

## Editorial

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We are sending you the Newsletter in a new shape. We decided to have an email form in order to make it simpler when forwarding and distributing the newsletter among the member's Network. In any case, we are open to hear your opinion and comments.

The AVSO staff is glad to announce that we have received a very good feedback from the results of the two of the biggest events of this year that took place in June and July: The Conference at the European Parliament "Shaping policy for voluntary service through research" - Investigating the effects of research in voluntary service for forming European and global policies and the Expert seminar on exchange of information and best practice in working with the EU Youth Programme. You can read further at the section on AVSO this month and on our Website!

The AVSO office will be closed during the 1<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> August because of the Staff's Holidays, the next issue will be at the end of September.

Enjoy the newsletter!!!

The AVSO team

## News from Europe

**Ombudsman launches information campaign for businesses, associations, NGOs and regional offices.** The European Ombudsman, P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, has launched a campaign to inform companies, associations, NGOs, regional offices, schools and universities about their right to complain to the Ombudsman. He said: "Thousands of businesses, associations and other organisations from all the Member States are involved in EU projects. They are often in direct contact with the EU administration, for example following calls for tender or contracts signed with the institutions and bodies. And some of them do encounter problems with the EU administration. I am therefore working hard to raise awareness among these target groups about my services."

Of all complaints the Ombudsman receives, 95% come from citizens, and only 5% from companies, associations and other organisations. However, half of the complaints from the latter groups fall within his mandate. Typical cases of maladministration encompass late payment for EU projects, problems with tender procedures, legal errors or the refusal to give access to a document.

The decisions of the Ombudsman are not legally binding but the EU institutions are keen to cooperate. Mr Diamandouros stated: "Following our inquiries, the EU institutions have settled bills, paid interest, released documents, remedied injustices, reviewed processes, and improved procedures for the benefit of all parties."

In the framework of his information campaign, the Ombudsman will step up his cooperation with important target groups. In pursuit of this goal, he also published a new information sheet explaining to businesses, associations and other organisations how he can help settle problems with the EU administration, giving concrete case examples.

Please find the information sheet under the following link:

<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/infosheet/en/default.htm>

**"The European Union and non-discrimination":**

The European Commission launches a competition open to all young people in EU. European children and teenagers between the ages of 12 and 18 are invited to design a poster on non-discrimination in the EU. The aim of the competition is to raise awareness among young Europeans of the work being done by the EU in this field. Those wishing to take part in the competition will have to design a poster illustrating the idea of non-discrimination in the European Union. Participants will be divided into two age categories (12-14 and 15-18) and must work in groups of at least four.

Further information may be found on the site [www.europayouth.eu](http://www.europayouth.eu) which contains links to the competition site.

### **Council of Europe Launch Awareness-raising campaign: DOSTA!**

"Dosta", a Romani word meaning "enough", is an awareness-raising campaign which aims at bringing non-Roma closer to Roma citizens. "Dosta" means that we want to stop prejudices and stereotypes not by denouncing them but by breaking them, showing who the Roma are. They are not perfect, of course, but "who is perfect?". What is sure is that Roma are European citizens: they form a group of 8-10 million people and can be found in almost all Council of Europe member states; in some Central and Eastern European countries, they represent over 5% of the population.

Being European citizens means that Roma have not only obligations but also rights and aspirations like everybody else, and their citizenship and human rights must be recognized on equal bases.

The Dosta campaign will take place in five Eastern European countries, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". It is clear that these five countries have different policies towards Roma, different cultural patterns and social norms, and different development levels of civil society. However, the messages "Dosta" wants to convey are the same for all European countries. More information available at: [www.dosta.org](http://www.dosta.org)

### **Portugal Presidency youth policy priorities**

Portugal will take in consideration the implementation of the European Youth Pact concerning the social and professional integration of the young people and will develop these issues based on the priorities for entrepreneurship and voluntary service.

Promoting the entrepreneurship among the young is one of the pillars set in the Lisbon Strategy and a key element of the European Youth Pact, adopted by the European Council in March 2005. Prioritising entrepreneurship on issues related to the Presidency's agenda for the area of Youth derives from the need to develop a policy, which may genuinely and strongly help solving the problem of employment. This objective can only be reached based on an integrated policy, which aims not only to change mentalities but also to improve the skills of the European young people, so as to eliminate the obstacles that make the innovation and competitiveness more difficult.

It is thus intended, through this topic's proposal, to prompt visible results concerning employment – the main problem on Youth in the European Union – by offering the young people effective instruments for their emancipation.

Lastly, following the adoption by the Commission of common objectives for the voluntary service, the recognition of the voluntary service's social and human value, especially as social and professional skills acquired by the young people.

### **AVSO this Month**

**"Shaping policy for voluntary service through research" - Investigating the effects of research in voluntary service for forming European and global policies.**

On the 13th June 2007 in cooperation with MEPs Marian Harkin and Gisela Kallenbach AVSO organised a conference in the European Parliament. The aim of the conference was two-fold: firstly to present the latest research projects in the field of voluntary service and volunteering, and secondly to hear from policy makers about their take on research and how research results could be fed into policy-making.

As a direct result of this Conference AVSO was invited to participate at the European Parliament Interest group on

Volunteering in Strasbourg on the 19th June 2007

130 Participants attended, thanks a lot for your presence!!!! We have uploaded the Final report of the Conference, the Researches that were presented and the AVSO's Contribution to the European Parliament Interest Group in our website [www.avso.org](http://www.avso.org)

**Expert seminar on exchange of information and best practice in working with the EU Youth Programme, 3 - 6 July 2007, Brussels, Belgium.**

During the Seminar, AVSO gathered 32 organisations working actively with the Youth in Action Programme, specially with voluntary service projects. The organisations shared their experience in the implementation of the new Youth in Action Programme but as well they had the opportunity to interact with key-speakers from the field such as officials of the EACEA (Henar Conde), of the Youth National Agencies (Marie Helene Cotte – French NA and Andrew Hurley – UK NA), of the SALTO Inclusion (Ann Hendriks) and of the European Commission DG EAC (Peggy Genève – Youth Unit and Jacob Kornbeck – Sport Unit).

The workshops and the final Plenary produced a document or “wish list” ([http://www.avso.org/activities/activities\\_eu.html](http://www.avso.org/activities/activities_eu.html)) that has already been presented in a meeting at the European Commission on the 20<sup>th</sup> July and that together with an statement will be distributed to other policy makers and responsible of the Youth Programme.

**"Hand in Hand" - reinforced Mentorship in voluntary service projects- Still Places available**

The Seminar is conceived as a high quality Training in mentorship for voluntary service organisations and workers in the field of youth and the daily volunteer's management. The Seminar has settled ambitious objectives; it is aiming to provide not only training but to come up with an International Reinforced Partnership System for mentoring. At the same time, it will create a frame of resources for mentorship; it will contribute to the quality of youth projects especially EVS and it will enhance the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the Youth in Action Programme.

For this training we will have two trainers: One trainer belonging to AVSO's members, Andy Bevan from ICP Partneriaeth will explain more about the EVS projects and mentorship. He has an invaluable experience in the field and James Cathcart working for Prince's Trust, the main organisation in the mentoring field in Europe. The Seminar will take place in Rome from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2007.

For further information you can write to [helena@avso.org](mailto:helena@avso.org).

**Member's NEWS**



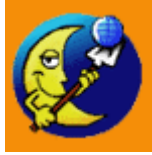
**VOLONTEUROPE- CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS** by Anthea Neagle – CSV

Volonteurope is hosted by the European office at CSV HQ in London. It is a European network of over 1,500 volunteering organisations and individuals who support each other in their efforts to promote and facilitate volunteering across Europe. We meet in a different European city every year for a four day conference which includes work shops, events and of course volunteering!

Our host organisation for this event is the vibrant Centrum Wolontariatu, the Volunteer Centre of Warsaw: [www.wolontariat.org.pl](http://www.wolontariat.org.pl) The venue this year is at the Ibis Stare Miasto hotel, it is close to the picturesque old town and has full access for people with disabilities. There will be over twenty-five presentations ranging from lectures to interactive sessions held by an international range of experts. In this anniversary year we are introducing fresh ideas into our programme including a round table discussion on Active Citizens Building Europe, a new consultancy service and a session for delegates to create partnerships.

Themes this year include Volunteering & the Public Sector, Youth Volunteering, Volunteer Management & Episodic Volunteering, Active Ageing, Environment, Social Inclusion and Active Citizenship. By participating in your choice of workshops, presentations and round-table discussions, you will share ideas, best practice and create links with organisations across Europe. More information contact: Anthea Neagle Volonteurope Secretariat

Email: [aneagle@csv.org.uk](mailto:aneagle@csv.org.uk) or at the website [www.volonteurope.org.uk](http://www.volonteurope.org.uk)



**Learning opportunities for senior volunteers - managing transnational exchanges  
(Project funded by the SOCRATES Programme)**

BY Davide Di Pietro – LUNARIA

Volunteering abroad is an important non-formal intercultural learning experience. Among others, it includes discoveries of previously unknown areas, insights at political level and the revision of preconceived opinions. Not being a tourist in a foreign country but participating in "real life" is crucial for personal gain. Intergenerational learning and acquiring foreign language skills are further aspects which can be enhanced by a trans-national exchange project. Many seniors are not only open to new ideas and opportunities for personal further development - which some of them simply did not have when they were young - but they also have the best prerequisites to act as multipliers in passing on knowledge and intergenerational experiences.

Against this background, a conference was held in Tallinn, Estonia, in December 2006, with participants of four pilot projects in the European exchange of older volunteers. It has resulted in a handbook which documents the experiences from the perspectives of institutions for adult education with trans-national work approaches, local and regional governments, local initiatives, NGOs, international voluntary service associations and individual senior volunteers.

By analysing and recording existing knowledge and examples of good and bad practice in this handbook, we hope to provide future projects in the framework of the EU programmes for education and training, youth, culture and citizenship in 2007-2013, especially the "Lifelong Learning" and "Europe for Citizens" programmes, with a valid resource.

You can find the handbook in English at the AVSO website [www.avso.org](http://www.avso.org) formation and that of future participants in such projects. Their French, German, Italian and Polish versions can also be downloaded [http://www.isis-sozialforschung.de/en/projects/voluntary\\_service.html](http://www.isis-sozialforschung.de/en/projects/voluntary_service.html).

### **Briefing**

**European Youth Week 2007, 3-6 June. 'Youth in Action'** AVSO was invited to take part to the European youth Weeks from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> June 2007 at the EESC in Brussels. The event focused on the new Youth in Action Programme.; on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2007 the European Youth Celebration took place in the presence of Commissioner Jan Figel. This celebration aimed at highlighting the richness of European Youth policy and the success of the last Youth Programme (2000-2006) by presenting awards to selected outstanding projects which were supported under the Programme. For more information on the projects awarded <http://youthweek.eu/active-best-practise-projects.html>

**Brussels, 4 June 2007. European Forum on the Rights of the Child created to look to the future.** The European Commission launched in cooperation with the German Presidency of the European Union, a Forum on the Rights of the Child. This Forum, the first of its kind, will involve children and bring together stakeholders to exchange information and practice and take positive action for children and young people. 'Towards and EU strategy on the rights of the child,' adopted by the Commission on 4 July 2006, was the first step in the Commission's work on Children's rights.

**Brussels, 8 June 2007. Moroccan and European civil society organisations meet in Rabat.** Moroccan civil society organisations met the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Rabat to discuss the involvement of civil society organisations in implementing the EU-Morocco action plan and the possibility of setting up an ESC in Morocco. The Moroccan associations called for a stronger role in implementing reforms in Morocco and stressed that their direct contacts with citizens and grass-roots experience could be a valuable asset. Until such time as an ESC was set up, it was suggested that the Moroccan Euromed platform could be used as a vehicle for contact and consultation with the European Commission delegation, provided that all strands of civil society were involved in the platform's work.

**Brussels, 19 June 2007. Launching the European Day against the Death Penalty.** The Commission is proposing a draft Joint Declaration to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, to be adopted together with the Council of Europe, regarding the establishment of a European Day against the Death Penalty, on 10 October of each year.

For more information: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/rights/fsj\\_rights\\_intro\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/rights/fsj_rights_intro_en.htm)

[http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/human\\_rights/adp/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/adp/index.htm)

### **Call for proposals and tenders.**

**ECF GRANTS PROGRAMME:** Programme supports projects that promote European cultural exchange and cooperation. The next deadline for applications will be **September 15th 2007**, for projects starting not earlier than November 2007. More information at <http://www.eurocult.org/we-support-cultural-cooperation/grants/>

**ACTION 1- YOUTH PROGRAMME:** Pilot Projects on Thematic Networking. It aims to support the networking of youth exchange projects, youth initiatives and democracy projects underway now or in the past under the Youth in Action programme and the Youth programme. These networks must aim to establish links between projects tackling the same theme, pool experiences in a specific thematic field, increase the links between youth exchanges, youth initiatives and youth democracy projects and valorises, disseminate and exploit the results of the projects.

**Deadline for applications will be the 1<sup>st</sup> September.** More information at [http://eacea.cec.eu.int/youth/calls2007/action1/index\\_en.htm](http://eacea.cec.eu.int/youth/calls2007/action1/index_en.htm)

### **STUDY ON MEDIA AND DIVERSITY:**

Calls for Tender/Grants of Directorate general for Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities. Deadline for bids **10<sup>th</sup> September 2007.** More information at: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/emplweb/tenders/tenders\\_en.cfm?id=2105](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/tenders/tenders_en.cfm?id=2105)