



The AER believes in its commitments and this year launched two initiatives in aiming to include young people in public affairs. These initiatives have allowed young

people to give their views on current issues such as the future of Europe and sustainable development.

Following the announcement concerning the creation of the Youth Convention on the future of Europe, and with a view to involving a maximum of young people in Convention activities, the AER has set up a discussion forum for young people on the Internet. The reaction of young people proves their wish to live in a strong and united Europe, they want "more Europe". To give an example, some young people feel that they have become more aware of their European identity by travelling outside of the EU. Considering the amount of replies, we have provided a summary of these contributions for the Youth Convention.

On the day following the Summit in Johannesburg, the AER organised its first Youth Summer School in Opatija (HR), on the issue of sustainable development. Young people complain that "European leaders are forever putting off the creation of a political Europe". For this reason we decided to include them in the activities of AER political representatives and organised the first ever Youth Summer School in parallel to the traditional Summer School. Each of the 42 participants at the meeting was able to propose action and contribute to sustainable development in his or her home region. One participant summed up nicely: "This event has given us the possibility to work together, to find solutions to problems in our regions, and to submit these solutions directly to political representatives".

This initiative has proved the benefits of increased involvement in public affairs for young people. It is up to all of us to encourage this involvement!

Liese Prokop
AER President
Vice-Minister President of Niederösterreich (A)

The AER calls for a Parliamentary vote on GATS



At the initiative of the AER, 150 regional Ministers and political representatives of culture and education from all over Europe and Canada looked at the consequences of negotiations in the framework of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) on public policies and services in the fields of culture, education and the media. They unanimously demand the organisation of wide public consultation and deliberation by national and regional Parliaments before opening these sectors of major importance for the protection and promotion of cultural identities and diversity up to privatisation and competition.

Important decisions on the future of public services in our countries and regions are gradually being taken by GATS negotiators without prior consultation or the agreement of elected representatives selected by the citizens to manage public affairs and defend their interests at either national or regional level"

stated Liese Prokop, AER President and Vice-Minister President of Niederösterreich (A).

Mobilise national as well as regional governance

"We cannot let the experts in international trade and Economic Interest Groups decide on

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the future of public service policies for us, particularly in fields such as education and culture. On behalf of the AER, I solemnly call upon all political representatives to act and to participate in later GATS negotiations. I hope that the messages in the Final declaration of the 2nd AER Conference of Regional Ministers of culture will be heard by governments at all levels and that, together, we will manage to make politics the priority in trade talks" added the President.

Bruno Hosp, Minister of Culture for Bozen-South Tyrol (I) and President of the AER Culture and Education Committee, host of the Brixen-Bressanone Conference



Education: preserving national sovereignty

Bruno Hosp, President of the AER Culture and Education Committee and Minister of Culture for Bozen-South Tyrol (I), host of this Conference, insisted on the importance of protecting national and regional sovereignty in both of these fields. "We do not feel that privatisation in several sectors of culture and education be the right reaction to the needs of individuals and society as a whole. We are particularly against a change from the current education system, subject to the approval of public authorities and acting in the general interest, to a system meeting the needs of the market and of interest groups" stressed Dr. Hosp.

Whilst liberalisation in certain public markets may have a positive effect on global economic development and the future of public finance in general, culture and education are the sources of cultural identity and diversity and therefore represent highly delicate fields. For this reason, in the Declaration adopted at this Conference, the AER calls for both these sectors to be excluded from

future GATS negotiations until clear agreement has been found for the inclusion of representatives from regional governments, particularly regions with exclusive or shared (with national government) legislative competences, in later negotiations. Article I-3a on GATS member status must be re-considered in this light.

Culture: maintaining unanimous voting

The AER also warns the European Commission, the main EU negotiator within GATS, against following a unilateral strategy for the promotion of privatisation and reiterates its opposition to further modification of the EU Treaties which would allow the transfer of competences in education and culture to the European level.

All speeches, particularly those by important guests at the Conference - Diane Lamieux, State Minister for Culture and Communication of Quebec (Canada) and Fritz Pleitgen, Director of ARD (German public television channel) as well as the final Declaration are available on the AER web site: www.a-e-r.org (Brixen/Gats links/Conference documents).

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focus

Brixen/Bressanone Declaration on cultural diversity and GATS*

We, the European regional ministers and political heads of education, culture and media departments representing the views and interests of our citizens

- believe that GATS does concern public services in the fields of education, culture and media,
- believe that GATS carries the tendency of the precedence of commercial priority over democratically agreed quality,
- are concerned with the implications of GATS as democratically accountable providers of public services in education, culture and media,
- assert that these services should be available to our citizens on the basis of social equality, universality and high standards,
- demand that we, as the democratic representatives of our citizens, be involved in all future negotiations within GATS which deal with education, culture and media issues, based on the principle of subsidiarity,
- call for an international agreement for the protection of diversity in education, culture and media to include the regional dimension,

- demand that democratically supported services in education, culture and media be excluded from further GATS involvement,
- urge all members of the AER and leaders of other European regions to lobby their councils, their governments and the EU in pursuit of the aims of the Brixen/Bressanone Declaration on cultural diversity and GATS.

* Unanimously adopted (2 abstentions) by the European regional ministers and political heads of Education and Culture in Brixen/Bressanone, 18th October 2002



AER activities in the 2nd phase of the Convention

In July the European Convention ended the first phase of its activities. The AER benefited from these first five months by presenting its position to Convention members and to the other European institutions. The aim is to involve the regions in the future distribution of competences to be based on the principle of subsidiarity and to ensure their participation at an early stage in EU decision-making processes.

With regard to its activities on the Convention, the AER Institutional Affairs Committee and its working group on the future of Europe met on 2nd August in Salzburg in order to prepare a new opinion and to present this document to the Committee plenary session on 8th November in St. Gallen.

Planting roots for the regions in the Constitutional Treaty

On the eve of EU enlargement to over 20 member states, the AER positions must demonstrate that the regions are the best placed to guarantee political and cultural diversity throughout Europe and to contribute to better run, more democratic EU institutions closer to the citizens. Convention members will receive the concrete proposals of the AER on this topic and concerning the incorporation of the regions in the fundamental principles both of a Constitutional Treaty and its institutional provisions.

In an opinion addressed to all Convention members and to members of the Constitutional Committee of the European Parliament, the AER, along with other interregional organisations, expressed its own opinion on the final report of the working group on subsidiarity. The AER also called for the right for the regions to appeal to the European Court of Justice and to participate *ex post* in controlling the distribution of competences and the principle of subsidiarity (this aspect has not been discussed by the relevant working group). This opinion was also sent to all Convention members and the representatives of the other European institutions.

Better integration in decision-making and legislation

On 11th October, the President of the Landtag of Baden-Württemberg, Peter Straub, represented the Assembly of European Regions at a hearing of the Institutional Affairs and European governance Commission of the Committee of the Regions. He called for access for the regions to referral before the European Court of Justice. He declared that this right would allow the regions to defend themselves should the EU overstep its competences and to maintain their powers within their states.



On 16th October, Lambert Van Nistelrooij represented the AER at the meeting of the contact group on regional and local authorities, chaired by Jean-Luc Dehaene, Vice-President of the Convention. The AER Vice-President asked the Convention to take account of and give greater application to the role and the position of sub-

national bodies within the European institutional structure in legislative, executive and judicial terms. This would particularly allow the Convention to clarify to what extent regional and local authorities could be integrated into the various stages of the European decision-making and legislative processes. He also insisted on greater participation for the regions in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity and increased respect for the principle of proportionality in EU legislation. This would provide member states and regions with more room to manoeuvre when applying Community law. Following this meeting, Jean-Luc Dehaene specified that towards the end of December, a plenary session could focus on the role of the regions and local authorities in the future institutional structure of Europe.

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BARCELONA CONFERENCE

The future of Europe depends on gender equality



The Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Institut Català de la Dona organised a Conference in Barcelona (E) on 25th and 26th October 2002 under the heading "Women in decision-making in the Regions of Europe: women and men sharing power".

Women in politics...

"The balanced share of responsibilities and equal opportunities must be fully planned for, assessed and resolved. If we do not manage to reconcile the pillars of society, i.e. paid work and family obligations, via enhanced action for the reconciliation of politics and family life, female participation in this field will remain tedious and difficult" declared Carin Palmcrantz, President of the Equal opportunities for men and women group.

... and economics

"Claims for gender equality do not only concern women, all members of society are affected" stressed Margarida Álvarez i Álvarez, President of the Institut

Català de la Dona. *"The struggle for gender equality is not simply a question of justice, it's profitable"* she continued. World Bank statistics prove that countries which protect women's rights and develop access to financial assistance achieve more rapid economic growth than other countries.

The 4th AER annual Conference on equal opportunities for men and women brought in over 80 regional political representatives and experts in gender equality who were able to exchange their experience and discover examples of good practices in this field. The group 'equal opportunities for men and women' now intends to distribute the final Declaration adopted in Barcelona to the European Institutions and to the regions themselves.

* *The Manifesto of Catalonia is available on the AER web site: www.a-e-r.org*

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Eurodyssesey Forum in Porec

The ancient Roman city of Porec (Istria-HR) welcomed the Eurodyssesey Forum on 26th and 27th September, the annual meeting of managers of the various member regions of this AER training programme. An issue of particular importance in Porec was that of the succession of the Franche-Comté (F) region, that held the Presidency of the Secretariat of Eurodyssesey for more than 15 years. A submission to the AER Bureau meeting (Brixen, 17 Oct.) proposed Wallonia-B as a candidate for succession, and the final decision will be taken at the General Assembly in Naples.

The Forum also gave the opportunity to former interns to share their personal experience. Their enthusiasm was certainly the best compensation that the participating regions could have received. Five new regions have decided to sign on to the Programme as observers: Murcia (E), Covasna and Brasov (RO), Dubrovnik-Neretva and Primorje-Gorski Kotar (HR). In addition, Madeira (P), Castilla y León (E) and Adjara (GEO) are undergoing the phase of sponsorship.

The next Eurodyssesey Forum will be held in Lyon (Rhône-Alpes-F) at the end of September 2003. All of the member regions of the AER are cordially invited to attend: members are encouraged to participate and to support the youth of their regions.

The AER Eurodyssesey Programme aims to improve the chances of young Europeans aged 18-30 to integrate into the workforce by offering them the opportunity to acquire professional experience abroad. It allows member regions to confront their youth with the socio-economic realities of other regions and also to favour their introduction into the European economic fabric.

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AER SUMMER SCHOOL

The Regions' follow-up to the Johannesburg Summit

Around 200 participants from 50 Regions in 19 European countries attended the AER Summer School 2002 in Opatija (8th-12th September), supported by the CLRAE and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Just a few days after the Johannesburg Summit, this year's Summer School focused on concrete implementation policies of sustainable development at the regional level. The event also encouraged exchange of concrete experience and know-how among the participants in various fields of environmental protection and sustainable social and economic development.

As an outcome of our work, the organising Adriatic regions - Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Istra, Dubrovnik-Neretva (HR) and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (I) - launched the "Adriatic Agenda 21", the initiative which aims to establish a permanent cooperation network between Adriatic regions and towns on sustainability issues in order to stop degradation of the environment within the Adriatic Basin and improve quality of life.

"Sustainable development is the only way that can prevent Adriatic countries in transition from repeating mistakes made by the most developed countries. Yet, it is also a complex process that cannot happen spontaneously. Therefore, a cooperation network through which sustainability principles will be

promoted, a common vision of the future of Adriatic space will be made and practical actions will be planned and initiated, is very much needed there" said the Presidents of the signatory Regions in their common Final Declaration.

The AER who co-signed this Declaration is determined to support the process that has been started in Opatija. *"We indeed believe that with joint efforts, such as the "Adriatic Agenda 21 initiative", we can preserve remaining European areas of unspoiled nature and areas with specific culture which are both threatened by dominating development trends"* explained Paul Diemel, Coordinator of the AER Summer School Organising Committee.

Initiated in 1996, the Summer School is a truly inter-regional project. The 2002 edition was organised by Bruxelles-Capitale (B), Gloucestershire (GB), Noord-Brabant (NL), Thüringen (D), Wien (A) and Wallonie (B), and the above mentioned Adriatic Regions.

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NB. The final report on the 2002 Summer School will soon be available online at www.a-e-r.org (Programmes).



Young people act in favour of sustainable development

The first AER Youth Summer School was organised in Opatija, in parallel with the classic AER Summer School. More than 40 young people from all over Europe had the opportunity to discuss their proposals for a more sustainable future directly with regional experts and elected representatives. Their common objective was not to reach a new general declaration on sustainable environment but to find genuine solutions immediately applicable in this field. In fact, each participant was asked to prepare the working sessions in the form of a home assignment with well-defined projects and ideas on how to improve his/her local environment in practice.

"The future belongs to the young people of today. It is essential for a political organisation such as the AER to encourage their involvement in public life as

active citizens. Only then we can achieve our vision of environmental sustainability in practice. We hope that this AER Youth Summer School will contribute to serving this objective" said Mr Jörgen Hedberg, President of the AER Youth Sub-Committee.

The 1st AER Youth Summer School was organised by the AER member regions Sörmland (S), Vestfold (N), Catalunya (E), Devon (GB), Niederösterreich (A) and Harghita (RO).

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NB. The AER Youth Summer School 2002 newsletter is available at the AER Secretariat

28TH & 29TH NOVEMBER 2002

General Assembly of the AER in Naples



Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that the region of Campania will host the General Assembly of the Assembly of European Regions in Naples on 28th and 29th November of this year.

For the first time ever, Italy will be hosting the AER General Assembly representing over 250 regions. This event is of major importance in today's Europe, on the eve of the enlargement of the Union which represents a historic opportunity for the whole of the continent and requires, at the same time, an unprecedented adaptation by the populations of our regions with their widely varying cultures.

By participating in preparations for the General Assembly programme we have tried to use all means possible to take advantage of and give voice to the diversities of the regions. We have also attempted to lay the foundations of sustainable partnerships between the regions of Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern Europe.

We hope that our hospitality will provide AER members with an effective working environment and keep our tradition as an international and open region, of which we are very proud, alive. Here in the region of Campania, we became Italian thanks to the contributions of the whole of Europe and the Mediterranean. This remains a permanent challenge for our region: to provide a place where women and men of various origins meet each other and work together with tolerance and solidarity in view of our future.

Antonio Bassolino
President of the region of Campania

At the invitation of Mr Antonio Bassolino, President of the Campania Region, the 18th General Assembly of the AER, but the first in Italy, will take place in Naples on the 28th and 29th of November 2002. All meetings will be held in the Mostra d'Oltremare, the conference centre of Naples.

THURSDAY 28TH NOVEMBER

09.00 – 12.00

Seminar on the development of inter-regional co-operation in Europe, particularly in the framework of EU programmes (INTERREG, PHARE, MEDA...), co-organised by the Campania region and the AER with the aim, by building upon the examples of former successes and by analysing the difficulties of past projects, of drawing together the expectations of regions in regard to these programmes and to share this information with the European institutions.

At the same time, AER Bureau meeting (Bureau members only)

12.00 – 14.00

Lunch

14.00 – 19.30

General Assembly

- Welcome speech by Mr Antonio Bassolino, President of the Campania Region, host of the General Assembly, and by Mrs Prokop, President of the AER
- Session devoted to the AER initiatives for young people and to future perspectives
- Activity report from the AER Presidents and Vice-Presidents
- Activity report from the Secretary General
- Activity reports from the Committees and programmes
- Voting of draft resolutions
- Activity programme and budget for 2003
- Elections of the President, Vice-Presidents, Vice-President Treasurer and the Bureau members

21.00

Dinner at the Archaeological Museum of Naples

FRIDAY 29TH NOVEMBER

08.00 – 09.30

AER Bureau meeting: elections of Presidents of the Commissions and the members responsible for AER programmes

09.30 – 14.00

General Assembly

- Presentation by Mr Antonio Bassolino of the conclusions of the seminar on inter-regional co-operation
- Round tables, followed by debates, on the two questions of major political importance for the European regions:
 1. the European Convention on the Future of Europe and the role of the regions,
 2. sustainable development and territorial cohesion in an enlarged Europe, with the participation of representatives of the European institutions (Convention, Commission, CoR, CLRAE...) and the Presidents of the Regions
- Adoption of a final declaration and closing speeches

14.00 – 15.30

Lunch

Evening: Reception at the San Carlo Theatre, Naples

Saturday morning: excursions at the Museum and National Galleries of Capodimonte, Pompei or Reggia di Caserta

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Campania opens its doors

Campania is the largest region in southern Italy, with an area of some 14 000 km². It is bordered on the east by the regions of Latium, Molise, Puglia, and Basilicata and bound on the west by the Tyrrhenian Sea. Its islands are those of Capri, Ischia and Procida, which have a total surface area of approximately 61 km². The coastline extends over close to 350 km. The capital of Campania is Naples.

The region is home to a variety of landscapes. From one end to the other you can pass by the sea, mountains, vast plains, rivers, lakes, islands, thousand-year-old caves, and also pass through several climates that range from the humid heat of the coasts, to the revitalising atmosphere of the

mountains, to the softness of the plains. The historical cities, boroughs dating from the middle ages, archaeological and volcanic zones (Phlegraean Fields and Vesuvius), large national parks, as well as a well-preserved natural environment are many major assets of this region that attracts tourists from the world over.

Campania is the second largest region in Italy in terms of demographics; it boasts 6 million inhabitants, of which more than half are concentrated in Naples. It is also one of the youngest regions in Europe, with almost 50% of its population below 30, and one third under 20. This youth favours the dynamism of this region, thanks to the richness of university life.

Economic opportunities are developing at a particularly high rate in Campania. To attract enterprises, the regional government offers them a large variety of incentives. The result is that each year, 125% of new Italian business enterprises are established in the region. Campania is currently home to around 14 000 enterprises.

However, a portrait of the Campania region would not be complete without the evocation of its delicious Mediterranean cuisine and of its internationally renowned pizzas. A must for any visitor!

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The expectations of Wallonie, a region with legislative powers, vis-à-vis the European Convention

BY JEAN-CLAUDE VAN CAUWENBERGHE, MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF THE REGION OF WALLONIE



As you are aware, the region of Wallonie is one of the federated bodies in Belgium and therefore holds both executive and legislative powers with full independence in allocated fields. From these fields, some are exclusive whilst others are shared exclusively with the European Union.

In addition, in accordance with the Belgian federal system, complete coherence exists between domestic and foreign applications of our system of competence distribution. This means that the region of Wallonie is automatically responsible for foreign relations in its fields of competences. On this basis in particular, the region participates as an independent actor in European affairs, an ambitious, but difficult project, particularly in terms of the concrete expectations of our citizens with regard to economic globalisation. In this way, depending on the topics up for discussion, the region of Wallonie has a seat within the Council of Europe on behalf of Belgium and participates in working groups whose mission it is to discuss future decisions. The region is represented by elected regional representatives in the European Parliament. Wallonie is also responsible for ratifying International Treaties such as the Nice Treaty, the transposition and application of European directives and the implementation of European regional policy. Although citizens do not always understand the point behind Europe, regional representatives act as an important, day to day and direct link with the European populations.

Towards a veritable partnership

Our "State-region", provided for under the Belgian institutional framework, has a special relationship with the European Union. This relationship is regular, but it would be preferable for a direct, systematic and extensive connection to be established, i.e. an active partnership within decision-making processes at all levels and at the service of the citizens. At the current time, European regulations do not take sufficient account of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. Subsequently, transposition is

usually a tedious process, especially considering that the regions are not fully involved in the drawing up of Community decisions.

Regionalisation is gaining ground throughout Europe and the EU cannot turn a blind eye

Institutionally speaking, Europe does not recognise the regional level, which is increasingly gaining in strength within the Union. Regionalisation or decentralisation has made considerable progress in recent years, even in countries such as France, which are traditionally known for following a centralist model. This phenomenon is not a mere national issue. It is one thing to disturb the institutional frameworks of various member states and another to take full account of subsidiarity.

Are we not in an era of European construction at the service of the citizen and close to the populations of Europe? Is the Convention not debating the future European constitution rather than a simple international Treaty between those states wishing to sign? If this is the case, how can the ambitious and positive expectations of EU institutional reform and in particular, the activities of the Convention not be satisfied?

Towards the recognition of the regional dimension and grass-roots governance

Our top priority is the explicit recognition of the regional dimension, and regions with legislative powers in particular, in all pertinent sections of the Union constitutional texts. One solution may be to establish the respect of national identities as provided for under Art. 6 of the current Treaty, to cover the respective structures of the member states, their internal distribution of competences, regional divisions and local government.

The region of Wallonie represents the legislative body the closest to the citizens and calls for a revision of the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. It is important that the region, whatever its domestic status, be able to directly participate in decision-making, particularly concerning the required control mechanisms for the application of these principles.

The Commission, as it has the power of initiative and is calling for continually improving governance, must systematically consult the regions in all fields that concern them.

As a final measure of protection, the right to direct referral before the European Court of Justice should be accorded to regions such as ours when its powers are under threat. This is one of our long-standing lobbying themes and we feel that it remains fundamental.

Joint action within the Convention

These specific requests merit the close attention of Convention members. The creation of a working group on sub-national diversity in member states and on the regional dimension is more than necessary. Our region is a long way from being alone. In eight of the member states, 74 regions with legislative powers, representing roughly 56% of the EU population, are facing similar difficulties and have similar expectations. Together, we can collaborate in our action and speak with greater force and increased legitimacy.

We have held a Conference of the regions with legislative powers every year for the last ten years. In 2001, we met in Liège, and this year we will hold our Conference in Florence, on the 14th and 15th of November. Our objective is to positively influence the debates of the European Convention. We hope to be heard and for our citizens to feel more involved in the pursuit of the ideal Europe.



ENLARGEMENT

The Vienna Region shares its experience with the candidates



Following Austria's accession to the EU, the Region of Vienna was involved very early in the pre-accession process. Its understanding of the impact of EU membership on its own political life became an asset in its cooperation with the cities and regions of the candidate countries. Against the background of Austria's relatively recent accession (1995), Vienna is now able to share its experience with its partners in Central and Eastern Europe and has launched a training programme "The Consequences of EU Membership for the Towns and for the Regions". The organisation of this programme was motivated by two factors:

- the towns and the regions of the candidate countries are not well informed on the EU. A certain level of understanding, especially of the impact of the EU policies on their own policies is, however, indis-

enable when it comes to fully grasping the problems encountered in the accession process or developing an appropriate accession strategy;

- it is also essential that the towns and the regions be integrated into the accession negotiations taking place at the national level in order for them to better represent their interests.

The aim of this project of the Vienna Region is, therefore, to increase awareness of the towns and the regions from the CEEC close to Austrian borders on the pre-accession phase onwards and, as a result, to support their policy choices in preparation for joining the EU.

The seminars bridge the following topics: the institutions of the EU, the principles of the common market, Economic and Monetary Union, CFSP, Schengen, negotiations & lobbying, calls for tender regulations, financing and the impact on taxation, environmental standards, structural and regional policy, and the administration of Phare, ISPA, Sapard and other grants of the EU.

Apart from Vienna, these seminars have taken place in Warsaw, Katowice, Krakow (PL), Prague, Brno (CZ), Bratislava (SK), Budapest (H) and Harghita (RO).

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internet

www.a-e-r.org

A vital tool for the European regions

The AER website is constantly updated, improved and streamlined and receives as many visits from its members as from non-member regions, European affairs consultants, researchers, students, journalists, and NGOs - the number of subscriptions to our online services proves it. In September, the number of visitors had doubled from the previous year, reaching a peak of over 8000 visits per month.

The site is currently accessible at www.a-e-r.org (although the old address remains operational). The latest changes reflect the dedication of the AER to the development of interregional co-operation in Europe. A few of our new services include:

- **Members' Space** (accessible from the home page): this page is devoted to the member regions and provides space for them to advertise their initiatives, partnerships, conferences and activities. As from 2003, a simple e-mail will suffice in order to publish announcements online.
- **Centurio:** the new Centurio web site gives the opportunity to civil servants or elected representatives from Central and Eastern Europe to undertake traineeships in Western European regional administrations. Apply online!
- **AER Youth Summer School:** within the Youth Forum, an area is dedicated to this new AER initiative.

And of course, we must not forget already existing services such as information on ongoing activities, the online databases (Visiting Cards of the European Regions, Interregional Partnership Pool, links to the members) and subscription services.

notebook

RE-ELECTION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN SWEDEN

The Social Democratic Party (SAP), led by former Prime Minister Göran Persson, came out ahead in the legislative elections on 15 September with 40% of the vote. However, with only 144 seats out of the 349 in the Riksdag, they were unable to obtain an absolute majority in the Parliament. The Moderate Party (conservatives) took a heavy blow in these elections, losing 27 seats. Similar trends were noted in the local elections.

SLOVAKIA: ELECTORS VOTED FOR EUROPE

The pro-European coalition of the centre-right received 78 out of 150 seats in the Parliament following the legislative elections on the 20th and 21st of September. Though they came out ahead in the polls with 19.5%, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, led by Vladimir Meciar, found themselves overpowered by the centre-right coalition. The voters, it seems, have clearly chosen Europe.

GERMANY: THE GREENS SAVE CHANCELLOR SCHRÖDER

Following an electoral campaign fraught with sudden developments, the coalition of the left (SPD- Greens) finally triumphed on 22 September, after a head to head with the conservatives and centrists (CDU/CSU) led by E. Stoiber. The SPD and the CDU/CSU each received 38.5% of the vote and the SPD even lost 47 seats in the Bundestag. It was the Greens who, realising their historic score (8.6%), offered Gerhard Schröder the majority necessary to maintain the Chancellorship.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: THE VICTORY OF THE NATIONALISTS

Despite appeals from the international community in favour of pro-European reformists, in the legislative elections of 5 October, the Bosnians stayed loyal to the nationalist parties, the SDA, SDS, and HDZ, representing the ethnic interests of the 3 communities in the country, Muslim, Serb and Croat.

THE "NEW ERA" TRIUMPHS IN LATVIA

The brand new party led by Einars Repse, the New Era (right), prevailed following the elections of 5 October with 23.8% of the vote. The Party of the People, part of the incumbent coalition, obtained only 16.7% of the vote, and was passed up by FHRUL, the leftist party defending the interests of minorities in Latvia.

THE IRISH RATIFY THE NICE TREATY

All of Europe is satisfied with the results of the referendum in Ireland. By a very large majority (6.89%), the voters accepted the ratification of the Nice Treaty, therefore giving the green light to the enlargement of the EU.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.robert-schuman.org/oe/calendrierelections/>

AER ACTIVITIES

August - October 2002

Political meetings and events

- Participation in the global Summit on sustainable development (*T. Hagg, B. Soulage, Johannesburg, 26/08 - 4/09*)
- Participation in the annual conference of the European group on public administration (*K. Klipp, Potsdam, 4-6/09*)
- Meeting with B. Richstein, Minister of Justice and European Affairs for Brandenburg (*K. Klipp, Potsdam, 6/09*)
- Meeting between M. Barnier, Commissioner for regional policy, and NGOs in the framework of the European Convention (*K. Klipp, Brussels, 16/09*)
- Participation in the CPMR General Assembly (*K. Klipp, Ioannina, 18-19/09*)
- Participation in the conference on 'The Future of Cohesion Policy' organised by the Southwest of England (*B. Greenslade, Plymouth, 20/09*)
- CoR informal meeting on the Napolitano Report (*A. Mavroudi, Brussels, 23/09*)
- Meeting with C. Huvenne, regional Councillor of Nord-Pas-de-Calais (*K. Klipp, Strasbourg, 24/09*)
- Meetings in Strasbourg with the Ambassadors of Cyprus (*30/09*) and of Malta (*3/10*) / *K. Klipp*
- Participation in the hearings on the Napolitano Report and the European Convention - Plenary session of the CoR Institutional Affairs Commission (*P. Straub, President of the Parliament of Baden-Württemberg, Brussels, 11/10*)
- Participation in the European Convention Contact Group 'Dehaene' (*L. Van Nistelrooij, Brussels, 16/10*)

Member contact

- Meeting with members of the Chancellery of Bavaria (*K. Klipp, Munich, 1/08*)
- Inauguration of the Bureau of representation of Woj. Slaskie (PL) in Brussels (*K. Klipp, 16/09*)
- Meeting with the representatives of the Swedish Counties (*K. Klipp, Stockholm, 23/10*)

Other AER meetings

- Institutional Affairs Committee working group on the 'Future of Europe' (A) - (*Salzburg, 2/08*)
- Consultative group (*Strasbourg, 30/08*)
- Committee on Culture, Education and Youth - Sub-Committee on Education and Training (D) - (*Pécs, 5-6/09*)
- Summer School and Youth Summer School (*Opatija, 8-12/09*)
- Working group on regionalisation (*Brussels, 26/09*)
- Eurodissey Forum (*Istra, 26-27/09*)
- Presidium (*Brussels, 27/09*)
- Working Group on Regional Partnership (*Strasbourg, 4/10*)
- Committee on Culture, Education and Youth (D) - (*Brixen, 17/10*)
- Bureau meeting (*Brixen, 17/10*)
- Conference of Regional Ministers of Culture and Education (*Brixen, 18/10*)
- Conference on equal opportunities for men and women (*Barcelona, 25-26/10*)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.a-e-r.org

publications

"L'ÉMERGENCE DU RÉGIONALISME COOPÉRATIF EN EUROPE - IDENTITÉ RÉGIONALE ET CONSTRUCTION EUROPÉENNE"



The 21st century will be one built on networks, and the European regions are part of this (r)evolution. The thesis of Nicolas Schmitt - associate at the Institute of Federalism at the University of Fribourg and author of this impressive work - analyses the phenomenon across the 67 regions of Germany, Austria, Italy and France. His work demonstrates that despite past political obstacles and an incompatibility of norms, the regions have already established an impressive number of partnerships reaching to the four corners of Europe and beyond.

However, the legal pre-eminence of this fact would not satisfy a jurist. It is then befitting, according to Nicolas Schmitt, to radically change the way in which foreign relations in the regions are conceived based on the idea of a stratified federal Europe. His thesis also proposes a new constitutional standard that takes account of this emerging phenomenon, which has been branded cooperative regionalism. His work is available (only in French) from Éditions Universitaires (Pérolles 42, CH-1705 Fribourg).

CONTACT: Eduni@st-paul.ch - www.st-paul.ch/uni-press-FR.ch

diary

NOVEMBER

Wednesday 6th - Friday 8th

Convention Presidium and Plenary session - *Brussels (B)*

Wednesday 6th - Saturday 9th

Summit on the Health and Social Services of the regions of Europe (EuroSalute) - *Milan (I)*

Friday 8th

AER European Conference of Regional Ministers of Health and Social Affairs - *Milan (I)*

Friday 8th

AER Institutional Affairs Committee - *St Gallen (CH)*

Wednesday 13th - Friday 15th

CLRAE Bureau meeting and Mini-session - *Strasbourg (F)*

Thursday 14th - Friday 15th

European Conference of Regional Ministers on Spatial Planning and Meeting of the AER Committee on Regional Policy - *Pécs (H)*

Thursday 14th - Friday 15th

Conference of the Regions with legislative power - *Florence (I)*

Tuesday 19th

Debate on Enlargement at the European Parliament - *Strasbourg (F)*

Tuesday 19th - Wednesday 20th

Plenary assembly of the Heads of government of Arge Alpen-Adria - *Venice (I)*

Tuesday 19th - Thursday 21st

CoR Bureau meeting & Plenary session - *Brussels (B)*

Thursday 28th - Friday 29th

AER Bureau meeting & General Assembly - *Naples (I)*

DECEMBER

Tuesday 3rd - Wednesday 4th

CoR and the Danish Presidency- Conference on Enlargement - *Brussels (B)*

Wednesday 4th - Friday 6th

Convention Presidium and Plenary session *Brussels (B)*

Tuesday 10th

CLRAE Bureau meeting - *Strasbourg (F)*

Thursday 12th - Friday 13th

European Council Summit - *Copenhagen (DK)*

Friday 13th

AER and the Local Democracy Agencies - Centurio Forum - *Vienna (A)*

Thursday 19th - Saturday 21st

Convention Presidium and Plenary session - *Brussels (B)*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.a-e-r.org (diary)



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