

AVSO Newsletter — October 2006

Editorial

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are pleased to send you the first „new“ AVSO newsletter, new in terms of style, content and editorial team. You will receive news about voluntary service in an EU context as well as news from within AVSO on a monthly basis. **Comments and suggestions for news items are more than welcome!**

In this issue among others we would like to remind you of our new web-site, and to check it regularly, also, if you think something is important to the voluntary service community and we forgot to report about it on our web-site - please let us know and we will post it.

It is also my pleasure to introduce in this issue the two new AVSO member organisations, LUNARIA in Italy and ICP WALES from the UK. We also have a new representative for CSV, who are back on board! Welcome to the new members, and we are looking forward to a fruitful cooperation!

the AVSO team



Celebrating 10 Years of EVS!

On the 26-27 November 2006 the European Commission will organise an event to celebrate **"European Voluntary Service - 10 years of solidarity and active citizenship" in Brussels**. About 180 participants are expected, among them: up to 100 former EVS volunteers, representatives of EVS host, sending, coordinating organisations, representatives of the European institutions, national youth ministries and national agencies, etc. (for details see attached concept). Massimiliano Viatore, the President of AVSO will be among the keynote speakers on this event. During its first ten years, EVS has changed the lives of 30.000 volunteers and numerous organisations and communities. The Commission will also publish a short film - they are still hoping to receive film and photo material from EVS projects!

New AVSO website and logo launched!

As you might have seen, AVSO has a new logo and a new web-site. We are trying keep the site up-to-date, so please check it regularly.

Also, if you have a link to our site, please change the logo, we can send you the new one on request!

www.avso.org



NEW AVSO Research project started in September

The new research project Youth research study: **"The impact of long-term voluntary Service in Europe"** will explore the impact of voluntary service in Europe, the EVS programme and other VS programmes. The study is carried out by a research team at ProMENTE Social research organisation, lead by the researcher Steve Powell. The first stage is the collection of published and unpublished material - so if you have a study or survey or other publication on the impact of voluntary service, in any language in electronic form, please send it to info@avso.org.

The immediate purpose of the research is to give AVSO's member organisations, all of which are experienced national and international voluntary service organisations detailed knowledge about the value of national and international voluntary service in national and European youth and social policy, and as well as to be able to make immediate policy-related recommendations.

The longer term perspective of the study is to foster thorough understanding of the possibilities and limitations of full-time voluntary service for young people and the development of policies and programmes for young people in Europe.

The mid-term milestone of the research project will be a meeting held in Portugal in the beginning of December, hosted by Vertigem. There the research team and AVSO will be able to validate the research methodology and findings with the European experts on voluntary service, as well as map out a way forward in the topic, and to help define the parameters of the final publication of the project.



Education was on the agenda on Monday when MEPs debated ways in which education can be improved and expanded across the European Union. Education policy is for EU members to organise nationally, but the Parliament can play a role in providing a forum for discussion and ideas. Its role is to encourage, support and supplement initiatives in the field. Being debated were ways of increasing education mobility in Europe, lifelong learning and how a "European dimension" can be taught in schools.

The Erasmus university-exchange programme has helped over 1 million people study abroad, greatly encouraging the study of foreign languages and cultural contact between Europeans. The success of this has inspired Austrian Socialist MEP Christa Prets to introduce a report, with the backing of Parliament's Culture and Education committee, that supports moves for a "European Quality Charter for mobility" for education and training. According to Mrs Prets "mobility helps to promote active European citizenship, brings citizens closer and improves mutual understanding". It can also help boost Europe's economy.

The mobility charter envisages practical guidelines to help people study in a foreign country. They include information, general preparation and logistical support. MEPs were particularly insistent that the Charter included specific proposals to help women, the disabled and disadvantaged groups.

A recommendation on ways to increase lifelong learning lies at the heart of a report by German Green MEP Helga Trüpel and her colleagues on the Culture and Education committee. It recommends skills that people could acquire to help them in life and the labour market. The skills include: good communication in their mother tongue, foreign languages, maths, science and technology. MEPs also stress the importance of civic values, based on the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights.

Lifelong learning can increase adaptability and employability in the labour market. As Mrs Trüpel says "in a fast moving and changing Europe, the demands on every individual are continuously rising...not only dealing with modern challenges but also working in an increasingly globalised labour world requires being permanently ready to acquire new knowledge".

Inside the Finnish Presidency

During Finland's EU Presidency, the Finnish Ministry of Education organised the conference „*Adult Learning, Competence and Active Citizenship*“, which was held at Hanasaari Swedish-Finnish Cultural Centre in Espoo, on 3-4 October. The conference was opened by Antti Kalliomäki, Minister of Education, and Odile Quintin, Director General, European Commission, introduced the European Commission Communication on adult learning, entitled *Adult Learning: It is never too late to learn*. The aim of the conference on adult learning was to analyse the economic, social and cultural changes in the operating environment and discuss how adult education should respond to them. The alternative forums examined the primary measures for developing adult education and present projects for providing adult learning throughout Europe.

The conference themes were also central to the European Commission's forthcoming communication on adult learning. The contents and priorities of the communication on adult learning were introduced and discussed at the conference.

Intercultural dialogue: contribute to the "Call for ideas"

The European Commission is launching a "Call for ideas" for promoting intercultural dialogue in Europe. 2008 must be the year of every single citizen. Its success will rely on the ideas, experience and imagination of the citizens. This is the reason why the European Commission has decided to launch a call for ideas addressed to civil society and all other interested parties. This process will enable the Commission to define guidelines for future calls for proposals, which will be published in 2007, in the framework of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

The closing date for submitting contributions is 30 October 2006.

All the details can be found on: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/dialogue/call_idea_en.html

Related information:

2008: European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/dialogue/year2008_en.html

Young people aged under 26 who do not live in one of the 38 EURO<26 countries can now buy a EURO<26 youth card online at: <http://card.euro26.org/>. Young people who live in an EYCA member country cannot buy the card online but are redirected to the EURO<26 organisation in their own country. The EURO<26 youth card promotes mobility and participation among young people in Europe through the provision of 100,000 discounts (e.g. discounts at cinemas, concerts, transport, travel accommodation, insurance services, travel assistance, and much more):

http://www.euro26.org/opencms/opencms/euro26_org/data/public/header/discount_database/

The card is a classic EURO<26 design, and features the Council of Europe "All Different, All Equal" campaign logo. The EURO<26 card is issued by the European Youth Card Association (EYCA). The card is also a key to European project initiatives organised by the European Youth Card Association, with support from the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

Related information:

EYCA (European Youth Card Association)

<http://www.eyca.org>



CALLS FOR PROPOSALS:

★ **International Visegrad Fund, Budget allocated, 448 000 EUR, Deadline 31 Jan 2007**

Beneficiaries University; School, Training institution
Countries Czech Republic; Hungary; Poland; Slovakia
Activity areas Civil Society; Culture; Education and Training; Regional policy; Research; Social Affairs; Tourism

Under the approved budget and available resources Fund's financial resources are used to support the activities in the field of:

1. Cultural cooperation
2. Scientific exchanges and research
3. Education
4. Exchanges between young people
5. Cross-border cooperation
6. Promotion of tourism

The main goals of the VStP are:

- to support strategic, long-term, four-country Visegrad projects.
- to support common presentations of the Visegrad Countries outside the V4 Region.
- to support exchange and co-operation between Visegrad Countries and their neighbours.

The International Visegrad Fund will support one or more long-term strategic projects in 2007. The amount allocated for a project is usually from 40.000 to 200.000 EUR. The projects eligible for acquiring Strategic grant must involve partners (co-organisers) from all V4 countries and must be implemented in all four Visegrad countries. Applicants from Non-Visegrad Countries can apply for the Visegrad Strategic Program Grant under the same conditions, but the project must be thematically related to Visegrad cooperation.

The VStP Project will be financed by the Fund up to 50% of the total project costs. The Fund is entitled to secure financial resources for project supporting from external sources as well. The time frame of the proposed budget is 12-36 months, even if the project is envisaged to last longer.

The Fund's contact details are:

International Visegrad Fund
Drotárska cesta 46
811 02 Bratislava
Slovak Republic
strategic@visegradfund.org
<http://www.visegradfund.org/>

★ **ASEF Youth Connections, Asia-Europe Foundation, Deadline 31 Dec 2006**

Who can apply : Beneficiaries: All Countries: Austria; Belgium; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Slovakia; Slovenia; Sweden; Spain; United Kingdom; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Indonesia; Japan; Malaysia; Myanmar; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Thailand; Viet Nam
Activity areas All

Co-funding support for activities to promote contacts and co-operation among youth in Asia and Europe. The application period is open for projects to be held in 2006. Organisations for youth and students in ASEM countries are invited to apply.

ASEF Youth Connections encourages national and local youth to contribute to the Asia-Europe dialogue by organising multilateral activities with counterparts from the other region.

Applicants are encouraged to open up participation to all 38 countries of ASEM. However, we are also aware that some youth organisations may not have the capacity to organise events of that scale. Hence, ASEF will still positively consider applications in connection with activities involving less than 38 ASEM countries, as long as they would involve participants from at least two Asian member countries and two European member countries of ASEM.

The call is open to both innovative ideas and traditional youth activities. The following activities may be proposed under the ASEF Youth Connections grant:

- (a) Activities and exchanges previously conceived under the banner of the Asia-Europe Youth Co-operation framework, such as the Asia-Europe Youth Camps, Asia-Europe Young Volunteers Exchange, Asia-Europe Youth Explore and the Asia-Europe Youth Training Courses,
- (b) Joint initiatives, youth exchanges and activities as a follow-up to or resulting from the Youth Declaration or Action Plan of an event organised by ASEF, such as the ASEM Youth Dialogue, and
- (c) Other innovative ideas that would carry out the objectives of the grant.

ASEF encourages youth-to-youth dialogue and co-operation in all areas and on all issues that are of mutual interest for youth of both regions, whether or not they deal with developments that are directly relevant to the ASEM countries. After all, in the age of globalisation, we recognise the need for youth in Asia and Europe to be aware of any issue or development that have global implications, wherever its origins. For example, we will positively consider applications for a seminar that would enable Asian and European youth to discuss and share perspectives on developments in third regions, such as Iraq or the Middle East.

<http://www.asef.org/>