



Plenary meeting of Committee 2

Barcelona, Catalunya-E, 12th May 2010

Agenda ref.: 2

Original in English

Document for adoption

**Draft Minutes
of the Plenary Session of AER Committee 2 “Social Policy & Public Health”
‘s-Hertogenbosch, 7 October 2009**

(The list of participants is available in a separate annexe)

Summary of the main outcomes:

- Adoption of the “AER Roadmap for Demographic Change”
- Adoption of the political priorities 2010-2011 and of the Work Programme 2010
- Presentation of the AER Bureau’s decision to turn AER Observatory on Gender Issues into a Standing Committee on Equal Opportunities
- Presentation of the outline of the Conference on Preventing Alcohol-related Harm

Lily JACOB, Vice-President of the Province of Noord-Brabant (NL) and Constantin OSTAFICIUC, President of AER Committee 2 (Timis-RO), opened the conference and welcomed the participants.

0. Conclusions of the conference “Innovation for demographic change” and working session of the previous day

Jolanda SCHNEIDER (Noord-Brabant-NL) gave a summary of the discussions of the previous day. She then presented the draft AER Roadmap for Demographic Change.

Adoption of the “AER Roadmap for Demographic Change”

The “AER Roadmap for Demographic Change” was unanimously adopted.

This Roadmap establishes an AER Network on social innovation for demographic change. Its aim is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practice between regions, by identifying potential cooperation projects and funding sources. If your region is interested in working in this area, please contact AER Committee 2 Secretariat (c.meschede@aer.eu).

The AER Roadmap for demographic change, along with all presentations made during the conference, is available at: <http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2009/innovation-demographic-change.html>

I. Adoption of the agenda of the plenary meeting

The agenda was unanimously adopted with some amendments to the order of events. An item “Any other business” was added to the agenda. It was decided to take agenda item X-adoption of the Committee work programme and political priorities immediately after agenda item III.

II. Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting

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

III. Update on current European policy developments

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU (AER Secretariat) presented the latest European policy developments in health and the proposed positions of the AER Committee 2 on these developments.

Thus, in March 2009, AER Committee 2 responded to the **EC consultation on health inequalities** in a position based on our previous work, emphasising the need for political proposals and structural funds to combat efficiently health inequalities.

The European Union is considering dedicating the year 2012 to **active ageing and intergenerational solidarity** and launched a consultation to measure the interest raised by this proposal. AER made a contribution based on our previous positions on demographic change. Further work on this issue could be done in the framework of the newly created AER Network on social innovation for demographic change created by the Roadmap.

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU reminded the member regions that the European year 2010 is dedicated to **combating poverty and social exclusion**. Regions can benefit from funding opportunities for events involving their citizens. These funding opportunities were summed up in a fact sheet the AER Secretariat prepared. This document is available at: <http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2009/innovation-demographic-change.html>

Finally, the European Union launched a **consultation on the White paper on "Adapting Climate Change"**, proposing to implement measures of adaptation in addition to preventive measures. In its response to the consultation, AER's Committee 2 proposes to take action from now on and not to delay action to 2012 as mentioned in the EU White paper. The AER response also stresses the need for a holistic approach, where all sectors work together. ICT can be used as a tool for prevention. The AER response was unanimously adopted.

Updates from the Committee networks

IV. E-he@lth

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU (AER Secretariat) transmitted the apologies of Agneta GRANSTRÖM, Network Chairperson (Norrbotten-S) who was not able to attend the Committee 2 plenary session. She forwarded the warm invitation of Norrbotten-S to participate to the Arctic Light E-health Conference (ALEC2010) to the member regions. This conference is addressed to a wide public: regional politicians and officers, industry and academic representatives, other experts in the field. A draft agenda is available and the registrations are open.

V. Preventing Alcohol-Related harm

Karin MERNELIUS, Network Coordinator (Jönköping-S) announced the programme of the afternoon's working meeting. She also confirmed that the Conference on Preventing Alcohol-Related Harm following the closure of the AER Peer Reviews project would take place in Barcelona (Catalunya-E). The date has been fixed in the meantime: 11-12 May 2010.

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU (AER Secretariat) announced that Committee 2 working meetings will take place in the framework of this Conference. Participants are requested to register early after having received confirmation of the plenary and conference dates, as the first semester of 2010 coincides with EU Spanish Presidency.

VI. Observatory on Gender Issues

Monica CARLSSON, Chairperson of the Observatory on Gender Issues (Norrbotten-S) presented the last activities of the OGI whose focus this year was violence against women. In the near future, the Observatory will focus on domestic violence. Monica CARLSSON reminded that there is no legitimacy for European democracies without gender equality. The OGI has been contributing to the revision of the AER statutes and rules of procedure, to ensure they reflect gender equality principles.

Monica CARLSSON informed the participants that the AER Bureau decided to turn the OGI into a Standing Committee on Equal Opportunities during its last meeting in Gothenburg on September 18th. Thanks to this new status, the new Standing Committee should be able to carry out interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary actions. Its work will also progressively develop beyond gender issues to tackle all sorts of inequalities, but the uttermost priority will remain gender equality. The Standing Committee will continue to work closely with Comm2. The collaboration with Committee 1 and 3, as well as with the AER governing bodies will be developed. Monica CARLSSON invited the member regions to join the Standing Committee on Equal Opportunities and to send her suggestions on the topics to be dealt with next.

Constantin OSTAFICIUC congratulated Ms CARLSSON on the group's new status and also on their official position in the AER Bureau and Presidium.

VII. Equal Europe for People with Disabilities

Ulla HÖGLUND (Värmland-S) transmitted the apologies of Metin GENC, Chairperson of the Working Group (Istanbul-TR) and presented the work of the newly created Working Group on Equal Europe for People with Disabilities. The last meeting took place on September 21st and focused on selected articles of the UN Convention on people with disabilities (Article 8 on awareness-raising, Article 9 on accessibility, Article 25 on health and Article 26 on habilitation and rehabilitation). The main task for this group will be to exchange knowledge and experience on the regional implementation of these articles. Ulla HÖGLUND underlined that the UN Convention is above all about human rights, as people with disabilities should be granted the same rights as valid people. Mainstreaming the issue of disabilities within AER is also an objective of the Working Group. Ulla HÖGLUND invited all AER member regions to participate in the work of the Working Group.

VIII. Emergency Planning

Johan SMEDBERG (Västernorrland-S) went back over the history of the Emergency Planning Network, which was created in 2005 following the restructuring of the AER Committees. This network, based on solidarity, aimed at improving the mechanisms to exchange experts and material across borders and to share knowledge about emergency situations in regions. Johan SMEDBERG underlined that if the issues linked to emergency planning are often denied as they are associated to a worst-case-scenario perspective of the future, they prove to be crucial: most of the emergencies countries face do not happen in capitals.

Johan SMEDBERG then reported on the last EPN meeting which took place on 31st March in Limoges (Limousin-F), and which focused on floods. A booklet with the conclusions of the meeting is available at: <http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2009/epnseminar.html>

Regarding the future of the network, Constantin OSTAFICIUC (Timis-RO) suggested it was necessary to evaluate the network at the occasion of the next Committee plenary, to elaborate a strategy for it and to identify a new leader..

IX. Region's Corner

Ulla HÖGLUND (Värmland-S) presented an initiative taken by the County of Värmland. The main idea of this initiative is that healthcare staff should have the possibility to exchange their knowledge with their peers in a hospital in other European countries. The County of Värmland is now studying the possibility of a cooperation between hospitals in Värmland-S and Noord-Brabant-NL. The purposes of this cooperation would be to gain experience, to learn about new techniques and to broaden the staff's perspectives. The exchange period should be from 2 to 4 weeks. The exchange of staff would be open to every healthcare staff with the exception of medical doctors. The requirements for those taking part in this initiative would be to provide feedback and to offer to host staff in their own hospitals for the same amount of time. Persons interested in cooperating in this initiative can address their interest to the County of Värmland. Constantin OSTAFICIUC (Timis-RO) asked the Committee 2 Secretariat to forward this initiative to all AER member regions and create a working group of regions interested in this activity. The working language of this initiative is English.

Ulrika NEUHAUSER (Wien-A) asked whether the visitor is merely shadowing the local health professional or whether they are also working, and perhaps granted a certificate at the end of their stay.

Ulla HÖGLUND explained that the project is still in its very early stages and no certification processes have been considered yet. The emphasis is on job shadowing, as there are insurance implications to be taken into account if actually practicing abroad.

X. Adoption of the Political Priorities 2010-2011 and of the Work Programme 2010

This point was taken right after point II on the agenda (Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting). Constantin OSTAFICIUC presented the Political Priorities 2010-2011 proposed for adoption.

He invited the participants to think of the future of the Emergency Planning Network left without a leader following the withdrawal from political life of its Chairperson. He suggested that the network be evaluated at the next Committee plenary.

Regarding the Work Programme 2010, Constantin OSTAFICIUC (Timis-RO) suggested to avoid holding Committee 2 meetings on the same dates as the Committee of the Regions. He also suggested amending the proposed dates for the next Committee 2 plenary meeting, to respect the commitments some members may have for 1st May and asked the Committee 2 Secretariat to identify alternative dates.

The Political Priorities 2010-2011 and the Work Programme 2010 were adopted unanimously.

XI. AER Youth Regional Network

Olov OSCARSSON, Head of Youth Committee 4 on Health and Social Affairs within the AER Youth Regional Network (Jämtland-S), presented the Youth Regional Network (YRN), its objectives, its structure and its activities. He underlined the importance of the politicians' support for this YRN to take off. More information on the YRN is available at: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/youth/aer-youth-regional-network.html>.

Any Other Business

Harriet HEDLUND (Västerbotten-S) presented a proposal to organise a joint plenary with AER Committee 3 (Culture, Education and International Cooperation) on the issue of Health and Culture in 2011. She suggested that this issue is discussed at the next Committee 2 plenary.

Constantin OSTAFICIUC thanked her for her region's invitation and suggested that this issue is discussed at the next Committee plenary meeting in Barcelona.

Ulrike NEUHAUSER (Wien-A) presented a publication issued by the city of Vienna about Vienna's regional healthcare initiatives. This publication includes a new concept for improving the living conditions of people needing assistance.

XII. Committee 2 Contribution to the AER General Assembly

Ourania GEORGOUTSAKOU (AER Secretariat) presented the upcoming AER General Assembly, taking place in Belfort on 25-27 November 2009. The General Assembly being dedicated to Energy and the contribution regions can make against Climate Change, Committee 2 contribution would consist of its Response to the EU White Paper on "Adapting to Climate Change".

XIII. Date and venue of the next meeting

The next plenary session will take place on May 12th in Barcelona, at the kind invitation of Catalunya-E and will be preceded by a Conference on Preventing Alcohol-related Harm (May 11th).

The Committee members and AER wish to thank the Province of Noord-Brabant (NL) for hosting the meeting and their warm hospitality.

All presentations made during this meeting are available on the webpage of the event:
<http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2009/innovation-demographic-change.html>

CB, February 2010