

AVSO Newsletter — January 2007

Editorial

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Happy New Year to all of you! We are back and busy in AVSO preparing two applications for the 1st February deadline - have a look further below, perhaps you are interested. One is a round table discussion and sharing of experiences about the technical and administrative issues of the Youth programme - both old and new. The other application is for a training seminar on reinforced mentorship in voluntary service projects.

We have sent out our 2007 work plan to our members, and we have received very positive feedback. We have quite a few ambitious projects on the way, we intend to set up an intranet for our members, to share ideas, studies, and documents and be able to create a closer network by facilitating direct contact between the members. Also we will travel to France and Germany among others with the sole purpose of networking and spreading information about AVSO.

We are also of course continuing the recruitment of new members. If you are interested in finding out what are the benefits of AVSO membership, the engagement of the members and the membership fee, please write to us and we will be happy to give you all the information you want. We need more members to enhance the cooperation between voluntary service organisations, to have a stronger voice towards the decision makers and to be more effective in multiplying the results of our lobbying activities. **So join us!**

Enjoy the newsletter!

The AVSO team



NEWS from EUROPE



AVSO participated at the 20th Anniversary celebration of the ERASMUS programme. As we have observed, many ERASMUS students seek to continue their European adventure and go on an EVS or other voluntary service programme.



Vice-President of the European Commission, Margot Wallström gave a very motivating and enthusiastic speech at the occasion, and she also mentioned the EVS programme. "...This is indeed a good morning because it's a day of **celebration**. Just 20 years ago the **Erasmus programme** was born. And what a **success** it has been! It has given nearly **one and a half million young people** the opportunity to study abroad and experience life in another culture. "



"For **eight out of ten** of you, you are the first person in your family to have had that opportunity. Living and studying abroad is a potentially **excellent experience**. It broadens your horizons. It challenges your pre-conceptions. It makes you more **confident**, more **independent** – and more **employable** too. It can even be something of a **survival training course** – especially if you're unfamiliar with the language of your host country! First, it is clear that shared culture and education are a powerful force for uniting people. It was true in the days of Erasmus himself: it remains true today. The fundamental purpose of the European project is to secure peace and friendship between European nations. And "an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe" – to quote the EU Treaty. That kind of unity implies a common culture: a shared outlook on life; a common understanding of the world and what we want to achieve in it. That is the kind of understanding which the Erasmus programme generates. When I talk about a "common culture" I don't mean a bland, uniform culture for the whole of Europe. Far from it! Our wonderful diversity is one of our greatest riches, and I hope we all treasure it. What I mean is a common set of values. Our shared commitment to democracy, fair play, social justice, solidarity, tolerance, inclusiveness. Those are the things that unite us far more fundamentally than our differences."

"For example, there's the **European Voluntary Service (EVS)**, an excellent volunteering scheme which has been run by the European Commission since 1996. If you're **between 18 and 25**, EVS offers you the opportunity to do volunteer work in another country, normally for a period of six to twelve months, helping with social, cultural, environmental and sports projects. **It's fun!** It creates friendship. It lets you show **solidarity** with other people in very practical ways. You can learn from them, and they can learn from you. Together you can discuss what Europe means to you and the **kind of Europe you want** for the future. We have to decide and to build that future **together**. "**Together since 1957**" is the EU's birthday slogan: now let's **stay together** and face the future. As **friends**."

For more information on the Erasmus programme and Erasmus days all over Europe: <http://www.20erasmus.eu/page/erasmusdays>

The 18-month Programme of the German, Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies

The period established in the Programme is within the January 2007 to June 2008.

In March 2007 the Union will commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and AVSO will be there. The German Presidency will be submitted on June 2007 in the European Council a document containing an assessment of the state of discussions with regard to the Constitutional Treaty and exploring future possible developments.

Regarding the enlargement the three presidencies will take the opportunity to consolidate the basis of the existing European Union of 27 countries. The Strategy for Sustainable Development adopted in 2006 will be kept as the key of the future policy-making; in this context extremely importance will be given to the climate change and the environment.

PRIORITIES ON CONNECTION WITH THE AVSO'S WORK.

- * **Visa issue:** The future presidencies will focus on developing the area of freedom, security, and justice. They will look for a "coherent approach to immigration and integration policy in the European Union". They consider high priority to give the effective protection of the Union's external borders. Strengthening of FRONTEX and implementation of Visa Information System. Moreover, they will take forward work on Common applications centres. The three presidencies as well will also take forward work opening the way for all of the newer Member states to become part of the Schengen area as soon as possible.
- * **Promotion of the Intercultural Dialogue:** The future presidencies will pay more attention to promote the intercultural dialogue in order "to foster mutual understanding between people of different backgrounds and cultures (complementary with the events which will take place in 2008, the year of the intercultural dialogue).
- * **Intercultural Dialogue:** Finally, the Presidencies will attach great importance to the promotion of multiculturalism and integration in the context of EU action in the field of education. In connection with the activities in the framework of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008), special attention will be given to the role of multilingualism in fostering multicultural understanding and communication. Particular priority will be given to developing a coherent approach to integration policy and to fostering mutual understanding between people from different backgrounds and cultures through dialogue.
- * **Employment:** YOUTH PACT "Youth Pact, particular attention should be paid to young people, with particular emphasis on facilitating the transition from school to work and on strengthening the link between education and the labour market; the use of European financial instruments, in particular the European Social Fund, will be of crucial importance in this regard. Thirdly, lifelong learning, a good quality of work for all and improving the integration of older people in the labour market are necessary for European workers to have healthier and more productive working lives and to make active ageing at the end of their working career possible".
- * **Social Participation:** The Presidencies will promote the social participation and professional integration of young people. For the implementation of this priority they will work on questions related to the provision of equal opportunities for all young people, fostering their entrepreneurship and voluntary engagement and the promotion of diversity as well as intercultural dialogue among young people. In these areas the exchange of good practices and a better knowledge and understanding of youth are crucial. The evaluation of the results of the Youth Programme 2000-2006 and the successful launch of the new "Youth in Action" Programme (2007-2013) will be of major importance for further developing a European Youth Policy".
- * **Senior volunteers:** As part of the process of the demographic change, the presidencies commit themselves to bring opportunities for everyone. In especial the German Presidency will emphasize the role of older people as active participants in the economy and the labour market, bearing in mind their potential to contribute to the economic and social development of our societies.
- * **Promoting equal opportunities:** Further developing the European social model, promoting equal opportunities and European policy of gender mainstreaming, as well as improving educational systems will priority. The presidencies considers that the implementation of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007) as a good opportunity to highlight achievements and further work to be done in this area.
- * The three presidencies attach particular importance to the **transatlantic relations**.
- * **Social Policy:** the overarching aims of the presidencies will be to reinforce the European social model as part of the Lisbon Strategy "child-care, support for older people and people with disabilities; the challenges arising from demographic trends and changes, in particular the ageing of our societies and low birth rates; the promotion of social inclusion and the fight against poverty as a distinctive mark of the European project"

THE GERMAN PRESIDENCY IN A NUTSHELL



The German Presidency runs from 1 January till 30 June 2007. They already created a website where you can download not only the programme but where important events and news will be posted (<http://www.eu2007.de/en/>). They will prepare the 50th anniversary of the creation of the EEC. We can summarise their programme:

European Constitution: Explore future developments in the adoption of an European Constitution because “The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe envisages significant progress towards a value oriented and socially just Europe, more civil rights, increased cooperation in the areas of justice and home affairs, clearer division of responsibilities between the Union and the Member States, greater national parliament participation and a stronger foreign and security policy. It makes the European Union more democratic, efficient and transparent and gives it more scope to act”.

Europe of knowledge: Stepping up investment in education and research.

Strengthening European cooperation in education. Systematic implementation of the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme established by the education ministers. Launch Conference for the Programme Lifelong Learning.

Modern cultural and media policy: Because cultural and media policy improve the Europe’s Culture identity and highlight the continent’s diversity. The presidency proposed a Revision of the Television without Frontiers Directive and a call for the elaboration of joint recommendations on how to tap the growth and employment in the cultural sector.

Efficient, citizens-oriented administration: e-government and set transnational standards.

Promoting equal opportunities: to target all population groups.

Integration and Intercultural Dialogue: The presidency will look forward to develop a coherent approach to integration policy and intensify the exchanges experience in this area. Focus on the dialogue with the Islam.

UPCOMING INTERESTING MEETINGS:

14.03.2007- 15.03.2007 Conference: Developing Intercultural Competences to Combat Racism and Xenophobia
Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs .Lübeck

28.03.2007- 31.03.2007 Conference: Knowledge for Action. Research Strategies for an Evidence-Based Education Policy. Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Frankfurt am Main.

13.04.2007 -16.04.2007 Youth Event: Equal Opportunities and Social Participation For All Young People. Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Cologne

26.04.2007 -28.04.2007 European Conference on Cultural Diversity. Federal Foreign Office Essen

26.04.2007-27.04.2007 5th Congress of the Social Sector: Managing Europe’s Social Affairs; Values – Competition – Finance Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Magdeburg

06.05.2007 07.05.2007 European Launch Conference for the Programme for Lifelong Learning. Federal ministry of Education and Research . Berlin

AVSO is actively following and participating in the German Presidency. We will keep you up-dated on relevant activities, but if you want to find out more, go to: <http://www.eu2007.de/en/>

FINAL VERSION TO THE COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON YOUTH

You can already download from the website the final version of the meeting held on 13-14 November on 2006. Adopted a resolution on implementing the common objectives for participation by and information for young people in view of promoting their active European citizenship. By adopting this resolution, Member States have committed to further develop concrete actions to encourage young people’s active participation in democratic life: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsroom/loadBook.asp?target=2006&bid=92&lang=1&cmsID=357

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE TOWARDS 2008 AND A NEW APPROACH, “Best practice at European and National Level”

The Directorate-General for Education and Culture organised a conference and exhibition on Intercultural Dialogue that was held in Brussels on 22 and 23 November 2006 on the headquarters of the Committee of the Regions.

This event was the first step on the preparation of the 2008 European Year for the Intercultural Dialogue. This is not the first time that a conference in held in this subject and as Odile Quitin remarked “this conference won’t be an isolated event, this is the beginning on the process of different mobilisations”. She continued “the Intercultural Dialogue will be the priority for a generation of programmes in 2007 such LIFE, YOUTH, CULTURE and active CITIZENSHIP. The final conclusions of such conference have arrived. Available at the website http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/dialogue/index_en.html



★ **NEW YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME 2007/2013: ARE YOU READY?????**

AVSO carried out a survey during the week of the 10th January on the implementation of the new Youth in Action Programme. A few Agencies are NOT READY for the new programme and will not accept applications for the first deadline on 1st February 2007. However, and because of the new simplification of procedure and the "one application" rule your partner could submit the application in other national agency. You can visit our website and Downloaded the document which gives in detail which agencies are ready and no.

★ **UNITY MAKES US STRONGER - NEW MEMBERS Registration form January 2007.**

Happy New Year and Welcome to AVSO! The registration campaign for new members is officially open. If you are working with volunteers and voluntary Service, if you are interesting on share your best practice and worst practice, if you want to advocacy and lobby at the European Level, if you want to improve your programmes and organisation, if you want to involucrate in further knowledge about voluntary activities, if you want to get first hand information and news, to sum up if you want to be stronger in Europe: You must ask for the information pack at the address info@avso.org and join us! We will be very pleasant to receive you as new member. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

★ **CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN PARTICIPATION: EXPERT SEMINAR ON EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND BEST PRACTICE IN WORKING WITH THE EU YOUTH PROGRAMME.**

This AVSO Seminar will take place on July in Brussels; Belgium. The main objective of the seminar is to bring together our members and other voluntary service organisation to try to evaluate the previous Youth programme, as well as to discuss the first impressions about the new Youth in Action programme. The participants will have the opportunity to exchange experiences about some main topics: from the relationships with the National Agencies to the application and accreditation procedure, from the projects management to the role of the coordinating organisations and the follow-up ... etc.

If you would be interested in attending, you can download [The Partnership Agreement to sign and send back to AVSO Office-Rue Joseph II, 174, B-1000, Brussels, Belgium- no later than 22nd January 2007](#). For further information, please contact cristina@avso.org

★ **CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN PARTICIPATION: SEMINAR "HAND-IN-HAND REINFORCED MENTORSHIP IN VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROJECT.**

This AVSO Seminar will take place in the end of September in Rome, Italy. The hosting organisation will be our Italian member AFSAI. In order to reach the potential of volunteers and projects we will organise this seminar in reinforce mentorship. The objective of our seminar will be to gather voluntary service professionals, youth workers, current and future mentors, sending and hosting organisations and to offer a possibility to learn about the aspects of mentoring and reinforced mentorship, especially organisations working with young people with fewer opportunities, in the broadest sense of term, meaning young people who are living with disabilities, coming from poor families or care homes, juvenile offenders, ethnic minorities, refugees, immigrants, young people living or coming from rural areas...etc. High level external trainers will give participants an overview on what is mentoring, and what it isn't, what are the requirements to set a reinforced mentoring structure in place, how this can be achieved even by the smallest organizations and the possibility to develop a mentoring system.

If you would be interested in attending, download [the Partnership Agreement to sign and send back to AVSO Office -Rue Joseph II, 174, B-1000, Brussels, Belgium- no later than 22nd January 2007](#). For further information, please contact helena@avso.org.

★ **THE OPINION OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE ON VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES: IT'S ROLE IN THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY AND ITS IMPACT.**

The European economic and social committee adopted on 13th December 2006 the final version on their opinion by 127 votes to 9 with 17 abstentions. Our advisory committee member Ms Gräfrin zu Eulenburg was the co-rapporteur for the document. Even if the final version introduces last modifications to discuss, we think that the most important is the existence of such document. Reading strongly recommended: http://www.eesc.europa.eu/documents/opinions/avis_en.asp?type=en

★ **WHAT DO YOU MEAN WITH EVALUATION?**

In the frame of our Research "The impact of long-term voluntary service in Europe" we are looking forward to hearing from you if you can help us to find:

Studies and data of the impact of voluntary service.

PARTICIPATE IN OUR **TOOL BOX**: we are collecting evaluation forms and best practice in evaluation. Please send your contribution to info@avso.org or directly to our research team steve@promente.org and eso@promente.org

BRIEFING

Brussels, 15 December 2006. Welcome to Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union. The official welcome moved from the Council to the typical Brussels "Place de la Madeleine". Open to all the people the event was harmonised with Bulgarian and Rumanian groups. MTV cooperated in the party with the launch of a "Human Chain" Young people will have their picture taken and uploaded on the TV station's website and become part of the human chain. They will have the opportunity to join their hands with people from all over Europe, first at the live launch, and later through cyberspace. This project will continue all through the early part of 2007 and will be accompanied by advertisements inviting thousands of young people to participate by uploading pictures from their computer and becoming part of this human chain. President Barroso said: "Finally the moment of celebration has arrived. 1 January 2007 will be an important day in European history. Bulgaria's and Romania's accession to the EU completes our historic fifth round of enlargement, which peacefully reunified Western and Eastern Europe."

Brussels, 19 December 2006. The Commission welcomes the ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity. The UNESCO convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expression will be able enter into force in three months time, following its ratification by a sufficient number of countries yesterday. The required number of 30 ratifications was reached on 18 December when the Community, joined by twelve Member States (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) deposited their instruments of ratification at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Bulgaria also ratified yesterday in Paris at the end of this joint ratification. Ján Figel', European Commissioner in charge of Education & Culture, said: "These ratifications by the Community and the Member States are a clear sign of the EU's commitment to cultural diversity, both within the EU and at international level. This is particularly rewarding, because the ratification is the last step in the long process of sometimes very tricky negotiations, for which the Commission was responsible as the voice of the Community." The European Commission had negotiated the Convention on behalf of the European Community and the Council Presidency negotiated on behalf of the Member States. The Convention was finally adopted in October 2005, and on 18 May 2006 the Council of Ministers adopted the decision authorising the Community to ratify. This Convention forms the basis of a new pillar of world governance in cultural matters. Its ratification paves the way for enhanced cultural cooperation at international level, notably through exchanges of views and best practices in public policies to promote cultural diversity.

For more information : http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/action/diversity/unesco_en.htm UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity – a new instrument of international governance

CALL FOR PROPOSAL AND TENDERS

★ **European Youth Foundation. Council of Europe. Deadline 1 Fevruary 2007. Category C and C bis. Administrative grant applications.** (N.B. Only youth NGOs having received an EYF grant in 2007 are eligible for an administrative grant. See [How to apply for a Category C grant](#)).

The European Youth Foundation can grant financial aid to international youth NGOs and networks, not only to help them carry out their projects, but also to contribute to their annual administrative costs. Two types of financial support are available:

Category C concerns those organisations which already have an established European structure

Category C bis concerns those organisations in the process of setting up a European structure

Further Information:

http://galadriel.coe.int/fej/portal/media-type/html/country/null/user/anon/page/default.psm?js_language=en

★ **Culture Programme (2007-2013). Support for cultural actions**

Strand 1.1 Multi-annual Co-operation Projects

Strand 1.2.1 Co-operation Measures

Strand 1.2.2 Literary Translation

The European Commission proposal relating to the Culture programme has not yet been formally adopted by the EU legislator. Nevertheless, to enable prompt implementation of this programme after the adoption of its legal basis, which should take place soon, and to enable potential beneficiaries of Community grants to prepare their proposals as soon as possible, the European Commission has decided to publish conditional calls for proposals. These calls for proposals do not legally bind the European Commission. They may be cancelled and calls for proposals with different specifications may be issued, with appropriate reply periods, if there is a substantial change in the legal basis by the European decision-making authorities.

More generally, the implementation of the calls for proposals in 2007 is subject to the following conditions which are not dependent on the European Commission:

the adoption by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union of the final text of the legal basis establishing the Programme without any substantial modifications;

the adoption of the annual work programme relating to the Culture programme and of the general implementation guidelines and the selection criteria and procedures, after referral to the programme committee; and

the adoption of the 2007 budget for the European Union by the budgetary authority.

Conditional call for proposals EACEA 09/2006: Strands 1.1 and 1.2.1

It should be noted that the selection procedure will last several months. It guarantees the transparency of the Community action and provides the stringency needed to ensure that public funds are used appropriately.

For further information please contact the Cultural Contact Point of your country or send your questions to the following mailbox: EACEA-CULTURE-CALLS-2007@ec.europa.eu

Deadline for submission of applications: 28/02/2007

<http://eacea.cec.eu.int/static/en/culture/call092006/index.htm>

the European decision-making authorities.

★ Lifelong Learning Programme general call for proposals 2007 (EAC/61/2006).

The Decision establishing a new Lifelong Learning Programme, was signed by the Presidents of the European Parliament and of the Council on 15 November and was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 24 November. It comes into force on 14 December 2006. The Commission has published on 20 December the [2007 general Call for Proposals](#) for applications for grants under the programme. The Lifelong Learning Programme comprises four sectoral programmes on school education (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci) and adult education (Grundtvig), and is completed by a transversal programme focusing on policy cooperation, languages, information and communication technology and dissemination and exploitation of results. Finally, a Jean Monnet programme focuses on European integration and support for certain key institutions and associations active in the field. The programme budget will be € 6,970 million for the total period 2007-2013. Targets:

- **For Comenius:** To involve at least three million pupils in joint educational activities, over the period of the programme;
- **For Erasmus:** To contribute to the achievement by 2012 of three million individual participants in student mobility under the present programme and its predecessors;
- **For Leonardo da Vinci:** To increase placements in enterprises to 80,000 per year by the end of the programme;

For Grundtvig: To support the mobility of 7,000 individuals involved in adult education per year, by 2013.

With the support of the European Community budget line" support for bodies actives at European Level in the field of



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