vi) Acknowledge the important role played by non-formal and informal education/learning as a complement to formal education in combating social exclusion in relation to young people and that this should be appropriately recognised. particularly by validating knowledge and competencies acquired by young people in this context.
- (vii) Encourage youth work programmes and services to inform young people about "the democratic process", the need and desirability for young people to engage in civil society and voluntary work activities.

- (viii) Provide access for all young people to relevant information regarding areas of concern to them such as education, health, employment opportunities, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and encourage young people to use these facilities.
- (ix) Pursue efforts to combat discrimination against young people on the grounds of socio-economic status or based on sex, social or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.
- (x) Take steps for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to be properly taken into account in the area of housing policy where appropriate.
- (xi) Develop and support health educational activities, both in formal and non-formal education.
- (xii) Take account of the value of crime and violence prevention measures and crime rehabilitation programmes in a social inclusion context; these could be part of youth work programmes and services as appropriate.

CALL FOR THE MEMBERS STATES AND THE COMMISSION WITHIN THEIR
RESPECTIVE COMPETENCIES TO:

- (i) Ensure that Youth work programmes and services should be flexible to take account of any special needs of young people from disadvantaged areas.
- (ii) Seek to extend and promote for young people more active learning, which is better focused on the needs of the civil society in facilitating their engagement in voluntary activity and their involvement in cultural, sporting and recreational activities and validate their work., while taking into account the needs of the labour market.

- (iii) Give a high priority to young people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the further implementation of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on poverty and social exclusion, and in the development of initiatives under the Community action programme on social exclusion, and ensure that key youth actors including young people and their youth organisations are actively involved in consultations regarding the development of the OMC and in the development, implementation and monitoring of National Action Plans on social inclusion.
- (iv) Strengthen the links between young people and their families, schools, youth organisations and local communities with special regard to the particular capabilities and requirements of young people.
- (v) Recognise the important role to be played by youth organisations, professional, volunteer and other adults in assisting young people to expand their knowledge, ambitions and horizons of the world at large.
- (vi) Ensure a greater synergy and connection among different Community instruments for young people, such as Socrates, Leonardo, Youth programmes and, where appropriate, the European Union Structural Funds.

Finally, there should be better coordination between youth policy and other important sectors such as education, social affairs, employment, etc.