



Press Release

Communicating Europe, Innovation and Youth: AER awards Europe's the most dynamic regions of 2009

Belfort (F), 27th November 2009.

The AER Communicating Europe Award 2009

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) has honoured three regions with its "Communicating Europe Award".

In the category *Children and Young People*, the prize goes to the Croatian Medjmurje County for its project "A B C D Europe". This project convinced the jury with its creativity and originality on a small budget. It addresses a very specific target group - children in kindergarten and primary schools. Fifty kindergartens and 32 primary schools were reached by the project involving more than 20 000 children. The jury liked the original concept of involving these young kids in talking about Europe through activities that were entertaining as well as educational. **Vesna Heluga**, head of the project, said: *"We are working hard to educate children and young people about the EU, and this award is the crown of all that work. Also, it is motivating because for next year we are already preparing lots of interesting, educational programs and projects for children and young people."*

The winner of the category *Regional Media* was the Dutch Province of Noord Brabant for its project "Brabant Battle Goes Europe". *"It is a great honour for our region to be the winner of a Communication Europe Award. We see this prize as confirmation of our efforts to communicate Europe to our citizens in Brabant in the best way we can and as a stimulus to our ambition to make Europe part of our everyday life"* said **Wim Van Der Donk**, Queen's Commissioner in the Province of Noord-Brabant. The project is a creative and engaging media production involving high school students. The show is a great example of what can be done in partnership between a region and regional media using state of the art technologies.

In the last category, *Communicating the European Parliament elections*, the winner was the Styria region of Austria for its project "We go Europe - Europe in Styria". The project combined a creative use of language with captivating and challenging topics. A good mix of interactive and informative activities made use of new media tools such as live chat and web streaming. **Franz Voves**, governor of the region said: *"As regional Governor of Styria and a glowing European I am very pleased that this year's 'Communicating Europe Award' has been awarded to our region. The winning informational series "Wir in Europa (We go Europe)" addresses itself on one hand to young people, as Europe's future will lie in their hands some day, and on the other hand to our regions, as Europe will always remain a Europe of regions."*

The AER innovation Award 2009

In this category, AER decided to award two regions: Slaskie (PL), for its project "SEKAP", and Västra-Götaland (S) for its project "Industrial Dynamics". The SEKAP project aims to provide online technical tools to improve the effectiveness of the administration. **Dorota Danielczyk**, head of Slaskie's European Affairs Office, said: *"This project shows clearly our potential in innovation, environment and equal opportunity"*. For the Swedish region, **Marcus Nordanstad**, head of project

Industrial Dynamics, said: *“The region of Västra Götaland is very honoured and grateful to be awarded AER’s Innovation Award. This is an inspiring acknowledgment for the region, proving that our innovation strategy and its initiatives are effective. The award encourages us to be even more creative in the future”*. Industrial Dynamics creates a network of expert organisations to support industrial SMEs.

The jury awarded the region of Heraklion (GR), with a new award of *Special Recognition*, for its project “Mammogram Mobile Unit”. The project was set up in July 2008 to improve the detection of breast cancers and overcome the obstacles which prevent women from undertaking of screening. **Evangelia Schoinaraki**, head of the region, said: *“It constitutes an important remuneration of our efforts as Prefecture of Heraklion to offer health and prevention services to the citizens of our region and everywhere else in our country where it’s needed. At the same time, it constitutes a great recognition at the European level, which gives us the impetus to continue our work in the health sector.”*

Established in 2006, this Award recognises the European regional authorities that have stimulated, fostered and implemented innovation in their territory.

The AER Most Youth Friendly European Region Award 2009

AER also presented today its award for the “Most Youth Friendly European Region”, which this year went to the Somerset region (UK). **Cllr John Osman**, cabinet member for children and young people, said: *“Somerset County Council aims to help give young people a chance to actively communicate the issues that matter to them. We’re proud that the variety of work carried out by us and our partners across the county, has been recognised on such a big stage with a prestigious award.”*

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) 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.

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