



AER QUARTERLY REPORT (JULY – SEPTEMBER 2011)

FOREWORD BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear members and friends of AER,

As you may know, this is the last Quarterly Report to which I contribute since I will leave AER.

There are a number of great challenges ahead of AER:

1. The most crucial topic at the moment is the future of the cohesion policy 2014+ and the future budget of the Union. The draft regulations have been known for a while now, and AER is carefully analyzing them and will continue to lobby for its position.

The last step in this was a discussion at the Bureau of AER on 30 September together with Commissioner Hahn, MEP Lambert van Nistelrooij (the rapporteur on the General Regulation, including the Common Strategic Framework), the Spokesperson for Commissioner Lewandowski (Budget), and regional experts.

The next step will be our Summit of Regions, Cities and Municipalities on 20/21 October in St. Poelten near Vienna. All European associations of regions and municipalities will discuss with Commissioner Hahn and the Polish Minister for Regional Affairs the current state of the regulations and the budget foreseen for Regional Policy.

2. Concerning Europe 2020, there will be no success without proper inclusion of regions and municipalities in the strategy. On 12 December we have a high level conference with President Barroso, Commissioner Hahn and Danuta Huebner for the EP, where we will discuss with our partner CEMR how to bring together all actors in governance (EU, national, regional, municipal) to deliver on Europe 2020 in partnership.

3. "Regions master Globalisation" is the topic for our GA this year, based on AER's longstanding work on innovation, entrepreneurship, or social inclusion. Please make sure you are registered for the General Assembly, get your flight, hotel, voting form and in case your regions really cannot make it, give a proxy form to another region that you have confidence in.

Kind regards and see you on the Azores

Klaus Klipp

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ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (1)

COHESION POLICY

Future EU funding: regions get ready for financial engineering

On the occasion of its plenary meeting in Republika Sprska (BH), a conference on financial engineering provided the participants with an overview of the current EU offer in the field of financial engineering instruments. The main stakes of this shift from grants to loans were explored, on the basis of the first conclusions of AER's detailed 9 months investigation and consultation among members. Two topics where financial instruments have been or may be soon introduced: energy and climate change, and enlargement funds were examined more into detail.

Contact: e.delangle@aer.eu

Preparatory meeting of the summit of regions and cities on cohesion policy 2014+, Brussels (26 September 2011)

The Secretary generals of the interregional organisations members of AER, and of the main other interregional organisations in Europe met in Brussels on 26 September in order to prepare the declaration of the upcoming summit of their Presidents to be held in St. Pölten (Lower-Austria, A) on 21 October 2011. The purpose of this preparatory meeting was to agree on the content of a common declaration to be handed out to Commissioner Hahn, MEPs and the Polish Presidency.

Contact: e.delangle@aer.eu, c.diegelmann@aer.eu

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY

Meeting of the AER working group on climate change and energy

The AER working group on climate change and energy met on the occasion of the Committee 1 Fall Plenary Meeting on 15 September 2011 in Banja Luka, Republika Sprska (BiH). During the meeting the aims and outcome of two INTERREG IV projects in which AER is partner – MORE4NRG and ECREIN+ - were presented. The group members also discussed the outcome of the AER study on regional energy projects which was published on the occasion of the European Regions' Energy Day in April and adopted the work plan for 2012.

Contact: c.diegelmann@aer.eu

More information: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/energy-policy/energy-wg.html>

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SWOT-Analysis on entrepreneurship in AER member regions

In the framework of the AER working group on entrepreneurship and innovation and cooperation with the ENTREDI project (INTERREG IVC), AER carried out SWOT-Analysis (Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threats) in the regions of Crete (GR) and Istanbul/Bahcelievler district (TR). During a two-day workshop with relevant regional stakeholder in entrepreneurship policy expert teams consisting of entrepreneurship specialists from Basingstoke (UK), Hessen (D), Jönköping (S) and Western Macedonia (GR) reviewed the current support system in the regions and analysed their entrepreneurial potetial. As an outcome the two participating AER member regions received a detailed list of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in terms of entrepreneurship support. This data will help them to further improve their strategies and support system. Contact: c.diegelmann@aer.eu

Meeting of the AER working group on entrepreneurship and innovation

The AER working group on entrepreneurship and innovation met on the occasion of the Committee 1 Fall Plenary Meeting on 15 September 2011 in Banja Luka, Republika Srpska (BiH). The aim of the meeting was to present the outcome of the two SWOT analysis and to discuss how AER could further work with this instrument in order to support more regions in the analysis and improvement of their entrepreneurship strategies. Under the guidance of Kompass Frankfurt a working meeting will take place on 14 November in Frankfurt, Hessen (D), which will aim at the development of a project concept.

Contact: c.diegelmann@aer.eu

More information: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/economic-development/wg-entrepreneurship-innovation.html>

Meeting of the jury of the AER Regional Innovation Award

On 31 August the Jury of the AER Regional Innovation Award met in Brussels in order to select this year's winner. The prize aims at honouring European Regional Authorities' actions, which have stimulated, fostered and implemented innovation in their territory. It aims at promoting best practices as well as to demonstrate how regions can contribute to regional economic welfare. The award ceremony will take place on the occasion of the AER General Assembly on 24 November 2011 on the Azores (P). Contact: a.schober@aer.eu

More information: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/economic-development/aer-innovation-award.html>

Meeting of the AER working group on regional airports

The AER working group on regional airports met on the occasion of the Committee 1 Fall Plenary Meeting on 15 September 2011 in Banja Luka, Republika Srpska (BiH). The group discussed the concept of a study on the role of regional airports in long term economic perspectives, which will be carried out under the lead of Østfold region. On the occasion of its meeting the working group also visited the regional airport of Banja Luka and exchanged experience with aviation expert from the region of Republika Srpska. Finally the group adopted its 2012 work plan.

Contact: c.diegelmann@aer.eu, a.schober@aer.eu

More information: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/transport/regional-airports.html>

COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Meeting of the AER working group on agriculture and rural development

On the occasion of the Committee 1 Fall Plenary, the AER working group on agriculture and rural development met. The host region of Republika Srpska presented its agriculture and rural development and a project aimed to strengthen institutional capacities to deliver more efficient and effective agricultural services in order to make a substantial contribution to an acceleration eligibility for IPARD support funds. The group also appointed Jan Jacob van Dijk as new chairman of the AER working group on agriculture and rural development and adopted the work plan for 2012.

More information: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/agriculture-rural-development/working-group-on-rural-development.html>

Contact: e.delangle@aer.eu

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

PRESERVE

The PRESERVE partners published their final publication “PRESERVE best practices – Highlights of Successful Examples for Sustainable Tourism”. This colourful guide gives a short introduction into the project and the PRESERVE peer review methodology and showcases highly interesting best practices in the field of sustainable tourism, which have been identified during the project and can inspire other regions to similar projects.

Furthermore, the PRESERVE partners are currently planning their final events. On 20 October 2011, the final conference “Innovation & Sustainability in Tourism” will be held in Siena. The goal of the conference is to explore the ideas, problems and solutions of regions related to innovation and sustainability in European tourism. Moreover, the major outcomes of the PRESERVE project will be presented.

On 7 November 2011, the PRESERVE partners will gather for their last meeting in Brussels, where they will introduce “PRESERVE hidden treasures” to Brussels officers and tourism stakeholders. The strategies for the PRESERVE hidden treasures, which have been developed during the PRESERVE project, will be presented to show how they can be valorized in a sustainable way. More information: <http://preserve.aer.eu/> Contact: a.schober@aer.eu

SOCIAL POLICY AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE (2)

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY AGEING

AER joins the Coalition of Stakeholders for 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity among Generations

AER has joined a coalition of some 25 European-level organisations that are committed to promoting the objective of 2012- the European Year for Active and Healthy Ageing. Consisting of organisations representing the elderly, youth, patient groups, people with disabilities as well as commerce, this coalition will support the European Commission in creating awareness about the implications of ageing and creating momentum for action at all levels. The Committee Secretariat represents AER in the coalition meetings.

Contact: Ourania Georgoutsakou, Senior Policy Coordinator, g.ourania@aer.eu; +32 2 880 95 65

E-HE@LTH

AER e-He@lth network contributes to the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (AHAIP)

The AHAIP is an initiative developed under the Europe 2020 strategy that aims to bring together all relevant stakeholders. A number of initiatives to support innovation are being discussed and AER has called for EU support to develop a capacity-building programme for regional politicians and officers, in order to ensure that innovation becomes an integral part of regional policies and enjoys long-term political support. AER is also cooperating with other European organisations to bring to its regions examples of innovative processes that can be implemented with the support of experts.

Contact: Ourania Georgoutsakou, Senior Policy Coordinator, g.ourania@aer.eu; +32 2 880 95 65

To pilot this capacity-building concept, AER is developing a workshop to support Romanian regions in the implementation of e-health policies and tools, that will take place in Covasna (RO) on 3 November 2011. Contact: Camille Bullo, Policy Coordinator, c.bullo@aer.eu; +33 3 68 46 00 87



Renewing Health project- Users Advisory Board

This project brings together 7 regions from across Europe, the majority of which are AER members, to pilot telemedicine tools and create evidence for the quality and cost-efficiency of using telemedicine tools. The Committee 2 Secretariat represents AER in the project's Users Advisory Board and contributes the regions' perspective on the outcomes of the project to date, to ensure that the final project deliverables provide a strong evidence base for future telemedicine use in regions across Europe. The last meeting of the Users Advisory Board took place in Brussels on 30 August 2011.

Contact: Ourania Georgoutsakou, Senior Policy Coordinator, g.ourania@aer.eu; +32 2 880 95 65

CULTURE AND HEALTH

This was the theme of the conference jointly organised by AER Committees 2 (Social Policy and Public Health) and 3 (Education, Culture, Youth and International Cooperation) on 20 September 2011 in Istanbul-TR.

The overall objective of the Conference was to illustrate the positive impact culture can have on an individuals' health and to deliver evidence on the economic benefits this can bring. Culture, including dance, music or the arts, can prevent, delay or treat disease, and can alleviate the suffering of ill people. A study was presented showing that if all people were actively engaged in cultural activities, this could bring down morbidity rates up to 25% in a single country and have a significant economic as well as humane impact.

This conference was also an excellent example of how greater synergies can be created among AER bodies: it was an opportunity for member regions to meet new people and discover new policy areas that may not fall within their direct remit but have an impact on their policy dossiers.

Further information: <http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2011/culture-and-health.html>

COMMITTEE 2 FALL PLENARY MEETING

The Committee 2 fall plenary session took place on 21 September 2011 in Istanbul-TR. The debate centred around the active and healthy ageing and the actions regions can take in order to better prepare and cater for their citizens' needs.

Committee 2 members debated and adopted the political priorities and work programme for the Committee in 2012: focus will lie on active and healthy ageing, innovation and building inclusive societies.

Full details available at: <http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2011/comm2-fall2011.html>

EQUAL EUROPE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Project proposal is published

Member regions participating in this AER network discussed the possibility of developing a project concept to support regions in educating politicians and officers about the implications of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The project outline was developed with the assistance of the AER Funding Coordinator at a workshop on 17 June 2011 in Valencia (E) and is now available online: <http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2011/comm2-fall2011.html>

For further information and to join, please contact: c.meschede@aer.eu; +33 3 88 22 74 35

STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND HEALTH

EUREGIO III project – Final Conference

The Euregio III project evaluates the investment of structural funds in health during the current funding period and has generated proposals on how the impact and quality of investments can be improved for the next funding period.

The final conference, organised on 22 September 2011 in Brussels and to which **Erreur ! Contact non défini.**, Committee 2 Vice-President and the Committee 2 Secretariat contributed, showcased the outcomes of the project and was an opportunity to discuss with representatives of the European Commission what needs to be done to improve health investments in future cohesion policy.

A key outcome of the project is the call for more strategic investments, i.e. integrating spending under the European Structural Funds into regional and national health strategies. AER emphasised the need to educate politicians and officers in the regions to better understand the possibilities for using structural funds. AER proposes to develop capacity-building sessions to support regions in integrating health investments when negotiating the Operational Programmes for the future cohesion policy in 2012.

Contact: Ourania Georgoutsakou, Senior Policy Coordinator, g.ourania@aer.eu; +32 2 880 95 65

EMERGENCY PLANNING

FLINKMAN project

AER is partner to the Flinkman project, a 2-year project co-financed under the EC Civil Protection Mechanism and aiming to develop guidelines for increased coordination among stakeholders involved in flood management and prevention. The 4th coordination meeting was organised and hosted by AER in Brussels on 5 September 2011. It was an opportunity to monitor the project's progress and to plan the final conference to take place on 8-9 December in Thessaloniki (GR).

For further information on the project: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/emergency-planning.html> or <http://www.flinkman-project.eu>

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Regular Committee 2 updates

Want to receive regular updates on Committee 2 work and policy developments? Register for the Committee 2 newsletter- "What's new, Committee 2?" (contact c.bullot@aer.eu). All editions are also available online: <http://www.aer.eu/about-aer/committee-2-social-policy-and-public-health/newsletter-of-committee-2.html>

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

YOUTH AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

AER SCEO contributes to the AER Summer School

Monica Carlsson, President of the AER Standing Committee on Equal Opportunities (Norrbottn, S) contributed to the AER Summer School and the workshop on 'Youth and Equal Opportunities' held on 24 August 2011 in Flevoland (NL). This workshop looked at how to promote equal opportunities for young women and to include gender equality in regional youth policies, but was also an opportunity to discuss with the young participants what equality issues they are facing

today and what they think should be done to overcome these.

For further information: <http://www.flevoland.nl/english/flevoland-a-european-prov/summer-school/workshops/youth-in-green-jobs/>

GENDER EQUALITY

Supporting women candidates in Tunisian elections

At the initiative of Michèle Sabban, AER President (Ile-de-France, F), and with the cooperation of the Tunisian Minister for Women Affairs Lilia Labidi, the AER Standing Committee on Equal Opportunities organised a 2-day training seminar in Tunis to support women in Tunisia to actively engage in politics and civil society.

Tunisia is applying the principle of gender parity for the upcoming elections for a Constituent Assembly on 23 October 2011. The AER SCEO brought together a number of female politicians from AER member regions to share their knowledge and their personal experiences of the difficulties women candidates may encounter when engaging in politics and how to overcome these. The aim of this event was to ensure that gender parity does not remain a dead letter, but rather that women in Tunisia develop credible candidacies and receive support from their European counterparts on how to develop an election campaign and win over an electorate.

Further details: <http://www.aer.eu/events/standing-committee-on-equal-opportunities/2011/training-tunisian-women.html>

MAINSTREAMING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS AER

AER SCEO President addresses AER Committees 2 and 3

Monica Carlsson, President of the AER Standing Committee on Equal Opportunities (Norrbotten, S), addressed the members of the AER Social Policy and Public Health Committee (2) and the AER Culture, Education, Youth and International Cooperation Committee (3) at the occasion of their respective plenary meetings in Istanbul (19 and 21 September 2011). These two Committees had jointly organised a conference that covered aspects of both their work areas: culture and health. Ms Carlsson applauded this initiative as an excellent example of how greater synergies can and should be created among AER bodies and explained that this was also her vision for the AER SCEO. She then went on to identify areas for closer cooperation with the two Committees, including equal rights for young people, equal access to culture, education that promotes equality, equal rights for people with disabilities and Roma inclusion.

AER SCEO calls for equal support within AER Secretariat

The Presidium of the AER Standing Committee on Equal Opportunities has drafted a declaration requesting that it be granted a Policy Coordinator within the AER Secretariat in order to be able to implement the mandate it was afforded by the AER 200 General Assembly in Belfort (F). This draft declaration was unanimously adopted by the AER Committees 2 and 3 at the occasion of their fall meetings in Istanbul (TR). It will be presented for discussion and adoption at the AER Bureau meeting on 29-30 September 2011 in Brussels (B).

For further information on any of the above, please contact: Ourania Georgoutsakou, Senior Policy Coordinator, [g.ourania@aer.eu](mailto:g.ourania@ aer.eu); +32 2 880 95 65

COMMITTEE (3)

Committee 3 held its Autumn plenary meeting on 19 September in Istanbul, in combination with a conference on Culture and Health, a European Citizens' Forum on Turkey's accession to the EU and the plenary meeting of Committee 2. All sessions were open to the members of the AER Youth Regional Network.

At the occasion of this meeting, Committee 3 thanked Ms Kathrin HILBER (St. Gallen), who had withdrawn as chair of the Sub-Committee on Culture, for the work accomplished. As a consequence, the Committee

- approved of Ms Karine GLOANEC-MAURIN's (Centre) application to move from being the chair of the Sub-Committee on Education & Training to become chair of the Sub-Committee on Culture.
- elected Mr Tomas VEDESTIG (Norrbotten) as the new Chair of the Sub-Committee on Education & Training.

Committee structure: <http://www.aer.eu/about-aer/committee-3-culture-education-youth-and-international-cooperation.html>

CULTURE

Culture and its benefits for health are quantifiable

110 AER members exchanged with experts and fellow regional representatives at the Culture and Health conference on 20 September in Istanbul (co-organised with Committee 2) about the latest state-of-the-art research on the intertwinings between culture and health.

Regional representatives exchanged their experiences and best practices in this field. Music, theatre or graphic arts are some of the tools put under scrutiny during the event. Participants witnessed at first hand how music could help accompany sick children in a live performance of the music and dance group "Aksak Ritim", a Turkish percussion group composed of disabled young people.

The economic rationale behind promoting culture and health programmes was also discussed. The cost of the burnout syndrome in the EU15 is estimated to represent 3-4% of GDP and the World Health Organisation (WHO) predicts that depression will be the world's second largest disorder by 2020. At the same time scientific studies clearly show that culture has an impact on well-being, reduces stress, protects and nourishes the brain, limits degeneration and helps tackle disease. They establish that the mortality risk increases by 33% among those who do not participate actively in cultural events. Investing in culture constitutes therefore an investment with long-term benefits.

During the conference, an appeal was made to regions to invest in culture and health. In the final declaration, the participants also called upon the European Union to recognize this field and start working on it.

Programme, presentations and the final declaration are available at: <http://www.aer.eu/events/committee-3-culture-education-interregional-cooperation/2011/culture-health.html>

New ways of promoting cultural heritage

For a region, cultural heritage represents 70% of its force to attract tourists. Participants to the Istanbul Committee 3 plenary meeting (19 September) discovered a project initiated by Topic-Topos, an innovative independent digital publisher specializing in heritage. The aim of Topic Topos is to draw up an inventory of the cultural heritage of European regions and disseminate it through new technologies: internet, ipad applications etc... The innovation is not solely technological. The way the research is undertaken and presented is also innovative. The heritage sites are listed with the help of local and regional actors and descriptive notices are drafted by local experts. Moreover, heritage is presented in context: notices about the historical, social, architectural context are related to each item presented. Many AER regions are interested in this new tool and AER, together with Topic Topos, is investigating how far EU programmes can help finance the project.

Regions which are interested in knowing more or taking part are invited to contact the secretariat of Committee 3.

Further information on the projects is available at: <http://www.aer.eu/events/committee-3-culture-education-interregional-cooperation/2011/ist2011.html>

Roma: en route for an AER strategy

The region of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (H) has presented a pan-European strategy on Roma at the Committee 3 plenary meeting. The aim of this strategy is to highlight the key areas of work on which regions could improve their policies (employment, education, health, housing) in order to facilitate the integration of Roma minorities across Europe. Civil society organisations representing the Roma communities have been consulted to draft this strategy and two of them were invited for a discussion with members of committee 3: EDROM, an organisation representing the Roma of Edirne (TR) and the European Roma and Travelling People Forum. AER has decided to endorse this strategy and to push for it to be more widely known among its members. Being a transversal issue, Committee 3 will make sure that other AER committees work on this issue. A series of peer reviews/training academies will be put into place on this thematic if the General Assembly adopts the strategy.

Further information is available at: <http://www.aer.eu/events/committee-3-culture-education-interregional-cooperation/2011/ist2011.html>

YOUTH

AER Peer Review “Promoting Youth Employment”

Drawing on its peer review methodology, AER launched an intensive and innovative one-year project, funded by the EU PROGRESS programme: Promoting Youth Employment (PYE). Its aim is to suggest new youth employment policies and improve existing strategies in four AER member regions: the Azores (P), Krapina-Zagorje (HR), Hampshire (UK) and Vojvodina (SRB). The kick-off meeting took place on 4-5 July 2011 in Brussels and the 1st Peer Review was held on 12-16 September 2011 in Vojvodina (SRB). Conclusions of this series of peer reviews and recommendations will be compiled in a document which will be circulated to all AER members.

General information on PYE and partner regions: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/youth/promoting-youth-employment-pye.html>

Outcomes of the Peer Review in Vojvodina: <http://www.aer.eu/events/committee-3-culture-education-interregional-cooperation/2011/peer-review-vojvodina.html>

Most Youth Friendly European Region Award on social inclusion of youth with disabilities (MYFER 2011)

The international jury met on 6 October 2011 in Brussels to select the region that had launched the most efficient and effective policies in the field of youth with disabilities. Its discussions was based on the recommendations of the pre-selection committee composed of YRN members, which gathered on the occasion of the AER Summer School 2011 in Almere (NL).

More information: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/youth/most-youth-friendly-european-region-award/competition-2011.html>

AER Youth Regional Network: Fall Plenary Session & Seminar on Eastern Partnership

Reminder: Deadline to register for the YRN Fall Plenary & Seminar on Eastern Partnership: Youth Mobility – Going East! is 15 October 2011. All AER Members are invited to nominate a young representative from their region to attend the events and join the AER Youth Regional Network.

More information: <http://www.aer.eu/events/committee-3-culture-education-interregional-cooperation/2011/aer-youth-regional-network-fall-plenary-seminar-on-eastern-partnership.html>

AER Questionnaire on Youth Participation

Reminder: AER member regions are invited to contribute to the AER Report on Youth Participation and help identify good practice examples in this field. Please send your contributions before 15 October 2011.

The questionnaire in EN and FR is available at: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/youth.html>

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Active support to women in Tunisian elections

Following an initial visit in May, an AER delegation under the leadership of President SABBAN and composed of 10 people, went back to Tunis on 15 and 16 September. The visit's main objective was a training seminar for Tunisian female candidates in the 23 October elections for the Constituent Assembly. For the first time in Tunisia, all political parties have to respect a strict gender parity rule for the constitution of their lists. The two-day seminar aimed at preparing female candidates to the forthcoming election by exchanging experience with AER European female politicians.

The seminar was attended by 40 female candidates, representing more than 25 political parties, as well as renowned Tunisian militants.

Inauguration of the AER representation in Tunisia

Based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between AER and the Tunisian Minister of Regional Development in May, AER President Michèle SABBAN took the opportunity of her September trip to Tunis mentioned above to officially open the AER permanent representation in Tunisia. The role of the representation, whose staff is seconded for free by Delta Consulting, is to follow closely the Tunisian political and societal transformation process and to help AER's members establish concrete partnership projects with Tunisian regions. AER member regions will be able to use the facilities of our representation (including meeting rooms) for free. One of the first initiatives envisaged is to welcome young Tunisian graduates for a professional traineeship in AER

member regions. Several European regions: Azores (P), Franche-Comté (F), Ile-de-France (F), Limousin (F), Abruzzo(I) have already expressed their interest for this pilot experience.

AER's commitment in the international fight against climate change rewarded

In the framework of the 2nd R20 summit, AER President Michèle SABBAN received an award from R20 founding chair Arnold SCHWARZENEGGER for the role played by AER in mobilizing European regions on this crucial issue and for the role played by our assembly in helping launch the R20.

The headquarters of the R20 being established in Geneva and several foundations having officially committed to financial contributions, the first projects will soon be developed in Africa.

AER members invited to meet their North East Asian counterparts

AER has been invited as guest of honour to take part in the 2011 NEAR International Forum which will take place from Monday 31 October to Wednesday 2 November in Seoul (South Korea). NEAR represents Presidents of regions from Japan, China, Russia, Korea and Mongolia. They will get together in Korea to discuss the need for an increased cooperation between Europe and North East Asia in the fields of transport policy as well as energy and environmental policies. President Michèle SABBAN has invited all AER member regions to join her in this visit which will be an opportunity to reinforce our diplomatic but also commercial links with regions from this part of the world. Indeed, AER members have been encouraged to come with entrepreneurs from their regions to meet their Asian counterparts.

For further information, please contact the secretariat of Committee 3 (Mathieu Mori, Senior Policy coordinator, m.mori@aer.eu, Tel./Fax +33 (0)3 88 22 74 47; Doris Materne, Policy coordinator, d.materne@aer.eu, Tel./Fax +33 (0)3 88 22 74 43; Justyna Hejman, Youth & Citizenship Officer, j.hejman@aer.eu, Tel./Fax +33 (0)3 88 22 74 46.

EURODYSSEY

Eurodyssey Forum welcomes new programme members

On 8 & 9 September, 120 politicians, regional coordinators and experts met in Aosta (I) for the annual forum of the Eurodyssey programme and welcomed Královéhradecký (CZ), Guria (GE) and Kärnten (A) as new members as well as Asturias (E), Dolnoslaskie (PL), Donegal (IRL), Lombardia (I), Toscana (I) and Istanbul (TR) as candidates.

On top of a conference on the theme "European regions rally for the work and the future of young Europeans", various workshops were organised and focused amongst other things on the role of and the relationship between regions, young people, businesses and employers.

With the economic crisis and the pressure on regional budgets, part of the debates were dedicated to financial aspects. The participants were informed on possible matching with European funding programmes and were shown best practice in other regions.

While the European Commission representative **Michel Laine** DG Employment – European Social Fund recognized the potential of the Eurodyssey programme and its results, he nevertheless thought that there was scope for development. AER and the Eurodyssey general secretariat will follow-up on this and seek to arrange an appointment with the European Commission.

Adjara (GE) has been declared host of the 2012 forum.

Developing a quality approach in the Eurodyssey programme

On July 12, a working group met in Paris in order to prepare a first draft for an application in the framework of the next call for proposals under Leonardo (2012). The aim of the project will be to develop a quality approach of the programme as well as a certification procedure and a label.

For further information, please go to the Eurodyssey website: <http://www.eurodyssee.eu/>, or contact André Craveiro, Operational coordinator of the Eurodyssey programme, andre.LM.craveiro@azores.gov.pt, Tel. +351/296/ 30 80 23, or Doris Materne, Policy coordinator, d.materne@aer.eu, Tel./Fax +33 (0)3 88 22 74 43

SUMMER SCHOOLS

140 regional representatives and YRN members gather to discuss "Youth in a changing society"

70 young people and 70 politicians and regional officers met from 22 to 26 September in Almere (NL) for the AER Summer Schools on the theme "Youth in a changing society". Sessions alternated between plenary meetings, workshops and study visits and involved regional experts and guest speakers from academia, the European Parliament and the European Commission.

The topics of the debates went from education, training and employment to equal opportunities and youth participation.

The 2012 Summer School will take place in the Azores (P).

For further information: <http://aersummerschool.nl> or please contact the secretariat of Committee 3 (Mathieu Mori, Senior Policy coordinator, m.mori@aer.eu, Tel./Fax +33 (0)3 88 22 74 47; Doris Materne, Policy coordinator, d.materne@aer.eu, Tel./Fax +33 (0)3 88 22 74 43; Justyna Hejman, Youth & Citizenship Officer, j.hejman@aer.eu, Tel./Fax +33 (0)3 88 22 74 46).

Standing committee on Institutional affairs

Regional Democracy – Interregional cooperation

Following up our President's study visit to Tunisia, AER hold a seminar on 6-7 of July in Abruzzo (IT). This event presented current developments of the regional democracy in European States, positive aspects of decentralisation and helped Tunisian authorities in learning more about the ways the decentralisation processes were developing in Europe. Best practices from regions of the European countries that have already undergone decentralisation reforms were presented, providing Tunisian authorities with relevant input for the decentralisation reforms in Tunisia.

For further information, please follow [this link](#).

In the same context, another workshop on decentralisation and local democracy took place in Tunis from 30th June to 2 July. AER helped in the organisation of this event by providing the expertise of Mr. Pascal Goergen, representative of Brussels-Capital, who presented the Belgian model of decentralisation.

For further information, please follow [this link](#).

AER European Citizens' Forum Republika Srpska

AER and the Government of Republika Srpska invited all citizens of the Republika Srpska to take part in the AER European Citizens' Forum, which took place on 15th September in Banja-Luka. During the Forum participants had the chance to discuss opportunities and challenges faced by young people in Republika Srpska regarding youth exchanges. The aim of the debate was to involve citizens in a genuine dialogue about possibilities stemming from youth exchanges with the European Union but also across wider Europe. In order to facilitate the discussion, local politicians and members of international exchange programmes presented their actions in Republika Srpska about the ongoing programmes in the framework of the European co-operation. This AER European Citizens' Forum in Banja Luka was held on the occasion of the AER Committee 1 Plenary.

Additional information can be found [here](#).

AER European Citizens' Forum Istanbul, Turkey

AER, the Provincial Council of Istanbul and the Center for European Studies at the Istanbul University organised a European Citizens' Forum on 19 September in Istanbul. During the Forum, participants had a chance to discuss the opportunities and challenges faced by Turkish regions should the country join the European Union.

Speakers have presented the current state of the negotiation process and discussed the Turkish integration scenarios. In addition, challenges linked to employment, education, health services, environment, tourism and innovation were discussed.

For further information, please follow [this link](#).

AER Bureau and Standing Committee on Institutional Affairs meeting

This meeting was held on the 29-30 of September in Brussels. During this meeting, Bureau members discussed about key issues for the future of the EU, including: the project of the Multiannual Financial Framework for the 2014-2020, the reform of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and changes in the new cohesion policy for years 2014-2020. As a result of these discussions, AER Bureau members adopted position papers on the Multiannual Financial Framework and the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Additional information can be found [here](#).

AER BRUSSELS OFFICE

OFFERING AER MEMBERS THE LATEST IN BRUSSELS

AER Daily Monitoring

A key mission of the AER Brussels office is to regularly liaise with our members' Brussels representation offices and to keep them up to date with the latest developments in the EU and the regions.

To this end, the AER Brussels office sends out to members a Daily Monitoring of news articles on the various policy areas AER is active in.

Over the summer, we reviewed the Daily Monitoring to add and remove thematic categories and sections, so as to ensure we keep providing our members with relevant information in the right format.

AER Breakfast Briefings

We also organise AER Breakfast Briefings – this is a series of monthly events addressed to members' Brussels offices that:



- ▶ Provide an opportunity for AER members' Brussels officers to liaise with each other in an informal manner
- ▶ Inform them about the latest developments in specific policy and programme areas and allow them to speak directly with EU representatives working in these areas

5 July 2011, Polish Presidency priorities

One day before the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, presented the priorities of Polish presidency to the European Parliament, AER organised a Breakfast Briefing on this very topic, with a specific focus on Cohesion policy and what regions can expect from the coming months.

Piotr Zuber, Representative in the Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU in charge of Cohesion Policy, shared with AER members the Polish presidency's views: promoting a Cohesion policy that is not only a development policy for the poor, but a differentiated policy that meets the needs of all the regions and to push regional matters in the Council by organising more informal meetings on this matter. That Poland has also a rich culture which it is willing to share and present during the presidency was demonstrated by Zofia Machnicka, Deputy Director of the Polish Institute, who presented the Polish Presidency Cultural Programme. AER would like to thank the Regional office of the Silesia region in Brussels for hosting this event.

This was the last briefing before the summer break and the AER Brussels office used this time to develop and plan an exciting programme of Breakfast briefings for 2011/2012.

Further information on the AER Breakfast Briefings: <http://www.aer.eu/events/aer-breakfast-briefings/2011.html> Contact: Regine Kramer, Policy Coordinator, [r.kramer@aer.eu](mailto:r.kramer@ aer.eu); +32 2 880 9563

PROMOTING AER IN BRUSSELS

The AER Brussels office regularly receives delegations from regions to inform them about AER's work and identify how the region can contribute to AER and profit from membership. In the last 3 months we have met and welcomed representatives from Bratislava (SK), Värmland (S) and Kosice (SK). The office also has an ambassadorial role and introduces non-member regions to AER. We have recently met with representatives of Skåne (S) and Karlovy Vary (CZ).

If you are interested in visiting the AER Brussels office, please contact us! Contact: aer.brussels@aer.eu; +32 2 880 95 60

We also regularly meet with others stakeholders in Brussels to discuss possible synergies and to provide our members with the latest information and the expertise they need. In this period we met with Bohemia EU Planners to discuss mutual activities and events.

Finally, the AER Brussels office has a key role in liaising with EU institutions in Brussels to promote AER members' views and to ensure AER is up to date on the latest policy developments in the EU. We often meet with policy officers from the various EU institutions and we also participate to consultations and meetings organised by the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions. In this period for example, we met with DG Research and Innovation relating to the regional dimension of innovation and with the Committee of Regions to discuss our respective work programmes and identify potential synergies.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (1)

Date	Location	Event
20 - 21 October 2011	St. Pölten, Lower Austria	EU Cohesion Policy 2014+ Summit of regions, cities & municipalities
20 – 21 October 2011	Siena, Tuscany (IT)	Final PRESERVE conference “Innovation & Sustainability in Tourism”
7 November	Brussels (B)	PRESERVE Seminar “PRESERVE Hidden Treasures”
7 November	Krakow, Malopolska (PL)	ECREIN+ Conference
14-15 November 2011	Frankfurt, Hessen (D)	Final conference of the INTERREG IVC project ENTREDI and meeting of the AER working group on entrepreneurship and innovation
28 November	Brussels (B)	Meeting of the AER working group on agriculture and rural development
7-9/12/2011	Montpellier (F)	Workshop of the AER working group on energy and climate change in the framework of the Energia 2011 fair

SOCIAL POLICY AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE (2)

Date	Location	Event
20-21 October	Poitou-Charentes (F)	AER ‘Equal Europe for People with Disabilities’ working meeting and seminar
3 November	Covasna (RO)	Meeting of the AER e-he@lth network
8-9 December	Thessaloniki (GR)	Final Conference of the Flinkman project

CULTURE, EDUCATION AND TRAINING, YOUTH AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION COMMITTEE (3)

Date	Location	Event
31 September – 2 October 2011	Seoul (KOR)	NEAR conference
Beginning of each month	-	Now & then @ YRN – monthly newsletter appears online
6 October 2011	Brussels (B)	Most Youth Friendly European Region Award 2011 : meeting of the Jury
13 October 2011	Brussels (B)	Platforma Steering Committee
14 October 2011	Brussels (B)	Platforma Working Group on “European development policy”
27-28 October 2011	Lower Silesia (PL)	YRN Autumn Plenary Meeting & AER Seminar on Eastern Partnership « Youth Mobility : Going East ! »
10 November 2011	Brussels (B)	Structured Dialogue (Platforma/Development cooperation)

20-24 2011	November	Azores (P)	« Promoting Youth Employment » : the 2nd Peer Review
8 December	2011	Brussels (B)	« Promoting Youth Employment » : mid-term meeting
15-16 2011	December	Warszawa (PL)	European Development Days (EDD)

Eurodissey

Date	Location	Event
9-10 November 2011	Barcelona (E)	Steering Committee
September 2012 (tbc)	Adjara (GE)	Eurodissey annual Forum

Summer School

Date	Location	Event
23 November 2011	Ponta Delgada (P)	Summer School Organizing Committee