



AER QUARTERLY REPORT (APRIL - JUNE 2011)

FOREWORD BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear members,

The second European Regions Energy Day in April in Brussels was again a great success. AER President Michèle Sabban handed over the results of AER's survey on investment in regional energy project to Energy Commissioners Günther Oettinger and the Commissioner for Climate Action Conny Hedegaard.

Energy is also one of the main topics of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Regarding this strategy, our President Michèle Sabban had the chance, at the occasion of the lunch with the President of the European Commission, Juan Manuel Barroso on 16 June, to reiterate on the importance of the involvement of regions for the success of this strategy. We will continue our intensive lobbying regarding Europe 2020, the new funding period 2014+ for Cohesion policy and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the future budget of the European Union and also assist our members with practical aspects in this respect.

Some examples are our Training Academy on Financial Engineering on 21 and 22 June in Brussels, a Study Tour on CAP to the region of Gelderland (NL) the same week, or the Plenary of Committee 1 with a conference on Financial Engineering on 15 and 16 September in Banja Luka, Republika Srpska. For 13 and 14 October we will organise, together with our member Niederösterreich, a summit on the future Cohesion Policy with all associations representing regions and municipalities in Europe. This will be at the right moment of the discussion of the regulations 2014+ in the European Parliament.

I hope you enjoy reading this Quarterly Report.

Klaus Klipp
Secretary General

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ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (1)

COHESION POLICY

AER Bureau meeting on 28 & 29 April: adoption of a position on a new category for intermediary regions in cohesion policy

On the occasion of the AER Bureau meeting in 's Hertogenbosch (Noord-Brabant-NL), the AER members debated and agreed upon a common position on the issue of intermediary regions in the context of the future reform of cohesion policy. AER members bring their support to the proposal of the Commission to create a new category, provided that it allows for an equitable distribution of resources.

The position paper is available at:

Contact: e.delangle@aer.eu

Financial engineering: are regions ready? Series of awareness-raising events.

On 11th May, a Breakfast briefing was organised on this topic and gave the interested Brussels offices the opportunity to hear the European Commission and the European Investment Fund on the interest of new financial instruments such as JEREMIE or JESSICA. The Breakfast briefing was followed by a workshop where the Auvergne and Wielkopolska regions presented their experiences in financial engineering and shared their opinions on the way these initiatives work for now. On 21st & 22nd June, a Training Academy was organised in order to dig further into the preparation and implementation of financial instruments in European regions. 15 regional officers were trained on this occasion.

Contact: e.delangle@aer.eu

Preparatory meeting of the Interregional Organisations' presidents summit on future cohesion policy, Lower-Austria (13-14 October 2011 - tbc)

The secretary generals of the interregional organisations members of AER, and of the main other interregional organisations in Europe met in Brussels on 31st May in order to discuss the upcoming summit of their Presidents to be held in Saint Pölten (Lower-Austria, A) in October. The purpose of this preparatory meeting was to agree on the principle of a common declaration to be handed out to Commissioner Hahn and MEP Danuta Hübner, to discuss the modalities of the cooperation and the topics to be addressed at the summit.

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CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY

2nd European Regions Energy Day, 11 and 12 April 2011, Brussels (B)

Hosted by the German Land Baden-Württemberg, the event welcomed regional decision makers and European energy experts under the theme, 'Investment in sustainable energy – Regions as motors for growth and innovation.' The aim of the second edition of the European Regions Energy was to demonstrate the success of both territorial action and public-private cooperation in the face of upcoming energy crisis - dwindling supplies of fossil fuels, risk of energy scarcity and changing climate. A variety of regional projects were highlighted throughout the conference: from offshore wind clusters in South Denmark, innovative waste heat recovery systems in Hampshire (UK), electric cars in Açores (P) to energy efficient measures introduced in medium sized enterprises of Baden-Württemberg (D) and concrete energy management actions undertaken by the regional energy agency of Maramures (RO). Two commissioners, namely Connie Hedegaard (DG Climat Action) and Günther Oettinger (DG Energy) took part in the conference.

Contact: c.diegelmann@aer.eu ; j.podralska@aer.eu

AER report on regional investment in energy projects

Based on the contribution from 27 regions, AER report seeks to analyse how regional authorities handle energy investments: what kind of incentives do they use to increase business involvement in energy projects and how do they grab EU funds to shed investment? It also highlights a variety of factors that hamper or facilitate the deployment of green energy projects in regions. The paper highlights the following issues: political predictability, social acceptance, R&D, stimulation of the demand-side, cooperation and networking. The outcomes of the survey were presented on the occasion of the European Regions Energy Days on 11 and 12 April 2011 in Brussels and handed over to Commissioners Hedegaard and Oettinger.

Contact: j.podralska@aer.eu

Sustainable development and perspectives for ultra peripheral islands: conference on energy policy, 27 May 2011

The meeting allowed the participants to obtain a better insight into the Azores renewable energy policy and different ways of exploiting the island's renewable energy sources. The site visit to the geothermal plant followed the thematic seminar. The meeting also provided the occasion to launch a new AER working group for peripheral and ultra peripheral AER member regions. Beyond a mere sharing of knowledge and competences, the group, coordinated by Marie-Dominique Allegrini-Simonetti, member of the AER bureau and representative of the Region of Corsica (F), will focus on defining their particularities, on coming up with adapted responses, but also on making their preoccupations and expectations known.

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MORE4NRG Final Conference, 9-10 June 2011, Almere (NL)

The aim of the conference was to sum up and evaluate the project outcomes from the last 3 years: results of the peer reviews that were based on AER methodology and that took place in the regions of Maramures (RO), Western Greece (GR), Gabrovo (BG) and Prahova (RO) and Abruzzo (I) as well the transfer of good practice toward green energy and climate change, identified within this initiative. Some most innovative examples, namely "Soap on Tap" from Lazio, "Energiochi" from Abruzzo and the Park of Energy Awareness from Western Greece were highlighted. More4nrg partners expect to continue their successful cooperation with a new INTERREG IVC project Regions4greengrowth, which will focus on energy investment opportunities and be subjected to the European Commission approval.

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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 has carried out a call for SWOT-Analysis in two AER member regions. The SWOT-Analysis (Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threats) will consist of a two-day workshop with all relevant regional stakeholder in entrepreneurship policy. After evaluating a number of applications the Jury chaired by Committee 1 President Håkan Sandgren selected the regions of Crete (GR) and Istanbul (TR) for the SWOT-Analysis. Results will be presented at the next meeting of the working group during the Committee 1 autumn plenary meeting. Contact: c.diegelmann@aer.eu

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

AER working group on regional airports

Based on the AER position on State Aid for regional airports, the working group contributed to the EC consultation on the review of the Community guidelines on financing of airports and start-up aid to airlines



departing from regional airports. Based on the outcome of the consultation the European Commission will revise its internal guidelines. Contact: c.diegelmann@aer.eu

Expert visit to Ruse airport

On 19 May AER representatives from the regions of Østfold (N), Västerbotten (S) and Southern Denmark together with the AER Secretariat met in Ruse to share their experience with the region which is about to transform a military airport into a civil regional airport. After discussions with different regional actors the group members formulated recommendations for the transformation process and how to attract private investors. Contact: c.diegelmann@aer.eu

Eco-innovation and ECREIN+ activities

A Breakfast briefing was organised on 31st May in Brussels, in order to inform the Brussels regional officers on financing opportunities in the field of eco-innovation and to introduce the ECREIN+ project. A representative of the ETAP platform presented the main financing opportunities and an officer from the European Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation introduced in more details the opportunities offered by the CIP. 2 AER member regions, who are also direct or indirect partners in the project, Île-de-France and Brasov, presented initiatives in the field of eco-innovations. On 7 June, the AER participated in the Steering committee meeting of ECREIN+, via videoconference, since most partners were gathered in Stara Zagora (BG) for a workshop on the Environmental Goods and Services (EGS) sector.

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

COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Working group on Rural Development

On June 21st, a Breakfast briefing entitled "CAP reform: where do we stand and how can regions act?" was organised in Brussels, to discuss the latest developments and the role of the Parliament in the CAP reform as well as ways for regional stakeholders to voice their interests in the reform. Speakers included George Lyon - MEP 2010 and Rapporteur for the European Parliament on CAP, Harry Keereweer - Representative of the Province of Gelderland and Shelby Matthews - Chief Policy Advisor at COPA-COGECA. A programme of study visits in Gelderland (NL) to debate followed the meeting on how modern agriculture can combine productivity and sustainability and to highlight the role of education and research in agriculture and rural development.

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Public hearing on Leader as a tool for local development

On June 20th AER was represented at the 'Hearing on Leader as a tool for local development of the European Economic and Social Committee Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment. The hearing focused on lessons learned from the application of the Leader approach (including added value, effectiveness, efficiency and financial management aspects), areas for improvement, future potential (continued mainstreaming and links with other EU Policies, i.e. Cohesion Policy; potential of the LEADER model as a policy tool for local development e.g. in the context of urban development).

More information: <http://europa.eu/eucalendar/mobile/event/226077>

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

PRESERVE Action Plan Workshop

The aim of the workshop was to bring closure to the entire peer review methodology followed since the start of the project PRESERVE. After working on the indicators, testing the methodology in 6 peer reviews and adapting the tools at hand, partners have produced a series of 6 peer review reports highlighting the findings and recommendations of the peers. In order to make the peer review exercise a success, it was crucial to



ensure that it was useful to the partners and that it could contribute to making their respective tourism strategies more sustainable. During the action plan workshop partners developed and elaborated action plans that reflect and implement the main (and most feasible) recommendations made to them by their peers.

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SOCIAL POLICY AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE (2)

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Structural funds and health

The AER Committee 2 Presidium met with MEP Danuta Hübner, Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development, on April 20th to discuss the position of health in the future cohesion policy and how the future programming period could be improved to increase structural fund investment in health. MEP Hübner voiced her support for the continued support to health-related policy objectives in the future cohesion policy.

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Active and Health Ageing Innovation Partnership: AER pursues dialogue with the Commission

This European initiative has been developed under the Europe 2020 strategy with the aim of creating a momentum across Europe and among a variety of partners (including public authorities, industry, patients, research, public health sector) to deploy innovative solutions in health and social care. At the occasion of the AER Committee 2 Spring plenary meeting, member regions discussed with the European Commission about how regions can contribute to stimulating innovation and how Europe can support them. Following this exchange, AER was invited to continue to the thematic workshops on how to stimulate innovation as regards integrated care models and chronic disease management.

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EQUAL EUROPE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This AER working group aims to support regions in implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities' provisions on awareness-raising, accessibility, health and habilitation/rehabilitation

Conference on Employment and Disabilities

This Conference was held on June 16th in Valencia (Comunidad Valenciana-E) and looked at how regions can develop comprehensive employment policies that support the inclusion of people with disabilities. It was an opportunity for members of the AER "Equal Europe for People with Disabilities" working group to report on their progress towards implementing the UN Convention and to learn from each other how they can support the labour inclusion of people with disabilities.

Development of a project on disabilities: Work in progress!

The members of the AER Working Group "Equal Europe for People with Disabilities" discussed and jointly developed a project concept to address the lack of awareness and knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. This project will consist of targeted information campaigns for regional politicians and officers and health staff in the regions. The AER Secretariat and interested members will now develop a detailed project outline and will start drafting an application for co-financing of the project.

Further information: <http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2011/disabilities-employment.html>
Contact: Claudia Meschede, Policy Coordinator, c.meschede@aer.eu, +33 3 88 22 74 35

The AER e-he@lth network facilitates the exchange of knowledge among regions on how to integrate ICT into the management and delivery of health and social services.

AER represents regions at European e-health week

Responding to an invitation from the European Commission, the AER e-he@lth network organised a regional forum at the occasion of European e-health week, a major annual event linked to the EU Ministerial conference on e-health and bringing together all stakeholders in e-health. The AER forum showcased how regions are already actively deploying e-health in their territories, focusing on the use of telemedicine to manage and prevent chronic diseases. It clearly illustrated the role of the regions in this area and was an opportunity to discuss with the industry, the patients and other health representatives how to work together to further deploy telemedicine.

Based on the conclusions of the workshop, AER submitted a response to the EC consultation on its e-health Action plan for 2012-2020.

Further information: <http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2011/ehealthweek2011.html>

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COMMITTEE 2 SPRING PLENARY MEETING

The Committee 2 spring plenary session took place on 18 May 2011 in Codroipo-Udine (Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, I). Discussions focused on recent developments in promoting innovation for healthy and active ageing, as well as the impact of the European directive on patients' rights on the organisation and management of regional health services.

On 17 May, AER member regions joined the closing conference of the A.Dri.A project "Youth distress and alcohol-related problems: knowledge, innovation, experimentation" and learned about the results and outcomes of this project aimed at tackling the issue of alcohol consumption among youth. AER was invited to present the outcomes of its peer review project that concluded in May last year and took the opportunity to monitor members' progress towards implementing the outcomes of that project.

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 3rd coordination meeting, organised and hosted by AER in Strasbourg on 9-10 June 2011, was an opportunity to monitor the project's progress. AER presented the AER Summer thematic dossier on tackling natural disasters, which refers to the Flinkman project and other regional experience in this field. Partners also discussed the planning of 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.bulloot@aer.eu](mailto:c.bulloot@ 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>

CULTURE, EDUCATION AND TRAINING, YOUTH AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

COMMITTEE (3)

Committee 3 held its Spring plenary meeting on 18 & 19 April in Orléans, in combination with a conference on Professional Youth Mobility, a European Citizens' Forum on Youth Entrepreneurship Education. Its sessions were open to the members of the AER Youth Regional Network.

CULTURE

Registrations for Culture and Health conference in Istanbul open

The Culture and Health Working Group finalised the programme for the conference that will take place on 20 September in Istanbul, in conjunction with the Committee 3 & 2 Autumn plenaries. The Conference focuses on evidence-based programmes and projects that demonstrate how culture can be used as a means for preventing disease or improving well-being.

Further to a general overview, sessions will address in turn the situation of children, adults and elderly people. Speakers include representatives from the regions, the European Commission and academia as well as project workers. For more information: <http://www.aer.eu/events/committee-3-culture-education-interregional-cooperation/2011/cult-health.html>.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Youth Entrepreneurship Strategies (YES): Switching from desktop research to concrete mapping

The YES project partners met between 11 and 13 May in Tallinn and Stockholm. They took stock of the results of their desktop research concerning entrepreneurship education policies and strategies existing in their respective countries at local, regional and national level. With the help of a matrix they analysed them, in order to identify bottlenecks, and proceeded to a preliminary SWOT analysis. The partners also finalised the questionnaires they will use in the actual mapping of entrepreneurship education activities in their country/region and which will take place in the coming months. Collected examples and projects will not only be compiled in view of a best practice guide but also be screened against the findings of the SWOT analysis.

1st YES newsletter: <http://www.portavoz.net/clientes/yes/15500NEWLETTERPDF.pdf>
YES project website: www.young-entrepreneurs.eu.

Entrepreneurship education presented to a wider public

In the framework of an AER Citizens' Forum on 18 April in Orléans, Committee 3 invited two project partners as well as a representative from Istanbul University, from Kompass-Centre for Entrepreneurs (Frankfurt/D) and from the region of Olomouc (CZ) to present their activities or projects in the field of entrepreneurship education. Young people, together with politicians and officers, got the opportunity to exchange on the topic, to learn about support structures and mechanisms and to get involved in a planned project.

YOUTH

Peer Review Project on Youth Employment approved by the EC

The European Commission approved "Promoting Youth Employment (PYE)" - an AER led project under the EU Progress programme, whose overall objective is to assess and improve youth employment in 4 European regions: Vojvodina (Serbia), Hampshire (UK), Açores (Portugal) and Krapina Zagorje (HR). The kick-off meeting will take place on 4-5 July 2011 in Brussels (B) and the 1st Peer Review in Vojvodina (SRB) on 12-16 September 2011.

AER Youth Regional Network

- Spring Plenary Session

At the kind invitation of the Centre region (F), more than 80 members of regional youth councils and youth organisations met on 19 & 20 April 2011 in Orléans to discuss the membership criteria and AER-YRN synergies. For the 1st time, YRN met with the AER Committee 3 members to discuss the importance of regional professional mobility schemes, such as Eurodissey. The report is available on: <http://www.aer.eu/events/committee-3-culture-education-interregional-cooperation/2011/yrn-spring-plenary.html>

- YRN survey on regional youth participation

It takes only 5 minutes to fill in the YRN survey on regional youth councils & parliaments in Europe. By completing this questionnaire (paper and online versions available on: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/youth.html>) you will contribute to publishing the Report about youth participation in European regions, identifying good practices in this field and providing a strategic toolkit on how to establish and run a successful youth council.

- New communication tools

We invite to you follow YRN by our newly established communication tools: “*Now&then @ YRN*” is a monthly newsletter of the AER Youth Regional Network. It can be downloaded at: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/youth.html>. Moreover, everyone is invited to follow YRN on Facebook and Twitter!

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

Reminder: Deadline for applications is **15 July 2011**. For more information: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/youth/most-youth-friendlyeuropean-region-award.html>

INTERREGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Partnership framework agreement signed with Tunisia

Under the leadership of AER President SABBAN, a delegation of 20 persons composed of Committee 3 President Hande BOZATLI, several regional Vice-Presidents, Councillors and heads of administration as well as European entrepreneurs visited Tunisia from 11-13 May. The visit was organised in order to support the current transition and decentralisation process and to create a perspective for the young people with regard to mobility and employment.

The delegation met amongst others with the the Tunisian Minister for Regional Development, Mr **Abderrazek ZOUARI**, and signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), in the presence of Mr **Said AYDI**, Tunisian Minister of Vocational Training and Employment. In the run-up to the constituent in October, the MOU should pave the way for an AER representation to be established in Tunis, several working groups in view of supporting the decentralisation and regionalisation process and a specific AER mobility initiative that will draw on its longstanding experience in the framework of its Eurodissey programme.

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.

EURODISSEY

Eurodissey Steering Committee prepares September annual Forum



The Eurodyssey Steering Committee met on 17 & 18 May in Lyon (F) and further prepared the forthcoming annual Forum, which will take place on 8 & 9 September 2011 in Aosta (I). In its debates, participants will explore what European regions can do in order to guarantee and secure employment for young people and to provide them thus with a livelihood. The Forum will be organised along with a dialogue meeting, in which regional leaders will get the opportunity to discuss a hot topic.

Steering Committee participants further examined proposals for a new visual identity for the Eurodyssey programme as well as the comments that had been collected concerning the functioning of the programme's website.

Conference on professional youth mobility

On 19 April, Committee 3 organised in Orléans (F) a conference on professional youth mobility. Together with the support of the Youth Regional Network and specialists, participants got an insight in the general framework conditions in relation to EU programmes and initiatives, such as Youth on the Move, and were informed about the Eurodyssey programme.

FREREF, the European Foundation for research, education and training, at the side of AER

Following a first contact in January, exchanges with FREREF have been intensified. The President of FREREF, Jean VANOYE took part in the panel of the above mentioned mobility conference and project leader Joël BONAMY joined the Steering Committee meeting in Lyon for an exchange of views and in order to explore possible ways of cooperation.

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

Registrations for 2011 Summer Schools on "Youth in a changing society" open to young people and adults from AER member and non-member regions

A series of communication events has accompanied the opening of registrations for the forthcoming AER Summer School from 22 to 27 August in Almere (Flevoland/NL). A specific website informs all potential participants on the progress of the programme and concerning the list of speakers and provides them with the possibility to register online.

The Organising Committee, in its last meeting on 24 May in Brussels, responded positively to an official request of the YRN and raised the upper age limit for participants of the AER Youth Summer School from 24 to 26 years. The lower age limit (18 years) remains unchanged.

Summer Schools resort to new media

Further to the meeting of the Organising Committee on 24 May in Brussels, the last details have been sorted out and agreed and a communication plan been drawn up. The latter ensures amongst others the Summer Schools' presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Youtube. At regular intervals, specific events, like an interview organised on 20 May on Twitter with Committee 3 President Hande BOZATLI, will highlight the period prior to the Summer School.

To follow us on the different social media, please join us at: <http://aersummerschool.nl>

Winner of movie competition to gain a free seat

AER's 1st movie competition "Lights, Camera, Action!" invites all young Europeans to shoot short-films showing how youth is changing society all over Europe. The author of the best movie will win his/her seat at the AER Summer School and be invited to work together with the AER Press and Communication team to cover the

event. More information (deadlines, rules and guidelines) is available on: <http://www.aer.eu/events/committee-3-culture-education-interregional-cooperation/2011/moviecompetition.html>

For further information: <http://www.aer.eu/events/summer-school/2010-2019/aer-summer-schools-2011.html> 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

AER supporting decentralisation processes in the Southern Mediterranean

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between AER and the Tunisian Regional Development Ministry, at the occasion of an official visit by AER President Sabban and AER members to Tunisia in May. This agreement aims to provide support to Tunisia's decentralisation process, and to contribute to professional mobility of young Tunisians by opening the AER Eurodyssey programme to young Tunisian university graduates. Following the AER visit, Tunisian representatives were invited to take part in the conference on decentralization to be held on 6 July in Pescara, Abruzzo (I), which will provide Tunisian members of government with valuable AER members' experience and knowledge on decentralization processes in Europe.

For further information please follow this [LINK](#):

Reform of the European Neighbourhood Policy

Lobbying for an European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with strong regional focus

Following the process of the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, that started in 2010 and received further impetus after the national uprisings in the Southern Mediterranean, the European Parliament published a resolution on 7th April and the European Commission a Communication on 25 May¹. The AER General Secretariat met Mr Marek Siwiec, rapporteur on the EP resolution on the Eastern Dimension of the ENP, to make sure that the position and voice of the regions be heard in the EP report on the future ENP to be published in September. Following this meeting, the AER Secretariat has prepared a draft position on the future ENP, which is scheduled to be discussed at the AER Bureau in September.

Second AER Black Sea Regional Policy Conference - Following the first Black Sea Regional Policy Conference (February 2010, Paris), the Standing Committee hold a second Conference on 5-6 April in Batumi, Ajara a.R. (Georgia).

This Conference, which gathered more than 120 participants, was a good platform to inform regions about possibilities of interregional cooperation in the framework of EU programs. First joint projects were presented, and the event ended with the adoption of the Batumi Declaration², which was sent to all relevant European institutions. The answer of High Representative Catherine Ashton to the AER Batumi Declaration can be found online [HERE](#):

AER-Congress of Local and Regional Authorities cooperation

AER attended the Bureau of the Congress and liaised with the Congress President to develop ad hoc and joint projects proposals in the frame of the Ukrainian Presidency of the Council of Europe.

AER also took part in the consultation on the Chaves report concerning with the cooperation between the intergovernmental sector of the Council of Report dealing with regional and local democracy, and the Congress. AER reasserted, at this occasion, the unique role played by the Congress in promoting regional and local democracy in Europe (see also the AER answer to the Chaves questionnaire, August 2010, available at the AER Secretariat).

¹ Joint Communication « A new response to a changing Neighbourhood », COM(2011)303

² Available here: <http://www.aer.eu/events/standing-committee-on-institutional-affairs/2011/second-aer-black-sea-regional-policy-conference.html>

Communicating Europe and Citizenship

AER European Citizens' Forum on Youth Entrepreneurship Strategies

On the 18 of April, at the premises of the Centre regional Council, AER and the Centre Regional Council held a European Citizens' Forum dedicated to the Youth Entrepreneurship Strategies (YES) project, an INTERREG IVC project bringing together 8 partners, including AER. This Forum was open to regional officers from the AER, citizens and all other interested parties.

It provided valuable information for the regional officers on how entrepreneurial perspective can be integrated in the educational systems. One of the outcomes, along with the overall awareness-raising and best-practice sharing, was publication of the call for partnerships on the 'Project on Education for entrepreneurship' by the Olmoucky region.

For all presentations, including the call for partnerships from Olmoucky (CZ), please click [HERE](#).

Capacity building and training

AER Training Academy: Exploiting the potential of EU financial engineering at regional level

Currently, regional authorities are not always aware and capable of using available EU financial instruments. The AER Training Academy which was organised together with Committee 1 and the AER Funding Working group was held in Brussels from 21 to 22 of June, was set up to provide regions with practical advice on financial engineering tools. The training included presentations by regional and financial institution experts, case studies and question-and-answer sessions.

Further information and presentations of this training module is available [HERE](#):

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (1)

Date	Location	Event
30 June 2011	Brussels	Meeting of the AER working group on climate change and energy and study visit to BMW on electric cars
31 August 2011	Brussels	Meeting of the jury of the AER Regional Innovation Award
15 September 2011	Banja Luka, Republika Srpska (BiH)	Committee 1 Plenary Meeting
15 September 2011	Banja Luka, Republika Srpska (BiH)	Meeting of the AER working group on agriculture and rural development
16 September 2011	Banja Luka, Republika Srpska (BiH)	Conference: Future EU funding: regions get ready for financial engineering
13 – 14 October 2011 - tbc	St. Pölten, Lower Austria	Summit of the presidents of interregional organisations on future cohesion policy
20 – 21 October 2011	Siena, Tuscany (IT)	Final conference INTERREG IVC project PRESERVE
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

SOCIAL POLICY AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE (2)

Date	Location	Event
20 September	Istanbul (TR)	"Culture and Health" Conference, jointly organised by AER Committees 2 and 3
21 September	Istanbul (TR)	AER Committee 2 fall plenary session

20-21 October	Poitou-Charentes (F)	AER 'Equal Europe for People with Disabilities' working meeting and seminar
3 November (tbc)	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
4-5 July 2011	Brussels (B)	AER Peer Review « Promoting Youth Employment » – kick-off meeting for partners
19 September 2011	Istanbul (TR)	Committee 3 Plenary meeting
20 September 2011	Istanbul (TR)	Joint Conference Culture and Health (Committees 2 & 3)
12-16 September 2011	Vojvodina (SRB)	« Promoting Youth Employment » : the 1st Peer Review
29-30 September 2011	Murcia (E)	YES project midterm conference
6/7 October 2011	Lower Silesia (PL)	YRN Autumn Plenary Meeting & AER Seminar on Eastern Partnership « Youth Mobility : Going East ! »

Eurodyssey

Date	Location	Event
08-09 September 2011	Aosta (I)	Eurodyssey annual Forum – " Eurodyssey: European Regions mobilising for the employment and future of Youth"

Summer School

Date	Location	Event
22 August 2011	Almere (NL)	Summer School Organizing Committee
22-27 August 2011	Almere (NL)	AER Summer Schools (Adult & youth) "Youth in a changing society"