



SUB-COMMITTEE YOUTH
Ustron, Silesia (PL), 15th May 2008

Chair: David Nordström, Norrbotten (S)

The following member Regions were represented:

Acores (P), Baranya (H), Bekes (H), Devon (GB), Dolnoslaskie (PL), Essex (GB), Gavleborg (S), Hampshire (GB), Heves (H), Jamtland (S), Jonkoping (S), Norrbotten (S), Ostfold (N), Slask (PL), Vasternorrland (S), Wielkopolska (PL)

AER Secretariat:
 SCHEELE Jascha
 MATERNE Doris
 KUCINSKA Malgorzata
 TABARLY Gaël

Agenda Item	Action/Decision
1. Welcome David Nordström welcomed the participants.	
2. Adoption of the draft agenda The new agenda was unanimously adopted.	Agenda adopted
3. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting The minutes were unanimously adopted.	Minutes adopted.
4. Report on AER Youth Team activities David Nordström regretted that Youth Team members could not participate in the meeting because of the exams and University obligations. Malgorzata Kucinska reminded the Youth Team Working Programme. The strategy and activities of the Youth Team are based on three levels: regional (they promote the AER' projects at regional level, involve in the organisation of the AER events and offer assistance to the youngsters in their region), European (by participating and encouraging young people from European regions to participate in projects conducted at European level and by staying in contact with European institutions: CoE, EU, or associations dealing with youth matters) and inter-AER (cooperation between the Youth Team members and all AER committees). In 2008, young people involved in the Youth Team activities will be working on a Demographic Conference, an Innovation Conference and the AER Youth Most Friendly Region. a) Training Weekend in Udine Malgorzata Kucinska presented the Training Weekend in Udine (9th-11th November 2008). The aim of the Training Weekend was to integrate and	

mobilize the AER Youth Team Members. It was an excellent opportunity to bring the young representatives together and to teach them how to be more involved in the regional and European activities. AER Youth Team participated in the preparation of the General Assembly: all members were in charge of the creation of the Gallery Room and moderation of the Market Place. The Youth Team President made a speech presenting Youth Team activities and also Members had an opportunity to meet President Barroso. After the General Assembly, Youth Team had two days Training Weekend. The aim was to discuss the AER Mainstreaming Youth Report and to adopt the Working Programme as well as the Youth Team Statute. Members had as well two workshops on the International Project Management.

b) Youth Team Session in Strasbourg

Malgorzata Kucinska presented the Session and its outcomes from 11th to 15th March 2007. To implement the inter-AER cooperation level, the AER invited the Youth Team members to Strasbourg to the AER Secretariat from 11th to 15th March 2008. The main objectives were to:

- get to know the AER work and organisation
- meet the policy coordinators of all AER Committees
- work together on the AER information leaflet for young people and a short film about the AER
- visit of the Council of Europe and European Parliament (meeting with persons in charge of youth issues)
- meeting with representatives from the European Youth Forum
- work together with AER Committees on projects, which will involve young people in 2008

Concerning Committee 3, the Youth Team had chosen to cooperate on the Most Youth-friendly European Region (MYFER) Award. Doris Materne presented the issues that had been addressed in the Strasbourg session in view of preparing the next edition to be called for 2009. She mentioned that, with the retirement of Alfred Kager (Niederösterreich) who had been the pivot in the MYFER, notably the following aspects could come under review or will have to be solved differently: motto and frequency of the competition, design of the questionnaire and of the award cup, number of awards, exploitation of the questionnaires, publicity/publications.

As Anton Kuzmin and Gabriela Kovacs, who are in charge of following up Committee 3, had not yet presented their conclusions on the Strasbourg meeting, David Nordström asked whether the Youth Team should continue to have full responsibility for the MYFER process. The participants confirmed this.

Saxon Spence made a comment that it is necessary to have a special budget in the AER for organisation of this prize. The Prize should be mainly prepared not by the Youth Team, but by AER Secretariat.

c) Youth Team Members participation in the European events

Malgorzata Kucinska presented the calendar of the Youth Team activities and participation in the several events since October 2007.

Anton Kuzmin in Krzywowa: From 20th to 25th October 2007 self-government of Lower Silesia organized an international seminar „No barriers. Lower Silesia for NGO. Ten regions for youth politics 2007-2013” in Krzywowa (Lower Silesia, Poland). Anton Kuzmin participated in this event and made a presentation of the AER Youth Team activities.

It was decided that Youth Team members (Anton Kuzmin and Gabriela Kovacs) will provide their ideas concerning the MYFER Award and they will give their contribution to the preparation of this Prize.

AER should examine the possibility of a MYFER Award Budget.

<p>Christoph Landolt in Brussels: Meeting in the Committee of the Regions on 27th November 2007: Christoph Landolt represented Youth Team as well as the Youth from the European Regions in the Committee of the Regions during the consultation concerning the “EC Communication on the Youth Polices”. Gabriela Kovacs in Iasi: On 28th November Gabriela Kovacs participated in the AER European Citizens’ Forum in Iasi. The subject of the Forum was: “First Year of the Romanian Membership in the European Union. Opportunities for Romanian citizens”. Claire Bridges in Valencia: From 23rd to 24th January 2008, Claire Bridges represented the Youth Team on the meeting of the Summer School Organising Committee. Christoph Landolt in Brussels, 1 April 2008: Christoph Landolt represented the Youth Team during the third meeting of the Summer School Organising Committee in Brussels. Anton Kuzmin in Brussels, 17 April 2008.</p> <p>d) Youth Team coming activities</p> <p>Malgorzata Kucinska presented the calendar for the coming events such as participation of the members in the European Forum Wachau in Lower Austria, Committee 2 Conference in Umea, next meeting of the Youth Team – during the Summer School in Ostersund, Innovation Conference of the Committee 1 in Linz. Members will participate as well in the European Final of the Competition “Do you speak European”? The most important event will be organisation of Youth Team election during the Summer School. This year there are three vacant places: one for the regions from Eastern Europe and two from South Europe.</p> <p>David Nordström said that it is important to mobilise the young people from Southern regions, because there was no Youth Team members from this part of Europe.</p>	
<p>5. AER Youth Ambassadors on Sustainable Development</p> <p>David Nordström introduced the topic and said that this year Youth Ambassadors prepared very interesting projects.</p> <p>Malgorzata Kucinska presented 2008 AER Youth Ambassadors Project. The theme for 2007 was sustainable development in European regions. The role of Youth Ambassador this year is to inform other young people about what can be done in their regions to promote sustainable development. After the Summer School, the Ambassadors are organising in their regions an activity on sustainable development (debate, information campaign, short film, quiz etc...). As a grand finale, the AER Youth Ambassadors met in Brussels the 17th April 2008. At this meeting Youth Ambassadors had a chance to present their activities to Mr. Ladislav MIKO, Director of Directorate B - Protecting the Natural Environment, DG ENV, European Commission and to tell what young people think on environment and sustainable development. The aim of the meeting was as well to select the best AER Youth Ambassadors Project. The best project was “Healthier Surroundings” project by Anton Kuzmin from Olomouc Region.</p>	
<p>6. AER Summer School 2008</p> <p>David Nordström welcomed two participants from Jamtland who attended the meeting and who were in charge of the organisation of this year Summer School: Anna-Carin Holmgren and Runar Englund.</p> <p>Malgorzata Kucinska thanked to the Region Jamtland for the perfect preparation of the Summer School. Malgorzata Kucinska presented the next Summer School: aim, definitions, organisation and outcomes as well as a programme. In 2008, the 13th AER Summer School and 7th AER Youth Summer School will take place in Östersund, Jämtland in Sweden from 24</p>	

to 30 August. The main topic of the event will be “Youth Entrepreneurship in European Regions”. The Summer School and Youth Summer School will take place as a single event. There will be capacity for 200 participants, half of whom should be youth aged between 18 and 24. The other half should be officers and politicians working directly on youth entrepreneurship issues in their regions. The aim of the Summer School is to familiarise regional policy makers and officers and young people with the concept of youth entrepreneurship for regional development and for young people’s career prospects. The Summer School will present tools necessary to become a successful entrepreneur and will look on ways of how regions can create a favourable context for young entrepreneurs. By the end of the week, participants will have developed ideas about what they could do to improve the entrepreneurship strategies in their region.

This year the registration to the Summer School is possible via AER Website. Deadline to register is 15th June.

7. AER Youth Regional Network

Malgorzata Kucinska presented the new AER Project. The AER proposes to prepare a case study on Youth Participation in European Regions and set up an AER Youth Regional Network (YRN) conceived as a common platform of youth regional organisations/councils/parliaments on regional level in Europe. This platform is to become a forum for discussion and exchange of experience between youngsters across all the European Regions. The idea is to bring together young people from European Regions and give them an opportunity to exchange, to share ideas, experiences, differences, hopes, fears, and problems and to find together solutions to their problems or fears. The network will allow putting into practice the EU principle of subsidiarity in the field of youth policy.

In the beginning, the AER will be working on the creation of the contact database and preparation of the case study on the situation of the Young people in European Regions. The contact database and the case study aim to define the main partners, which will be members of the Network. The AER is looking for the contacts and youth organisations/councils/parliaments in the AER member Regions and at the same time is examining in which Regions youth participation is strong or weak. This study will provide an exchange of best practice and ideas about how the youth participation could be reinforced.

The second short term objective is to set up a monthly newsletter for all regional partners. This newsletter will be an excellent tool to inform partner organisations about Youth policies at European, national and especially regional level and to maintain the communication between all interested partners.

The last short-term objective is the organisation of a Preparation Meeting in the second part of 2008. All the interested Regional organisations/councils/parliaments will be invited to participate. The meeting will take the form of a youth forum and it will focus mainly on the discussion over the methodology, structure, aims and objectives of the Network. In addition, the Forum will also include a conference on the topic: “Youth Participation in the European Regions” or “Situation of the Young People in the European Regions”.

The AER is going to apply for EC Funding (Youth in Action Programme) Sub-Action 4.3 — Training and networking of those active in youth work and youth organisations. The deadline for the application is 1st September

<p>2008.</p> <p>Paul Kirkman made a comment that he found that the Agenda and Youth AER projects were very well prepared and it was the prove that AER was doing a good work.</p>	
<p>8. Cross-cutting activities in relation to the AER Citizenship Policy</p> <p>Malgorzata Kucinska presented the Citizenship Activities, which were related to the AER Youth policy.</p> <p>a) AER European Citizens' Forums</p> <p>From October to December 2007, the AER organised four European Citizens Forums in West Sussex (UK), Alsace (F), Silesia (PL) and Iasi (RO). The European Citizens Forum in West Sussex was attended by 40 students from a local college, and consisted of a number of different workshops and activities, which encouraged the students to think about their own identities and to discuss what Europe meant to them.</p> <p>They also had the chance to discuss their ideas with a panel of speakers representing the European Parliament and the European Movement. In Strasbourg (Alsace – F) the forum was organised jointly with the Institute of the Political Sciences and Alsace Regional Council. This event, which was attended by 60 students, focussed on the European Neighbourhood Policy, with case studies from Ukraine, Morocco and Belarus. The Citizens Forum in Silesia (PL) was attended by 180 young people from the city of Mikolow. A panel of young students had the opportunity to discuss the future of youth in Europe with experts from the European Parliament, Europe Direct, NGO's and local officials.</p> <p>Krystyna Brzozowska confirmed that the Forum in Mikolow were very attractive and useful for young participants.</p> <p>The final Forum for 2007 took place in Iasi (RO), and consisted of a discussion panel about the first year of Romanian membership of the EU, attended by 50 representatives of regional authorities, civil society and the media.</p> <p>In 2008, AER will organize 6 Forums in Gävleborg, Lower Silesia, Republic of Srpska, Heves, Wielkopolska and Vastra Gotland.</p> <p>On 12th May 2008 in Gävleborg 70 young students from Västerberg Folk High School will participate in the European Forum. The topic of the meeting is: "An EU day on democracy, developing countries, health, culture meetings, environment, work and studies". The idea of this Forum is to have six discussion groups with 10-15 students and politicians with six different themes that engage young people. They will have a chance to discuss with the regional and European policymakers. The aim is to raise their knowledge concerning the European important questions such as democracy, European external relations, health, migration environment and climate, European free movement.</p> <p>Among the invited guests, the young people will meet members of the European Parliament: Mr Jens Holm, Mr Olle Schmidt, Mrs Inger Schörling (former MEP), as well as national and local policy makers: Mrs Ulrika Karlsson, Mrs Bodil Ceballos (Members of Swedish Parliament), Mr Sten-Erik Nilsson (County Council of Gävleborg), There will be also Mrs Gun Lundberg and Mrs Malin Johansson from the Europe Direct Gävleborg.</p> <p>b) Do you speak European? AER Competition</p>	

This event is a Europe-wide debating competition for young people on Europe. The competition is a public speaking and personal expression contest which gives teams of young people between the ages 14 and 18 the opportunity to prepare and present their views on the question “what does Europe mean to you?”.

The aim of the competition will be to increase the awareness of young people of the European context in which they live. The competition started in November 2007 with registration and preparation of the regional competitions. From January-April 2008 the regional competitions take place, from May-August 2008 the nationals. The European final will take place on 3rd December 2008 in Brussels. 36 AER regions from 12 countries have registered to participate in the AER debating competition.

Each stage of the competition is a one-day event, in which teams of young people compete against each other to present their views of Europe. Each team should have a maximum 5 young people and prepares a 5-7 minutes presentation, which can be made in any format: including traditional speech, drama, dance, video, rap etc.

David Nordström said that it could be a good idea to repeat this competition also in 2009 as this activity had a remarkable success in the European Regions.

Saxon Spence said that she was impressed by the young participants of this competition. It would be good to prepare a special video about the competition.

Zsuzsanna Mesteller agreed that this competition was a big success and it should be continued in the future. She suggested that AER should publish all presentations on the Website.

c) AER Scholarship

The AER is offering one annual scholarship for a student from an AER member region to undertake a course of study at Masters degree level in a topic related to regional democracy. The scholarship will cover tuition fees and living costs for a one-year course at a university in another AER member region in a foreign country.

The scholarship is available for a 1-year full-time Masters-level course, which is properly accredited by a recognized university, in any topic relating to the work of the AER. Eligible courses include: Regional Studies, Public Management, International Relations, European Studies and Politics. These are just examples; any course which has a regional aspect may be considered as eligible. In the case of general degrees such as Politics or European Studies, the student will be required to write their Masters thesis on a regional aspect of the topic. The total maximum value of the scholarship is €11.500.

The deadline for sending the applications was 31st March. There were 37 applicants from 26 regions from 15 countries. The selection jury made up three professors from universities from UK, Slovakia and Austria now evaluates the applications. The decision will be made at the beginning of June.

9. Discussion about future goals and policies of the Sub-Committee Youth

David Nordström said that when he was elected for the position of the

<p>President of this Sub-Committee, he started to think about the future goals of the work in the Youth field. He consulted his region as well as other Swedish regions members of the AER about this question. It is very important to continue the work of Youth Team and Youth Ambassadors. However, it is essential to focus on the direction of establishing the Youth Regional Network. David Nordström said that it could be good to have a network of young politicians engaged in the work of all AER Committees. He invited the participants to check in their regions how many young politicians are really engaged in the activities and to give some ideas and proposals about the future of the Network. David Nordström requested the participants to the discussion concerning this topic.</p> <p>Saxon Spence from Devon said that in the beginning of her work with the AER activities, she noticed that there were no young people during the meetings and not a lot of woman. However now, she saw that it was wonderful to see so many young people, that young motivated persons are more and more engaged. It could be good to rise the age up to 30 in the AER projects.</p> <p>Erik Alira from Dolnoslaskie said that he agreed with Saxon. He said that the question of the age is relative, and adults sometimes are like youngsters with many ideas.</p> <p>Nikolett Poko from Baranya said that it is very important to provide the possibility to exchange the good practice between the young persons from European regions.</p> <p>David Nordström said that AER Secretariat should continue this idea together with the regions.</p> <p>Krystyna Brzozowska from Slask said that she agreed with participants about the age of the youth in the AER Projects. The age of 24 is a limitation for the participation in the local democracy. It could be precious if the people of different ages meet together as well. It is possible to exchange the ideas between the generations. The good idea could be to send a questionnaire to young people from the regions to ask what they are interested in, about which topics they would like to discuss and learn more.</p>	<p>Members were requested to discuss this topic.</p>
<p>10. Any other business</p> <p>David Nordström thanked the participants and Malgorzata Kucinska for the meeting.</p>	

Strasbourg, 21 May 2008
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