



EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Last month has been very busy regarding the preparation for our next trainings and seminars. We are very glad to see that our works have sparked off so much interest and that in a few weeks we have gone beyond all the forecast in terms of participation. Please, check out the registration for the AVSO lobbying and Social Activism seminar, which has been opened recently and there is an early bird registration till the next 25th February.

In this issue, we also would like to bring to your attention the warning sent by the Council of Europe regarding a hoax concerning its trainings.

To round off, have a look at the call for participation in a survey launched by the United Nations Volunteers to prepare for the IYV+10.

Last week the Board and the Secretariat met for the Board meetings in Berlin, and we also had the chance to meet our members ICJA and ASF and see their offices and the amazing work they contribute. We also had meetings in the German Ministry to ask them to support some of our own, and some of our Members' activities.

Enjoy the Newsletter!!!

The AVSO team

AVSO-THIS MONTH.

AVSO Lobbying and Social Activism seminar 15-16 April 2008 REGISTRATION OPEN

Civil society organisations and volunteers want to make a change. However, they might not always know how, when, or using and applying which tools. Networking, lobbying, activism are all terminology widely used, but what do they really mean?

The objective of the seminar is to demystify lobbying and advocacy work by showcasing real examples of success and failure, by meeting the real European key decision and policy makers, to hear from them, what do they appreciate and when do they close their doors. Because policy makers and politicians need lobbyists - exactly how and what for will also be explored during the seminar.

Visits to the European parliament, the European Commission and other key institutions will illustrate the complexity and also the real life aspect of the lobbying and advocacy work of the 17 000 lobbyists in Brussels. In an interactive workshop session at the end, participants will have the possibility to adapt the theory and practice they heard during the seminar to their own contexts and organisations.

The seminar will take place at the AVSO premises in Brussels - jointly with visits to the European institutions (European Commission, European parliament, European economic and Social Committee) and other organisations of interest.

The registration process will take place in 2 steps:

1. There will be an early bird registration option, until the 25/02/2008:
 - 120 EUR for organisations who are members of AVSO
 - 160 EUR for organisations non-members of AVSO
2. After the 25th February the registration prices will be:
 - 120 EUR for organisations who are members of AVSO
 - 190 EUR for non-members of AVSO

The participation fee will cover the conference folders, other administrative costs, coffee breaks, a sandwich lunch for the first day, and a warm lunch for the second day.

Participants have to cover their own travel and accommodation costs, AVSO will help booking accommodation for a reasonable price close to the venue.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to **contact Agnes Uhereczky at agnes@avso.org**

AVSO training Mainstreaming and Facilitating Intercultural Dialogue in Volunteering and Voluntary Service

AVSO submitted an application for the 1st February deadline. We are very glad to confirm that the participation objectives have been reached by far. The training has sparked off an enormous interest for a wide variety of organisations. For the first time, the project will distribute and start to work even before the approval of the project. Promoters and participants will receive information each month about the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the topics concerning in a moth basis. The information will be display in this newsletter as well.

If you are interested, please consult possibilities to participate directly to Helena Ruiz Fabra at helena@avso.org

Invisible Heroes Campaign- PARTICIPATION REQUIRED!!!!

The purpose of the campaign is to get recognition for all those many hundreds of thousands of volunteers serving daily in Europe, the "Invisible Heroes" of our societies. Every volunteer should be recognised for his/her contribution to society, the time and energy they invest in helping others and making Europe a better place to live!

We ask volunteers serving currently and during the next 12 months in Europe to send us their photo to invisibleheroes@avso.org, specifying the project and city of the service as well as their name. In the first phase of this visual campaign we will collect the photos and up-load them to a separate website linked from the AVSO website. As soon as the special "Invisible Heroes" campaign website is up and running volunteers and their organisations can up-load their own photos directly to the site.

Please encourage your volunteers to participate and spread the information that will be arriving during the campaign!!!! www.avso.org

OPEN – 2008 new members' recruitment.

AVSO is an open network for this reason it has been open again the process for becoming AVSO member during 2008. AVSO is open for all non-profit (non-governmental or public) organisations which have an interest in the development and promotion of long-term voluntary service in Europe.

We would be very glad to welcome new organisations in the course of our activities. As our next General Assembly will be held in June, in this edition the **deadline for applicants is 18th May 2008**. You can check the procedure in our website (http://www.avso.org/members/members_join.html) or you can request further information at helena@avso.org. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

MEMBER'S CORNER

DISCOVER the new AVSO Members- in this issue Unis-Cité and CIU Sweden:

In 2007, AVSO started its new member's recruitment campaign by launching **a call for membership on AVSO's Newsletter AVSO'S 27-The unity makes us stronger**. The campaign settled a very ambitious objective, namely to become 27 full members by the end of 2008. As a result of such campaign and of the increasing activities we had the pleasure to ratify during our to six new members , namely: Noborders based in The Netherlands, ARCI Servizio Civile based in Italy, PRAXIS based Greece, LEGAMBIENTE based in Italy and CIU based in Sweden, Unis-Cité based in France. Moreover, we were very glad that the historical membership of EIL in AVSO has been renewed by EIL Ireland and EIL Germany.

We propose to meet our new Members in this section in the next issues; we would like to present you this month: UNIS-CITE and CIU.



UNIS-CITÉ <http://www.unis-cite.org>

Created in 1994, Unis-Cité proposes a year of civic service and personal development to young people aged 18 to 25. In this innovative programme of long-term youth service in France, young men and women of all cultural and social backgrounds and education levels come together in teams of 8, for a full-time six or nine months commitment working for the community. This civic "rite of passage" has a double impact:

- 1- On communities as volunteers work with existing local citizen organizations whose aim is to meet critical society needs,
- 2- On volunteers as they learn new skills, and receive citizenship training and support for developing their own future (personal and professional) projects.

Since 1995, almost 2,000 young people have risen to the challenge, completing more than 1000 projects benefiting thousands of people in communities all around France, in partnership with more than 600 local and national organisations.

Unis-Cité currently operates in 9 major French cities and 6 medium-size cities, engaging young volunteers who: serve disadvantaged children/ youth/ adults, isolated elders, people with disabilities, homeless people, and work to combat racism and discriminations, protect the environment, promote community economic development.



CIU - Centrum för Internationellt Ungdomsutbyte (The Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange) <http://www.ciu.se>

The "Foundation for International Youth Exchange" (SIU) was established in 1990. It was initiated by the Swedish government, the Swedish Sports Confederation and the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations. Then, in 1996, a re-organisation took place and SIU changed its name and organisational form. Today the Swedish Centre of International Youth Exchange (CIU) has got 28 members and together with several international partners we conduct two international youth exchange programs. The programs are called Sweden World Youth (SWY) and Youth Partners in Development (YPD). The programs are 6 months long and the participants spend half the time in Sweden and half the time in the partner country. The participants in SWY and YPD live in host families and take part in local voluntary work connected to sustainable development.

Another area of work for CIU is to inspire and advice young people who want to explore the world. CIU do that mainly through a web based community called MyTellus but also through seminars and workshops at schools and special events.

CIU also develops methods and tools for the improvement of youth exchange and voluntary work. At the moment CIU focus on an own method for the recognition of informal learning which is called ELD (experience, learning, description). Together with the

Swedish National Agency for School Improvement CIU has got a project with the objective to increase the internationalisation of schools. CIU is a member of the European network EYRICA (European Youth Information and Counselling Agency) and also represent Sweden in the European Members States Expert Group on the development of youth-specific elements of Europass.

SEVEN – Senior European Volunteer Exchange Network

A Grundtvig 3 year networking project, led by our member LUNARIA, and AVSO is one of the partners. The kick-off meeting took place in January in Italy, and the project website will be soon up and running, so watch this space.

In Europe, the majority of seniors live in better conditions than in the past but there is still a certain degree of risk of permanent social exclusion due to ageing. The creation of a European society active at all ages needs a strategy that allows seniors to take part in social life also after the exit from the labour market. Seniors represent a richness not appreciated enough in terms of experiences and acquired skills: therefore specific actions at European level devoted to seniors, can develop schemes of social inclusion and active participation in order to change seniors from passive beneficiaries of social protection to active citizens in the construction of Europe. Staying active, and thus a voluntary service at the age of 50+ can really delay the onset of age-related illnesses and bring more value and energy to the lives of senior citizens.

Lunaria has arrived at the setting up of this network thanks to a series of pilot projects financed by the European Commission (2001, DG ESA – Pilot project on Exchanges of Senior volunteers, 2001 DG EAC – Mobility 55, 2003 DG EAC – Still Active!, 2004 DG ESA Teaming up!, 2006 DG EAC Conference on senior volunteers exchanges) but also greatly co-financed by several local Governments in Europe who are all involved in the network (in Italy, Austria, Belgium, Germany).

We at AVSO are very proud of the large network and to be able to take part in it. We hope to contribute with a number of actions, lobbying at EU level, and promoting the network through our own internal and external networks, to translate our research results to senior volunteer exchanges and by adapting our mentorship manual to this specific age group.

For more information on the network/project, either contact Davide di Pietro at dipietro@lunaria.org, or check the new SEVEN website as soon as it will be up and running – we will keep you posted.

The Member's Corner is a free space at AVSO Newsletter for all Members and their staff. You can post press releases; adverts for your activities, contributions, statements, reflections about the situation at your organisation or your country, etc. For contribution to the Member's corner, please contact Helena Ruiz Fabra at helena@avso.org

NEWS FROM EUROPE

Cultural Diversity, Religious and Dialogue: Hearing at the European Parliament.

Hearings topics are varied, but only a few of them have such a strong content and are able to spark off so much interest as the one organised by Erna Hennicot-Schoepges MEP (EPP-ED, Luxembourg), European Parliament rapporteur on the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. The hearing took place on 10th January 2008. The first session was entitled 'Respect for EU Values - Living Together', and the second 'Europe facing Religious Pluralism'. The EPP-ED is one of the political groups of the European Parliament; it is the largest of the seven groups. Thus, it represents many of the major political parties across

Europe who fall into the centre-right/Christian democrat category (for example, the Conservative party of Britain, Nicholas Sarkozy's UMP party in France or Angela Merkel's CDU party in Germany). What did change at the Union in the last years to pass from economic and monetary topics to a more cultural, values topics settling approach?

Jean Figel's opening speech drafted the current situation of the Union as confronting to its own maturity. Proof of it, is the fact that we are able to deal with more sensitive issues such culture and dialogue. As he pinpointed through his speech, interest is the first condition for dialogue and diversity is growing at the Union. In addition, as have been showed in the last Eurobarometer three in four EU citizens welcome dialogue with other cultures and, it is means that the Union could not longer afford just remain an empty legal basis. These are the grounds that permitted the European Commission to declare 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Especially at the moment, when diversity is increasing we should contribute more to cohesion and dialogue. Finally, Figel demanded no to see diversity as a burden, if not as a sign of more Europe.

During the Hearing, other key-speakers took the floor: academics from Luxembourg, Germany, France, Italy, Czech Republic, and Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in the discussion. Unfortunately, none of them reached the public as commissioner Figel did.

Key-speakers were focusing probably too much in bringing religion to a political order. This was proof by the lack of a secularist perspective as viable political stance represented at the panel. Passive responses from the public were due to the fact that the conference room was packed out, huge attendance from the same school of thought. Only a reduce number of interventions from the public took place. Some criticism arise, these were the voices of some journalist who questioned the assumptions presented during the panels and if the interlocutors appointed by the Institutions are represent the reality of beliefs and modern life in Europe.

Inter-religious dialogue is fast emerging as a central theme of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, with MEP and EYID rapporteur Erna Hennicot-Schoepges last week hinting that the Parliament may host a forum on the issue before the end of the year.

New Youth Website

The youth website has been completely renovated. It includes new section such youth in other fields. More details regarding Youth policy and the youth in Action Programme. The results are remarkable, please check by yourself: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm

New Youth in Action guide published for 2008.

The Programme Guide is a tool for anybody who would like to participate in the Youth in Action Programme. It includes the necessary information about the priorities, actions and main features of the Programme as well as the criteria and conditions on how to participate. The new version is currently available in English only; this new version is valid from the 1st January 2008. Note that the applications forms for the 1st February deadline have changed as well. You can check the new guide:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/guide2008/yia_programme_guide08_en.doc

The European Commission awards funding to new civil protection simulation exercises and projects.

The European Commission has awarded grants worth €4.07 million to projects and large-scale pan-European simulation exercises proposed under the recently adopted Civil Protection Financial Instrument. The exercises will involve earthquake and flooding simulations, and will be led by organisations from five European countries. For more information: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil>

European Commission to launch study on unleashing talent and creativity in Europe.

Representatives from the EU's Culture Ministries met in Cannes on 27 January to discuss the challenges facing the music industry at an informal meeting held to coincide with the start of this year's MIDEM international trade fair for the music and recording industry. At the event, European Commissioner Ján Figel' announced the launch of a study on the role of culture, and the EU's cultural industries, in promoting and stimulating creativity, innovation and growth in the EU.

WARNING! Messages from the Council of Europe.

To all our partners, to all youth organisations, and especially to all young people interested in Council of Europe training courses in the field of youth. It has been brought to our attention that a call for application supposedly drafted by the Directorate of Youth, and bearing the Council of Europe logo has been circulated in order to swindle young people out of 135 euros. Although such a hoax is very rare, it happens, and the Council of Europe wanted to give you a few "hints" to avoid being abused.

NO MONEY is asked in advance whenever training courses, study sessions or other activities are organised by the Directorate of Youth of the Council of Europe. The fee is either paid on the spot (intercultural language courses) or deduced from travel reimbursement (study sessions, training seminars...).

WHOEVER works for the Council of Europe has the following address: firstname.SURNAME@coe.int. We would appreciate if you could pass on the information around, as it will be a way to counter such frauds. Do not hesitate to contact us should you come across documents of the same vein as above Thank you! youth@coe.int.

MISCELLANEOUS BRIEFING

Follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers in 2001

For the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers in 2001, the United Nations Volunteers invites your organization to take part on an online survey. The survey targets volunteer-involving organisations (organizations engaged in or supporting volunteering) be they: NGOs, governments, private corporations, or part of the wider world of volunteering. This survey is not intended for individual volunteers to participate in the survey – although they may participate if they wish. This web survey is intended to provide a general overview of the state of the world's volunteering. This online survey will only take 10 minutes. It aims to acquire a better understanding of the trends, successes, challenges and lessons learned in the world of volunteering since 2001. More importantly, the survey's findings will be part of the report that the UN Secretary General will submit to the 63rd General Assembly later this year. All responses can be anonymous - but with your permission we will also try and contact you to follow-up on their ideas, inputs, initiatives and success stories. **The deadline for submission is February 29.**

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=O6agIrydJDIIfzaxJEe8XJg_3d_3d

PES launches a Public consultation in order to draft a manifesto for its political Programme 2009-2014

It is the first time that any European party is holding such consultation. It is aiming to ensure that the final version represents and gather the ideas and concerns of citizens; trade unions, party members and civil society. The consultation is focus on some themes:

- a) Save our planet (climate change, energy and sustainable development agenda.
- b) New Social Europe (particularly the social, economic and employment agenda)
- c) European democracy and diversity (how to improve democracy and fundamental rights in the EU)
- d) Europe in the world.

AVSO members are able to contribute through the PES website (www.pes.org) or you can contact the project manager Alexandra Pardal (manifesto2009@pes.org)

ESODOC

ESoDoc is the right workshop for documentary film makers, new media professionals and NGO field workers, who want to experiment the new boundaries of audiovisual production. You should be interested in working in developing countries, with citizen's activism, to use the media for human rights and environmental protection. **Application deadline for ESoDoc 2008: 18th March.**

<http://www.esodoc.eu/>

CALL FOR PROPOSALS AND TENDERS

Citizenship - Connecting people throughout Europe. The deadlines for submission of applications under the new program "Europe for Citizens" for funding request from 2008 on are scheduled as follows:

- Civil society projects. Deadline for submission **15th February 2008**. For activities taken place between the 1st July 2008 to 30th June 2009.
- Action 4- Active European Remembrance projects, deadline for submission the **30th April 2008** for projects between 1st September 2008 and 31st August 2009.

More Information: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/funding_en.htm

European Youth Foundation.

Category B.

In this category the European Youth Foundation (EYF) may support, for example: specialised publications (such as training manuals); newsletters or magazines produced by international youth organisations or networks; information campaigns; exhibitions and the production of audio-visual materials etc; the development of web sites or the production of CD-Roms; the production of posters, badges and stickers; research projects on youth-related issues. In the same category, the EYF can also grant study visits enabling youth organisations and networks to make new contacts in Europe and thus extend partnerships and develop co-operation. Priority will be given to projects using new information technologies and those with an innovative nature. The next deadline for applications is: **1st April 2008** for activities taking place between 1 January and 30 June 2009.

Category A.

It is an international youth meeting, which can take the form of a seminar, conference, workshop, camp, festival, etc. The next deadline for applications is **1st April 2008** for activities taking place between the 1st January and the 30th June 2009.

<http://www.eyf.coe.int/fej/>

Lifelong Learning. The main deadlines are:

Comenius, Grundtvig: Mobility 31 January 2008

Leonardo da Vinci: Mobility 8 February 2008

Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig: Partnerships **15 February 2008**

Jean Monnet programme 15 February 2008

Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig: Multilateral projects, Networks and Accompanying Measures **29 February 2008**

Erasmus: Mobility **14 March 2008**

Leonardo da Vinci: Transfer of Innovation multilateral projects 14 March 2008

Transversal programmes **31 March 2008**

Call for proposals - 'Youth in the world': cooperation with countries other than the neighbouring countries of the European Union / 'Youth in action' Programme.

Deadline 15 April 2008. This call for proposals seeks to support projects promoting

cooperation in the youth sector between Programme Countries and partner countries other than the European Union's neighbouring countries.

AVSO FUNDING TABLE: At the beginning of last year, AVSO published a funding table for the period 2007-2013. Please, notice that it is still published in the Youthnetworks and in the AVSO documents page.

To subscribe or unsubscribe your mailing address from the AVSO Newsletter, please e-mail: newsletter@avso.org