

Switzerland should be included in European Education Programmes

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Today, the majority of the European Parliament voted in favour of including Switzerland in the 'Youth in Action' (2007-2013) and 'Lifelong Learning' (2007-2013) Programmes. "Switzerland's participation in both programmes was already foreseen in 2006. Although Switzerland does not belong to the European Economic Area, education should not stop at national borders. This counts even more when one considers the geographical location of Switzerland in Europe," explains Doris Pack, Rapporteur and Chairwoman of the Culture Committee.

Projects and initiatives submitted by Switzerland should be subject to the same conditions and rules as projects submitted by the Member States. Switzerland also intends to set up a national agency to supervise the implementation of these programmes at the national level.

"Switzerland is benefiting from these programmes as well as the Member States, but must also make their financial contribution: this amounts next year for the 'Youth in action' programme to 1.7 million Euros and for the 'Lifelong Learning' programme to 14.2 million Euros," said Pack. 'Youth in Action' aims to involve young people more in shaping the future of the Union, to support their mobility within the EU and to sharpen their sense of solidarity and democratic engagement. The 'Lifelong Learning' programme wants to provide options for EU citizens to establish new learning opportunities and will cover areas such as education and professional training for all ages.