



**Plenary meeting of Committee 2**

**Terceira, Açores-P, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2007**

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**Draft Minutes**

**AER Committee 2 “Social Policy & Public Health”  
Plenary Session Pécs (Baranya-H), 30<sup>th</sup> March 2006  
(Version 17 August 2007)**

**I. Adoption of the agenda of the plenary meeting**

The agenda was unanimously adopted subject to some changes in the sequence of events.

**II. Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last Committee plenary session were unanimously adopted.

**III. The structure of the new AER Committee 2**

Constantin OSTAFICIUC, AER Committee 2 President (Timis-RO), informed participants about the decisions taken by the AER General Assembly on 10 November 2006. The “Social Cohesion, Social Policy & Public Health” Committee (B) has been renamed “Social Policy & Public Health” Committee (2). Two new areas have been included in the Committee’s sphere of competence: Gender Equality (the AER Working Group on Equal Opportunities between Men & Women has been placed under the framework of AER Committee 2); Emergency Planning (a new work area).

Furthermore, on the basis of the Committee’s proposal, the General Assembly elected Constantin Ostaficiuc (Timis-RO) President of AER Committee 2 and Christina Wahrolin (Värmland-S) Vice-President.

The new Committee 2 structure was unanimously adopted.

**IV. AER contribution to the future of Health Services in Europe**

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU (AER Secretariat) presented the draft AER contribution that has been formulated after consultation with the member regions of Committee 2.

The proposed contribution was unanimously adopted without amendments.

The members requested that the AER should work more closely with other institutions such as the Committee of the Regions when drafting positions regarding Health and Social Care in Europe.

**V. AER contribution to the future European Health Strategy**

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU presented the draft AER contribution, which is based on the contributions of the member regions following an internal Committee consultation process.

The proposed contribution was unanimously adopted.

**VI. Europe’s Social Reality: A Public Consultation**

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU briefly outlined the consultation paper of the European Commission. This consultation is meant to provide a counterbalance to the EU Lisbon strategy

and provides an opportunity to highlight the social challenges that Europe and its regions are facing.

The AER response will be drafted following a consultation of Committee 2 members. The Secretariat will forward members a paper outlining the key issues raised and the aim of the consultation as well as some guidelines for drafting a common response.

The deadline for responding to the Committee 2 consultation will be 30 November 2007.

#### **VII. Update from the Equal opportunities working group**

Stéphane COOLS (AER Brussels Office) transmitted the apologies of Michèle SABBAN, Chairperson of the working group (Ile-de-France, F) for not being able to attend the meeting.

During its working session in Brussels on 23 March, the group decided to create an "Observatory for Migrant Women" which will bring together politicians and experts from the regions of origin and destination of migrant women, in order to develop intercultural understanding and facilitate the integration of migrant women.

The annual conference of the Gender Equality group will be held on 11-12 October 2007 in Timisoara, at the kind invitation of Timis County (RO). This conference will mark the launch of the AER Observatory for Migrant Women. All Committee 2 members are kindly invited to attend the Conference and to contribute to the activities of the working group.

#### **VIII. Update from the DAPHNE-funded project "Preventing Interpersonal Violence between Intimate Partners"**

Ulla HOGLUND (Värmland-S) informed participants of the latest activities of the project partners. The regions of Devon-UK, Hampshire-UK, Steiermark-A and Värmland-S have adopted a public health approach to preventing intimate partner violence, treating its perpetrators and victims and facilitating their rehabilitation.

The final Conference presenting the outcomes of the project will take place in Karlstad (Värmland-S) on 6-7 March 2008. Further information can be found under: [www.preventabuse.eu](http://www.preventabuse.eu)

John SMITH (Devon-UK) requested that, if the project is to be continued, it investigates also on women's violence (against men) and the increasing violence amongst the elderly. Ulla HOGLUND responded that indeed the project is also open to these groups.

#### **Integration of Ethnic Minorities - Final Declaration of the Seminar on 29 March 2007**

*In light of the important debate on the draft declaration during the seminar on 29 March 2007, it was decided that Committee members could submit proposals for amendment to the Committee Secretariat and that the debate and adoption of the declaration would take place during the Committee plenary session on 30 March 2007.*

Constantin OSTAFICIUC presented the draft Declaration on the integration of ethnic minorities and invited members to present their proposals for amendment.

John SMITH suggested to include a point on the need for regions to monitor their progress in achieving the objectives set out in the declaration

A central debate focused on whether to include a distinction between national/historic minorities and newly arrived populations, such as immigrants or refugees, as the needs of these groups are not necessarily the same. Agneta Gränstrom (Norrbotten-S) and a representative of Brasov-RO supported the inclusion of such a distinction. Karin Melin (Värmland-S) argued that in modern society such a distinction is no longer valid and may lead to discrimination between various ethnic groups, which is against the spirit of the draft declaration on *integrating* ethnic minorities.



The majority of members agreed that no reference to a distinction should be made, as each region has its own mechanisms and policies for responding to the particular needs of every minority group.

The amended version of the AER Declaration on the Integration of Ethnic Minorities was adopted with one abstention (Brasov-RO).

Participants requested that in the future declarations should be no longer than 1 page and should be published several days in advance.

#### **IX. Update from the working group on the Prevention of Alcohol-Related Harm**

Karin MERNELIUS (Jönköping-S) presented the proposed AER-activities within the project 'Building Capacity – Implementing Coordinated Alcohol Policy in Europe', which is expecting approval for EU co-financing under the European Public Health Programme. The AER will implement peer reviews among partner regions on the following themes:

- Alcohol and traffic/ drink driving
- Pregnancy and nursing
- Drinking habits among young people and protection of children
- Early identification and brief intervention in primary health care

The final decision of the European Commission on co-financing is expected in early April. If the decision is positive, the first AER peer review be organised after the next plenary session of Committee 2 in the Açores (24 October 2007).

#### **X. Update from the ALIVE partners network**

Sture ERIKSSON, Network Coordinator (Västerbotten, S), informed participants of the outcome of the meeting between the network partners on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007. The network's application for EC co-financing under the 2006 call for proposals of the European Public Health Programme was unfortunately not successful. It has been decided to move on to Plan B, namely to collect and analyse information on current regional policies for the elderly, based on an inventory of existing material. The project will be funded by the participating regions' own resources.

An outline of the project will be sent to all Committee 2 members. Regions interested in becoming partners to this project are requested to contact the Network Coordinator or the Committee Secretariat.

#### **XI. Update from the e-he@lth network**

Agneta GRANSTRÖM, Chairperson of the network, informed participants about the first network meeting held in Brussels on 15 February 2007. 25 regions participated in the meeting, where 6 project proposals were presented offering new opportunities for health care through ICT. Further information about the seminar and the project proposals can be found under: <http://www.a-e-r.org/en/events/health-social-affairs-committee/2007/e-health-seminar.html>

The mandate of the e-he@lth network was unanimously adopted.

#### **XII. Update from the Emergency Planning network**

Councillor John Smith presented the draft agenda for the inaugural conference of the Emergency Planning network, to be held in Exeter (Devon-UK) on 18–19 May 2007. The main topics of this first conference are: floods; maritime incidents and coastal pollution; creating regional safety belts.

The purpose of the network is to support to regions in preventing and responding to disasters such as floods, earthquakes, air crashes, forest fires or major accidents. Regions interested in the activities of this new network are kindly requested to contact the Committee Secretariat.



### **XIII. Contribution from the AER to Youth Team**

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU updated the participants on the work of the AER Youth Team who plans to organise events all over Europe in order to teach young people healthy living. It is planned to start with a Conference in South Carelia-FIN in May 2008.

### **XIV. Date and Venue of the next Committee meeting**

Andreia COSTA and Maria Teresa BRITO (Azores-P) invited Committee 2 on behalf of the Government of the Azores-P to hold it's next plenary session on the Island of Terceira on 22-23 October 2007. They proposed to organise a Seminar on Monday 22 October on "Health and Social Services in ultra peripheral areas".

*The Committee members and the AER wish to thank the Region of Baranya (H) for hosting the meeting and their warm hospitality.*

*CM, August 2007*

