

Brussels, 27 February 2007

“Your Europe – Your Future” : the first ever EU Youth Summit to take place in Rome in a month

On 24-25 March 2007 more than 200 young people from the 27 Member States will gather in the Italian capital for the first ever EU Youth Summit to mark the anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The Youth Summit will allow young people from across the continent to voice their views on today's Europe and to express their aspirations for the future. Their conclusions will be conveyed to the European leaders who will gather in Berlin that same week-end.

The EU institutions¹ are joining forces with the European Youth Forum to organise the **first ever EU Youth Summit** in Rome on 24-25 March 2007. The summit will take place in the Campidoglio, the very same building where the Treaty of Rome was signed by the six founding Member States (Italy, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands) 50 years ago. The objective of the Youth summit is to recognize Europe's achievements but above all to look ahead to tomorrow's Europe.

Vice-President Margot Wallstrom, in charge of Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy, said : *"This 50th anniversary is a time to celebrate past achievements and to reflect on the challenges and opportunities ahead. The Union has brought Europe together again, made it stronger and offered our citizens freedom, stability and prosperity. Yet, as the EU grows older and our societies evolve, the case for European integration evolves too. This summit will offer an unprecedented occasion to discuss this European Union 'on the move' "*.

European Commissioner in charge of Education & Youth, Ján Figel', said: *"Today's youngsters will form the EU's citizens of tomorrow, and the sooner they are involved in debates and forums about their European future, the better they will tackle coming challenges"*.

Over **200 young participants** from all walks of life, and from all 27 EU Member States, will attend. There will be six participants from each Member State, plus 30 representatives of international youth NGOs and eight representatives of the European Youth Forum. Four of the six national participants will be selected in youth debates at national, regional and local level that will have taken place between January and early March.

¹ The event is organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The young people began their preparations for the **Summit at a meeting in Brussels on 17-20 January 2007**. On the basis of the conclusions adopted at this preparatory meeting, national youth councils in all EU member states have started to organise national debates, in close cooperation with the Representation offices of the Commission, the European Parliament information offices and the National Agencies of the *Youth in Action* Programme, the EU's new funding programme for youth. These national debates will allow young people to get involved at the national, regional and local level, to select delegates, and ensure a bottom-up approach to the preparation of the Youth Summit.

The Youth Summit in Rome will be opened by on Saturday 24 March at Rome University (Roma III, Faculty of literature). In the afternoon, the young people will break off into six working groups to discuss:

- the future of the EU Treaty,
- the EU's social and economic model,
- sustainable development,
- the EU's role in a globalised world,
- democracy and civil society,
- youth and education.

On Sunday 25 March, the Summit will convene at the *Campidoglio* building for a plenary session, where the final conclusions and messages on the future of Europe will be adopted. These will serve as a basis for the structured dialogue between young Europeans and the European Institutions in the years to come. In a Round Table debate the young people will also discuss the messages with Vice-President Wallström, Commissioner Figel' and representatives of other EU institutions. This **debate will be accessible to the public via internet streaming**.

The Youth Summit in Rome will take place in parallel with the informal European Council in Berlin on 25 March 2007, where the Heads of State and Government will adopt a **political declaration** setting out the values and ambitions of the European Union.

The Youth Summit is expected to be the start of a process of dialogue and debate that mobilises young people and youth organisations and leads to the preparation and mobilisations of the European elections in 2009.

Young Europeans have a crucial role to play on the European stage. They are important multipliers of the European idea which is reflected in the **new Youth in Action Programme that started in January 2007**. The aim is to offer financial support to youth mobility and youth work projects until 2013. Next June, the European Youth Week will take place in Brussels to highlight the achievements of youth projects financed by the previous YOUTH Programme, and to continue the debate between young people and policy makers.

More information can be found at:

<http://50.europa.eu>

<http://europa.eu/youth/>

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html