



AER Youth Peer Review Regional Youth Employment Policies

Background – what is AER Peer Review?

Developed by AER a 'peer review' methodology allows regional authorities to assess and improve their performance in key areas of regional responsibility. A peer review is a mentoring visit undertaken by a group of regional authorities to a host region, in order to identify current strengths and weaknesses in a specific policy area. Peer reviews can help regional authorities to understand how well they are working and support them in making improvements. They provide a good opportunity for regional representatives to learn from one another.

It has been since then implemented in other areas of the AER's work including alcohol policies and renewable energies.

The methodology could also prove useful for the area of youth employment policy. Multinational review teams of youth employment policy experts from European regions would undertake study visits to host regions and provide advice on enhancing regional youth policies and practices. The teams would have face-to-face meetings with their counterparts in the host regions and would produce comprehensive reports including recommendations on further measures to enhance youth employment policies in the host regions.

Moreover, the European Union funding under the Youth in Action programme is a potential support for the development of peer reviews in this area. This paper outlines the peer review concept as it could relate to youth employment policy, and sets out the possibilities for accessing the EU funding.

Objectives

The aim of the project is to develop a comprehensive peer review system for regional youth policies throughout Europe. The key objectives of the project would be:

- To encourage the development of better regional youth employment policies throughout Europe;
- To allow an exchange of experience between European regions on youth employment policy;
- To develop new methodologies in regional youth employment policy.

Methodology

The AER Secretariat and the Sub-Committee Youth would be responsible for:

- Identifying **pilot regions** willing to host peer reviews;
- Identifying **peer review teams** (at least three youth policy experts – politicians and officers);
- Developing a **toolkit** providing participating regions with a fixed source of reference.

Pilot regions and peer review teams

Each interested region could choose to host a review, contribute to one or more teams, or do both. As far as possible, each team would consist of experts from at least three different countries, in order to ensure that the members will be able to contribute expertise and complimentary approaches to youth employment policy issues. The host region would therefore have the opportunity to draw upon a number of different models and to identify those parts of each model that are the most relevant to their own circumstances.

Each peer review team would undertake a 5-day visit to their host region. The peer reviews would involve interviews with politicians responsible for youth employment policies, youth officers, young people, youth councils and NGOs, as well as site visits.

On the final day of the visit, the review team would present its key findings to senior staff, the youth council and to regional politicians. The review would identify both the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the host region's youth employment policies. The peer review team would produce an in-depth assessment report within one month of the visit. The host region should commit to presenting the review report to its political bodies in order to ensure that the recommendations in the report are discussed thoroughly and options for their implementation are properly identified.

All peer review teams and the representatives of the host regions would meet in the final phase of the project in order to evaluate the pilot initiatives. During this evaluation they would assess the effectiveness of the peer reviews, make suggestions for improvement of the methodology and put into place a framework for the further continuation of the youth policy peer review scheme.

Toolkit

Toolkit will provide all participants involved in the Youth Peer Review with an indispensable source of reference when evaluating regional youth employment policies and will include:

- a questionnaire for the host region, to gather information about youth employment policies;
- a checklist for the review team, to assist them in collecting information;
- a final report template.

Budget

The AER could apply for funding for a youth policy peer review scheme under Action 4.3 of the Youth in Action programme.