



The AER European Youth Ambassador Scheme What? Who? How? When?

A European Youth Ambassador...Who...Me?

Yes, you! Congratulations for being selected as a European Youth Ambassador! All participants in the AER Youth Summer School 2006 have been nominated by their regions to be European Youth Ambassadors.



Now, this might sound like quite a daunting prospect, so this brochure is intended to explain exactly what a European Youth Ambassador is, what they do and how they do it...so you can get down to business!

Put simply, a European Youth Ambassador (EYA for short) is a young person who is responsible for getting other young people in their region interested in European issues. When we talk about Europe, we don't only mean the European Union, we also mean any form of co-operation between different European countries, inside or outside

of the European Union. So if your country is not a member of the European Union, don't worry, you can still be a successful European Youth Ambassador! Whichever country you come from, your role is the same: to inform other young people in your region about European issues and also to help to explain to politicians – regional, national and European - what young people want from Europe today.

By the end of 2006, each European Youth Ambassadors (including you!) will organise an activity in their own region on a topic related to Europe. The activities might be, for example, debates on young people and Europe, information campaigns about EU programmes for young people or joint campaigns with elected politicians on European issues of interest to young people. This means that we will have a series of about 60 different events all across Europe, which will be aimed at getting young people involved in Euro-

pean issues.

As a grand finale to all this activity, at the end of the year, we will organise an event in Brussels, called 'Meet the Policymakers'. This will give you the chance to present your activities and ideas to the politicians in Brussels who make the decisions about what the European Union does, and, who knows, perhaps you will make your own mark on European politics!



Left and above : Participants of the AER Youth Summer School 2005 (Mostar - BiH)



European Youth Ambassadors

A European Youth Ambassador... who?... Me?	1
How will I know what to do?	2
What kind of issues should my activity address?	2
Can you give me some examples of possible activities?	5
How can I prepare for my role as a European Ambassador?	6
What happens after the Youth Summer School?	6
What is the 'Meet the Policy-Makers' Event ?	7

Questions ?

If there is anything you don't understand, or would like some more information about, just contact:

Joanna Benfield
Director, AER Brussels Office
Assembly of European Regions
AER Brussels Office
Place Saintette 2
B-1080 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 421 87 57
Fax: +32 2 421 84 81
Email: j.benfield@a-e-r.org

We look forward to meeting you at the AER Youth Summer School 2006 in Maramures!

How Will I Know What to Do...?

As an EYA you will take part in the 2006 AER Youth Summer School in Maramures, Romania, from 27th August – 2nd September. During the Youth Summer School, you will be provided with information and training on European issues that will help to prepare you for your role as a European Youth Ambassador.



Turnul Stefan, Baia Mare

During the Youth Summer School, you will get training in useful skills, including communication skills, lobbying and development of action plans. You will also get the

opportunity to hear about what other young people have done to promote understanding of Europe in their own regions. You will be

advised on how to prepare and implement your action plan, and you will be able to discuss it with experts who can help you to make sure that your plan is realistic and easy to implement.

By the end of the Youth Summer School, you will have prepared your own individual action plan, setting out the activities that you plan to organise in your region, deciding when they will take place, how you will advertise them and how you will find any money you need to fund them.

What Kind of Issues Should My Activity Address?

You can organise any kind of activity that you like, so long as it follows a few simple rules:

1) Your activity should have a European dimension. This means that it should either relate to the EU and its policies, or it should promote European co-operation with young people from other European regions

2) Your activity should also involve other young people in your region

3) If possible, your activity should also involve regional politicians and/or Members of the European Parliament (or you should let these people know about the results of your activities)

4) You will be responsible for finding the resources (money, equipment, venue, etc) that you need to organise your activity



In order to help you to narrow down the theme of your activity, we have chosen four broad categories. Your activity should fall into one of these:

(A) Future of Europe

Activities in this category could look at how young people in your region think Europe should be in the future; for example, they could look at what it means to be 'European' (whether or not your country is a member of the EU, you are still European!). Alternatively, your activity could examine whether your country should join the EU or the Euro, if you are not already a member.



(B) Health & social affairs

These activities could make information available to young people about what the European Union is doing to improve young people's health, or they could try to influence European

policy on an issues such as mental health and alcohol. Activities could look at how different countries approach such issues.

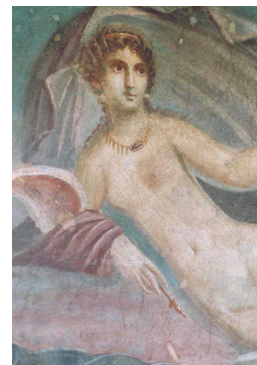
(C) Regional issues, transport and environment

Activities in this category could provide young people with information about the European Union's Lisbon Strategy, or could look at how different regions tackle similar transport or environment problems.



(D) Youth, culture & education

These activities could provide young people with information about possibilities to study abroad or could promote youth exchanges with other regions. They could also try to influence the development of European policies such as the European Youth Pact.

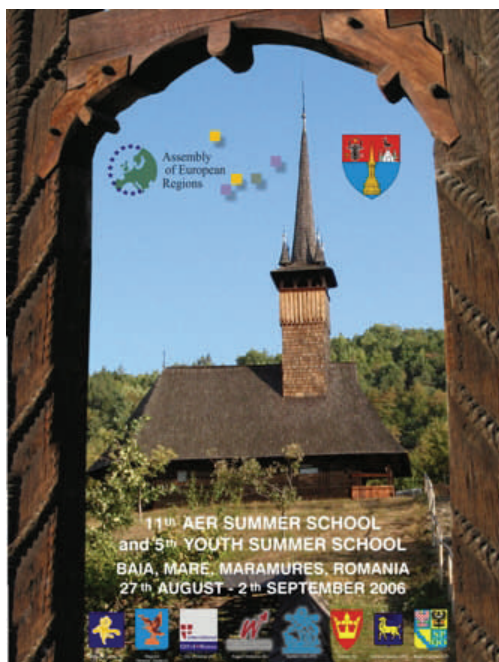


As long as your activity falls roughly into one of these categories, then no problem, it doesn't have to match the description given here completely! The important thing to remember is, whatever theme you choose, your project must have a European dimension. This could mean that the action could address an issue relating to the European Union or the Council of Europe, or it could raise awareness of how the issue is dealt with in other countries. Alternatively it could engage European representatives in your region (such as Members of the European Parliament) in promoting an issue that is important to young people where you live.

You can chose to organise just one activity (for instance, one newsletter, or one debate), or a series of activities on the same theme. However, remember that it is very important to be realistic about the cost of your project. Think about how you might be able to make use of the resources that are already available to you, such as your school or college hall. Use low-cost methods to publicise your event, such as inter-



net and email. See whether your regional authority, who selected you to be an EYA, can provide any help.



AER EYA

During the Youth Summer School participants will be divided into four groups, one for each of the topics described above. The AER Youth Team members, already experienced in working on these topics, will help to co-ordinate the work of the four groups, and assist you with developing your individual action plans. If you prefer, you can put together an action plan together with other EYAs from your region, or even with an EYA from a different region.



Can You Give me Some Examples of Possible Activities?

You can organise any type of activity you like, so long as it fits into the guidelines set out above. However, if you are stuck for an idea, here are some possible actions that you could consider.

Remember these are just intended as examples – see if you can come up with something better!



Youth Summer School



A « Poarta maramureseana »

- Organise a debate on what young people in your region think about Europe. Ask your regional authority whether you can use the regional parliament chamber or another meeting room for your activity. Ask regional politicians and local MEPs to take part in the debate. Your region can help you to contact them!
- Organise an information campaign to inform other young people in your area about European funding opportunities that they are eligible for (e.g. to work abroad for a short period). Information campaigns might be electronic or print, or you might organise a stand somewhere. Ask your region to help you with distribution of materials and printing!
- Create a short film about what 'Europe' means to young people in your region. We can show it to the European decision-makers when we meet them later this year
- Produce a newsletter on EU programmes for young people. Ask your region to arrange for it to be distributed electronically to schools and colleges
- Hold an event in your Youth Parliament, inviting MEPs or regional politicians to come and debate their views on Europe
- Invite MEPs to come to your school or college to explain to young people what the European Union does for them
- Organise an study with EYAs from other countries on an issue of common concern (e.g. mental health, transport for young people) and present your findings to your regional council
- Do a survey of the views of young people in your region on a specific topic that the EU is preparing policy on (e.g. mental health, alcohol) and send the conclusions to the European institutions. Your region can help you to identify the right contacts
- Organise a campaign to facilitate European travel for young people
- Organise an event to explain a big European issue, such as the Lisbon Strategy, the European Youth Pact or the European Constitution to young people (invite MEPs and regional politicians to give the explanations!)
- Organise an information campaign on opportunities for young people to volunteer in other European countries
- Organise a European quiz night. Ask your region to provide the venue and a prize!
- Organise a cross-border project with a European Youth Ambassador from a neighbouring country, bringing young people from your two regions together. Ask your region to help you apply to the European Youth Programme for financial support!
- Put together a project for EU funding, together with some of the European Youth Ambassadors from different countries

How Can I Prepare for My Role as a European Youth Ambassador?

Before attending the Youth Summer School, you need to complete the questionnaire included in this brochure, explaining what ideas you have for promoting European issues in your region. Don't worry if you don't know exactly what you want to do, you will have the chance to develop your plan properly during the Youth Summer School. The most important thing to decide before coming to the Youth Summer School is the broad topic of your activity (and don't worry, you can

even change your mind about this if you are struck by sudden inspiration when you are in Baia Mare!). In deciding what topic you would like to address, try to think about what interests young people in your region: do they care about the European Constitution? Would they like to know more about opportunities to work



and study in other European countries? Would they like to know more about how the European Union works? If you want your activity to be successful and to engage other young people in your region, it is important that you chose a topic that will really interest them.

Before coming to the Youth Summer School, you should also arrange a meeting with the person in your regional authority who nominated you to participate in the event. It is important that you explain to them what you will be doing as a European Youth Ambassador and that you ask them whether the region is able to give you any kind of support. For example, they might be able to help you by giving you a meeting room to organise a debate, helping you to contact Members of the European Parliament or regional politicians, or perhaps they can print copies of your newsletter or information material for you. Make sure you go to the meet-

AER European Youth Ambassadors

ing well prepared, so that you know what it is you want the region to provide you with. You might also want to ask the regional representative whether they are prepared to pay for a flight and accommodation, so that you can go to Brussels to take part in the 'Meet the Policy-makers' event at the end of the year (see page 7 for more details).



What Happens After the Youth Summer School?

After the Youth Summer School, it is up to you to turn your ideas into reality. Probably the first thing you will want to do when you go back home is to go and see the regional representative again who nominated you for the Youth Summer School. You should show them your completed action plan and

agree what the region can do to help you to implement it.

Then you need to do your planning, advertising and finally put your plan into action. Perhaps you want to think about how to publicise your event. Would local newspapers be interested in reporting it,

for example? Remember that your region might have a press office that could help you with this.

The AER will set up a forum on its website for EYAs to exchange ideas and information about their activities. This will give you the opportunity to offer each other advice and share any problems you might be facing in organising your activity



En route to Brussels, BE

Once you have completed your activity, it is important that you let the AER know about the results. We will provide you with a form to fill out, describing what you did, what you achieved and whether you had any publicity in local newspapers, etc. We will put all of this information onto the AER website. Remember to take



Brussels BE — Be a part of it!

photos of your event, so that we can include these too!

At the end of the year, some of the European Youth Ambassadors will come to Brussels to present their projects to the European decision-makers at the 'Meet the Policy-makers Event'.

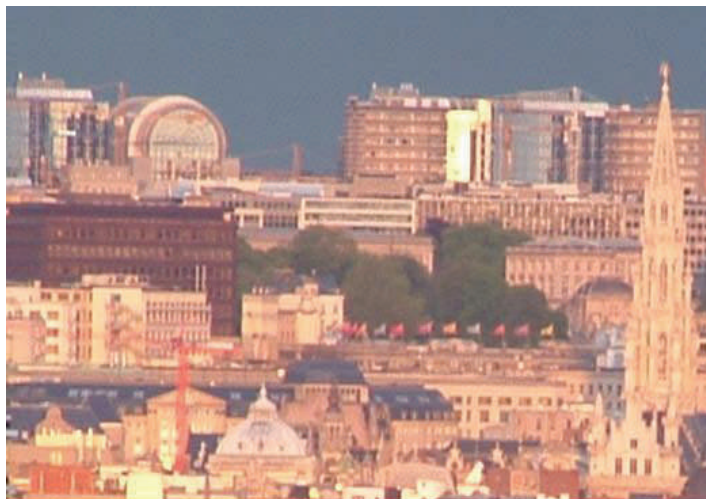


What is the 'Meet the Policy-Makers' Event?

This event, which will take place at the end of 2006, will give you the opportunity to tell the politicians in the European Union face-to-face what young people think of Europe today. All EYAs are welcome to participate in this event. If you attend this event, you will have the opportunity to inform the European decision-makers, including Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission, about your activity and about the views of young people in your region in Europe. The aim of this meeting will be to make sure that those people who make the decisions about what happens in the European Union understand and

take into account the views of young people in Europe.

On the same day as the 'Meet the Policy-Makers' event, we will organ-



The EU Parliament dominates the Brussels Skyline

ise a debriefing session, at which you will have the opportunity to provide the AER with feedback on the EYA scheme and to tell us what worked well and what did not. Even if you cannot attend this event, we will ask you to provide us with your opinions by email so that you also have the opportunity to contribute.

Remember, if you want to attend the 'Meet the Policy-makers' event, you will probably need to persuade your regional authority to pay for your trip to Brussels and for your accommodation for one night in a youth hostel. Don't leave this until the last minute!

In 2005, the AER established a Youth Team to promote young people's participation in the regions, and to give them a voice in European politics. The European Youth Ambassador Scheme is an integrated part of the Youth Team Work Programme. Good to know that the AER will keep up a strong focus on youth - it does not stop at the end of 2006!

www.a-e-r.org



The Assembly of European Regions/AER is the political organisation of Regions in Europe and their spokesman at European and international level.

Its vocation is to defend the Regions' interests in the political process and develop interregional cooperation.

AER brings together 250 Regions from 30 European countries, both members and non-members of the EU, and 13 interregional organisations.

What Do I do if I Have Any Questions?

If there is anything you don't understand, or would like some more information about, just contact:

Joanna Benfield

Director, AER Brussels Office
Assembly of European Regions

Place Saintelette 2

B-1080 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 421 87 57

Fax: +32 2 421 84 81

Email: j.benfield@a-e-r.org

