



AER European Citizens' Forum

**How can regions influence the youth employment matters in the time of economic crisis?**

17 March 2010 in Alba Iulia ( Romania)

**INTRODUCTION**

Since the beginning of the world economic crisis in 2008 the unemployment rate in Europe has grown rapidly. Central and Eastern European countries and particularly the youth have been affected the most. The number of unemployed young people in Romania has almost doubled in one year and the perspectives of improvement of the situation are pessimistic.

Local and regional authorities are closest to the young people's lives and therefore crucial in providing a framework for their development. The topic has been widely discussed on the regional authorities level during the latest plenary session of the Committee of the Regions to identify the key measures to be undertaken for a future-oriented European youth policy.

With regards to this situation AER, in cooperation with the region of Alba (Romania), has decided to organise a joint European Citizens' Forum entitled **How can regions influence the youth employment matters in the time of economic crisis? to be held on 17 March 2010 in Alba Iulia (Romania)**. As all AER European Citizens' Forums, the forum in Alba is intended to promote an exchange between the wide public, youth, regional experts and Members of European Parliament (MEP).

**TOPIC:**

The European Citizens' Forum in Alba Iulia will touch three issues linked to youth employment.

First, the issue of new skills. Which new skills do young people need to have when

entering the job market, what is missing in the training and what are the expectations for the future? Students and members of the youth organizations will have a floor to express their personal experience, whilst MEPs will be invited to present their plans for the diversification of training so that students have more practical experience. Regional representatives will inform about what they expect from the graduates who would like to work on the regional level.

Second, how can regional authorities boost youth employment? The involvement in European projects such as Eurodyssée, cooperation with private companies willing to offer internships, or changes in the university curricula will be at the heart of the discussion.

Eventually, participants will be invited to deal with the question of the mobility on the European labour market and risk of brain drain in the regions. That would mean a floor mainly for the regions representatives to explain their ideas and projects of how to make regions more attractive for young, well-educated people who are fluent in number of languages. On the other hand it may be interesting to see the student's point of view on the subject and we are looking forward to a fruitful discussion from the diverse points of view.

### **DRAFT PROGRAMME**

17:30-17:45      *Opening speech*

\*AER representative – Explanations on the objectives of the Forum

17:45-18:05      ***New skills for youth, expectations for the future and discussion***

\* Regional representatives

\* MEPs from Romania



18:05-18:25 **Ways of boosting youth employment** and discussion

- \* Regional representatives
- \* MEPs, Representatives from Universities and other employment institutes

18:25-18:45 **Advantages and disadvantages of European labour mobility** and discussion

- \* Regional representatives
- \* representatives from Youth employment institutions

18:45-19:00 *Closing speech*

- \*President of the host region

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### **What are the AER European Citizens' Forums?**

*Democratic principles have been crucial for Europe for centuries - ever since the Greek and Roman Empires and they became a basic value of the European identity. Democracy in the sense of direct participation in the decision process is thus historically a European privilege. Creating a strong European Union as an independent political actor therefore implies that citizens should get involved in the process. However, as shown by the poor participation in the European Parliament's elections in June 2009, for instance, it seems that the European union, because of its size and complicated political procedures, is loosing one of its key features: the institutions are loosing touch with their citizens. And since there is no Europe without citizens carrying it AER has decided, in 2007, to gap the bridge between Europe and its citizens, by launching the so-called European Citizens' Forums.*



*European Citizens' Forums help to create a link between Europe and its citizens by offering them a platform for exchange, and engaging them and regional politicians in a dialogue with the EU representatives on the present and future of Europe, on its problems and successes.*

*This direct confrontation of all the actors involved brings the benefits for all:*

- citizens are directly engaged in the European matters, they get to understand the decision making process and a sense of common identity among citizens can arise*
- regional politicians have an ideal possibility to lobby for the projects in their regions at the MEP's, they are the mediators between MEP's and citizens, they promote the region on the European level*
- European politicians have a direct feedback on their work and gain an inspiration for their future projects concerning their region in divers and interactive discussions*

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