



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**Information from the German delegation
for the Council (Education, Youth and Culture)**

Outcome of the Conference

"European Youth in Action for Diversity and Tolerance"

(Berlin, 6-9 November 2005)

1. The ever closer contact brought about by the globalisation process, economic problems and the loss of traditional social ties have led to insecurities and tensions, including in the relationships between the various community and ethnic groups in many EU Member States. Prejudices and inadequate knowledge reinforces this uncertainty among women and men alike. This, in turn, fuels radical positions and leads to the growth of intolerance, xenophobia, right-wing extremism and anti-semitism.

The European integration progress must be perceived as benefiting and enriching the whole of Europe, i.e. everyone living here. Our societies are being enhanced and vitalised by the ongoing exchange between people from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. It is important to support this understanding on a broad front by encouraging open-mindedness, respect, tolerance and a readiness to commit to democracy.

2. Consequently, the fact that young people are committing themselves to the ideals of the European integration process and are drawing up an action plan for an open, tolerant and diverse Europe, as at the conference "European Youth in Action for Diversity and Tolerance", provides a signal that cannot be esteemed highly enough.
Approximately 180 young people and experts from 41 European countries took part in the Conference "Youth in Action for Diversity and Tolerance" organised by the Federal Government of Germany and the European Commission, which was held in Berlin from 6 to 9 November 2005. The conference referred to the first international conference "Youth for Tolerance and Democracy", also held in Berlin in 2001. For the first time, not only did young people want to put demands to political decision-makers, but they also wished to put forward their own contributions for improving the situation in the form of a binding action plan.
3. Following intensive and rather controversial discussions, at the close of the conference, the young participants presented a declaration - based on current developments in Europe - putting forward political recommendations along with proposals for their implementation at European, national and local level. The participants feel a sense of responsibility to play an active role in their implementation. Other key issues included improving opportunities for young people to take part in society, the development of a European action plan to combat all forms of extremism, ongoing support for antiracism projects, a common European immigration strategy as well as a proposal on how Europe's cultural diversity can be defined more clearly in formal education systems, which should then be closely interlinked with informal education. The debate initiated should now be continued by Europe-wide conferences every two years. Germany accepts this challenge, and has stated its willingness to provide a platform for the continuation of the dialogue during the German Presidency in early 2007.

4. The outcome of the conference may be consulted on the conference website www.youth-against-racism.net or www.bmfsfj.de. The conference website also offers scope for further discussion as well as ongoing exchanges among conference participants on the implementation of the the conference's results.

