

7533/00 (Presse 101)

2254th Council meeting

**- GENERAL AFFAIRS -**

Luxembourg, 10 April 2000

President : **Mr Jaime GAMA**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese  
Republic

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***For further information call 02/285.87.04 or 02/285.68.08***

## **PARTICIPANTS**

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

### **Belgium :**

Mr Eddy BOUTMANS

State Secretary for Development Cooperation, attached to the  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Denmark :**

Mr Niels HELVEG PETERSEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Germany :**

Mr Joschka FISCHER

Mr Christoph ZÖPEL

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister of State, Foreign Affairs

### **Greece :**

Mr George PAPANDEOU

Mr Christos ROKOFYLLOS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Spain :**

Mr Abel MATUTES

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **France :**

Mr Hubert VEDRINE

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Ireland :**

Mr Brian COWEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Italy :**

Mr Umberto RANIERI

Mr Rino SERRI

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Presidency Special

Representative to the peace process of the Ethiopia/Eritrea border  
conflict

### **Luxembourg :**

Ms Lydie POLFER

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Netherlands :**

Mr Jozias VAN AARTSEN

Mr Dick BENSCHOP

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary for European Affairs

### **Austria :**

Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Portugal :**

Mr Jaime GAMA

Mr Francisco SEIXAS da COSTA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary for European Affairs

### **Finland :**

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA

Mr Kimmo SASI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister of Foreign Trade and European Affairs

### **Sweden :**

Ms Anna LINDH

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **United-Kingdom :**

Mr Robin COOK

Mr Keith VAZ

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

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**Commission :**

Mr Romano PRODI	President
Mr Michel BARNIER	Member
Mr Pascal LAMY	Member
Mr Christopher PATTEN	Member
Mr Günter VERHEUGEN	Member

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**General Secretariat of the Council :**

Mr Javier SOLANA	Secretary General / High Representative for CFSP
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## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE HELSINKI EUROPEAN COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**

### **- COUNCIL FORMATIONS**

Following the Helsinki European Council, which agreed - in recommendation No 9 of Annex III to the conclusions - that the number of Council formations should be reduced in order to improve the consistency and coherence of the Council's work, the Council approved the conclusions set out below.

The approach chosen is designed to meet the objective laid down by the Helsinki European Council. It merges certain Council formations and does not preclude that, where practicable, certain formations be convened in "back-to-back" format. The suggested mergers should be undertaken as soon as practicable and should be fully implemented by the beginning of 2001.

### **List of council formations - Conclusions :**

A. The following Council formations may be convened:

General Affairs	Justice, Home Affairs and Civil Protection
Agriculture	Internal Market, Consumer Affairs and Tourism
Economic and Financial Affairs	Research
Environment	Budget
Transport and Telecommunications	Culture
Employment and Social Policy <sup>1</sup>	Development
Fisheries	Education and Youth Affairs
Industry and Energy	Health

B. The Presidency will organise Council agendas by grouping together related agenda items, in order to facilitate attendance by the relevant national representatives, particularly where a given Council formation has to deal with clearly distinguishable sets of topics.

C. It is up to each Member State to determine the way in which it is represented at the level of the Council, in accordance with Article 203 of the EC Treaty.

D. The Council will examine by July 2001 the list of Council formations, *inter alia* in the light of experience gained in organising "back-to-back" sessions, and the relevant conclusions of the European Council.

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<sup>1</sup> The change of name of this formation reflects the wording of recent Treaty changes.

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE SPECIAL EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING IN LISBON**

The Council, recalling the success of the Special European Council in Lisbon on employment, economic reform and social cohesion, took note of the information provided by its President and Commission President PRODI on the various aspects of the follow-up.

The Presidency announced that it will shortly circulate a document indicating its intentions concerning the organisation of the Council's work on these matters within its different formations.

On his side, President PRODI gave detailed indications on how the Commission will proceed with fulfilling the different mandates it received in Lisbon covering in particular the following items: Action Plan for e-Europe; European Area of Research and Innovation; Multiannual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship 2001-2005; Broad Economic Policy guidelines: sound macro-economic policy, fiscal consolidation, quality and sustainability of public finance; Internal Market: pension funds, postal services, public procurements, financial services; education and training: e-learning; "Towards a new European social agenda" and future evolution of social protection; annual synthesis report for the (first) regular Spring European Council.

The Council, when preparing the Feira European Council at its session of 13/14 June, will have an opportunity to assess the progress of work with regard to these matters in the different Council formations.

**ZIMBABWE - Conclusions**

The Council, recalling the fundamental importance of respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, appealed to the Government of Zimbabwe to enforce law and order and to respect international law and standards. In this context it condemned the legislation passed in the Zimbabwe Parliament allowing confiscation of farm land without compensation and called on the Government of Zimbabwe to comply with the Court order to end illegal occupations.

Noting that the European Union is Zimbabwe's principal development partner, the Council reaffirmed the EU's commitment to support orderly and transparent agrarian reform in Zimbabwe, respecting the rights of all citizens.

The Council also recalled the commitment by the Government of Zimbabwe to hold elections in May 2000 and urged the Government to create the conditions for the holding of free and fair elections. Under such conditions, the Council agreed that the EU would be willing to support and monitor the elections.

The Council invited Heads of Mission in Harare to monitor the political situation closely and to submit an early report in the light of which it would decide on future steps.



**BURMA/MYANMAR - Conclusions**

The Council expressed its concern at the situation in Burma/Myanmar, in particular the continuing and intensified repression of civil and political rights, as well as the harsh conditions hindering the people's enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. It once again urged the Burmese authorities to respect human rights, restore democracy and engage in a dialogue with the opposition that could lead to national reconciliation in a united and democratic State. It therefore agreed:

- to extend the common position on Burma/Myanmar for a further six months, and at the same time, to
  - a) ban the export of equipment that might be used for internal repression or terrorism;
  - b) strengthen the visa regime in place by naming those in the regime and its supporters to whom it applied; by agreement of all Member States, the ban on the issue of an entry visa for the Foreign Minister may be waived where it is in the interests of the EU; and
  - c) impose a freeze on the funds held abroad by those same persons.
- to make a further effort to explain and to promote the aims of the EU's policy towards Burma/Myanmar through the establishment of a meaningful political dialogue. To that end, the EU will send a second Troika mission to Rangoon/Yangon; and
- to invite the Commission to examine the possibilities for increased humanitarian aid to Burma/Myanmar

**EU-ASEAN**

The Council reaffirmed the importance of the EU-ASEAN relationship and agreed to propose to ASEAN that a Ministerial meeting be held in Asia in the course of 2000, which will be prepared by a senior officials' meeting during the Portuguese Presidency.

**WESTERN BALKANS - Conclusions**

The Council heard presentations from the SG/HR and the Commission on the way ahead in the Western Balkans in accordance with the mandate given to them at the Lisbon European Council. It welcomed their intention to visit the region more frequently, also with the view to advance the comprehensive dialogue with Serbian civil society and to bring forward further proposals, including on trade and speeding up assistance, notably to Montenegro. The Council also heard a presentation by the Special Coordinator and EU Special Representative for the Stability Pact on the successful outcome of the regional funding conference and took note of the commitments of all participants, beneficiary countries as well as donors.

The Council took note of the holding of municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 8 April which have shown some encouraging trends towards non-nationalist political forces. It urged the relevant authorities to implement the election results speedily as a contribution to the full implementation of the Dayton and Paris agreements and the New York Declaration, as well as the "Road Map" prepared within the framework of the Joint Consultative Task Force.

The Council welcomed the decision by the Serb National Council (SNV) to appoint representatives to the Interim Administrative Council and the Transitional Council of Kosovo, which the Council hopes will be the first step towards full participation. This will contribute to the democratisation process in Kosovo and to the full implementation of UNSCR 1244. The Council stressed the importance of proper preparation of local elections in Kosovo.

The Council further underlined the importance it continues to attach to strong coherent effort by the EU, the US and the Russian Federation on Western Balkans.

The Council invited the Commission to play an active role within the "Adriatic and Ionian Council" to be set up in Ancona on 19/20 May at the Adriatic Conference.

**RUSSIA/CHECHNYA - Conclusions**

The Council heard a report by FM Gama and SG/HR Solana on their meetings with President elect Putin and FM Ivanov in Moscow on 7 April. It was encouraged by the desire expressed by President Putin to develop a strategic partnership between Russia and the EU in the years ahead and by the atmosphere of the discussion on issues of concern.

The Council hoped that the election of Mr. Putin will give a new impetus to the partnership between the EU and the Russian Federation on the basis of common values and shared objectives. It also hoped that under his leadership the political and economic reform process in Russia will lead to early tangible results. It looked for the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to be pursued more vigorously by Russia in all its aspects. The Council underlined that an open and frank dialogue on issues of concern is an essential element of our long-term strategic partnership.

Recalling the conclusions of the European Council in Lisbon on 23/24 March and the General Affairs Council conclusions of 20 March, the Council again deplored the great suffering of the civilian population and the continuing reports of alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Chechnya. The recent decisions and recommendations by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the discussions by the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva reflect the serious concern of European public opinion with the conflict. The Council expressed its support for the Council of Europe's continuing cooperation with and assistance to Russia, so long as Russia abides by its commitments.

At the same time, the Council acknowledged efforts made by the Russian authorities, for having the presence of Council of Europe experts in Mr Kalamonov's office, and their agreement to publish the report of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture. The Council also noted the fact that the ICRC has been promised free access to the detention camps.

The Council supported the call by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Russian Federation to establish, according to recognised international standards, a national, broad-based and independent commission of inquiry into the serious allegations of human rights violations. Those found guilty of violations should be brought to justice.

The Council looked forward to the visit of the OSCE CiO to the region on 14-15 April to pave the way for the early resumption of the Assistance Group activity in Chechnya in order to fulfil its full mandate. It acknowledged the agreement reached on the visits to Chechnya by the Troika of EU Heads of Mission as well as by an ECHO assessment team.

The Council also heard a presentation by France of the proposal for a long term partnership with Russia and invited its competent bodies and the Commission to examine it.

The Council finalised the EU position for the third Cooperation Council between the EU and Russia. It looked forward to the EU-Russia Summit planned for 17 May in Moscow.

**ETHIOPIA/ERITREA - Conclusions**

The Council was briefed by the Presidency's Special Representative, Senator Rino Serri, on the situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea. It expressed its deep concern at the humanitarian situation that was exacerbated by the unnecessary conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It reaffirmed its strong support for the efforts of the OAU Presidency to bring a speedy end to the conflict and invited the competent bodies to consider the possibility of EU support for the implementation of the peace settlement. It also expressed its concern at the level of arms sales to the region, all the more so given the humanitarian situation.

The Council was briefed by the Commission on its food aid. It emphasized the need for a coordinated approach with the UN so as to ensure the efficient and speedy delivery of international aid. It called on Ethiopia and Eritrea to facilitate such deliveries and to ensure the security of food and humanitarian assistance.

**INSTITUTE OF EU-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS (IRELA)**

The Council, at the request of the German and Spanish delegations, discussed the financial difficulties experienced by IRELA ("Instituto de Relaciones Europeo-Latinoamericanas") in Madrid.

The Council noted the valuable work being performed by the Institute and, while confirming the importance of respecting Community budgetary procedures, invited the Commission to find an interim solution to IRELA's financial problems in order to avoid temporary closure of the Institute.

### **CHINA'S ACCESSION TO WTO - Conclusions**

The Council was debriefed by Commissioner Pascal LAMY on the latest round of bilateral negotiations on China's accession to the WTO. It expressed its full support for the Commissioner's stance and noted that the EU had already shown flexibility in its few remaining requests. The Council stressed that a similar attitude from China, taking account of the specific interests of the EU, would pave the way to an agreement.

### **RELATIONS WITH TURKEY**

The Council approved the Community position to be taken at the 39th session of the EU-Turkey Association Council in Luxembourg on 11 April 2000.

The EU position also covered the following draft Decisions to be taken by the Association Council concerning:

- the establishment of eight Association Committee subcommittees, this in the context of Turkey's candidature for accession to the EU and with the aim of monitoring progress towards the approximation of legislation and to accompany both the EU pre-accession strategy and the national Turkish action programme;
- the opening of negotiations aimed at the liberalisation of services and the mutual opening of procurement markets; these negotiations will start shortly.
- the repeal of Decision No 4/72 on the definition of the concept of "originating products" from Turkey, this Decision now being obsolete since Protocol 3 to Decision No 1/98 of the EC-Turkey Association Council of 25 February 1998 on the trade regime for agricultural products laid down the rules of origin to be applied henceforth to trade in agricultural products between Turkey and the Community.

**OFFICE SPACE FOR THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF  
THE COUNCIL - Conclusions**

The Council:

- notes that, owing to the recent creation of new units, there is not enough room in the Justus Lipsius building to house all the General Secretariat's departments;
- agrees that eventually all the Council's premises should be in the neighbourhood of the Justus Lipsius and mandates the Secretary-General to contact the competent Belgian authorities to discuss the terms for building/purchasing/leasing a further building in the immediate vicinity;
- approves the Secretary-General's proposal that those departments of the Secretariat whose work requires a high level of security, and in particular certain departments responsible for CFSP and ESDP matters be based provisionally in the avenue Kortenberg building; this solution makes for optimum security at the lowest cost, in the shortest possible time and without interfering with the Council's normal work;
- calls for the relevant budgetary decisions, as proposed by the Secretary-General of the Council, to be taken as soon as possible in order to avoid any delay in implementing the ESDP.

This decision does not affect the location of certain departments in the Frère Orban building.

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### **3rd MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE IGC 2000**

The 3rd Ministerial IGC - held in the margins of the Council - was preceded by the now customary meeting with the President of the European Parliament, Ms FONTAINE.

At this meeting the Chairman of the Representatives Group, State Secretary SEIXAS da COSTA, reported on the work carried out by his Group since the last Ministerial meeting of 20 March. He indicated that the Group has met twice and covered the following items:

- rounding-off of its preliminary discussions on the possible extension of qualified majority voting by examining specific questions arising in relation to Article 308 (ex 235) and the Justice and Home Affairs provisions;
- examination of the size and composition of the Commission and weighting of votes in the Council, as well as a first report by the "Friends of the Presidency" group on the reform of the Court of Justice and Court of First Instance.

The President of the European Parliament, Ms FONTAINE, gave an outline of the key elements of the Parliament's Opinion to the IGC which the European Parliament is expected to adopt later this week.

The Ministerial session of the IGC discussed in particular the questions raised by the possible extension of qualified majority voting on the basis of a Presidency paper focusing on the more complex provisions - i.e. taxation, social security and environment - where a shift to qualified majority for the entire provision is excluded, but where specific measures covered by these provisions could be identified as potential candidates for QMV. For each of the subjects mentioned, the Presidency indicated in detail the approach it intended to explore.

Ministers also took note of the provisional work programme for the second stage of the IGC, up to the Feira European Council on 19/20 June.



## **ITEMS APPROVED WITHOUT DEBATE**

(Decisions for which statements for the Council minutes have been made available to the public are indicated by asterisks; the statements in question may be obtained from the Press Office.)

### **EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

#### **Relations with Russia**

The Council approved the Position of the European Union for the third Session of the Council of Cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation which took place in Luxembourg in the evening of 10 April 2000 (see Press Release 7534/00 Presse 102).

The Council took note also of the information provided by the Presidency and the High Representative on the state of play of preparations for the EU-Russia Summit which is scheduled to take place in Moscow on 17 May 2000.

The Council adopted Directives to the Commission for the negotiation of a multilateral framework agreement to facilitate cooperation in the area of safety of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste management in the Russian Federation.

#### **Association with Hungary**

The Council agreed on behalf of the EU to the Decision regarding the transition to the second stage of the Association pursuant to Article 6 of the Europe Agreement to be adopted by the EU-Hungary Association Council by written procedure.

It is recalled that Article 6 of the EU-Hungary Europe Agreement provides for a transition period of a maximum duration of ten years, divided into two successive stages, each in principle lasting five years. The Agreement entered into force on 1 February 1994, which means that the first stage ended on 31 January 1999.

Article 6 also provides for the Association Council to decide the transition to the second stage in the light of the application of the Agreement and "Hungary's accomplishments in the process leading to a market economy system".

## **Common Foreign and Security Policy (budgetary implications)**

The Council approved a Document - Annual report - on the main aspects and basic choices of CFSP, including the financial implications for the general budget of the Communities, for presentation to the European Parliament.

The Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) of 6 May 1999 on budgetary discipline and improvement of the budgetary procedure, provides under point H, paragraph 40, that "once a year the Council Presidency will consult the European Parliament on a Council document setting out the main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP, including the financial implications for the general budget of the European Communities".

The document approved by the Council follows the same criteria as those used for the previous two reports, namely:

- its scope is limited to the description of CFSP activities, e.g. common positions, joint actions and implementing decisions, declarations and demarches, political dialogue;
- it is complementary to the chapter on external relations of the annual report on the progress of the European Union presented to the Parliament in application of Article 4 of the TEU;
- the broad priorities of the Union's external relations, as expressed for example in European Council conclusions, are included in the "Article 4" report.

## **European Economic Area**

### **- Social policy**

The Council approved on behalf of the EU a draft Decision of the EEA Joint Committee amending Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement on cooperation in specific fields outside the four freedoms (social policy).

The amendment aims to extend the cooperation in the field of social policy providing a framework for cooperation and setting out the procedures for full participation of the EEA/EFTA States in the programme of community action (Daphne programme: 2000-2003) on preventative measures to fight violence against children, young persons and women.

### **- Civil protection**

The Council approved on behalf of the EU a draft Decision of the EEA Joint Committee amending Protocol 31 to the Agreement on the European Economic Area on cooperation in specific fields outside the four freedoms (civil protection).

The amendment aims to extend the cooperation in the field of civil protection providing a framework for cooperation and setting out the procedures for full participation of the EEA/EFTA States in Community programmes and actions in this field as envisaged by the Council Decision of 9 December 1999.

## **TRADE QUESTIONS**

### **Custom union with Turkey**

The Council adopted a Regulation regarding the implementation of measures to intensify the EC-Turkey custom union.

The aim of the regulation is to assist Turkey in preparing for accession by establishing closer links with the European Union in all fields connected with the intensification of the custom union. These measures provide for financial support of cooperation projects and operations in several areas within the custom union with a financial reference amount of 15 MEURO for the implementation of this Regulation for the period 2000-2002.

### **Anti-dumping measures regarding China and Taiwan**

The Council adopted a Regulation extending the definitive anti-dumping duty imposed by Regulation (EC) No 584/96 on imports of certain tube and pipe fittings, of iron and steel, originating in the People's Republic of China to imports of the same fittings sent from Taiwan (whether declared as originating in Taiwan or not).

This Regulation follows an investigation by the Commission which demonstrated that, in the case of the original anti-dumping measures, imports of fittings originating in the PRC were being circumvented by imports of the same products originating in that country and transhipped through Taiwan.

A number of Taiwanese companies have been exempted from the extension of the anti-dumping duty and further requests for exemption can be addressed to the Commission for imports which do not circumvent anti-dumping duties imposed by the Regulation.

### **Association Council with Bulgaria**

The Council, on behalf of the Community, approved a draft Decision to be adopted by the EU-Bulgaria Association Council extending the double-checking system, introduced in 1998 by Decision No 3/97 of the Association Council and successively extended by Decision No 3/99, applied to certain steel products from Bulgaria for the period 1 January to 31 December 2000.

The Council also adopted the corresponding Community implementing Regulation for this measure.

## **TAXATION**

### **Excise duty for certain mineral oils in Germany**

The Council adopted a Decision authorising Germany to apply a reduced rate of excise duty to certain mineral oils when used for specific purposes in accordance with the procedure provided for in Article 8(4) of Directive 92/81/EEC.

This provision allows countries to be authorised to introduce exemptions or reductions in the excise duty charged on mineral oils for specific policy considerations. In the case of Germany the measure was authorised to allow the ongoing German environmental tax reforms differentiating levels of mineral oil duty on fuels according to their sulphur content. The reduction can be applied from 1 November 2001 until 31 December 2002, for fuels with a maximum sulphur content of 50 parts per million.

## **RESEARCH**

### **Agreement between EURATOM and USA**

The Council adopted a Decision authorising the Commission to conduct negotiations on the agreement for co-operation between the European Atomic Energy Community represented by the Commission and the Department of Energy of the United States in the field of fusion energy research and development.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **Limit values for benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air**

Following political agreement reached unanimously at the Environment Council on 13/14 December 1999, the Council formally adopted its common position on the proposal for a Directive providing for limit values for benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air. The aims of the proposed Directive are to provide a high level of protection for public health and to improve the quality of life for EU citizens, especially in big cities. The common position will now be forwarded to the European Parliament for its second reading in accordance with the co-decision procedure (Art. 251 EC Treaty).

The proposed Directive sets out for the first time EU wide air quality standards for benzene and carbon monoxide. The common position fixes a limit value of  $5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  for benzene, to be met by 1 January 2010, and for carbon monoxide a limit value of  $10\text{ mg}/\text{m}^3$  to be met by 1 January 2005. To reach these targets, emissions of benzene will have to be reduced by 70% and peak levels of CO must drop by up to a third.

It is recalled that carbon monoxide is one of the most common toxic air pollutants and affects human health by reducing the supply of oxygen available to the body. Benzene is a known genotoxic carcinogen, increasing the risk of leukaemia. The principal emission source for both pollutants is road traffic. For benzene other important sources are fuel distribution, petroleum refineries and the chemical industry, for carbon monoxide it is all combustion processes.

The proposed Directive forms part of an integrated package of measures designed to combat problems of air pollution following the adoption of the Framework Directive on air quality in 1996 (Directive 96/62/EC). A first "daughter" Directive, fixing limit values for sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead, was adopted on 22 April 1999. The Commission plans to present further proposals for tackling other pollutants, including carcinogens, at a later stage.

### **CITES Convention - Preparation of the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties**

The Council adopted Conclusions for the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) which is taking place in Nairobi from 10 to 20 April. These conclusions aim at facilitating the preparation of the Conference with regard to key issues on the agenda, in particular as far as whales, African elephants, Cuban turtles and sharks are concerned.

## **YOUTH**

### **Youth action programme \***

After having reached agreement with the European Parliament in the meeting of the conciliation committee on 29 February 2000, the Council formally adopted the Decision establishing the "Youth" Community action programme, the Dutch delegation voting against.

The new Youth programme brings together within a single instrument a number of existing actions, in particular the "Youth for Europe" programme and the "European Voluntary Service". The programme aims at fostering co-operation in the area of youth policy, through informal education and training measures and exchanges of young people within the Community as well as with third countries. It is part of wider efforts undertaken by the Community in the fields of education and training, and thus supplements the SOCRATES and LEONARDO programmes.

The objectives of the programme are to:

- enable young people to acquire the knowledge, abilities and skills which may help them in their future development;
- encourage young people's initiative, enterprise and creativity;
- enable young people to take an active part in society and to become responsible citizens;
- encourage young people to make an active contribution to the building of Europe, and to strengthen their sense of solidarity;
- help to promote respect for human rights and to combat racism and xenophobia, and
- strengthen co-operation in the field of youth.

The "YOUTH FOR EUROPE" action promotes exchanges of young people aged 15-25. It supports activities, preferably multilateral ones, based on transnational partnerships between groups of young people. The purpose is to enable them to discover different social and cultural environments. The programme is biased in particular towards young people who do not have easy access to other European programmes such as SOCRATES or LEONARDO. In addition, the programme supports activities designed to prepare young people for mobility in terms of linguistic knowledge and a greater awareness of other cultures.

The "EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE" is aimed at young people, aged in principal between 18-25, who undertake to carry out a non-profit-making and unpaid activity for the benefit of the community for a limited period of time (maximum 12 months), as an informal educational experience. In this way, the programme aims to enable young people to acquire skills and abilities, both social and cultural, to contribute to meeting society's needs in a wide range of spheres (social, socio-cultural, environmental, cultural, etc.) and to come into contact with other cultures and languages.

Apart from these two actions, the programme also supports "YOUTH INITIATIVES", in which young people participate in innovative and creative schemes and in initiatives focusing on their social commitment at local, regional, national or European level; "JOINT ACTIONS" between this programme and other Community programmes in the field of education and vocational training; and "SUPPORT MEASURES", which are designed at the training of, and co-operation between, persons involved in youth work, information campaigns for young people at European level and studies on youth.

The programme is also open to the participation of EFTA countries belonging to the European Economic Area, the associated countries from Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus, Turkey and Malta, under the conditions agreed or to be agreed with those countries.

## **TRANSPARENCY**

### **Public access to Council documents**

The Council approved the replies to

- the second confirmatory application made by Mr Steve PEERS in 2000, the Danish, the Finnish and the Swedish delegations voting against;
- the third confirmatory application for access to documents made by Mr Steve PEERS in 2000, the Danish delegation voting against;
- the confirmatory application made by Mrs Anne BERGMAN-TAHON, the Danish and the Finnish delegations voting against; and
- the second confirmatory application made by Mr Roland LOUSKI in 2000, the Danish and the Finnish delegations voting against.