

AVSO Newsletter — November 2006


Editorial

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

And here comes the second edition of our newsletter. We continue bringing you news from Europe as well as from AVSO.

We had a very exciting 2 weeks behind us: not only did we have a great participation from our Members at our General Assembly, but AVSO also participated at the EMPOWER Forum, organised by DG Communication, to explore how we might begin to fill the still existing gap between European Citizens and Institutions. In order to do so, the Forum tried to adopt some concrete suggestions related to a set of priorities recalled by the White Paper: the European Public Sphere; improving civic education; connecting citizens with each other; connecting the citizens and the public institutions; the digital divide. AVSO put forward the proposal of an enlarged voluntary service programme in the EU - to build a more solidarity based Europe and foster civic engagement. You can see more of the forum at the following web address: <http://www.empower06.eu/index.htm>.

This year still to come is our much anticipated seminar in Portugal on the impact of voluntary service, as well as a public hearing on senior volunteering to be held in the European Parliament. You can read more of these two events below.

 Also, it is my pleasure to announce, that the cooperation between AVSO and the Banca Monte Paschi Belgio is taking on a more specific form: we will jointly organise a festive Christmas party on the 12th December at 18.00 at the Espase Banca Monte Paschi Belgio in Brussels for our friends, colleagues and partners in Brussels. The very short official statements to endorse the cooperation will be followed by food and drinks. The invitations will be sent out shortly.



NEWS from EUROPE



Commission publishes 2007 work programme

The Commission published its 'Work Programme' for 2007 on 24 October. The programme defines the priorities for the next year: modernising the European economy; "flexicurity", a linguistic hybrid of job flexibility and security; migration, energy policy, "Making Europe a better place to live", and improving the standing of the EU as a global player. Apart from these thematic issues, the programme focuses on the issue of delivery of legislative and management tasks.

One central heading in the programme is dedicated to "Connecting Europe to citizens". 'Plan D' and the 'White Paper on Communication' are mentioned as achievements in a "reinforced dialogue with the citizens", in order to make EU policy "more accountable, transparent and effective", as well as "understandable and relevant" to citizens. Further steps by EU institutions, Member States and civil society are announced for the coming year, but no concrete mention is given as to what they would consist of. The text reminds its readers that "the Commission has made communication one of the strategic objectives for its term of office". Indeed, there is still some way to go in reaching this objective, as sentences like the following demonstrates: "Next year, the Commission will concentrate its communication activities on the priorities set out in annex, which have been established on the basis of the political priorities set up in the present work programme."

Logo of the 50th Anniversary of the Treaties of Rome 08-11-2006

This is the official logo of the EU for the 50th anniversary of the Rome treaties. The logo will be used by all EU institutions for the anniversary celebrations, events and publications. Member States, regional and local authorities, as well as NGOs, businesses and citizens are invited to use the logo for any event they may organise in connection with the anniversary.

The logo, which incorporates the slogan "Together since 1957", is available in each of the 23 official EU languages and in its original version.

Commenting on the ceremony, Vice-President Margot Wallström said: "The winning logo represents the diversity and vigor of Europe and at the same time it underlines the desired unity and solidarity of our continent. I warmly congratulate the winner and the other nominees – the results of the competition are impressive and demonstrate the talents of young European designers and artists."



<http://www.logo-competition.eu/>

Brussels, 25 October 2006. 'Lifelong learning': a new education and training programme to build the Knowledge Society.

The Commission welcomes the final step in the legislation process to adopt the 'Lifelong Learning Programme': on 25 October, the European Parliament adopted the Commission's ambitious proposals for this new action programme in the field of education and training. For the first time, a single programme will cover learning opportunities from childhood to old age. The Lifelong Learning Programme will cover the period 2007-2013, and is the successor to the current Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and eLearning programmes. It has a budget of € 7 bn to support projects and activities that foster interchange, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the EU, so that they become a world quality reference.

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Ján Figel', the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture, and Multilingualism, said, "Education and training are the cement that binds societies together in the face of economic and demographic change. I therefore welcome the decision of the European Parliament to join the Council in adopting the Lifelong Learning Programme. It is a tangible, 'hands-on' result of policy cooperation in education and training between the Member States and the EU institutions. With it, it will be possible for individuals in schools, universities and companies across Europe, and in all stages of life, to pursue all manner of stimulating learning opportunities, by participating in Programme-funded projects. I am also pleased because it arrives twenty years after the flagship programme for university education, Erasmus, was launched in 1987, emphasising the continuity and effectiveness of Community action in the field of education."

The Lifelong Learning Programme is actually an over-arching structure that is built on four pillars, or sub-programmes. Grants and subsidies will be awarded to projects under each of these that enhance the trans-national mobility of individuals, promote bilateral and multilateral partnerships, or improve quality in education and training systems through multilateral projects encouraging innovation, for example. The four pillars are:

The Comenius programme (€ 1,047 million) addresses the teaching and learning needs of all those in pre-school and school education up to the level of the end of upper secondary education, and the institutions and organisations providing such education;

The Erasmus programme (€ 3,114 million) addresses the teaching and learning needs of all those in formal higher education, including trans-national student placements in enterprise, and the institutions and organisations providing or facilitating such education and training; The Leonardo da Vinci programme (€ 1,725 million) addresses the teaching and learning needs of all those in vocational education and training, including placement in enterprise of persons other than students, as well as the institutions and organisations providing or facilitating such education and training; The Grundtvig programme (€ 358 million) addresses the teaching and learning needs of those in all forms of adult education, as well as the institutions and organisations providing oThese four pillars are joined by what will be known as a 'transversal programme' (€ 369 million), which will pursue the following four key activities: policy cooperation and innovation in lifelong learning; promotion of language learning; development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning; dissemination and exploitation of results of actions supported under the Lifelong Learning Programme and previous related programmes, and exchange of good practice.

Finally, these actions will be complemented by the new Jean Monnet programme (€ 170 million), which supports institutions and activities in the field of European integration.

The implementation of the Lifelong Learning Programme has been allocated a budget of € 6 970 million for the period of the 7 years from 1 January 2007 to end December 2013.

More information: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/newprog/index_en.html

Brussels, 25 October 2006. New "Youth in Action" programme stimulates young Europeans to become involved in the community

The Commission welcomes the adoption by the European Parliament, during its plenary session of 25 October, of the new 'Youth in Action' programme, the latest generation of the Commission's youth programme. It covers the period 2007 - 2013. With its budget of 885 million euros, the Youth in Action programme is simpler and more flexible than its predecessor. It will be accessible to young people aged between 15 and 28 (13-30 for some specific actions), and is also open to a wider selection of partner countries.

Mr Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism said, "I am glad that this new Youth programme begins as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Union, and I notice that it addresses the first generation of young people that has grown up after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This new programme aims at encouraging young people to work together to acquire new skills through non-formal education activities, for a common project, for the defence of cultures, for a future of prosperity, understanding and peace. It fosters the idea of belonging to the European Union, and promotes social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, both inside and outside Europe. Since young people represent 20% of Europe's citizens, they are called to play a more active role; this programme gives them the opportunity to play an active, constructive role in the future of Europe."



Social tensions and the threat of unemployment in an ever-changing, competitive world economy, disproportionately affect the young. For this reason, efforts are underway at Member State and EU levels to promote a more active involvement of young people in the society in which they live. The European Commission's action programmes in the field of youth in particular add value through their ability to facilitate the implementation of multinational, Europe-wide initiatives for young Europeans.

The Youth in Action programme will give funding support to projects under five headings:

Youth for Europe: This action is geared to reinforcing the active civic participation of young people by supporting appropriate exchanges, mobility and initiatives for young people and their projects.

European Voluntary Service: This well-known action, which celebrates its tenth anniversary in December this year, continues in the new Youth in Action programme. It aims to develop young people's solidarity, active engagement and mutual understanding. It can take the form of either individual or collective projects to enable young people to express their personal commitments but also to involve them in the EU's solidarity actions.

Youth of the world: This fosters young people's mutual understanding and active engagement through an open-minded approach to the world. It opens up the programme to projects with the neighbouring countries of the enlarged Europe.

Youth workers and support systems: This action helps youth organisations that are active at the European level to promote the development of -exchange, training and information schemes for youth workers, and projects to stimulate innovation and quality and partnerships with regional or local entities. Support for policy cooperation in the field of youth: This promotes co-operation among decision-makers on youth policy, preparing the participation of young people in democratic life. It also develops representative structures for young people throughout Europe. Furthermore, this action gives assistance to encourage structured dialogue between young people and those responsible for youth policy, and helps co-operation with international organisations, thus promoting discussion and reflection on the European Union's work for young people.

The legal basis for the Youth in Action programme provides for a flexibility clause so that the programme can be adapted to any new priorities that may emerge, ready to be adapted to changing demands. The content of the programme will not be fixed for its duration; rather the initiative remains "live". Society changes and evolves; consequently, the Youth in Action programme is now open to a wider range of young people, from adolescence to adulthood. The new programme is cohesive, and it is now accessible to third countries, encouraging maximum participation throughout Europe and beyond.

Brussels, 25 October 2006. The celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome to focus on youth.

The European Institutions gave their green light to several projects and events to be carried out throughout the European Union in 2007, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signature of the Rome Treaties. The purpose is twofold: celebrating the freedom, peace and prosperity that the European Union has accomplished so far, and looking at the future and at what kind of Europe the citizens, and in particular the young, wish for the future. The Youth Package which includes "United Schools of Europe", "Spring Day in Europe" and a Youth Summit in Rome, was given the highest priority.

Commenting on the decision, Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström said: " I hope that the anniversary events will make people think: what kind of Europe do I want for tomorrow. Europe is more than just a market place. That is why we should use this anniversary to show that the Union is also about sustainability, citizenship, gender equality, consumer rights, security and opportunity for the people. In the times when Robert Schuman spoke of "creative reconciliation", Europe was universally considered as a good project. Nowadays we must earn this consent – to go an extra mile when it comes to transparency, democracy and dialogue."

Alejo Vidal Quadras, Vice-President of the European Parliament for Information and Communication policy, said "it is essential that the EU Institutions and Member States seize the opportunity presented by the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome to intensify the debate on the future of Europe. This is not about "celebrating for celebrating's sake". It is about grasping the opportunity presented by this very symbolic anniversary to draw conclusions on what we achieved so far and to renew the European project to match it with the needs and expectations of future generations, who in turn will take it forward. The European Parliament will make its contribution to this, in Brussels as well as in Strasbourg, and in each and every Member State".

The projects were decided by the Inter-institutional Group on Information (IGI), which gather all representatives of the European Institutions

The meeting was co-chaired by European and Parliament Vice President Vidal-Quadras Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström.,

The IGI worked on the basis of project selected earlier by a Task Force consisting of current Member States, Bulgaria and Romania, the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council Secretariat, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The following projects were selected:

United schools of Europe will link schools from all parts of the European Union with each other. Schoolchildren will talk to each other and exchange views and experiences using real time web-based communication tools. It will also foster exchange, twinning and visiting schemes in the longer term.

Spring Day in Europe , which has already proved a success during the past 4 years, will in 2007 focus on the 50th Anniversary Taking place from the end of March to the beginning of May, the Spring Day will raise awareness on Europe's achievements and encourage debate about the future of Europe among pupils aged 7-17.

A Youth Summit in Rome will be held parallel with the meeting between Heads of State and Government in Berlin on March 24-25th. Youth representatives from all over Europe will discuss their future, first with each other, then with the European Council in Berlin, through a live image transmission. This link will also connect the meeting with the celebrations in Brussels on March 24th, organised by the Belgian authorities. The Youth Summit will be prepared by local events in the first months of the year and will provide a large opportunity for a deep debate about Europe and its future among the young.

It will also provide an opportunity to reflect about the participation of young people in the democratic life of the Union.

A project called "50 faces of Europe" will involve 50 citizens, born in each of the years, who will talk about how the European Union have impacted on their life and whose experiences symbolise milestones in the European project. They will give interviews to the press, participate in national conferences with key political figures, give lectures and visit schools. They would also be invited to take part in other events linked to the anniversary.

Some other interesting projects will be confirmed after the first reading of the 2007 budget tomorrow by the Parliament.

A Mini Film Festival outdoors during the summer months in European capitals and other large cities, showing MEDIA funded films. The objectives of the MEDIA programme are to preserve and enhance European cultural diversity and its cinematographic and audiovisual heritage.

Concerts for Europe will be organised by the representations in the Member States on Europe Day May 9th,, On the day of the famous 1950 Robert Schuman declaration, which paved the way to the beginning of the European project. In 1985 European leaders decided to make May 9th "Europe Day".

Europalia, an art festival taking place from October 2007 to February 2008 and highlighting the common cultural aspects as well as the diversity of the 27 different countries of the Union. Its fine arts, theatre and dance events attracted more than a million visitors in 2005. 1.5 million euros for Europalia are proposed by the EP budgets committee.



Education, Youth Affairs and Culture Council, Brussels, 13-14 November 2006. The Commission will be represented by Mr Ján Figel', Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism.

C) Youth.

Summarising the debate, the Presidency emphasised that the development of youth policies was conditional upon obtaining reliable information - both quantitative and qualitative - through independent research. Such research should focus on areas of relevance to political decision-making in the youth field.

The development of coordinated horizontal youth policies and their practical implementation should be promoted by means of a better structured dialogue between relevant actors in the youth field, which in turn implied developing a culture of consultation and dialogue between all interested parties. Networking of this kind could help improve knowledge in the youth field in an efficient manner, as well as facilitate informed policy making. To this end, the development of national networks covering policy, research, youth work and young people was to be encouraged.

Finally, the role of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy was underlined, as was the importance of maintaining the quality and reliability of its work by ensuring the supply of reliable, up-to-date information via the national correspondents.

By adopting a resolution on promoting young people's active European citizenship, member states have committed to further develop concrete actions to encourage young people's active participation in democratic life. The resolution gives possibilities to develop instruments to measure progress in this area.

In their resolution, Member States have also endorsed the European Commission's proposal to set-up a genuine dialogue with young people, structured from the local to the European level around issues of concern to them. This is a concrete step towards bringing Europe closer to its young citizens and can be seen as a youth field response to the Commission's plan D.

e) Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning

This Recommendation calls for Member States to ensure that all young people are given the possibility to develop the package of eight key competences by the end of their initial education and training. It also calls for specific attention to be paid to disadvantaged learners. In order to enable all adults to learn, maintain and update their key competences, the Recommendation calls for comprehensive infrastructures and coherent strategies, developed in collaboration with social partners and other stakeholders.

The Recommendation is accompanied by a European Reference Framework that identifies eight key competences that people need for living, learning and working in a knowledge society: 1) communication in the mother tongue; 2) communication in foreign languages; 3) competences in maths, science and technology; 4) digital competence; 5) learning to learn; 6) interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, and civic competence; 7) entrepreneurship; and 8) cultural expression.

The Council is expected to adopt the Recommendation

f) Communication on Adult learning

On 23 October 2006, the Commission adopted the Communication on adult learning: It is never too late to learn. The pressures of demographic change, globalisation and the emergence of newly-industrialised and highly competitive countries mean that adult learning must be placed firmly on the political agenda. Adult learning will also help alleviate persistent problems of poverty and social exclusion.

To do so, the Commission will work with the Member States to produce an Action Plan on Adult Learning in 2007. The plan aims to support an efficient adult learning system, integrated into the national life long learning strategies of the Member States. The Action Plan will contribute to increasing the participation in adult learning by encouraging high quality information and guidance systems, staff development and improved learning content, speedier processes of validation and recognition of competences, and greater investment in the ageing population and migrants



ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AVSO

-Round -table discussion, Portugal 6th -8th December: still place available!!

One of the most important events in this year in AVSO will be the seminar that will be held on Lisbon thanks to the help of our member organization VERTIGEM between the 6th and 8th December entitled

"The experience of a lifetime-the impact of EVS and voluntary service on young people programme". The aim of this seminar is to group professionals and voluntary service managers around a table to discuss and come up with an acceptable and valid methodology to measure the impact of voluntary service and EVS projects. It will indirectly also contribute to improve the quality of youth projects, especially EVS projects by launching a debate on the effects of the projects participants will automatically revert to the quality of the projects to ensure the longer lasting effect and sustainability of the projects. If you are interested to take part in the Seminar, ask for the info pack and the registration form at helena@avso.org.

- Public Hearing on Mainstreaming Volunteering in European Union Policy, organised by the Green party of the European Parliament will take place on the 5th December 2006. AVSO will be represented by Agnes Uhreczky as well as by Davide di Pietro from Lunaria, one of AVSO's new member organisations, specialising in Senior Volunteering. The meeting will be chaired by MEP Marian Harkin and by MEP Gisela Kallenbach. **AVSO will give a 10 minutes intervention about What can the European Institutions do to actively support volunteers? Your input and comments are highly appreciated, so please send any ideas before the 1st December.** We will report about the hearing in our December issue.

-2 new member organisations were ratified by the General Assembly, Lunaria from Italy and ICP Partneriaeth from Wales. Welcome to our new members, you will find a link to their websites from our members page. Also CSV have nominated a new AVSO contact, Steve Egan, to revive the cooperation between AVSO and CSV.

-NEW MEMBERS Registration form from January 2007. At the beginning of the next year the registration campaign for new members will be opened. However, you can already ask for the information pack at the address info@avso.org and get in contact with us for any clarification in relation with the AVSO membership. We will be very pleasant to receive you as new member. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

CALLS FOR PROPOSALS:

Civil Society Dialogue: Culture in Action .Reference number. 22.02.04.02-TR 05 01 02Pre-Accession Funds.Subprogram.PHARE.

Beneficiaries of this call are NGO; Association; University; School, Training institution Countries situated in the EU countries; Turkey; Candidate Countries, who are active in the areas of Civil Society; Culture; Enlargement; Media A call for proposal for project aiming to promote cultural dialogue and understanding between civil societies in Turkey and the Member States and to encourage a cultural cooperation and networking between organisations in Turkey and the EU.

The overall objective of this programme is to support the active involvement of the public in Turkey in the accession process and to enhance its knowledge, thus bridging the gap between Turkey and the EU. The projects shall be in the field of information and/or culture and the programmes priority themes are as following: Cultural Projects with the objective to foster the debate about the EU by enriching it with an European cultural dimension. Information and Media Projects - with the aim to increase public awareness and stimulate an objective and informed debate at local/regional/national level about the EU, the civil dialogue, the European integration process and cultures of Europe

Please note that projects including cities or regions that are less exposed to EU activities like the Black- Sea region, will be given priorityThe grant awarded will be between EUR 25 000 and EUR 100 000. Applications no later of 5th December.

Contact information: Email:delegation-tukey-procteam@cec.eu.int

Fax: 03124474007

Guidelines:

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/\(...\)peaid/cgi/frame12.pl](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/(...)peaid/cgi/frame12.pl)

EuropeAid cooperation office:

<http://ec.europa.eu/comm/europeaid/cgi/frame12.pl>

Culture - Call for Proposals. Support for bodies active at European level in the field of culture. Deadline: 22ND December 2006

The Commission's proposal relating to the Culture programme has not yet been formally adopted by the European legislature. Nevertheless, to enable prompt implementation of this programme after the adoption of its legal basis by the European legislature, which should take place soon, and to enable potential beneficiaries of Community grants to prepare their proposals as soon as possible, the Commission has decided to publish this call for proposals.This call for proposals does not legally bind the Commission. It 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 legislature.

More generally, the implementation of the calls for proposals in 2007 is subject to the following conditions, the meeting of which is not dependent on the 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.

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.

Deadline for submitting the applications: 22/12/2006.

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/static/en/culture/call062006/index.htm>

EACEA.Call for Proposals No 12/06."Structural support for European public policy research organisations and for civil society organizations at European level".Citizenship.P.7. Deadline 22nd December.

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<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/static/en/citizenship/call1206/index.htm>

BRIEF NEWS

★ **Brussels, 6 October 2006. Making sense of today's media content: Commission begins public media literacy consultation.** As new information and communication technologies make it ever easier for anyone to publish, broadcast or communicate, so the ability to judge the true merit of media content and make conscious choices – or 'media literacy' – becomes ever more essential for active citizenship and democracy. The deadline for replies is 15 December.

Further information on the public consultation and the consultation document can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/comm/avpolicy/media_literacy/index_en.htm

★ **The international Development community meets in Brussels for the first European Development Days**

The most important players of the international Development community will meet in Brussels between the **13th and the 17th of November** for the First edition of the European Development Days (EDD) organized by the Directorate General for Development of the European Commission, under the responsibility of Commissioner Louis Michel. This first edition will focus on the African continent and the challenges in terms of governance as main topics and will include an EU-Africa Business Forum.

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

★ **Margot Wallström Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Institutional relations and Communication strategy pronounced a speech called: "The Constitutional Treaty: The Way Forward" at Notre Europe debate on "Plan B: how to rescue the European Constitution" Brussels, 18 October 2006.** The vice president made five general remarks: the need of an institutional reform, re-launch of the European project; to stop enlargement after Bulgaria and Roumania till the achievement of an institutional settlement; the continuation of a reform process and the impossibility to failure a second time on the Constitutional Treaty. She referred to the democratic dimension of the process: "renegotiation can not completely ignore the actors that have been involved in the preparation of the Constitutional Treaty. Can we afford to exclude the civil society from this process? How would we engage the citizens in this process? We have a strong interest to be inclusive in the decision making phase, and to ensure that any new text benefits of the largest possible support by the European citizens. Ratification procedures are equally important. While the responsibility of ratification lies with the Member States, I am convinced that Member States could decide to coordinate more closely the ratification procedure". She advocated by the idea of a popular consultation, organized the same day in all Member States."

★ **Fight Hunger: Walk the World Viral Video Competition.** The contest is organized by fighthunger.org a division of the United Nations World Food Programme. They invite to filmmakers from 18 years old to create an short film of 120 seconds, sending the message that the child hunger should end by 2015, as you probably already know this the principle aim of the Millennium Development goals. The materials will be use in their media campaign. Send your movies before the 15th December 2006. For more information and registration form <http://www.fighthunger.org/contest>



"It is a pretty history". Worldwide volunteering in the United Kingdom published the stories of their volunteers; they have a really nice website where you can find these amazing stories. Strongly recommended! <http://www.worldwidevolunteering.org.uk>

5 December - International Volunteer Day. Many different ways to celebrate this day are being prepare. We point a few that will be held on Europe.



International Volunteer Day <http://www.volunteer.ie>

In **Italy** every year the Volontari nel mondo - FOCSIV gives out the International Volunteer Awards to celebrate International Volunteer Day. A round table will be as well organised with volunteers and representatives from non-governmental organizations and the media. The Italian President Azeglio Ciampi will give the awards to the volunteers. This year, the topic will be "Food is not for sale. Earth is life". Further information in <http://www.focsiv.it> Moreover, in **Ireland** the Volunteer Centres Ireland, the national co-ordinating body of volunteer centres, will launch a series of guides to volunteering. The project has been called "Step by Step Guides to Volunteering". You can find more information at the website