

DRAFT MINUTES
Plenary Session of AER Committee B
“Social Cohesion, Social Services & Public Health”
Timis (RO), 29th September 2007

Opening and welcome from the host region

Constantin Ostaficiuc, President of Timis County Council (RO), opened the meeting and welcomed participants to Timis. He briefly presented Timis County Council. He repeated the apologies on behalf of Stig-Erik Westsmark (Västmanland, S), Committee President, who was not able to participate to the meeting.

I. Adoption of the draft agenda

The agenda was adopted without amendments.

II. Adoption of the Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were adopted without amendments.

III. Committee B Presidium Elections

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU (AER Secretariat) informed the participants on the procedure that had been applied for receiving candidatures for the Committee Presidency. She then presented two candidates, for the posts of Committee President and Committee Vice-President. Tudor OLARIU (Timis, RO) led a vote for each post.

Constantin Ostaficiuc, President of Timis County Council, was unanimously elected Committee President. Christina Wahrolin, County Councillor of Värmland (S) was unanimously elected Committee Vice-President.

Constantin Ostaficiuc thanked the Committee members for their vote.

IV. Update on the work of the Task Force on AER Restructuring

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU outlined the new AER Committee structure which had been formulated by the AER Task Force on Restructuring and which had been adopted by the AER Presidium and the AER Bureau in Sarajevo (BIH) on 16 June 2006.

The new structure will be presented for adoption to the AER General Assembly in Palma de Mallorca (Balears Islands) on 9-10 November 2006.

V. Committee's Priorities and Work Plan 2007

Ourania Georgoutsakou, Committee Policy Coordinator, presented the proposed Committee work plan for 2007, in light of the new Committee structure.

Carin MELIN (Värmland, S) stated that gender equality should remain a key AER priority and should be the sole subject treated by the Equal Opportunities working group.

Marta TATAR (Covasna, RO) suggested that the issue of gender equality could be treated under the more general topic of equal opportunities for all and that therefore the working group should have a wider mandate.

Ulla HÖGLUND (Värmland, S) suggested that both issues should be mainstreamed across the AER's activities and structure, but that they should be treated separately. Therefore, the working group on Equal Opportunities between men and women should deal with issues of gender equality, whereas equal opportunities for all should be dealt with in the framework of the social affairs sub-committee.

Agneta GRANSTRÖM (Norrbotten, S) stressed the need to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed across the AER's work.

Bo SIMONSSON (Västmanland, S), firstly repeated the apologies sent by Committee President Stig-Erik Westmark. Regarding the proposed Committee work plan, he expressed his concern that it is too ambitious. He suggested that Committee members should rely less on the Committee Secretariat and should review the Committee's working methods in order to ensure that member regions contribute more actively to the Committee's work.

Tudor OLARIU (Timis, RO) suggested that the Committee deal with well-defined issues. A working group should be created for each theme, with a member region taking the lead therein. The outcomes of the group's work should then be presented to the Committee.

Constantin OSTAFICIUC suggested that a list of Committee priorities and tasks be formulated for the next two years. All projects and working groups should develop a strategy for implementing their work and achieving their goals and should update the members on their progress at the Committee plenary meetings. He emphasised the importance of allocating responsibilities to the regions so that they are actively involved in the Committee's work. He further suggested that a message is sent to all AER members to register their politicians and experts for each of the Committee working groups.

The Committee members adopted the Committee Priorities and Work Plan for 2007, subject to the above comments and amendments.

VI. General Assembly of the AER (Illes Balears-E, 9-10 November 2006)

Ourania Georgoutsakou briefly outlined the programme and structure of the 2006 AER General Assembly and asked members to suggest potential speakers who could moderate discussion tables on the theme of migration.

Ulrike NEUHAUSER (Wien, A) suggested that the Secretariat contacts the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

VII. Social Services of General Interest

Ourania Georgoutsakou presented the draft AER position on this theme and outlined the key points.

The proposed position was adopted without amendments.

VIII. Update from the DAPHNE-funded project "Preventing interpersonal Violence between Intimate Partners"

Ulla HÖGLUND informed participants of the progress of the project, which adopts a public health approach to interpersonal violence prevention. The partners have launched their training activities and seminars, after a long negotiation period with the European Commission prior to signing the co-financing agreement.

Information on the partners' activities is available on the project website:

www.preventabuse.eu

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

Tudor OLARIU and Karin MERNELIUS (Jönköping, S) presented the project proposal that was submitted to the European Commission for co-financing under the 2006 call for proposals of the European Public Health Programme in May 2006.

AER is associate partner to the project 'Building Capacity – Implementing Coordinated Alcohol Policy in Europe', with the Ministry of Health of Slovenia acting as lead partner. AER will lead

work package 8, which will consist of a peer review among partner regions. AER member regions interested in working in the project are invited to join. The project should be launched in the beginning of 2007.

The Committee is also organising a series of two workshops during the 2nd European Alcohol Policy Conference in Helsinki on 20-22 November 2006.

The documents were adopted without amendment.

X. Update from the ALIVE partners network

Sture ERIKSSON (Västerbotten, S) updated participants on the project proposal submitted under the abovementioned call for proposals looking at policies for demographic change and in particular healthy ageing and providing health and social support for the elderly.

XI. E-health: an integral part of the regions' health policies for the future

Agneta GRANSTRÖM (Norrbotten, S) informed participants about the conference entitled "E-health: around the clock care for everyone, everywhere" which was organised by Norrbotten in cooperation with the AER on 9 - 10 June 2006 in Piteå. This was a very successful event that highlighted the huge potential of e-health technologies for improving health care services.

The proposal for the creation of new thematic group dealing with e-health within the Committee was adopted.

Bogdan GHELBERE (Timis, RO) congratulated Norrbotten on an excellent initiative and on the Piteå conference. He suggested that Norrbotten should take the lead in this group in light of their good work in the area.

XII. Date and Venue of the next Committee meeting

Béla PÖRÖS (Baranya, H) extended the invitation from his region of Baranya to host the next Committee plenary session and to organise a seminar on the theme of social inclusion of ethnic minorities.

Nikolett POKO (Baranya, H) proposed that the meeting takes place in Pécs on 27-29 March 2007. These dates will be confirmed at the occasion of the 2006 AER General Assembly.

Constantin OSTAFICIUC thanked Baranya for their kind invitation on behalf of the Committee members.

XIII. Any Other Business

No further issues were raised under this item.

Tudor OLARIU sent warm greetings to Stig-Erik Westmark for a speedy recovery on behalf of the Committee members.

Constantin OSTAFICIUC thanked the Committee members for their participation.

The Committee thanks Timis County Council for the wonderful cooperation in organising this meeting and for the excellent hospitality.

All documents adopted at this meeting are available on the AER website:

<http://www.a-e-r.org/events/health-social-affairs-committee/2006/seminar-and-plenary-com-b.html>