

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS BY COMMITTEE 1 IN 2009

Cohesion policy

- Following the AER definition and position on territorial cohesion adopted in 2008 a contribution to the EC consultation on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion was submitted to the European Commission in February 2009.
- The task force on cohesion policy that gathered in Sundsvall (S) in September 2009 updated the AER position on the future Cohesion Policy including previous positions and new elements of discussion such as the economic crisis, the Barca Report and the concept of Macro regions.

Innovation and Economic Development

- In the European Year of Creativity and Innovation Committee 1 launched the 4th edition of the AER Innovation Award. In 2009 the AER Innovation Award was presented to the regions of Västra-Götaland (S) and Slaskie (PL), a special recognition went to the region of Heraklion (GR).
- In spring 2009 survey on regional answers to the economic crisis was carried out and the AER Bureau adopted a declaration on the crucial role of regions in the fight against the global economic downturn in May 2009 in Fribourg (CH). In July 2009 a conference presenting regional good practice in overcoming the economic crisis was held in the Brussels representation of Ile-de-France (FR).
- AER together with EURISY organised a workshop entitled "Stimulating regional economies through high speed internet access" in May 2009 in the Croatian regions' office in Brussels.
- A conference on "EU guidelines for state aid for regional airports" discussed the EU rules on support for regional airports, which are to be renewed in 2010, and highlighted the importance of regional airports for regional development.

Environment: Climate change and energy

- Together with UNDP, AER organised a conference under the title "Regional Answers to Climate Change" in March 2009 in Limousin (FR).
- In June 2009 in cooperation with EURISY a workshop on "Innovation at the service of regions and cities for implementing sustainable energy strategies" was held to highlight the advantages of using innovative satellite information and services in support of successful energy strategies.
- In the frame of More4NRG Interreg IVC project that aims to reduce energy consumption and promote the use of renewable energy sources a conference entitled "Energy Efficiency - Regional Solutions for the Future" was held in September 2009 in Västernorrland (S).
- Under the coordination of AER a peer review in Republika Srpska (BIH) with experts from Maramures (RO) and North Hungary (HU) audited the region's potential to produce electrical and thermal energy from biomass.

Rural Development

- A survey on rural development examined the state of the art in AER member regions. The outcome will serve as a basis for further AER lobbying concerning the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.
- AER as a full member of the European Rural Development Network, a new EU advisory body to the European Commission participated in several meetings of the group. The outcomes of the meetings were presented at AER meetings.

Tourism

- PRESERVE, an Interreg IVC project aiming to share best practices towards sustainable tourism strategies held its official public launch conference in February 2009 in the Brussels representation of Abruzzo (IT). The conference entitled “Environment to trigger a more sustainable tourism” looked up for an answer to the question of how using the environment as a leverage to make tourism policy more sustainable.
- In June 2009 a PRESERVE peer review with experts from Styria (AT), Eszák-Alföld (HU) and Alytus (LT) took place in Örebro (S); a second peer review was organised in Calabria (IT) with experts from Tuscany (IT), South Denmark (DK) and Carinthia (AT).
- During a study tour to Salzburg (AT) a delegation from Durres (AL) examined good practice in the area of tourism infrastructure and learned about education and training issues in the tourism sector.

