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PRESS RELEASE

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MAKING YOUTH MOBILITY THE RULE RATHER THAN AN EXCEPTION: TOWARDS A NEW EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY

The European Ministers of Education met in Brussels on 21 November 2008 with the attempt to give a new political impetus to youth mobility across Europe, too often considered being an exception “in favor of those young people better informed or well-heeled”, as the French Research and Higher Education Minister, Valérie Pécresse, recalled.

In order to make mobility programmes more accessible to young people, the European ministers reached a common set of measures aiming to integrate mobility within the education process in Europe: develop learning periods, study and volunteering residencies abroad, better inform on the existing programmes, simplify the administrative procedures and diversify the financing sources.

Youth mobility has also been one of the central themes of the first “European Civic Days” organized by the European Civic Forum in La Rochelle last September, within the framework of the French Presidency of the European Union, of the “Europe for Citizens” programme and of the public debates programme “Paroles d’Européens”.

These debates brought together more than 1,000 representatives from 500 associations from all across the European Union, from the Balkans, from Turkey, from Russia, from Ukraine, from Moldavia, and outlined the main obstacles to mobility. The discussions resulted in specific proposals aiming to better consider the social dimension within the European youth policy, mainly by developing long term financial tools, designing programmes for both formal and non formal education, simplifying the administrative procedures according to the budget allocated and encouraging the NGO twinning, following the example of town twinning.

The European Civic Forum is particularly satisfied that these proposals join the Conclusions of the « Education, Youth, Culture » European Council. We shall promote these issues within an awareness campaign across European countries, and mainly over the course of the coming Czech and Swedish Presidency of the European Union.

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