

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0312/08  
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to the Commission

Subject: A European programme along the lines of 'Work and Travel'

Every year, thousands of European students, the greater part of them from the new Member States, participate in the 'Work and Travel' programme in the US. This programme facilitates obtaining a visa, a temporary work permit and a seasonal job. Participation in it allows these students to make considerable savings and, at the same time, to visit the host country. The programme's excellent results have led to other countries such as the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand adopting their own version of 'Work and Travel'.

At a time when much is being said about a European strategy for labour mobility, I believe that to create, at European level, a programme of this kind for young people from the Member States would mark a major step forward. In addition, the European economy would only gain from a more mobile workforce. From the institutional viewpoint, the adoption of a pilot EU project in this field would be a means of putting such a programme into practice.

At EU level there already exist numerous initiatives for a mobile workforce, such as the EURES network which publicises job vacancies in the Member States. Some Member States, such as the UK and France, also participate in programmes along the lines of 'Work and Travel'. The proposed project would complement those programmes by offering assistance to young Europeans at all stages in their attempts to find seasonal work in the Member States. In addition, a European programme along the lines of 'Work and Travel' would provide coordination and would facilitate young people's mobility in the Union.

Last but not least, the EU's Eurobarometer has revealed that more than 90% of young people in Europe identify the EU with the freedom to study, work and live anywhere in Europe. A programme responding to that perception would provide us with an opportunity to reinforce young people's sense of being part of the construction of a united Europe as active participants.

1. How does the Commission view the desirability of launching such a project?
2. What steps does the Commission propose with a view to encouraging labour mobility for young people on the European labour market?