

Opportunities of YOUTH program of EC



Youth



Education and Culture

The YOUTH programme is the EU's mobility and non-formal education programme targeting young people aged between **15 and 25 years**.

The Programme is open to youth in 31 European countries. The YOUTH programme offers possibilities to young people in the form of both [group exchanges](#) and [individual voluntary work](#), as well as [support activities](#). The YOUTH programme started in spring 2000 but incorporates, and is based on, the experiences faced by the former Youth for Europe and European Voluntary Service programmes. There are [National Agencies](#) for the YOUTH programme established in all 31 Programme Countries. The Agencies assist with the promotion and implementation of the Programme at national level. Furthermore, the [Euro-Med Youth programme](#), involving 35 Euro-Mediterranean partner countries, is one of the YOUTH programme's main activities. [National Coordinators](#) based in the 10 Mediterranean partner countries facilitate the implementation of this Programme. The YOUTH programme also supports international co-operation activities with other Partner Countries in [South East Europe](#) (SEE), the Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (former CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States) and Latin America (LA).

The Commission has created eight Resource Centres within the YOUTH National Agencies. These Resource centres are called SALTO-YOUTH, and their role is to provide different kinds of resource and support to improve the quality of YOUTH projects in priority areas. The SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres provide training courses, training tools, information on good practices, networks and partnerships development, partner finding etc. They work in close cooperation with the National Agencies and the National Coordinators to reach the users of the YOUTH programme. For further information, please consult: www.salto-youth.net.

Support to bodies active at European level in the field of youth

The Decision n° 790/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establishes a Community action programme to promote bodies active at European level in the field of youth.

The programme supports permanent activities of bodies pursuing an aim of general European interest in the field of youth or an objective forming part of the European Union's policy in this area. In particular, these activities must contribute, or be capable of contributing, to the active participation of young citizens in public life and in society and to the development and implementation of Community cooperation actions in the field of youth in the broad sense.

In 2006, priority will be given to politically visible initiatives concerning the participation of young people in the process of European construction .

Grants may be awarded, under the heading 15.07.01.02 (ex A-3029) of the general budget of the European Communities, to support operational and administrative costs of the abovementioned bodies.

What are the objectives and priorities of the YOUTH programme?

The Programme strives to achieve and maintain a balance between personal development and collective activity across all sectors of society while pursuing the following objectives:

- *Facilitating the integration of young people into society at large and encouraging their spirit of initiative.*
- *Helping young people acquire knowledge, skills and competencies, and recognising the value of such experience.*
- *Allowing young people to give free expression to their sense of solidarity in Europe and the wider world, as well as supporting the fight against racism and xenophobia.*
- *Promoting a better understanding of the diversity of our common European culture and shared heritage as well as of our common basic values.*
- *Helping to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promoting equality at all levels of society.*
- *Introducing a European element into projects which will have a positive impact on youth work at local level.*

A key priority for the European Commission is to give young people with less opportunities (from a less-privileged cultural, geographical or socio-economic background, or with disabilities) access to the mobility and non-formal education activities developed within the YOUTH programme. In close cooperation with the National Agencies for the YOUTH programme, the European Commission has established a strategy for the inclusion of young people with less opportunities into YOUTH. Please contact your [National Agency](#) or the European Commission for further detailed information on the [inclusion strategy](#).

Who can participate in the YOUTH programme?

The YOUTH programme primarily addresses young people aged between 15 and 25 who are legally resident in one of the [Member States of the European Union or other Programme countries](#).

The User's Guide aims to inform young people and other actors in the field of youth and non-formal education about the opportunities of the YOUTH programme and to help them gain access to its challenges.

The following groups can participate in the Programme:

- *groups of young people who want to organise a youth exchange or launch an initiative in their local community*
- *young people who would like to get involved in European Voluntary Service*
- *ex-volunteers who are looking to build upon their experience*
- *youth organisations*
- *youth leaders*
- *youth workers*
- *project managers or organisers in the field of youth and non-formal education*
- *other non-profit-making organisations, associations or structures.*

How is the YOUTH programme structured?

The overall structure of the YOUTH programme promotes crossovers between, and integration of, different Actions. This integrated approach facilitates a greater synergy between Actions so that best practices developed in one Action may be transferred to others.

These five main Actions are:

Action 1 - Youth for Europe

Youth exchanges offer an opportunity for groups of young people (aged 15-25) from different countries to meet. They have a pedagogical value and a non-formal learning aim, in that the groups explore common themes and learn about each other's cultures.

Action 2 - European Voluntary Service (EVS)

Under this Action, young people aged between 18 and 25 are able to spend up to 12 months abroad as European volunteers helping in local projects in a wide range of fields: social, ecological and environmental, arts and culture, new technologies, leisure and sports, etc.

Action 3 - Youth Initiatives

Through this Action, young people aged between 15/18 and 25 can obtain support to carry out a project at local level. The intention is to give them a chance to develop as well as express their creativity and spirit of initiative. It also aims at providing former EVS volunteers with a concrete opportunity to build upon the expertise and skills acquired during their voluntary service.

Action 4 - Joint Actions

This Action brings together the SOCRATES (education), LEONARDO DA VINCI (vocational training) and YOUTH (non-formal education) programmes. It will provide support for initiatives that build on the complementary nature of these three programmes and others, such as Culture 2000.

Action 5 - Support Measures

These measures underpin and complement the other YOUTH programme Actions, so as to consolidate and enhance their benefits, to continue and develop innovative actions at Community level, and to boost the quality of youth projects, for instance through exchanges of good practices or training of project organizers.