

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (90) 7

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

CONCERNING INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN EUROPE

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 February 1990
at the 434th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members;

Having regard to the relevant conclusions of the Conferences of European Ministers responsible for Youth (held in Strasbourg on 17-19 December 1985 and in Oslo on 11-12 April 1988);

Considering that young people have a right to full, comprehensible and reliable information, without reservations, and to counselling on all problems concerning them in all sectors, without exception, so that they may have complete freedom of choice, without any discrimination or ideological or other influence;

Considering that such comprehensive information and counselling from many points of view should help to promote young people's autonomy;

Considering that information and counselling are an important factor in increasing the mobility of young people, both individually and in groups, and that such mobility is essential to foster understanding and peace between peoples and to develop the feeling of being part of Europe,

I. Recommends that the governments of member states:

1. promote co-ordination at European level with due regard for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms of a policy of information and counselling designed for and accessible to all young people; this entails, *inter alia*, collecting information at local, national and international levels, and making it available as widely as possible to youth;

2. foster and support the creation and/or development of appropriate information and counselling services which observe the following principles: the services should be versatile, the sources varied, and the replies to enquiries comprehensive; young people's right to anonymity should be respected and the information reliable; the service should be accessible to all without discrimination, should be of a non-commercial character and should promote young people's independence; to this end governments should:

a. inform and counsel young people in accordance with their direct requests and specific needs;

b. promote surveys appropriate to specific national circumstances and enabling comparative studies to be made at European level of young people's needs, and use the results of these surveys for constant adaptation of services and structures;

c. satisfy themselves as to the utmost reliability of services and the validity of information sources and circulation ;

d. foster effective participation by young people in information and counselling activities intended for them ;

e. recognise the complementary nature of, and foster co-operation between, information and counselling services and youth organisations, by bringing them together, for example, in statutory management bodies and in the preparation and circulation of information ;

f. consult each other about issues relating to training for the staff of such services, with a view to giving them the skills required to perform the tasks which fall to them in the implementation of this recommendation ;

g. promote exchanges of staff, particularly by means of fellowship programmes, comparison of the information techniques adopted by each service, and training periods spent in the appropriate services in the different countries ;

h. strengthen their mutual co-operation, particularly as between neighbouring states with linguistic and cultural affinities, in matters of training, including advanced training, for the above-mentioned categories of staff, or foster such training in a Council of Europe context, especially through the European Youth Centre, provided that this does not imply the reduction of activities regularly organised by and for youth organisations ;

3. support the introduction of new technologies in information and counselling services, in order to facilitate :

— young people's direct access to information and counselling on a self-service basis, via centres, services, the media and mobile carriers ;

— the storage, updating, transfer, communication, publication and management of the product ;

— data processing, data compatibility, the use and analysis of data at local, regional, national and international levels and the creation of a network of national data banks ;

4. promote research at European level, both into information and counselling methods and techniques and into methods of evaluating such services, and foster the collection and exchange at European level of professional documentation on methods and techniques devised by practitioners and researchers ;

5. support the development of a European network of information and counselling services for young people ;

II. Instructs the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to draw the content of this recommendation to the attention of the governments of states which are parties to the European Cultural Convention but are not members of the Council of Europe.