



PRESS RELEASE

Subsidiarity is more than a word for European youth! *AER's Youth Regional Network's meeting*

Donja Stubica (HR), 9 June 2010.

Concerned about the challenges faced by youth in the contemporary Europe, 90 young participants from more than 40 European regions joined, today, the meeting of the AER's Youth Regional Network (YRN). Through this network, the Assembly of European Regions aims to reengage young people in politics.

Young representatives of regional youth councils, parliaments and organisations gathered today in the Croatian region of Krapina-Zagorje to discuss possibilities of greater participation in regional, national and European politics. While agreeing on the fact that their input is crucial, another question aroused: how can young people effectively take part in the decision-making process? The answer is simple: by applying the subsidiarity principle.

While welcoming the participants, **Sinica Hajdas Doncic**, Prefect of Krapina-Zagorje County, said *"you are the future of our regions and of Europe, and that is why you are so important, especially in the decision-making process"*. **Stjepan Mesic**, President of the Republic of Croatia (mandates 2000-2010) stressed that YRN can play an immense role in strengthening youth-adult partnerships, since *"it encourages greater inclusion of young people in the decision-making process on the European and regional levels by assuming that young people are the ones who can and eventually will overcome common challenges."*

Reingard Spanning, from the Institute of Educational Sciences of the University of Innsbruck (A), noted: *"There is a general frustration regarding politics, and it affects young people in particular. This problem seems to be solved at the regional and local levels, since they give a better opportunity to create a political culture that is inclusive, in ways that are not determined by the structure."* **Joanne Hunting**, from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe added: *"No youth policy will succeed unless the highest political level of the community is committed to dealing with youth issues and prepared to make them a priority. But there also has to be a commitment from the political side to full participation of young people in youth policy development – asking youth about their opinion and then going ahead with what had already been decided is tokenism, not participation."*

Olov Oskarsson: new elected President of the AER Youth Regional Network

Olov is 22 years old and he comes from the Swedish region of Jämtland. He studies religion and has specialised in corporate ethics. He joined AER in 2008 as a youth team member and he has been actively involved in YRN since the beginning. After his election, he said: *"As the newly elected YRN president I want us to start acting and make changes. We can really help all young people in Europe. What really makes me committed to this is that I think we have one of the best platforms for youth but still we can reach further."*

After electing a new President, the YRN also elected **Michal Matlak** from the Polish region of Westpomerania as Vice-President and adopted a new Strategic programme for 2010-2011.

Please find further information about the meeting at:

www.aer.eu/events/committee-3-culture-education-interregional-cooperation/2010/the-4th-meeting-of-the-aer-youth-regional-network.html

*The **Assembly of European Regions (AER – aer.eu)** is the largest independent network of regions in wider Europe. Bringing together more than 270 regions from 33 countries and 16 interregional organisations, AER is the political voice of its members and a forum for interregional co-operation.*

AER Contacts

Francine Huhardeaux
Press & Communication Officer
+33 3 88 22 74 49
f.huhardeaux@aer.eu

Valentina Guerra
Press & Communication Officer
+33 3 88 22 74 33
v.guerra@aer.eu

Justyna Hejman
'Culture, Education and Youth' Committee
Youth and Citizens Officer
+33 3 88 22 74 46
j.hejman@aer.eu

