

# KEY TO EUROPE

AEGEE'S ANNUAL REVIEW  
2011-2012



NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE LOCATED  
BE THE **CHANGE** YOU WANT!

# STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

WE, the members of AEGEE,

Realising that the European youth is building the future of our continent, Aspiring to a peaceful Europe free of obstacles and enmities, of false divisions and forced differences, Resolved to remove barriers between the peoples of Europe, Determined to contribute to a Europe of co-operation and understanding, Creating a network of young Europeans desiring to spread our ideals and ideas concerning Europe,

HEREBY DECLARE

**OUR BELIEF** that, while cherishing our diversity and respecting the character of our regions, we can find on the basis of our cultural and historical heritage the principles that unite us and guide us in our effort to strengthen the European conscience,

**OUR FAITH** in a Europe standing for liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law, and our will to co-operate with institutions that promote these concepts,

**OUR RESOLVE** to establish an open Europe which recognises the importance of all cultures in the shaping of its past present and future and which plays an active role in fostering peace, stability and prosperity throughout the world,

**OUR INTENTION** to promote unlimited access to education as being of fundamental importance to increase mutual understanding,

**OUR DESIRE** to encourage student mobility in order to fight prejudice and xenophobia by increasing people's awareness of different cultures, and

**OUR STRONG BELIEF** that our association is a unique platform enabling us to contribute to these visions of Europe.

AEGEE SPRING AGORA  
UTRECHT, 2000

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Rue Nestor de Tière 15  
B - 1030 Brussels  
+32 22 45 23 00  
headoffice@aegee.org

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
Stephanie Müller

EDITORS  
Patricia Juhl Anthony  
Zsófia Komáromi  
Andra Toma

PHOTO RESPONSIBLE  
Dasha Onokhova

PROOFREADERS  
Yvonne Antonovic  
Valérie Boiten  
Esra Celik  
Maria Heybutzki  
Olga Iatsyna  
Joanna Strycharz

STATISTICS & RESEARCH  
Hans-Peter Bretz  
Diana Ondža

DESIGNERS  
Erman Berkay  
Benjamin Doll  
Deniz Özhan

COMITÉ DIRECTEUR MEMBERS  
Jüri Kirpu  
Alma Mozgovaja

ADVISORS  
Anita Kalmane  
Michael Makowiecki

## DEAR READERS,

AEGEE's annual report regularly illustrates how AEGEE-Europe has been fostering European values by designing and putting into practice a variety of diverse and inventive activities. For more than 27 years, the European Students' Forum has brought together young people throughout Europe and beyond.

Similarly, for 25 years the Erasmus Programme has been changing lives and opening minds of more than three million students.

Erasmus has led the way as a unique feature and a pioneering task as it has marked a starting point of our common engagement in the field of education on the European level. It has always been advocated by AEGEE and I want to take the opportunity to thank you for this support.

As the European Parliament's rapporteur for the future period of the EU's education programmes 2014-2020, I have appreciated the Commission's intention to decrease the fragmentation and overlaps that exist in the current programmes covering school and higher education, vocational education and training, adult learning, youth and sport.

Moreover, even if many details still are to be clarified, I have welcomed the Commission's proposal to create a financial instrument (loan guarantee facility) enabling students to secure funding for a Masters degree outside their home country.

I may also emphasise the success of the „Erasmus placements“ that give students the opportunity to gain work experience abroad. We are insisting that this action will be continued under the new programme. In future, Erasmus - as well as Comenius - should boost the mobility of academics and teachers: Not only pupils and students, but also lecturers should have the opportunity to experience the unique value of a temporary stay abroad.

As co-legislator, the European Parliament will do everything in its power to ensure the continuation of the Erasmus success story. However, there is room for improvement:

For the activities in higher education, in particular student mobility, more flexibility is needed in order to adapt the mobility activities to the Bologna reforms and the new degree structures that have been established throughout Europe - namely Bachelor, Master



*Doris Pack  
Chairwoman of the Committee on Culture and  
Education in the European Parliament*

and PhD degrees.

It is necessary to create opportunities to combine part-time studies with part-time internships during an Erasmus stay abroad. In addition, Erasmus mobility periods should not be restricted to one academic year and one university. Instead, it should be possible to study at least at two universities and in different academic years.

Further problems to be tackled concern the (non-) recognition of courses and qualifications and the social dimension: Erasmus must not be a programme for few privileged young people. In 1999, on my initiative universities have been entitled to take into account social balance by granting more financial support to those having less means than their fellows. Unfortunately, universities have not made use of this instrument until now.

The upcoming negotiations on the EU's future education programmes and the final adoption of this package will be of utmost importance given the major impact on participating pupils, teachers, apprentices, students and adult learners.

However in the end, we depend on young people bringing in a sense of liveliness to the legal and bureaucratic framework conceived by politicians. The European Students' Forum has strongly proven its ability to fulfil such a vitalizing role. This is why I want to encourage you to continue your engagement and wish you all the best for the future.

*Best regards,  
Doris Pack  
Chairwoman of the Committee on Culture and  
Education in the European Parliament*

# PRESIDENTIAL FOREWORD



*Marko Grdošić, President  
AEGEE-Europe / European Students' Forum*

**AEGEE was born** 27 years ago from the need to unite Europe based on democracy, human rights and tolerance. AEGEE was born to bring together prospective students and future leaders, to discuss crucial issues and to give a youth perspective to it. AEGEE was born to increase student mobility. 27 years later, our goals have not changed.

The environment we live in has never been more vibrant, changes were never happening so fast, and the crisis is not showing any attempt to cool down. Youth unemployment is not just the problem of Greece and Spain, but of the whole Europe, the enlargement of the European Union has turned from celebration to a questionable move, democracy and human rights are on shaking grounds not just in Turkey and Eastern Europe, but also in many other countries.

What are we, as AEGEEans, doing to change these things?

The Youth Unemployment project is focusing on entrepreneurship, the only visible solution for young graduates. Getting employed seems like a hard quest, and we are all an evidence of a system that recognises our degrees but does not take into account all the skills and competences we gained with our activism and volunteering.

Today's educational system is no longer fulfilling the needs of young people and of labour market. A reform is more than needed. The Higher Education Days project is giving input to European educational systems through recommendations on the Bologna process, gathered from all corners of Europe.

Mobility was one of AEGEE's goals throughout the years and a lot has changed. Still, a big part of our Network is facing problems with the hard process of visa facilitation. Celebrating 25 years of Erasmus puts smiles on many faces of students that took part in this massive education mobility programme. AEGEE did an advocacy campaign before its establishment, AEGEE lobbied for its implementation in countries such as Turkey, and now we have to fight for equal opportunities for our friends in the Eastern Europe.

The Eastern Partnership project was established this year and shows the best spirit of our organisation, bridging young people from the East and West with various purposes. Besides the advocacy for education mobility and easier visa facilitation, they are working on the promotion of democracy, human rights and equal opportunities.

Environment is also one of our main concerns. With a strong delegation in Rio for the Rio+20 conference, AEGEE has represented a youth approach to the environmental issues and continues promoting sustainability in every aspect of life.

In the end, I have to mention the current proposal called Erasmus for All presented by the European Commission, as funding programme for the period 2014 - 2020. Disappointed with the way money was allocated in the initial programme, we have to make sure that our role in society is visible and that the importance of our work, as European organisation striving for active citizenship and providing non-formal education, is stressed out. There is a huge potential in AEGEE and only with sufficient funds it can be implemented.

Let's go back to the beginning of this foreword. In order to work efficiently AEGEE should also change. Our goals have not changed, but in order to reach them, we have to change the approach and way of work. Dear reader, I hope this Key to Europe will motivate and empower you to take action, start initiatives and be that change everybody is talking about.

*Marko Grdošić  
President  
AEGEE-Europe / European Students' Forum*

# DEAR AEGEE MEMBERS,

**Walt Disney once said:** "All our dreams can come true – if we have the courage to pursue them." This new edition of the Key to Europe you are holding in your hands is an example which truly demonstrates his statement.

AEGEE is often described as a learning platform, where people can test themselves by working in a team, either on a local or European level; by interacting with other young Europeans to broaden our horizons in many different dimensions, whether it be cultural understanding and the reduction of stereotypes, improving your language skills or the more idealistic wish to change Europe for the better. It all lies in our hands!

At the opening ceremonies of Agorae, external speakers often tell us - "You are the future leaders of Europe" and you might smile about this compliment. However, there is some truth in this message, as you – by joining AEGEE – proved that you like to be involved in European affairs, involved in overcoming national borders and involved in strengthening the interests of youth in Europe. What else is needed to become a leader than the courage to stand up and the willingness to take action?

With this year's Key to Europe I would like to introduce you to some people. People who got involved, either by organising an event, a workshop, a conference, a statutory meeting or other actions and the people who took their chance to participate. Thus, to prove that we, members of AEGEE, did not lose our spirit and commitment in making Europe a better place for today's students and our future generations.

The following pages aim to give you an overview of what AEGEE stands for, what are the association's achievements since its foundation and its goals for the future. You will find information and explanations about the structure of AEGEE, as well as a review of the past year of the Comité Directeur 2011-2012.

In the thematic part of the Key to Europe, the section Empowering Youth intends to spotlight events which enable you as participants or organisers to gain new competencies and skills which might also be useful for your future career. Youth Participation is a section about the fields of action in which members of AEGEE intervened, whether against the current draft of the



*Stephanie Müller  
Editor-in-Chief  
AEGEE-Heidelberg*

"Erasmus for all" programme or in lobbying for AEGEE at the National Youth Councils and in the Structured Dialogue process. However, other articles tackle the fight for a borderless and visa free Europe or the simulation of the European Union decision-making process.

We as AEGEE members see ourselves as open-minded and tolerant people, who like to be an example to the European society of tomorrow. In the section Crossing Borders you can read about projects which are exactly focusing on this topic: To overcome mental and physical borders striving for a unified Europe.

The fact that AEGEE does not only care about the interests of people is proved by the section on Environment & Sustainability which will give you many reasons about why it is important to care for our Earth and its ecosystem.

Last but not least the Events Calendar, which hopefully will remind many of you of all the happy days you spent in exotic cities with many people who you can now call your friends.

In the end, I hope you all enjoy reading and I hope the review will show you what achievements AEGEE can accomplish, if people are ready to take action on their dreams. Therefore, never forget: You are the change in Europe, make it happen!

Finally I would like to thank all the contributors to this Key to Europe, especially the group of people who helped me to issue it. You were always all there for me and ready to help with your actions, inspiration and motivation. Thank you!

*Stephanie Müller  
Editor-in-Chief  
AEGEE-Heidelberg*



# AEGEE FACTS & FIGURES

AEGEE is one of Europe's biggest youth organisations, with 13 000 members, welcoming students of all disciplines. It was founded 27 years ago in Paris and has since conquered Europe, with a Network now spanning from Western Europe until the Caucasus and Russia. Along the years, the members and some of the aims have changed, but

AEGEE's vision stayed the same: creating a unified Europe, based on democracy and respect for human rights, and bringing together students with different cultural backgrounds. The following pages include highlights from AEGEE's achievements, and provide a snapshot of the organisation today.

# WHAT IS AEGEE?

**AEGEE** (Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l' Europe), also known as European Students' Forum, was founded in Paris in 1985. Today, it is one of Europe's largest interdisciplinary youth organisations with 13 000 members in almost 200 university cities across the continent. AEGEE is a politically independent, secular and non-profit organisation, promoting cross-border cooperation, communication, integration among young people in Europe, as well as an open and tolerant society of tomorrow.

A widely spread network with students of all study disciplines provides the ideal platform for young volunteers from 40 European countries to work together on cross-border activities such as international conferences, seminars, exchanges, training courses and case study trips. AEGEE operates without any national level of organisation. Its structure is based on a Network formed by almost 200 local groups, and an European level consisting of Working Groups, Commissions, Committees, Project Teams and the Comité Directeur, the European Board of Directors.

The association's main aims are:

- promoting a unified Europe without prejudices,
- striving for creating an open and tolerant society of today and tomorrow,
- fostering democracy, human rights, tolerance, cross



border cooperation, mobility and European dimension in education.

The events and projects run by the organisation focus on AEGEE's four main Fields of Action (Cultural Exchange, Active Citizenship, Higher Education, Peace & Stability) and 3 Focus Areas (Youth Participation, Bridging Europe and Inclusion of Minorities).

Active  
Citizenship

Cultural  
Exchange

Higher  
Education

Peace And  
Stability

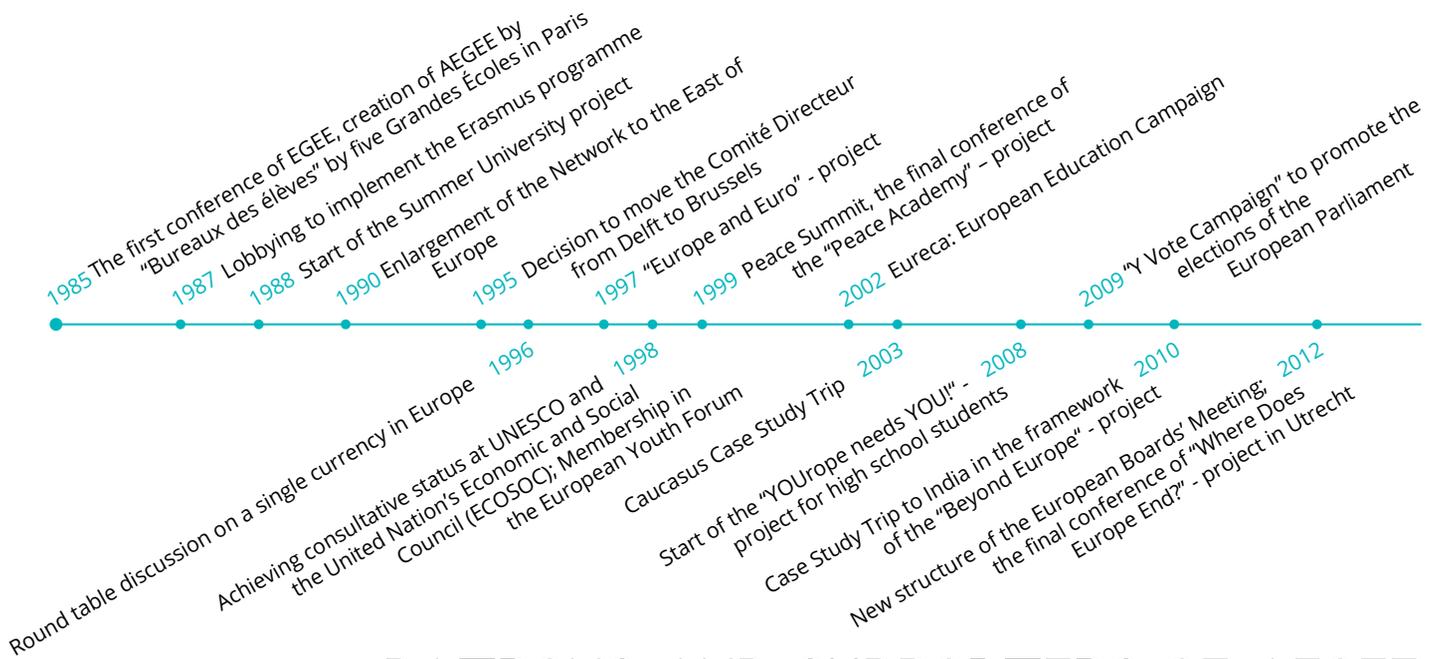
*AEGEE's four Main Fields of Action*

One of AEGEE's most well-known achievements is the effective lobbying for the creation of the Erasmus programme in the 1980s. In 2001, AEGEE worked together with ESN (Erasmus Student Network) and ESIB (The National Unions of Students in Europe, now European Students' Union) on the "Socrates on the Move" project, with the aim of promoting all Socrates initiatives. As a result, one million Erasmus students had been reached, and the scope of the Erasmus programme was broadened to include countries such as Turkey. AEGEE is also known for its longest running project, the Summer University that gathers thousands of volunteers each summer, providing courses on a wide range of topics from language courses to seminars about political, cultural or environmental issues.

*Written by Zsófia Komáromi, AEGEE-Budapest*



# FROM PARIS TO EUROPE: THE BRIEF HISTORY OF AEGEE



## PATRONS AND SUPPORTERS OF AEGEE

Being one of the biggest and most active student organisation in Europe, AEGEE and its projects have been supported by many remarkable personalities during the organisation's past 27 years. Below you can find a list of AEGEE's patrons and supporters, along with their positions at the time of expressing their support for the organisation and its projects.

- László Andor, Member of the European Commission for the "Study & Career Fair" at Agora Enschede (2012)
- Androulla Vassiliou, Member of the European Commission for the "Summer University" -project (2011)
- Doris Pack, Member of the European Parliament for the projects "Education for Democracy" and "Higher Education Days" (2000, 2011)
- José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission for the project "Where Does Europe End?" (2010)
- Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Italian Republic for the project "Y vote 2009" (2009)
- Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament (2004)
- Eric Froment, President of the European Rectors Conference (2002)
- Wolfgang Thierse, President of the German Bundestag (1999)
- Kenneth J. R. Edwards, President of the European Rectors Conference (1999)
- György Konrád, Hungarian author (1999)
- Árpád Göncz, President of the Republic of Hungary (1998)
- Mikhail Gorbachev, Former President of the Soviet Union (1998)
- Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic (1996)
- Klaus Hansch, President of the European Parliament (1994)
- Jacques Santer, President of Luxembourg, President of the European Commission (1994)
- Egon Klepsch, Former President of the European Parliament (1993)
- Catherine Lalumière, Member of the European Parliament, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (1993)
- Wilfried Martens, Belgian Prime Minister for the project "Euromanagers 1988" (1987)
- Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister of France (1986)
- Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister for the project "Second European Students' Week" (1986)
- Ruud Lubbers, Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1986)
- Francois Mitterrand, President of the Republic of France (1985)

# AEGEE'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS

AEGEE is meant to develop young people, give them an opportunity to express their opinion, and show that everybody is able to create change. AEGEE is as well meant to represent youth and student opinion on a daily basis, fighting for their rights and giving input to all the important processes in today's world. The Comité Directeur coordinates the external representation of AEGEE and throughout the year attends various meetings, events and conferences, addressing stakeholders and making sure youth voice is heard. This year we have been challenged to stress the importance non-governmental organisations hold in creating European citizens and developing young people into future leaders. In times when future support for our work is under question, we have to put all our forces into reaching this goal.

AEGEE is a member of different platforms of civil society. As members of the European Youth Forum (YFJ), AEGEE's voice has been represented when talking about rights of volunteers or interns, with the biggest impact on the Youth Forum's final position on the Rio+20 Conference. AEGEE had as well a delegation in Rio de Janeiro, representing student opinions on sustainable development and climate change. With the European Platform of Civil Society Organisations on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) we have cooperated on recognition of non-formal and informal education, social innovation and youth unemployment. The beginning of 2012 has finalised the European Year of Volunteering 2011, and presented the final result: Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe "P.A.V.E." – a recommendation for legislation of volunteering and recognition of rights of volunteers. Throughout 2011, AEGEE has worked on preparing this document together with other non-governmental organisations focused on volunteering. The European Commission has announced the European Year of Citizens 2013. The European Civic Forum (ECF) took over the coordination of this project, and AEGEE, as board member of the ECF took an important role in the preparation of the next European Year. This will be followed by a series of events in 2013. In June 2012, AEGEE has taken a seat at the European Movement International (EMI) conference in Tunis, and talked about the cooperation between civil society organisations and public authorities.



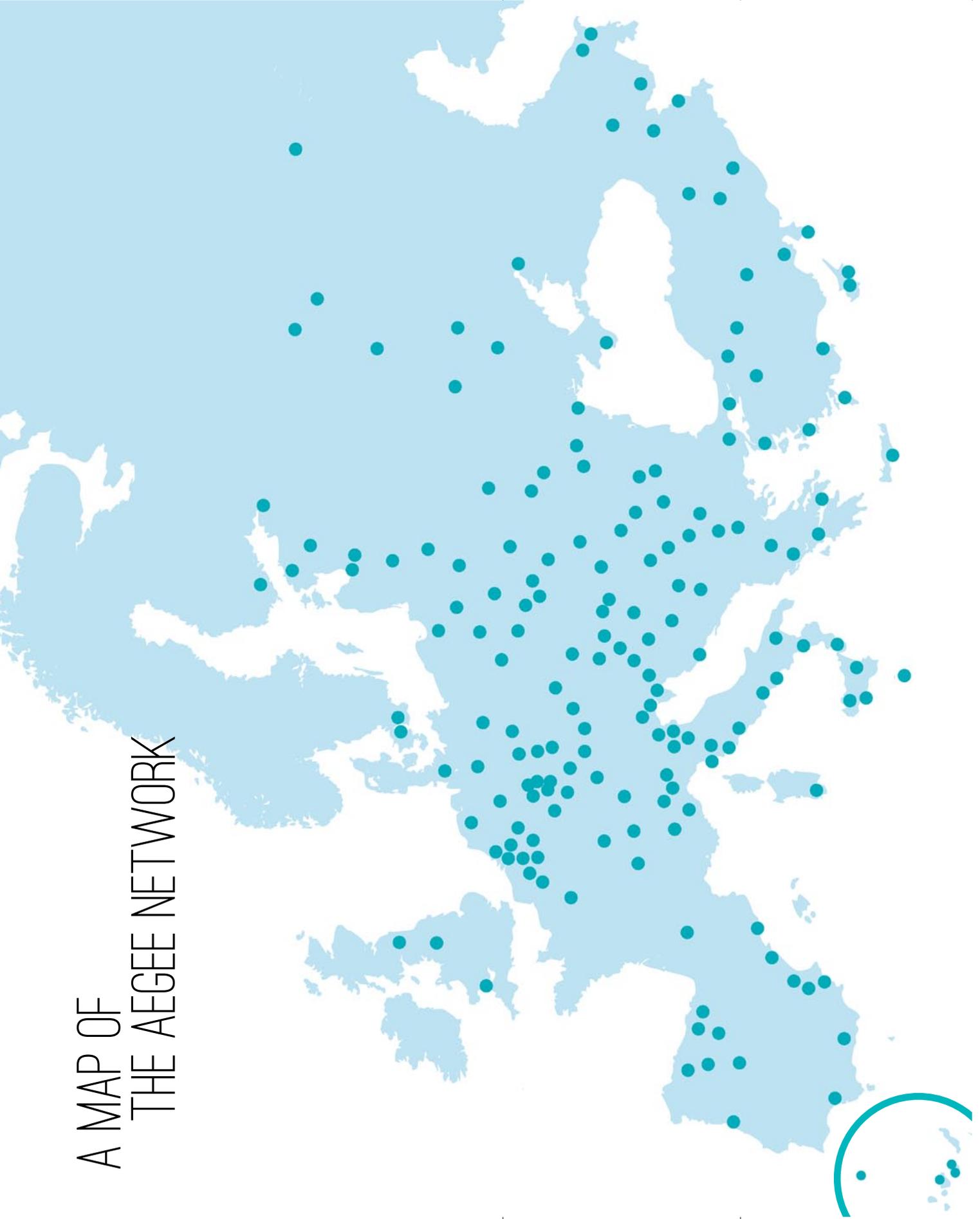
© Stephanie Müller

Besides these platforms, AEGEE also has a strong cooperation with European Institutions. The European Economic and Social Committee (EECS) has organised a conference "The Economic Crisis, Education and the Labour Market". AEGEE has taken a seat as a panelist debating on "Getting youth on board". AEGEE was also invited by the Turkish Parliament to discuss the youth involvement in decision making processes where we have made a clear point: Youth participation is not a crime! European youth needs to be encouraged to speak up, as expressing your opinion is the only way to take part in decision making. Meeting the representatives of the Council of Europe at a conference in June 2012 gave us a chance to stress youth approach to human rights and education systems in 21st century.

The future months will have an even stronger focus on recognition of civil society to ensure adequate support in the following years. Following the work of the European Union institutions, AEGEE will also give a strong opinion on new skills, the visa facilitation process, the democratic processes in the world and many other topics. This way we are making sure that the needs and opinions of AEGEEans are heard.

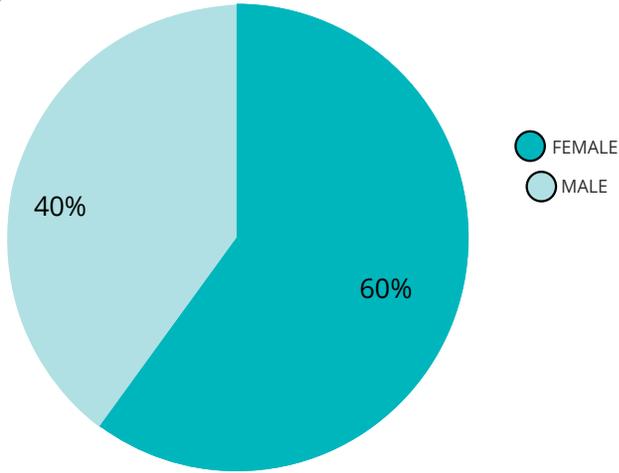
*Written by Marko Grdošić,  
Vice-President and External Relations Director until April  
2012, President of AEGEE-Europe from May-August 2012 &  
member of AEGEE-Zagreb*

A MAP OF  
THE AEGEE NETWORK

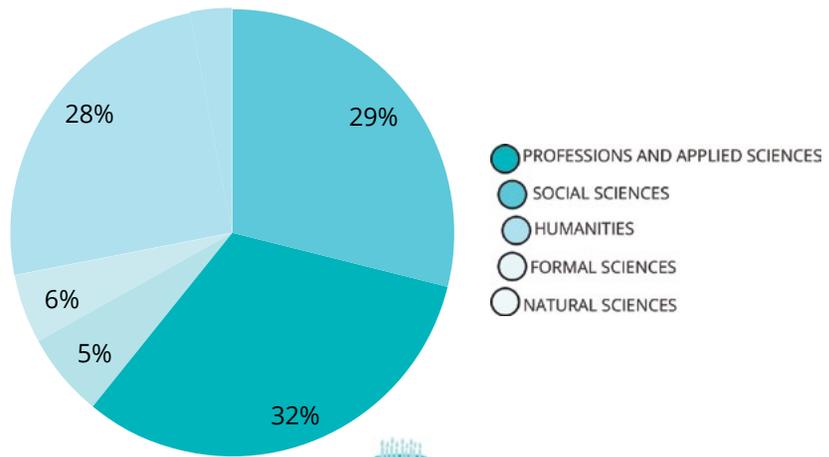


# MEMBER STATISTICS

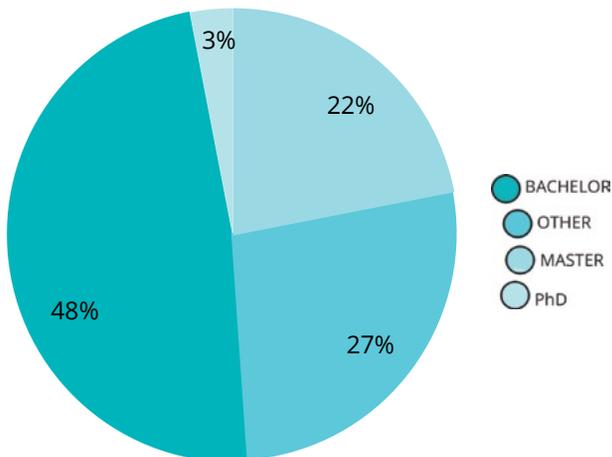
GENDER DISTRIBUTION



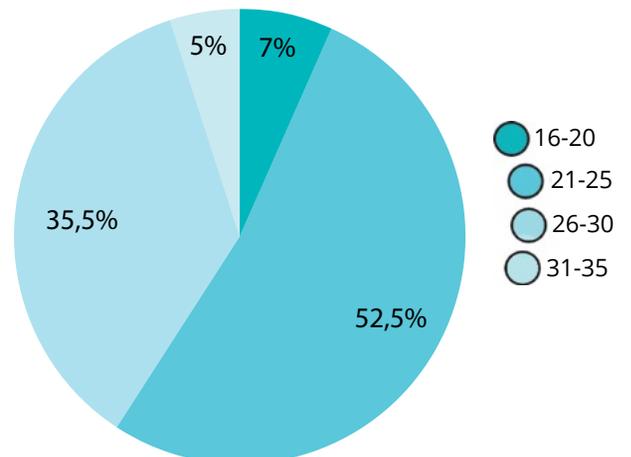
FIELDS OF STUDY



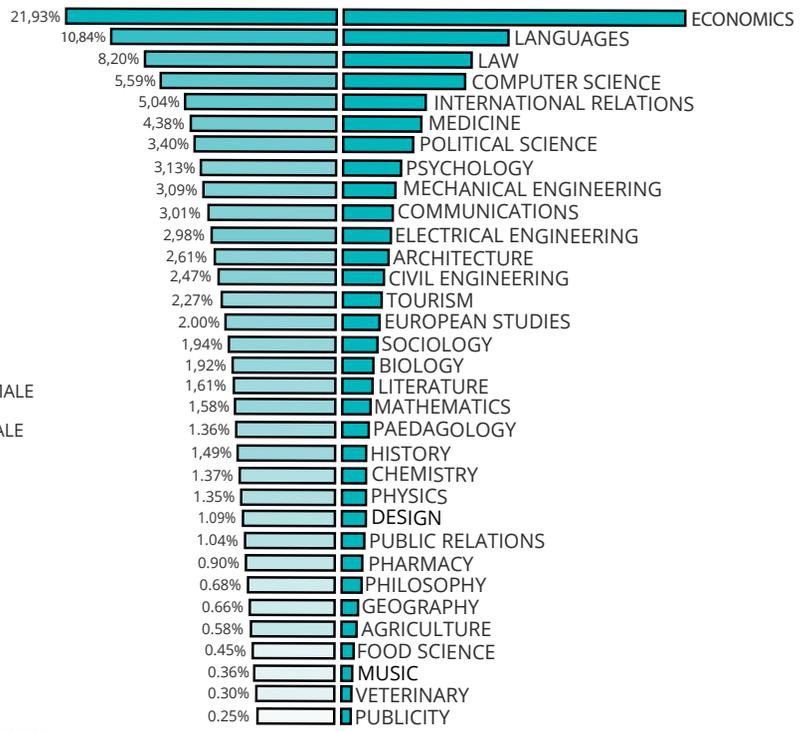
LEVEL OF STUDY



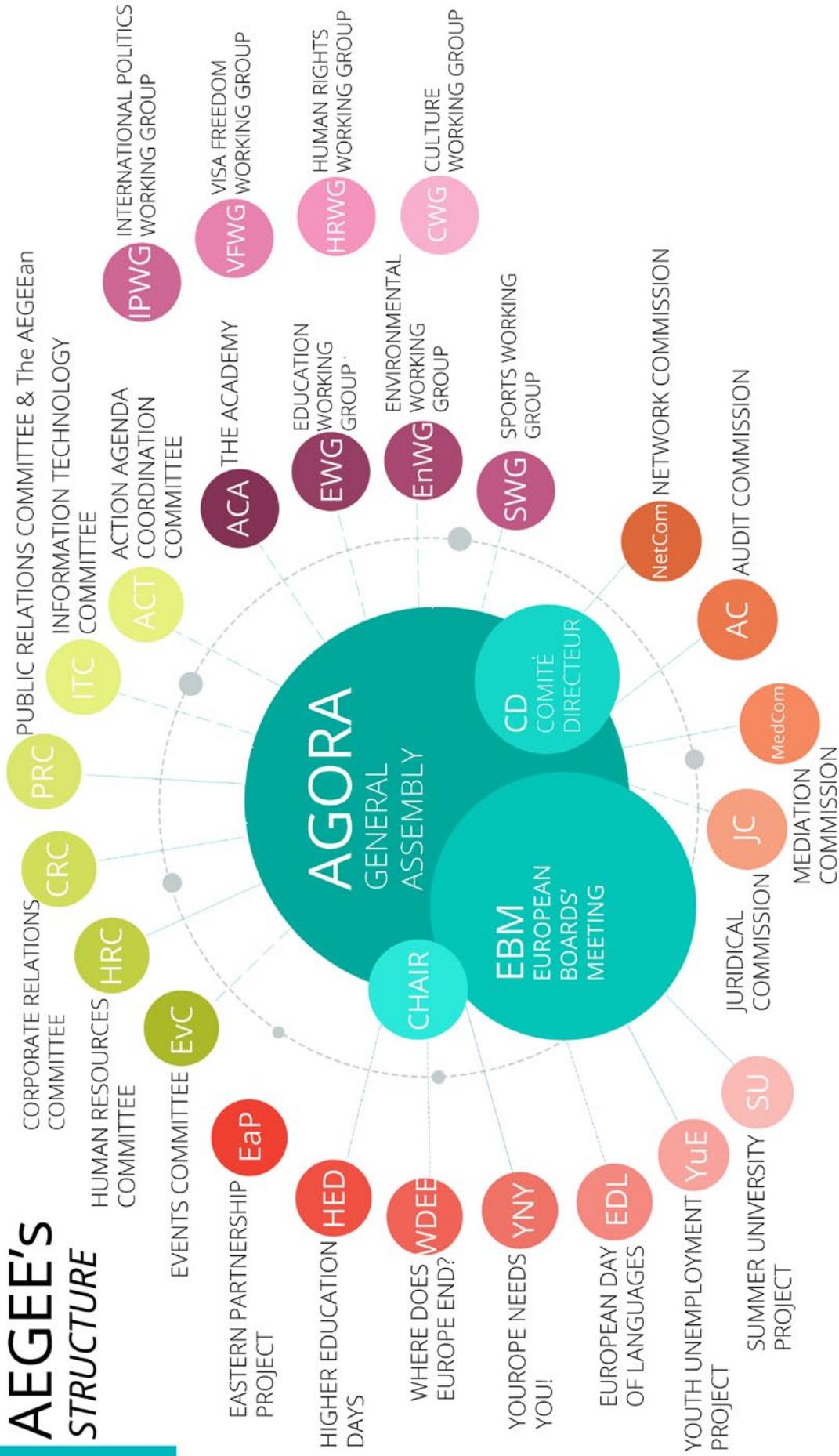
AGE OF MEMBERS



STUDIES



# AEGEE'S STRUCTURE



AEGEE'S  
STRUCTURE

AEGEE  
FACTS & FIGURES

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AEGEE'S ANNUAL REVIEW 2011-2012

# THE BODIES OF AEGEE

In order to be effective and achieving goals on European level AEGEE is working in thematic groups called Working Groups. There are eight at the moment. Additionally, there are six committees and four commissions to ensure the functionality of AEGEE on European level.

## THE WORKING GROUPS

One of the most unique Working Groups is the pool of trainers called **AEGEE Academy**. It was created in 1999 and its main goal is to organise trainings and ensure long term sustainability of AEGEE's. Every year the AEGEE Academy is organising different European schools such as Public Relations European School (PRES). Its members are people who are professionals in designing, leading and facilitating trainings and are eager to help every local to find the perfect trainer for their events.

Cultural exchange is an important part of many AEGEE activities. The aim of the **Culture Working Group (CWG)** - founded in 1997 - is to enrich the knowledge of AEGEE members about cultures in Europe. The CWG's activities and projects include trainings about intercultural communication, and guides about cultural diversity in Europe.

The **Education Working Group (EWG)** was founded in 1994 and aims for supporting the mobility of students in Europe, for the recognition of non-formal education and works hard on gathering and spreading information about educational exchange programmes. In the past it started several projects such as the "Higher Education Days". Its current projects are connected to the flagship topic of AEGEE, "Students' mobility" (2012-2014), including a mobility training school.

The **Environmental Working Group (EnWG)**, created in 2007, founded the former flagship project "Sustaining Our Future" (2008-2009) and established the very successful "European Day of Environment" (EDE) that takes place annually. This year EnWG has been working on the position of AEGEE towards the United Nations conference "Rio+20" on sustainable development.

The **Sports Working Group (SWG)** is one of the two brand new working groups in AEGEE, founded at the Spring Agora Enschede 2012. It aims to use the power

of sportive activities to unite people from different cultures, creating a platform for sportive activities, discussions and teaching methods.

The **Human Rights Working Group (HRWG)** was re-established at the Spring Agora Enschede 2012. It strives to spread information about the situation of human rights in Europe. The HRWG organises events and workshops where participants can learn how to get involved and fight against the suppression of people's basic human rights.

The **International Politics Working Group (IPWG)** initiated the flagship project "Beyond Europe - Perspectives of Tomorrow's World" (2010-2012). It was created in order to raise awareness among students about political issues that dangle our society, to support the development of transborder cooperation and to ensure direct promotion of peace and stability in Europe. Its current projects are the "International Politics Awareness Day" and the support for the organisation of "Model of European" Union (MEU).

As a youth organisation present all around Europe, a crucial question for AEGEE is the possibility to travel without any obstacles. This was the reason for the creation of the **Visa Freedom Working Group (VFWG)**. Its aim is not only to help people to get a visa or residence permit for entering and living in countries of the AEGEE Network, but also to fight and lobby for simplification, clarification and transparency of the whole visa procedure.

## THE COMMITTEES

The **Information Technology Committee (ITC)** was created to assist AEGEE-Europe with tasks in the field of IT, such as maintaining hardware, offering support to users, creating new features for the current systems, as well as acting as a platform for IT-related discussions.

The **Public Relations Committee (PRC)** is a body of AEGEE-Europe responsible for supporting the Network in the field of public relations and communication. It works on creating promotional materials, designing PR campaigns and improving the organisation's website. In autumn 2011, the PRC launched an online magazine for AEGEE members, called "The AEGEEan" ([www.aegge.org/magazine](http://www.aegge.org/magazine)).

The **Human Resources Committee (HRC)** was created in October 2011 in order to improve and spread the human resources techniques among AEGEE antennae. Its aims are to analyse the needs of the Network, create HR materials and circulate them among AEGEE locals.

The **Action Agenda Coordination Committee (ACT)** is responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the three-year action plan of AEGEE, the action agenda.

The **Corporate Relations Committee (CRC)** was established at the Spring Agora Enschede in 2012. It aims to provide funding possibilities for AEGEE-Europe by developing corporate partnerships and by preparing grant applications.

The **Events Committee (EvC)** was created in the spring of 2011 in order to support the Comité Directeur in improving the quality and impact of AEGEE's international events. It assists event organisers to prepare high-quality events.

#### THE COMMISSIONS

Commissions support actively the work of AEGEE-Europe, mediate between the locals and the Comité Directeur (CD), and at the same time making sure that everything is done according to the statutes of the organisation, the *Corpus Iuridicum Aegeense* (CIA). It is the **Juridical Commission** who is observing if all procedures and decisions taken at the Agorae are not violating the main rules we have established. If there is a problem in one local or between two bodies the **Mediation Commission** is on the spot. This body of experienced members gives recommendations to the CD or the Agora in case of complex arguments. With 11 commissioners the **Network Commission** is the largest commission. It maintains constant communication with locals, provide them with information and advice in order to sustain their organisations. The **Audit Commission** makes a detailed audit of all the financial records of AEGEE-Europe, including those of the locals and those prepared by the Financial Director. All the positions in the commissions are elected by the highest body of our organisation, the Agora.

*Written by Liliya Buyukliyska, AEGEE-Sofia*

## COME TOGETHER



© Gunnar Erth

**Cooperation between** different youth organisations has long been the target of discussions. For instance, many people tend to assume AEGEE has to compete with Erasmus Student Network (ESN) or AIESEC, and vice versa, but what if we join forces in raising awareness among young people convincing them that our goals are worth supporting?

On 18th April 2012 an annually organised conference, the III. International Event, took place in Debrecen. This year, the event witnessed a unique cooperation between members of ESN, AEGEE, AIESEC and several European Voluntary Service (EVS) organisations presenting a vast variety of topics ranging from leadership skills through debunking cultural stereotypes to scholarship opportunities abroad.

Since the topic of the European level involvement and active citizenship of students is becoming more relevant today, the event began with thematic workshops on the importance of volunteering, non-formal education and youth participation presented by the former Projects Director, Thomas Leszke and the current President of AEGEE-Europe, Marko Grdošić.

For a small AEGEE local, teaming up with others, can only amplify the impact of the message. AEGEE or ESN, birds of a feather, sharing the same open-mindedness and willingness to shape our future. At the end of the day, we really can learn a lot from each other.

*Written by Réka Salamon, AEGEE-Debrecen*

# STRENGTHENING THE AEGEE NETWORK

In the previous years AEGEE had a clear aim of spreading its presence all over Europe and beyond. To reach this aim, a large number of locals were established in different areas, starting from Portugal and finishing with the far Eastern part of the Russian Federation. Although this approach had its advantages and disadvantages, such a direction in development resulted in more than 240 locals established all over Europe in the year 2010.

After such fast growth and establishment of new locals, the past year brought about a period when sustaining the Network became a priority. Therefore, the total number of locals has been reduced, in favor of the stronger development for already established branches. Between August 2011 and August 2012, 15 cities, located not only in actively developing regions, but over the whole territory of Europe, expressed the wish to join the AEGEE Network and become Contacts. Thus, Contacts were established in Northern Europe (Kaliningrad and Kaunas), Southern Europe (Tuzla, Kastoria, Ioannina, Hatay, Erzincan and Reggio Calabria), in Western and South-Western part of the continent (Lanzarote, Sevilla, Madeira and Valladolid), in the Caucasus (Stepanakert) and in the central part of the AEGEE Network (Opole and Łódź).

In order to organise events and officially implement any activity on behalf of AEGEE, a Contact has to sign an official contract with AEGEE-Europe, called "Convention d'Adhesion", thus receiving the right to call itself a local and carry out activities under AEGEE's umbrella. The results of the development in this field for 2011-2012 are very impressive. At the General Assembly, Autumn Agora Skopje 2011, the Contact established in Kharkiv signed the contract. In the following month, December 2011, one more city received the right to call themselves a local, as AEGEE-Sumqayit was accepted at the Network Meeting in Tbilisi. However, the South-Eastern part of the Network was not the only region actively implementing the ideas of the organisation. In March 2012, the Network Meeting Burgos brought four more new bodies from the South-Western area – AEGEE-Lanzarote, AEGEE-Madeira, AEGEE-Sevilla and AEGEE-Valladolid. The Spring Agora Enschede in April 2012 clearly showed the results of the hard work of all involved members, as four additional cities got



© Network Commission

the right to call themselves AEGEE locals. These were AEGEE-Kaunas, AEGEE-Opole, AEGEE-Reggio Calabria and AEGEE-Rostov-na-Donu.

Taking a map and checking the location of all the new locals established between September 2011 till May 2012, one can clearly see that due to the hard work of AEGEE members, the organisation is currently represented in almost every part of Europe, from the Canary Islands in the West, to the Ural Mountains in the East, in the cities of conflict areas in the Caucasus and the Balkans, as well as the cities of the European Union, thus bringing the ideas of a unified Europe and a tolerant society to every city regardless the name, governmental issues or geographic location. Behind every new established local, there are hundreds of committed, open-minded young citizens. So as long as there are people willing to join a tolerant and open European society, AEGEE will successfully continue the development of its Network.

As former Speaker of the Network Commission I was lucky to see hard working people, contributing to AEGEE. Therefore, I would like to express my gratitude to all members for this commitment, working as great motivator for the organisation and every member.

*Written by Olga Iatsyna, former Speaker of the Network Commission & member of AEGEE-Dnipropetrovsk*

# AEGEE & EurActiv

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# COMITÉ DIRECTEUR 2011-2012: CHANGE FOR A BETTER EUROPE!

In life we are always striving to test ourselves, to improve things and to understand if some issues can be dealt with in a different way. This was the start for us, the Comité Directeur (CD) 2011-2012, after being trusted to lead and nurture AEGEE, to find out if our beloved association can provide a change for all of our members and if it can impact the European society as it was meant to by bringing European youth together.

For many people the path itself is considered to be more important than the destination, and our path throughout the year has been challenging, demanding, but in the end eye opening and developmental, because the CD term has revealed us an experience

spite the somehow cool atmosphere at the plenaries, we left Struga with new energy, passion and knowledge that with dedicated work it is possible to achieve changes within AEGEE.

The Agora of course was not the only memorable decisive event for all CD members that would be celebrated during our progression on the path AEGEE had set for us. Long hours and sleepless nights were also dedicated to the General Subvention which provides an important contribution to AEGEE-Europe's budget for the year 2012. Writing, rewriting, developing, creating, preparing. These have been just some of the things that Marko, at that time Vice-President of AEGEE-Eu-



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Alfredo Sellitti

From left: Luis Alvarado Martínez, Alma Mozgovaja, Marko Grdošič, Elena Antova, Jüri Kirpu, Gizem Karlı, Guillermo García Tabarés

we will never forget in our lives. As in all beginnings we were very idealistic, thinking that we would be able to bring a big change, which was eventually transformed into a realisation that change can only come from re-creating small things. Administration and our thematic affiliations were the things we started with.

The first step towards that change was Agora Skopje 2011, the Autumn General Assembly, for which the preparations were our first challenge as a team. At the Agora, long sleepless evenings were accompanied by many hours of registering locals, attending various meetings, inspiring workshops and prytania sessions that would eventually bring a new breath to AEGEE. De-

rope and External Relations Director, has directed us with.

As the members of the Comité Directeur, we were there to help the Network, not only here from Brussels, but also at various stops around Europe. Network Meetings and European Schools have been the places where we could contribute, teach and inspire the next generations to come, who will continue to reach a more equal Europe that we as young Europeans strive for.

Changes were always our goal and with the European Boards' Meeting (EBM) in Izmir in February 2012, we managed to bring a start to something new. Topics like

social inclusion, environment, freedom of press and many others were debated upon, bringing new knowledge to the participants and providing an alternative perspective. Heated discussions, for instance with Dr. James Skelly and Arzu Geybullayeva about the conflicts of the Caucasus triangle or with Prof. Dr. Gül Turan and Peter Matjasic about the problem of youth unemployment in Europe, taught us new things and opened new perspectives, action meetings that would set priorities for a new year and panel discussions where we could question the things that we took for granted. All of this has contributed to the EBM İzmir, an event we will keep in our hearts and minds.



Claudia Fiorentino

Ioana Duca

Despite trying to influence the matters on a broader scope which has been addressed at the EBM İzmir, we nonetheless concentrated on decisions that would be made here in Brussels, which would have an immense impact on our activities and future action taking. In 2014, "Erasmus for All" would be replacing the European Commission's Youth in Action programme, without providing support for non-formal education and peer-to-peer learning, despite the fact that these elements would make it possible for young people to become active citizens with skills and competences which would help them on the job market, as well as empowering youth civil society organisations in our society and supporting NGOs that work in such fields.

Tackling this issue with the help of the European Youth Forum and many of its member organisations was always challenging, but in the end we could see a real recognition of the European Parliament and Council of the European Union on the importance of non-formal education and support for youth NGOs like AEGEE, carrying out the task of directly reaching the young people in society.

After almost one year as members of the Comité Directeur our path had changed, but along with it, we diverged from it in the hope that all our actions and activities contributed to something greater, to something that would revolutionise the way we perceive things in our daily lives, namely the forthcoming of youth and young people. We strived to change the environment of today and hopefully we managed to change the path for others, so that they may have the opportunity to continue reinventing themselves and the future. Change is always needed, because the world around us is always evolving and if we stop, where would that leave us? In the end, isn't it what development demands, isn't it what growth and learning demand?

The path will always continue, for us, for AEGEE and also for you, the question is only if you choose to disregard its route or let yourself be guided and taught by it.

*Written by Jüri Kirpu,  
Comité Directeur & AEGEE-Tallinn*

## COMITÉ DIRECTEUR 2011-2012

- **Marko Grdošić** - President since May 2012, before Vice-President and External Relations Director (AEGEE-Zagreb)
- **Alma Mozgovaja** - Secretary General (AEGEE-Riga)
- **Elena Antova** - Financial Director (AEGEE-Sofia)
- **Gizem Karsli** - Projects Director, and from May-August 2012 also Vice-President (AEGEE-Ankara)
- **Jüri Kirpu** - Internal Relations Director (AEGEE-Tallinn)
- **Guillermo García Tabarés** - Human Resources Director (AEGEE-Barcelona)
- **Luis Alvarado Martínez** - External Relations Director since May 2012, before Corporate Relations Officer in March-April 2012 (AEGEE-Las Palmas)
- **Alfredo Sellitti** - President from September 2011 till April 2012 (AEGEE-Salerno)
- **Ioana Duca** - Archives Assistant from May till June 2012 (AEGEE-Cluj Napoca)
- **Claudia Fiorentino** - Intern from March till June 2012

# WHAT DOES AEGEE MEAN TO YOU?



© Carlijn van de Meulenhof

**Young Europeans**, what does AEGEE mean to you? Why do you care about youth participation, European ideals and student organisations? Why is it important for you to be involved?

We asked this question to five active AEGEE members. Five cities and five answers – but one continent and one question.

*Written by Anita Kalmene, AEGEE-Ogtr*

**"AEGEE helped me to discover** that despite administrative changes, AEGEE people will never change. Whether you are a new member or an older member, you are always welcomed in a warm and kind manner, as a family member. Together we are changing Europe for the best, step by step and I am proud to be a member of this family!"

*Carlijn van de Meulenhof,  
AEGEE-Amsterdam & AEGEE-Durham*



© Lucille Rieux



© Haluk Can Yasan

**"For me AEGEE is a learning platform** in which I can become a more aware and socially active European citizen. AEGEE is a way to make Europe happen by going beyond mental and physical borders and striving together for the future of Europe that we want."

*Lucille Rieux, AEGEE-Toulouse*

**"Living in a foreign country** sometimes makes you feel like a stranger, even though you feel super blended. With AEGEE, regardless of your past or present, you always feel home, even if you are in the weirdest place on the Earth. Everybody is your friend almost by default. Thus, it is like a family and members are like siblings, without parental supervision!"

*Haluk Can Yasan, AEGEE-Eindhoven*



© Mariella Rapa



© Miroslava Ganzarcikova

**"AEGEE is the evidence of my life change.** Along the way I have interacted with different cultures, looked into different societies, made everlasting friendships, and concluded that the world is a book; those who have not travelled have read only one page!"

*Mariella Rapa, AEGEE-Valletta*

**"AEGEE is an addiction.** Once you get involved, you can't stop. People, places, experiences, all those awesome events and friends you gain on the way, all those opportunities you would never get without AEGEE. By discovering Europe and the world, you discover yourself. And once your active AEGEE life is over, you'll never be the same again."

*Miroslava Ganzarcikova, AEGEE-Bratislava*

# EMPOWERING YOUTH



provided by Dasha Onokhova

# YOUTH PARTICIPATION



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# CROSSING BORDERS



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# ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

# THEMATICS

## LOCAL TRAINING COURSES MARK THE WAY FOR DEVELOPMENT!

**Local Training Courses (LTCs)** in AEGEE serve an elementary purpose in introducing new members to the work of the Association and also to strengthen the bonds between the current members of a local. Combining both aspects can be hard to tackle during one event that is the reason why AEGEE-Debrecen decided to organise two LTCs in two consecutive months: December 2011 and January 2012.

On the first occasion, the members had the chance to get an introduction and analysis of the structural components of AEGEE, and how to improve their personal skills. Exemplifying cross-border cooperation between locals, our trainers arrived from AEGEE-Cluj Napoca.

*- Founding big opportunities in a small shire -*

At the end of October 2011, thirty young people gathered for one reason: to improve themselves!

However, this time they had a different way to learn, a better way. With three great trainers from AEGEE-İzmir, they discovered a lot more about AEGEE and had the opportunity to start to become an actively involved AEGEE member.

The main topics of AEGEE-İzmir's Local Training Course (LTC) were: Volunteer Services, Group Dynamics, European Union Projects, Public Relations and much more information about the structure of AEGEE on



© Alfredo Sellitti



© Alfredo Sellitti

They gave informative and entertaining workshops targeting for instance Fundraising, Public Relations and Human Resources.

Later in January, former board members of AEGEE-Budapest and our Network Commissioner, Beata Matuszka, arrived to give a more in-depth perspective in the thematic work of AEGEE and staged various debates on contemporary youth policy topics.

These trainings are building the strong foundation of knowledge and teamwork on the local level as well as setting the ground for the work on the European sphere.

*Written by Réka Salamon, AEGEE-Debrecen*

European level.

Furthermore, the trainer of this LTC Mr. Berat Ezel used non-formal education materials and also encouraged participants to be a part of their education.

AEGEE-İzmir is very thankful to the Mayor of Aliğa County for contributing to this event.

*Written by Nevzat Kiliç, AEGEE-İzmir*

## NETWORK MEETING "NORDISCH BY NATURE"

The **Local Training Course (LTC)** "Healthy Lifestyle" was a three-day programme designed for 20 participants willing to become AEGEE members. The aim was to motivate and stimulate young Albanian students from Tirana to get to know AEGEE, its structure, function, and aims.

Additionally, AEGEE-Tirana offered something special. The LTC focused on the topic healthy lifestyle, healthy habits and yoga. The goal was to indicate the importance of youth activism which also means being active on local level by spreading the ideas of AEGEE among students.

The **Northern German culture** may not be exactly what people usually imagine when they think about Germany. AEGEE-Hamburg decided to invite the entire AEGEE family to their city and organised the "Nordisch by Nature" Network Meeting in March 2012.

During an exceptionally sunny weekend, 35 participants from many European countries could dive deep into the hottest topics on the AEGEE agenda like the Eastern Partnership, Strategic Planning and Public Relations. One of the highlights was the presentation by an external guest from Russia talking about contemporary Russian politics. This controversial topic has triggered a lot of hot comments and questions giving the partici-



© Erald Aga



© Michal Kasprzak

During the days, participants enjoyed the workshop with sessions like "speaking with confidence". The organisers were more than satisfied by the level of activism that participants showed both during the lectures and the workshops. They were truly triggered to grab more knowledge about AEGEE generally, and to become full members of this great student Network.

Through this LTC we found out that for students in Albania it is still not so easy to be a part of any international student's organisation due to the financial situation of the country.

*Written by Erald Aga, President of AEGEE-Tiranë*

pants a perspective that may differ from what they can usually receive through mass media.

Comité Directeur member Gizem Karsli then presented the concept of the Eastern Partnership project as one of the priorities of AEGEE-Europe, which was well perceived and many participants were shown ideas on how to implement similar activities in their cities. As well as interesting discussions and trainings, the participants could also enjoy some local culture with a "fish roll workshop" and local cuisine.

*Written by Michael Makowiecki, AEGEE-Hamburg*

# EUROPEAN SCHOOLS – CREATING CHANGE IN EUROPE

With the slogan “Dive into Inspiration” the European School 1 (ES1) in Passau offered 25 participants the possibility not only to dip their toes into the vast sea of the huge potential offered by their minds, but also, the Passau organisers provided an secured environment for diving deep down into the inner self of shining options and unknown golden strengths and weaknesses. Secured by the trainers like Miguel Gallardo Albajar watching out for everyone, true treasures were found together.

The ES1 was one week of intensive training in December 2011 which gathered young Europeans with lots of motivation and eagerness to learn and improve their skills for the preparation, organisation as well as the implementation of projects within AEGEE.

„ES1 is where AEGEE activists make the magic happen for the first time. Where fresh, idealistic, motivated and eager-to-change ideas are born. ES1 is the place where our new generations of leaders start their way in the youth voluntary world.“, said Luis Alvarado Martínez, Manager of ES1 in Passau.

Trainers from the Academy provided the great training in Passau. During the intense week the participants started swimming in the pond of knowledge, getting to know the theory of fundraising and human resources, as well as event management. During daily case-work the teams were able to apply the newly learned methods onto a large scale. Projects were developed throughout the week and ended with an ensemble presentation of the results in a simulated Agora.

At the end everyone went home with high spirits before Christmas, eagerness and high motivation and of course great friends for life. Sara Cocco from AEGEE-Cagliari described the ES1 as “the most useful and unexpected Christmas present in 2011! I would not have imagined a better way to end the year!” -expressing what every participant felt.

At the Spring Agora Enschede 2012 once again the participants, trainers and organisers gathered and enjoyed their mutual attendance reminding everyone of the amazing experience of ES1 in Passau.

*Written by Patrick Scholz, AEGEE-Aachen*



This European School 2 (ES2) was based on the close cooperation of the AEGEE-Academy and one host antenna, in this case AEGEE-Castelló, who devoted an enormous effort in making everything happen.

The trainers’ team was one of the most heterogeneous teams in the history of the European Schools, and counted with the inspiring contribution of Gizem Karšli, Projects Director of AEGEE-Europe. The participants arrived from all corners of the Network, and had very different degrees of experience, but it did not take long before the first synergies appeared, and in a couple of days the first ideas started to shape into potential projects for AEGEE-Europe.

During the closing session of ES2, one participant raised the question: Can you imagine the potential of this group in Europe? I am proud to say that I cannot see any limits for ES2 participants. When you empower young citizens, when you give them freedom to create their own projects and the tools to make them happen, once they realize they can break the limits... you can be sure they will become leaders for other young people and will create change in Europe. This makes worth any effort, any sleepless night, and makes you wish for the next European School to come soon.

*Written by Miguel Gallardo Albajar, Manager of the ES2 Castelló, member of the AEGEE-Academy & AEGEE-Alicante*

## FOR PEOPLE, WITH PEOPLE, BY PEOPLE

## FUNDRAISING EUROPEAN SCHOOL IN ZARAGOZA



© Bernadett Pólya

**For one week** in September 2011, 25 participants had the chance to attend the Fundraising European School (FRES) jointly organised by AEGEE and BEST, an association for technical students.

The FRES aimed to be a complex training course, enabling young people to develop crucial skills for effectively implementing projects. The trainers from the Academy provided the participants with essential knowledge about providing sustainable funding to their initiatives, based on a diverse portfolio of partners.

The content of the workshops was focused on fundraising and financial management. During the event, experienced fundraisers shared their knowledge. In addition, a practical case was provided, giving the participants the possibility to put their knowledge into practice.

To summarise this event: It was amazing! The participants could not have been better. They had a very tight schedule, but never stopped smiling and being actively involved.

The main reason why this event was so successful was thanks to the trainers, who were very qualified, full of energy and motivation. Thank you AEGEE-Academy, participants and everyone involved! You made this FRES unforgettable!

*Written by Sara Alcolea Madero and Pilar Lop Gargallo,  
AEGEE-Zaragoza*

**AEGEE stands for people**, their beliefs and their potential to grow and make things happen. Each organisation works with people.

The Human Resources European School (HRES) has been organised by the AEGEE-Academy and AEGEE-Kyiv, a powerful cooperation by people who care and want to develop themselves and their organisation in the field of Human Resources (HR).

The Ukrainian organising team, four international trainers and a diverse group of 25 participants from all over Europe came together in Kiev in April 2012 to create something valuable. The HRES aimed to give an overview of the common tools used in the HR cycle, to enable the participants to make practical use of the techniques taken from motivational theories, conflict management, group evaluation and coaching.

At the HRES, these people created knowledge, shared thoughts and ideas, gained skills, learned about HR and themselves. These seven days of non-formal learning experience made the participants discover their potential in the field of HR and helped them to develop themselves. They have truly learned how to make things happen for people, with people, by people.

*Written by Bernadett Pólya, AEGEE-Budapest*



© Fundraising European School

## JUMP ON THE TRAIN AND ENJOY THE RIDE!

## PLANNING THE FUTURE OF AEGEE



On 15th April 2012, 23 youth workers took part in the "Jump on the Train – Training for Trainers" project and spent seven days in Warsaw (Poland) developing their skills in order to become competent trainers and prepare their own workshops.

The participants from Poland, Germany, Finland, Estonia, Hungary, Romania, the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain were learning new skills under the supervision of experienced trainers from AEGEE, AIESEC, BEST and EFPSA. During the project they found out how to plan, run and evaluate high quality trainings for multicultural groups. „The unique form of the meeting and trainers' openness stimulated creative discussions and encouraged us to open our minds," said the participant Katarzyna Moćko.

The project had the strongest and most positive influence on its participants. "To us, the trainers' team, it means that we made a good decision focusing on participants' attitudes and self-awareness rather than just knowledge. Through constant challenges and high amount of practice we feel that they have achieved levels of preparation and confidence more than enough to deliver high-quality and inspiring trainings both in AEGEE and outside it," said Paweł Cieślak, coordinator of the trainers' team.

*Written by Karolina Norkiewicz, AEGEE-Warszawa*

In August 2011 about 45 eager AEGEEans travelled their way to Poznań. Among the participants were the Comité Directeur 2010-2011, the Comité Directeur 2011-2012, several Network Commissioners, the Planning Team members and many enthusiastic participants from all over the Network.

Their reason to go to Poznań was a bit ambitious, adventurous and idealistic. The aim of this "Planning Meeting 2011" was to draft a new Strategic Plan for 2011-2014 and also an Action Agenda for the first year. For the whole summer there had been at least 20 people working intensively on analysing AEGEE internally from the bottom to the top, looking into important movements in the European society, analysing in which topics relevant stakeholders are interested, etc. We started the Planning Meeting by choosing three focus areas for the strategic plan. It all required a lot of discussions, working in groups and deciding which topics have more future than others. Additionally participants had to draft concrete aims that AEGEE should achieve within three years.

These four days were amazingly intense. A relatively small motivated group of people was working for the future of AEGEE. Participants could feel how this future was in their hands. At the Autumn Agora Skopje 2011 the Strategic Plan got accepted. Now it is time for the Network of AEGEE to act.

*Written by Mayri Tiido, AEGEE-Tartu*

# THE EUROPEAN BOARDS' MEETING IN IZMIR – A MILESTONE IN AEGEE'S HISTORY



Skopje 2011, we started working intensely. As you can imagine, organising a profound conference within three months is quite challenging. Yet, with a strong team behind, we overcame all the difficulties and hosted quite a successful conference.

The preparations were divided into two pillars: the thematic part where we hosted the workshops and the panel discussions, and the planning part with the action meetings where we have drafted the Action Agenda for the upcoming year. In other words, we fuelled ourselves during the thematic sessions and put our inspiration and motivation in practice during the action meetings. The idea behind this structure was simple: We wanted more than fancy statements, we wanted action!

The thematic part coordinated by Jana Pokorna as the Content Coordinator and myself as the Projects Director hosted two panel discussions on the conflicts in the Caucasus region and the topic youth unemployment. Additionally, there were held thirteen workshops together with experts, on the topics of: Democracy in Belarus, Conscious Objection, Student Mobility, the Bologna Process, Turkey and the European Union, Social Inclusion, European Languages, the "Rio+20" Conference, Freedom of Speech, Youth Policy, Freedom of Speech in Hungary and the European Crisis.

The planning part coordinated by Katja Behrendt, Patrick Kabasci and Thomas Leszke hosted five sessions of Action Meetings where we had brainstorming sessions for the aims in our Strategic Plan valid for the period of 2012-2014 and drafted the Action Agenda for 2012-2013 that was approved by the Spring Agora Enschede 2012.

The Action Agenda Coordination Team (ACT) members made an amazing job and contributed to the planning process invaluablely.

To conclude, at the EBM Izmir, we tried to show the potential you have, we have. Altogether, we proved the presence of youth in today's Europe.

*Written by Gizem Karlı, Projects Director and also Vice-President from May-August 2012 of AEGEE-Europe & member of AEGEE-Ankara*

The European Boards' Meeting (EBM) in İzmir in February 2012 was the annual thematic conference of AEGEE-Europe, and for the first time with its new identity. In İzmir, AEGEE brought together 300 European students from 40 countries on a platform where they discussed freedom of speech in Hungary, democracy in Belarus, student arrestments in Turkey, conflicts in the Caucasus region, the Bologna Process, sustainable development and European integration.

In other words AEGEE, kept its fingers on the pulse of Europe together with the contribution of academics, politicians and successful NGO leaders. By enhancing the cooperation with its aforementioned stakeholders, we made a step forward in strengthening the cooperation between policy makers and the European youth.

There lies a great deal of effort behind the EBM Reform and the EBM itself. The story of the EBM İzmir has officially started at Autumn Agora Skopje 2011 where the EBM Reform was proposed by three valuable, experienced and committed AEGEE members: Katja Behrendt, Patrick Kabasci and Thomas Leszke, although the preparation for the reform dates back even before.

Once the structure of one of the biggest events of AEGEE-Europe was reformed, it was our responsibility as the Comité Directeur to make the EBM thematically strong and impactful. Right after the Autumn Agora

# AGORA - THE MOST POWERFUL BODY WITHIN AEGEE

The Autumn Agora Skopje in October 2011 promised to be interesting from the first moment the hosting local was announced. The Agora actually took place in Struga, 200km south of Skopje, on the side of Lake Ohrid. Struga was not the easiest place to be reached. However, it did not stop more than 700 young students coming.

Many AEGEE members started travelling days before the Agora, and took part in Pre-Agora events organised in cities such as Sofia, Belgrade and Thessaloniki. This gave them a chance to experience first-hand the troubles of spending hours at the borders.

Many AEGEE members had not been so lucky waiting hours at the borders. They could not reach the Agora as they did not receive a visa on time. The Visa Freedom Working Group presented a statement on visa issues at the Agora, one that we all share as AEGEEans.

Despite the cold, the Agora participants attended plenaries and workshops during the day, to discuss and debate the future of the organisation and to vote for candidates for different positions.

AEGEEans stood by each other at this Agora and made their commitment to building together the future of a united Europe.

*Written by Olimpia Parje, AEGEE- București*



© Stephanie Müller

Agorae come and go, people will remember the good company, the tight schedule or the fun they had during the European Night. This year's Spring Agora in Enschede stood out from the crowd. The local organisers tried their best to give this statutory event, generally focused on the internal organisation of AEGEE, a thematic approach. Therefore they invited beside many external workshop leaders Franck Biancheri, one of the founding fathers of AEGEE.

Mr. Biancheri was giving a thought-provoking speech about how he estimates the future of AEGEE with its organisational structure and its thematic focus. Not everyone in the audience was convinced that AEGEE should be spread in two - one AEGEE in the Eurozone countries and one in the other countries. Many questions were raised and heated discussions followed not only after his speech but also in the workshops he gave.

During these few days a common agreement, integrating the opinion of Franck Biancheri and the people who do not want to split AEGEE in two parts could not be reached. However, his contribution was valuable anyway, as it encouraged many members to think about the future appearance of our organisation. As Mr. Biancheri said: "It is on you to change AEGEE!"

*Written by Stephanie Müller, AEGEE-Heidelberg*



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# FACING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN EUROPE



© Giuseppe Gianni

organised the European School of Entrepreneurship (ESE) in Catania in cooperation with the AEGEE-Academy, the YouthHub Catania Student Incubator and of course, AEGEE-Catania. The week long training in December 2011 was an amazing experience not only for the participants, but also for the organisers, and its success is demonstrated by the second cycle of the ESE which is going to be held in October 2012 in Santander.

In Catania the extensive training was perfect in order to learn how to start from an idea and make something bigger out of it. First drafting the business model step by step in an extremely visual and efficient way, following the example of Apple and other big and successful companies, learning about the different marketing, management, financial tools in order to make our business sustainable and in the end a presentation for the future possible investors.

The impact of the event can be measured by many things: first, due to the success, the second edition with an important topic, the sustainable entrepreneurship is organised for October 2012 and second, the change which can be perceived in the participants' lives and the multiplier effect resulted in those start ups and trainings which have been initiated this year.

Therefore, don't give up or lose your hope in finding a job. AEGEE is there to help you with many opportunities. Take them!

*Written by Beata Matuszka, AEGEE-Budapest*



© Giuseppe Gianni

**Youth unemployment** is one of the warning signs of the severe crisis in Europe. The European Union Youth Report which was published in September 2012 calls for youth employment to be one of the top priorities, but what if – despite all the workplaces creating policies by different governments – you are still not employed?

Then be creative, use or improve your entrepreneurial skills (not surprisingly, being a member of a youth association like AEGEE can help you to work on them) and be self-employed! Also not surprisingly, one of the eight policy areas (so-called fields of actions) of the European Union Youth Strategy for the 2010-2018 period is employment and entrepreneurship.

AEGEE was always good in reacting or reflecting on the most important issues in Europe or the world (it is enough to mention for instance the "Rio+20" Conference), and this time it was not different either: the "Youth Unemployment"- project showed that we take this problem seriously and not only because we are also affected.

During the past few years they organised many Employment Action Days, Youth for Employment events and an exchange in Lyon in cooperation with the Higher Education Days project and AEGEE-Lyon.

Moreover, being loyal to one of their objectives which is empowering youth to set up enterprises – they also

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS: WHEN IT IS TIME TO EMPOWER OUR IDEAS

While performing my work for the Dutch government I realised how much being a member of the Comité Directeur was similar to a "European Public Affairs School" for me! Allow me to explain:

Most members of AEGEE are aware of the fact that from the head office in Brussels the Comité Directeur of AEGEE-Europe coordinates the administrative part of pan-European projects. However the European Board of Directors has a double function: it also spreads out the voice of AEGEE.

Every year, members of AEGEE organise hundreds of innovative projects and events on thematic issues like higher education, active citizenship, peace & stability and cultural exchange. Some events are for fun, but more often activities are being organised when young people experience obstacles and feel the need to contribute to a solution. After all, it is their future which is at stake.

From Brussels, the Projects Director looks for thematic input by attending meetings at the European Policy Centre. Furthermore, he or she approaches suitable partners in order to establish a project coalition. While developing "Education Unlimited", NGOs such as BEST, IFMSA, ELSA and ESN ensured their participation, as well as the UNESCO, the European Commissioner for Multilingualism and members of the European Parliament. The Projects Director is a liaison between the different working groups, project teams and Brussels' based actors.

AEGEE events have impressive results: ideas on how to include non-formal education in an academic curriculum, how to establish mutual understanding and cooperation between citizens of countries in conflict areas (e.g. Armenia and Turkey), a vision on how to reach the Millennium Development Goals, or the belief that the best tool for European integration are exchange programmes like Erasmus, Tempus and AEGEE's Summer Universities. It is this vision of AEGEE which can be spread out with the help of press releases, power points, videos, twitter messages and result booklets.

And now the secret why the head office is in Brussels: With the prepared public relation tools the President



© Johan Haggman

and his team perform their Public Affairs role: they talk with European Commissioners, catch up with members of the European Parliament, or attend a conference with ambassadors in the prestigious Palace d'Egmont while advocating AEGEE's positions. It gives AEGEE its own place in the "EU Bubble".

Besides contributing to Green Papers -the starting phase of European Union legislation-, I experienced that staff of the European Commission approached me in order to establish ad hoc an expert group as they were in need of anecdotes of young travellers who experienced obstacles when travelling in the neighbouring countries of the European Union. Having built credit among the European Commission, I took the chance to convene an IFISO stakeholders meeting, to demand a decrease in bureaucracy for European grants. With 20 NGOs at our side we succeeded. And with this autodidact Public Affairs experience I continued my career at EurActiv and the Dutch government.

*Written by Theijs van Welij,  
served the Comité Directeur in 2005-2007,  
first as Projects Director and later as President.*

# THE AEGEEAN MAGAZINE - A STORY OF TRUE SUCCESS

# THE AEGEEAN

AEGEE'S ONLINE MAGAZINE

It was nearly a year ago when the Public Relations Committee (PRC) had the idea to create AEGEE's own magazine, with the aim to strengthen the internal communication within AEGEE.

Today more than 20 people are working in the team as editors, journalists, proofreaders, designers and one IT specialist coming from all across the Network. They are all unified by the wish to inform you about the thematic development of AEGEE, cultural events, activities and announcements in the Network, interviews and many more articles also connected to AEGEE's external appearance.

Why is this magazine a story of success? It is thanks to the people in the team, who are not only willing to contribute to topics by sending, reading and commenting extensively on them which amounts to roughly 30 emails being produced per day, but rather because everyone in the team is making suggestions on their

own topics, or taking the initiative like the creation of The AEGEEan Choice Awards, introduced at the Spring Agora Enschede 2012. The positive reaction which the awards received within the Network has meant that they will be held annually at every Spring Agora.

Furthermore, after only working online, the first personal meeting of The AEGEEan team took place in the middle of January 2012 in Brussels where we, with the help of some human resource techniques and the advice of Gunnar Erth, managed to structure our work and smoothed the way for the next half a year.

Out of nothing this magazine was created, the way was experimental at the beginning, though with every month a routine started. Now I can proudly say this is the best team I have had the privilege to work with.

*Written by Stephanie Müller, Editor-in-Chief of  
The AEGEEan & member of AEGEE-Heidelberg*

## ERASMUS FOR ALL – ALL FOR ERASMUS?

*When a political decision can seriously affect idealism and finances of youth in Europe*

Within the next multi-annual financial framework for the period 2014 – 2020, the European Union has foreseen new ways for supporting youth activities.

In this framework, the European Commission proposed on the 23rd of November 2011 a new programme, which, once approved, will take over the current Youth In Action programme for the period 2014 - 2020. "Erasmus for All" has been presented as the programme, which will deal with education, training, youth and sport.

This programme foresees a great increase of the budget (compared with all the current programmes together) and a simplification of the mobility programmes for students, aiming at reducing bureaucracy and simplifying the procedures. However, this programme surprised quite a lot the civil society organisations for the lack of some key points of the previous programme that seem to be missing in the current shape – for example, the focus on employability rather than active citizenship, the lack of focus on non-formal education, and a clear new strategy on the financial side.

During several stakeholders meetings, the European Commission ensured that those key points will be added in the actuating phase of the programme, with a clear dissatisfaction on the side of civil society organisations, relying on the support of the European Union for carrying on initiatives with a wider European impact, and the European Parliament, where the Education and Culture Committee (CULT) has expressed already several times the weak points of the programme.

From a closer point of view, the programme is innovative in its shape: the European Commission presented the programme defining the general legal framework and the aims of the programme, and together with it presented a communication with a possible reading of the programme.

However, with a bit of "mistrust" it is possible to see how the communication does not represent a binding document, but only a suggestion on a possible use of the framework, therefore it is subject to any change without prior notice. And, in this context AEGEE-Europe



has highlighted several times how, in the regulatory documents, there is no financial differentiation per sectors, and there is a clear lack of focus on active citizenship in favour of a more pragmatic labour market approach.

On this point, civil society organisations in Europe have pointed out how their existence is linked not (only) to an employability logic, but (mostly) to enforce, highlight and support an active European citizenship, as clear focus of the European Institutions in the past, leading more and more people to a closer and comprehensive idea of Europe. To paraphrase the words of an important Italian politician who lived in the 19th century, "we created Europe, we need now to create Europeans", and in this direction most of the European organisations, including AEGEE-Europe, focused their efforts and created new projects.

The financial aspect of the programme, as already mentioned, foresees a significant increase of the budget compared to the current situation. However, the current shape of the programme proposed does not foresee any distinction among the key-sectors of the programme (besides sport, for which there is a separate chapter): therefore, besides a suggested budget in the communication, there are no rules about the future allocations of the funds, with the possible risk that money will be allocated at once for different sectors,



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and different stakeholders will apply at the same time for totally different aims, with a clear confusion about the allocation rules (for example, one sector might be privileged to the others).

Another key point, maybe the one which got the clearest visibility, is the new scheme for funding opportunity for European organisations: considering that the past experience created a circuit of organisations funded just because of their existence, without any clear benefit for the civil society they represented. Therefore, the new programme, as presented by the European Commission, presents a scheme according to which organisations will not receive funding for their existence: the “operating grants” (as the Youth In Action measure 4.1, that contributes significantly to the budget of AEGEE-Europe) will be, in case the new programme will be approved without amendments, substituted by a new regime for which only projects and not organisations will be funded.

This new system, according to the plans of the European Commission, would ensure that every single cent spent is effectively contributing to impact the society. The idea is to fund fewer projects with the highest outreach, to ensure a proper cost-effectiveness of the programme. On this point there has been the highest amount of debates with the European Institutions. AEGEE-Europe, among others, has pointed out several

times how this scheme is not cost-effective, considering that it doesn't matter how big a project can be, it will never manage to get the same outreach as the organisation that organises several projects per year including the one funded.

Therefore the new rationale, combined with the above-mentioned focus on employability, creates a clear fear that in the following years only projects related to the labour market will be funded, and pan-European organisations might disappear. From a financial analysis point of view this would also be the destiny of AEGEE-Europe.

Since the programme has been proposed, AEGEE-Europe started a two-fold campaign, with the aim to inform its members and its outreach, and to lobby for including better conditions in the programme. In this regard, AEGEE-Europe had the possibility to work from close with the European Movement International, the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) and the European Youth Forum (YFJ). Being member of both platforms, AEGEE actively participated in debates and contributed to create a common position, which would safeguard the interests of the association. The EUCIS-LLL and YFJ even created a coalition, of which AEGEE is member, to lobby together.

The current stage is still unclear. The CULT Committee is currently working on the programme, and in September the report will be published. In the meantime, few leaks seem to confirm that the financial aspect of the programme will be changed and the focus re-shaped. At the same time, the European Council is considering a re-shape of the programme with a different financial provision.

Hard time might arrive for AEGEE-Europe, and, in general, for European organisations, in case the programme might remain in the current shape. However, considering the work done so far and all the actors involved in the process, there are serious hopes that the future will be brighter.

*Written by Alfredo Sellitti,  
President of AEGEE-Europe from September 2011 till  
April 2012 & member of AEGEE-Salerno*

# NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCILS AND THEIR CHANCE TO TAKE PART IN POLICY MAKING

The Spanish National Youth Council (Consejo de la Juventud de España – CJE) is the national platform composed by youth organisations in Spain. It was created in 1983 bringing together Regional Youth Councils and youth NGOs working inside of the country. It strives to involve the Spanish youth in the development of the political, economical, cultural and social sectors of the country, giving young people a voice in the policies of the country.

Currently it consists of more than 80 member organisations.

In 2011, AEGEE got the opportunity to join the CJE. As AEGEE has no national level it was a bit complicated at the beginning, but after several meetings with the board of the council, we reached an agreement, and currently AEGEE is member through its Network Commissioner responsible of the area, which was made possible by Luis Alvarado Martínez's team (Tribulation 4.0).

Regardless of not having a national level, the Spanish locals have had the chance to get involved in the initiatives of the council. The fact that members of AEGEE are very international and involved in European affairs is something quite hard to find on the national, regional and local participation structures among young people in Spain.

That's why the involvement of AEGEE has also been an advance for the Spanish Council in international and European matters, as well as very enriching for the education and training of our members.

Among the initiatives where AEGEEans have participated there was a training course about the Youth in Action Program by the Council and Spanish National Agency giving us insights of application writing, development of projects, etc.

AEGEEans also participated and co-organised a National Education Forum at the Canary Islands, bringing together youth representatives and members of the Ministry of Education of Spain to discuss educational policies. An AEGEE member represented Spain in the Structured Dialogue process by attending the European Union Youth Conference of the Danish Presidency as part of the Spanish Delegation.



We have also been actively involved in the Youth Unemployment Forum trying to contribute to solutions from a European perspective. The forum strives to help reducing the highest youth unemployment rate in Europe, which is currently in Spain.

We were also present in the National Consultations of the Structured Dialogue and in the Youth Emancipation and Housing Forum, giving insights and feedback to institutions in form of policy papers about the difficulties young people face when it comes to emancipation.

Last but not least, our members have been selected to be part of the International Relations Committee of the Council as well as of the Youth in Action Expert Group.

The CJE and its structures are very useful for young people because they have the possibility to be part of the decision making process by drafting the policies which are implemented in society and which affect each and every one of us directly. It is a very good platform to reach the politicians and the policy makers for making them understand what young people really want. So don't miss this chance! Contact your National Youth Council or Youth Participation Platform!

*Written by Luis Alvarado Martínez, Corporate Relations Officer of the Comité Directeur March-April 2012, External Relations Director from May-August 2012 & member of AEGEE-Las Palmas*



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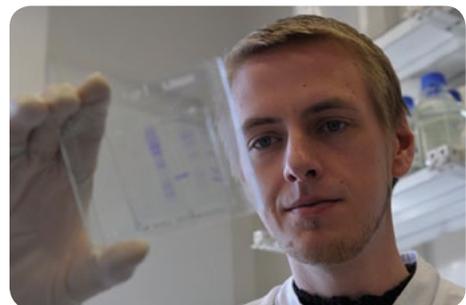
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- It offers numerous Master and PhD programmes in all disciplines, some 50 of which are **taught in English**.



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- **A student-friendly town:** Göttingen is a vibrant university town with moderate costs of living. You will enjoy its student-friendly environment, where 25% of the population are students.



# STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

## - AND WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR AEGEE -



The **Structured Dialogue** is a platform for young people and policy makers to discuss topics regarding the European youth policy at national and European level. Furthermore, it is a tool to ensure that youth policy meets the needs and expectations of young people across Europe.

It aims to involve a diverse range of young people and youth organisations in working together with policy makers for the purpose of joint decision making. Therefore, within the Structured Dialogue all young people in Europe have the possibility to express their opinions and participate in the development of policy making.

Every six months one of the 27 member states takes over the presidency of the European Union (EU). At the end of each presidency, which lasts six months, the EU Youth Conference of such presidency happens.

At the EU Youth Conference national youth delegates, policy makers from member states, the European Youth Forum and the European Commission meet to draft a final document, which will be the recommendation that the current presidency will send to national governments and to the European Commission.

The first trio of EU presidencies was in Spain, Belgium and Hungary in 2010. The second trio comprises of Poland, Denmark and Cyprus until 31st December 2012. The whole trio covers a topic and each of the presiden-

cies in the trio covers a sub topic too. The last Youth Conference took place in Sorø, Denmark from 18 - 21st March 2012. At this Conference, I had the opportunity to be a delegate for the Spanish Youth Council and advocated for my country as National Youth Representative. The overall topic for the second trio of the Structured Dialogue was „Participation of Young People in Democratic Processes“, and the sub topic of the Danish presidency was „Youth Participation“.

For a weekend long, I as a member of the Spanish Delegation (composed by three youth delegates and three politicians) took part in drafting recommendations to the member states and the commissions on the following topics: European elections, lowering the voting age, a new programme on the education and youth field, the role of new media aiming to make young people participate more in society and democratic processes, as well as the topic participation and innovation which aims to support youth entrepreneurship.

It was an amazing experience to be a part of this conference drafting the recommendations on behalf of the youth of Europe. From my own belief it is very important for AEGEE members to get involved in these kind of policy making processes, either by joining your National Youth Council and participating at platforms in your countries, or at the same time by lobbying to get international youth NGOs like AEGEE directly involved through further participation of our members in the EU Youth Conferences.

The outcomes of these conferences represent the general opinion of young people in Europe. Personally it was very enriching to be part of such a conference and I can only recommend every AEGEEan not to hesitate to be a representative. The next European Union Youth Conference will be held in Cyprus from 11-13th September 2012, where AEGEE-Europe will be represented by Mathieu Soete.

If you would like to be involved please check the European Youth Portal online and search for your national working group.

Let's make the voice of the European youth heard!

*Written by Luis Alvarado Martínez, Spanish National Youth Delegate & member of AEGEE- Las Palmas*

# MODEL EUROPEAN UNION

## - WHAT UNIVERSITIES CAN NOT TEACH -



© Michael Swarczak

When we asked the participants of Model European Union Mainz (MEUM) 2011, many told us that they had learned things during the event that they have never been taught by their university programmes before. One of the aims of MEUM is to provide a better understanding of the European Union without lecturing participants.

MEUM offered a unique experience for 70 enthusiastic Europeans to simulate the European decision-making process. The simulation aimed at being as realistic as possible, this was dependent on the effort of the participants who took on the roles of members of the European Parliament, EU-Council-Ministers or journalists. Their work started weeks before the simulation when they read in the two legislative proposals and prepared for their roles. During the simulation, MEPs and Ministers discussed the proposals, while journalists followed the discussions.

In the course of the simulation participants developed skills to represent a political position. From day to day it was noticeable how most of the participants got more and more self-confident in representing their roles.

*Written by Benjamin Doll, AEGEE-Mainz-Wiesbaden*

On 22nd October 2011 AEGEE-Yerevan organised the "Model European Union 2011" (MEU 2011). Around 35 Armenian students were selected to participate in the event. The aim of the conference was to stimulate civic activism and improve EU related knowledge among young people. The EU Delegation to Armenia covered the costs of the event.

During the conference the participants undertook the roles of heads of states and governments of the 27 EU Member States as well as the EU high-level officials. They discussed the possible future enlargement of the union. The participants made their decisions in the context of the current political forces and pressures within the EU member states, taking into account the national interests of the states they were representing.

Mr. Onno Simons, the Head of the Political, Economic, Press and Information Section of the EU Delegation to Armenia, who participated in the official opening and closing ceremony of the conference, emphasised in his welcoming speech the importance of organising such kind of events.

At the end of the conference all the participants were awarded with certificates of honour. The event was organised in Armenia for the first time and it is planned to be repeated next year.

*Written by Armenak Minasyants, AEGEE-Yerevan*

## FIGHTING FOR A VISA FREE EUROPE

## RESHAPING PERSPECTIVES IN EUROPE



The **Visa Freedom Working Group** has been fighting harder than ever before for bringing down borders and making Europe open for all members of AEGEE.

The question of visas was greatly discussed in connection to this year's Agorae. Even though the visa experience of AEGEE-Skopje for their Autumn Agora 2011 was not the most positive one, the organizers of the Spring Agora 2012 in Enschede did their best to learn from the past and facilitate the visa procedures for their participants smoothly. This was done with the help of the newly introduced informational database created by the VFWG. With it, both organizers and participants were able to get many questions answered. The database also came in handy for all the international events like the Summer University (SU) Project.

During the Summer Universities 2012, the VFWG took part in the themed SU by AEGEE-Paris and the SU by AEGEE-Budapest jointly organised with AEGEE-Praha. The VFWG has also been working much on its self-image. Apart from introducing a new logo, the format of the working group was changed with regards to their approved proposal at the Agora Skopje. A clear structure was introduced and persons responsible were appointed. The VFWG is also planning to introduce visa responsible persons on the local level, so that everywhere people can find the help they need.

*Written by Olga Volovyk, AEGEE-Kyiv*

During the last year the International Politics Working Group (IPWG) has developed several pan-European initiatives in various corners of Europe.

Firstly, in Yerevan the Model European Union Youth Conference has been successfully implemented. Afterwards, the WG has strengthened its partnership with AEGEE-Utrecht by organising „IPWG Goes for The Hague“ in March 2012. The participants got the unique opportunity to visit the International Criminal Court of Justice.

Secondly, the WG has established a cooperation with AEGEE-Budapest and jointly organised two big events including one local debate dedicated to the US Presidential Elections. The second initiative „Study trips and visits“ allowed AEGEE members to visit international political institutions like the United Nations headquarters in Vienna.

In addition, one of the board members participated at a Regional Training Course organised by AEGEE-Moscow. He gave three presentations on current European Union external and enlargement policies. Finally, the board of the IPWG has successfully implemented internal reforms, starting from the creation of a new logo and setting up a new working format. Furthermore, international political issues have been discussed and were published as articles on the WG's blog and in The AEGEEan magazine.

*Written by Armenak Minasyants, AEGEE-Yerevan*

## USING SPORTS IN AEGEE

The Sports Working Group (SWG) proves the power of the mailing lists within the AEGEE Network. AEGEE-København member Patricia Juhl Anthony was preparing for a conference in the capital of Denmark on the topic of sports and issued an open call to the Network. AEGEE-Kyiv member Hakan Unal Jr. responded with sports photos from the AEGEE- Çanakkale Summer University and information about the development of a Sports Working Group.

Things picked up in pace immediately, building the Working Group from the ground making it ready for the Spring Agora Enschede 2012. The Working Group was presented and approved by the delegates. From day one committed AEGEE members with an interest in sports reached out to members and the numbers of SWG members grew with a rapid pace. Some are interested in volunteering at international sport events and how this can help with the organisation of AEGEE events whereas others are interested in how sports can be implemented in non-formal education.

What they all have in common is the interest in sports, and that interest is well-needed to achieve future goals such as organisation of AEGEE Olympiads and implementing sports in a greater way in Summer Universities and more.

*Written by Patricia Juhl Anthony, AEGEE-København*

## THE RE-ERECTION OF THE HRWG

On the 5th of May 2012 the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) was ratified at the Spring Agora Enschede. The HRWG has been in AEGEE since 1994, and in 1996 it was registered as an AEGEE-Working Group. They have been really active for over fifteen years, but at some point they deregistered.

Then, at Spring Agora Alicante 2011, the Social Inclusion topic was chosen to be a flagship topic, but unfortunately this did not work out the way everybody hoped. The topic was too big for a project, and narrowing it down demotivated the members. After long meetings, the idea of a Working Group came up. As soon as this decision was taken we saw the mailing list flourishing again. Along the way we came up with ideas, topics, and the enthusiasm kept on growing.

It took some effort, but now we can say that we are a real, active and very much alive WG in AEGEE. Right now we are occupied with the organisation of a pre-event for Agora-Budapest. Furthermore we are preparing a database with movies to help antennae that want to have activities under the theme of human rights, planning for discussion rounds, and writing a lot of articles on these topics.

The decision of re-establishing this working group has proved to be a really good one. AEGEE is not ready to leave the topic of human rights behind.

*Written by Maria Arends, AEGEE-Groningen*



# WE GRADUATE FROM UNIVERSITIES - BUT WE LEARN IN AEGEE

## Bezuinigen en Beboeten in het Onderwijs

**Panelleden:** Professor Barkhuysen (UL)  
Anne-Wil Lucas (VVD)  
Max Patelski (ISO)

**Voorzitter:** Jaap van Rijn van Alkemade (UL)

**15** Dinsdag  
Mei

**KOG B041**  
Inloop: 20h



**iv GROTIUS**

provided by Szabina Hellinger

Have you ever wondered how the skills you learn in AEGEE can help your future perspectives, career-wise?

AEGEE-Lyon, AEGEE-Sofia and AEGEE-Tiranë in cooperation with the International Centre for Peace and Integration (IPCI) were successful in tackling this issue during their week-long event, from 20th till 26th May 2012, "Getting employed - the non-formal way".

The focal initiative of this youth exchange was not only the exploration of possibilities on improving interpersonal and professional skills by doing voluntary work, but the participants were also given a valuable insight on each other's cultural backgrounds. Coming from four different locations of Europe, participants of various backgrounds and thought-provoking ideas had arrived from France, Georgia, Albania and Bulgaria.

A series of thematic workshops, training sessions and simulations were carried out successfully, focusing on graspable effects of working within several Non-Go-

vernmental Organisations. During their case studies on comparing different societal grounds for volunteering, various aspects were highlighted and elaborated on, gradually turning the lively discussions into a coherent line of thought and one ultimate conclusion; there are only benefits in volunteering.

By finding the time, the energy and the willingness to take up youth activism as an extracurricular activity, one has the liberty of shaping European level processes at their initial phase, broadening their horizons in a unique way and - along the process - enhancing their knowledge and opportunities by doing so. The better the results from these beneficiary factors, the more recognition non-formal education will get in due time. It is not the amount of studying material read, but our own ideas coming to life that matter.

*Written by Szabina Hellinger, AEGEE-Budapest*

# "WHERE DOES EUROPE END?" – THE FINAL CONFERENCE –

It's not easy to write about the beginning when the end has come. But somehow it seems like yesterday – and not three years ago – that we, seven young Europeans, started this journey.

Our goal was to discover how different are peoples' perceptions of the physical and ideological borders of Europe. For that, we conceived a series of international events. Common for all the events, was the questionnaire which our participants asked people to fill in during the street actions. Distinctive, however, was the thematic focus that changed from one event to another. Our intent? To cover as many interesting topics as possible. Our strategy? To hold these events in places relevant for the topic chosen: WDEE Kick-off Conference (Koszeg, Hungary 2009), "EU and Enlargement" (Izmir, Turkey 2010), "Multilingualism" (Ogre, Latvia 2010), "Regionalism in Europe" (Leon, Spain 2010), "Human Rights" (Lund, Sweden 2011), "History and Colonialism" (Las Palmas, Spain 2011), "Multiculturalism" (Munich, Germany 2012) and the Final WDEE Conference (Utrecht, The Netherlands 2012).

## THE CLOSING CONFERENCE

Throughout the project we imagined the final conference in many ways and in all scenarios, Brussels was the place for it. Some people consciously save the best things for last and without actually wanting, we did so too. AEGEE-Utrecht organised the closing conference and proved that we could not have made a better decision. The event, which took place in May, gathered almost forty European students along with an important number of guest speakers such as university professors, local and European politicians, public persons, business men, and photographers.

We never actually wanted to find an answer to the question of "Where Does Europe End?", but rather to show the diversity in opinions and the multitude of possible answer this question receives. Following the same idea the final conference focused on four group sessions, which tackled some of the most important European topics nowadays: the European Union enlargement, the rise of nationalism in Europe, illegal Immi-



gration in Europe and the European economic crisis. During the last day, a final debate took place in which the results of the work in the group sessions were presented, resulting in a European map of challenges with problems and possible solutions to them.

## FINAL WORDS

It was not an easy task to make this project possible. Nevertheless, we believe that WDEE was a real success for AEGEE, and that, not only because we managed to organise eight international events with a significant impact on participants but also because we triggered the interest of many more people, students and professionals, who became more aware of this topic.

For us, the project team, WDEE was a life-changing experience, which enriched us personally and professionally and showed the great added value which volunteerism brought to our lives.

When we started to work for this project, we wanted to give AEGEE something back for everything we had already received, but without noticing it, we ended up receiving more.

*Written by Lavinea Manea, External Relations Responsible of the WDEE project & member of AEGEE-București*

# THE EUROPEAN AND ARAB YOUTH COOPERATION



In 2010 a successful EuroArab case study trip was organised by the team of the “Beyond Europe” flagship project which was held in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. It gathered European and Arab youth in order to discuss and tackle common challenges, namely social inequality, gender inequality, immigration and integration. It turned out to be just the beginning of the EuroArab adventure...

In 2011 the “Shift-Network Euro-Arab” youth initiative from Egypt contacted AEGEE and a great partnership was established. Two case study trips were organised in the Media & Culture theme - one in Alexandria (Egypt) and one in Kraków (Poland). The discussions were focused on two major topics. The first one was about how media often creates false images about people and their cultures. Thus, the aim of the project was to learn the truth about the values, traditions and habits of people coming from Europe and the Arab region. A lot of stereotypes were broken. The second topic was about the social media, which had a great influence on the Arab Spring. They went from the digital world to the streets, demonstrated and called for social justice that the Arab countries have been lacking. Until now three dictators have been toppled - in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. A big challenge awaits the Arab youth, which is to implement democracy and build a civil society.

The uprisings expanded to Europe - youth from the old continent got inspired by Arabs and also decided to go out to the streets and have their voices heard. Both worlds are interdependent in so many aspects and by exchanging our experiences, best practices and ideas, we can become more innovative and come up with new solutions that could improve both regions. In May 2012 “Shift” organized a “EuroArab Youth Forum” on sustainable development, with AEGEE-Kraków being an official partner. So many new initiatives were born since then. One of them is the EuroArab project that is now being launched by AEGEE-Europe.

In the AEGEE Euro - Arab Project the main issue addressed is the gap between the European and the Arab youth. We, European and Arab youth, have to strengthen our relationship and tackle global challenges so that we can all live peacefully together. Actions need to be taken!

We, the European and Arab youth, have to fight against prejudices, racism, xenophobia and discrimination at any level and fight for tolerance and solidarity in both regions towards one another. Nobody was born with hatred and intolerance, but we created it and therefore it is our duty to destroy it.

We, the Europeans and Arab youth, have to build up bridges between us and make it solid and stable. We want to achieve it by connecting to each other through intercultural dialogue, interactive exchange of ideas and sharing space. To make it all real, we will follow AEGEE’s four main fields of action and the strategic plan set for the period 2011 - 2014.

We will translate the above words into practice by realising training courses, exchange programs, policy making seminars, and a summer university. Through such activities, we will build and strengthen young people’s capacity to know how to become active citizens in our society. Most importantly, we are going to create an online EuroArab youth platform so as to connect all young people in both regions. The online platform is to host a great number of discussions on various topics.

*Let’s start creating a better world together!*

*Written by Diana Lesko, AEGEE-Debrecen, and Sandra Oborska, AEGEE-Kraków*

# THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

## - A YEAR OF GREAT EFFORTS, A YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENTS -

A lot of time has passed since the moment when the Eastern Partnership Project (EaP Project) started, when the first steps were made, AEGEE members got to know what this project is about and how to cooperate with the project team. So, what was done so far? Which are the results of EaP Project's activities?

The first big announcement about the project was during the Autumn Agora Skopje 2011, where the project's members held a workshop about the Eastern Partnership and had quite an entertaining puzzle game at the Agora Fair.

Meanwhile special activities to attract antennas were initiated - the Eastern Partnership Action Days. During autumn 2011 three events were organised in Budapest, Passau and Tbilisi. The main aim of the events was to make young people aware of the problems their friends have to face in the Eastern Partnership countries.

In November 2011 the EaP Project was officially included into the EaP Civil Society Forum, which is at the moment the most important platform for changes in the partner countries. This participation allows the project to contact various funds and NGO representatives, and to influence the adopting of important decisions by voting.

The project team is very active and participates in various AEGEE meetings (LTCs, RTCs, NWMs, etc.) in order to inform people about the aims and problems of the EaP region. The EaP gave workshops or lectures during the following events: NWM Tbilisi (Dec.2011), NWM Gdansk (Oct.2011), EBM Izmir 2012, Skiweek Event Plzen, NWM Hamburg, NWM Napoli and others.

The Youth Mobility Action Day in Yerevan held in February 2012 was a good start of EaP Project actions, where around 150 students gathered to find out more about opportunities to get education through such a programme as Erasmus Mundus.

In 2012 the Eastern Partnership Action Days co-organised a conference with other NGOs and think-tanks in Prague, were present at the culture festival "Wybieram Wschód!" in Poznan, as well as participated at a discussion round about conflicts in the Caucasus region in Groningen and at a cultural diversity evening in Passau.

The EaP Action Day conference in Prague was organized with the support of the Institute for European Policy Europeum and the European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic. The event has gathered different NGO representatives for whom the Eastern Partnership policy is important. During the conference a survey about the awareness and interest in cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries was held. The results showed that the themes democracy and youth were the preferred topics for mutual projects. It was commonly agreed that the most important platform of cooperation is civil society and its development. Main obstacles in it are the visa regime, the lack of information about the existing opportunities, the unawareness and the passive position of people.

Wybieram Wschód! ("I choose the East!") was a festival devoted to the socio-economic situation and culture in member countries of the Eastern Partnership Project. During two days there was conducted a panel discussion concerning the significance of the Eastern Partnership Project for European Union (EU)-member countries, the current socio-political situation in Belarus and the role of the Eastern Partnership in social discourse as well as a dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The EaP Action Day in Passau devoted to Georgia was organised within the framework of AEGEE-Passau lobbying for the programme "Education for Democracy" in order to support the students from conflict regions and bring them in contact with a democratic society. The University of Passau offers annually scholarships to two students from Georgia and in response the Georgian exchange students organised a cultural evening for AEGEE members this year. During the event the participants learned something about the special Georgian alphabet, the Georgian language, history, current political situation, traditional costumes and dances, as well as about typical food and wines.

From 2011 until recently the Eastern Partnership Action Days gathered in total approximately 1500 participants.

The EaP Project was also present at the Spring Agora Enschede 2012. During the AEGEE and Study Fair, where all the Agora participants, university representatives and external guests have gathered, the project team



# Eastern Partnership

Project of AEGEE-Europe

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was actively informing about the aims and actions of the Eastern Partnership Project, promoting their goals with newsletters and leaflets, discussing the current situation of the EaP policy and further projects and cooperations.

The workshop "My problem is your problem" brought many people together for a heated discussion about the problems young people have in both EU and non-EU countries.

The EaP Project is strongly supported by Polish antennae. One of best examples of the connection between the EaP Project and antennae in Poland is the project "AEGEE z Sercem dla Gruzii", initiated by AEGEE-Poznań. It was an event which does not resemble to any other event organised within AEGEE. AEGEE-Poznań organised a concert of two bands – "Propaganda Dei" from Poland and "Making of a Man" from the United Kingdom - and a "Cookie Action" (volunteers from AEGEE and Serce dla Gruzji were selling cookies which were donated by a local bakery as a charity gift) in one event. Additionally, they held a panel discussion with volunteers, guests from Georgia and the local municipality.

Besides internal AEGEE activities the project team participated in a lot of external events, since the project's

aims correspond not only to AEGEE members' interests but to many young people in Europe and in the Eastern Partnership countries. Just to name a few events where the EaP Project team was present at: the Youth Conference on the Polish Presidency (Warsaw), the Youth Convention on Volunteering (Brussels), the EMI Civil Society Congress (Yerevan), the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (Poznań), the Salto-Youth Forum on Volunteering (Warsaw), the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Working Group ("People-to-people contacts").

Until now the Eastern Partnership Project has achieved a lot. It actively cooperates with externals, National Youth Councils, embassies and ministries of the Eastern Partnership countries, Civil Society Platforms and think-tanks, as well as groups of proactive young people and European Institutions.

The prompt reaction of the EaP members to changing political situations in the Eastern Partnership countries is the essential key factor that helps the EaP Project to be up-to-date. Respectively, this demand is the priority of the project team in all its future actions and plans.

*Written by Daryna Skryl, AEGEE-Dnipropetrovsk*

# FROM CAPE TOWN TO RIO DE JANEIRO

## A JOURNEY ON GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT WITH AEGEE

**Cape Town, South Africa**—A group of AEGEE members sit in the common room of the Riverview Lodge Hostel. It is the final day of the Beyond Europe Case Study Trip to South Africa, and after having toured the city and surrounding townships for two weeks, visiting development projects and discussing the social, environmental, and economical problems they encountered, they are preparing for the **follow-up** of the project. They have just spent most of their last morning together brainstorming about initiatives to continue working on the goal of the soon-to-be finished flagship project—“Empowering young people to contribute to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.” It was my first AEGEE event ever—but one that would have far-reaching consequences!

One of the ideas put forward was “an AEGEE pre-event to Rio+20”, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development coming up in June 2012. At that time—September 2010—few of us had heard of what was to become the largest conference in UN history. A first **Earth Summit** in 1992 had brought us a number of global agreements—such the Climate Change Convention—and the blueprint of action to ensure a sustainable future, Agenda 21.

**Progress** on the lofty promises made at the UN Conference on Environment and Development—the official name of Earth Summit 1992—had been generally weak in the almost 20 years since they had been made, and another **follow-up summit** was being prepared—aptly called **Rio+20**. Taking stock of the little progress made, renewing political commitment to making development more global and sustainable, tackling emerging issues, improving the structure and functioning of international institutions, and discussing a new model called the ‘green economy’—the agenda for this summit could not be blamed of lacking ambition.

Unfortunately, organising an AEGEE pre-event to inform, train, and prepare AEGEE members for the conference proved to be too time-consuming and



complex, and efforts were put into other projects and events. Other youth-led organisations around the world started preparing for Rio+20 though, and several AEGEE members—myself included—have been **representing our network** at their events in Estonia, Slovenia, Spain, and finally the Youth Blast in Brazil. Throughout this time, work within AEGEE continued on the MDGs as well, and a group of members prepared input for the Rio+20 negotiation document, voicing the concerns of European students and **calling for**—among others—support of both formal and non-formal education for sustainable development, a tax system to support rather than obstruct sustainability, and increased funding for not-for-profit scientific research.

**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**—Having prepared for almost a year, within and beyond AEGEE, I finally arrived in Rio at the beginning of June, ready for a month of negotiations and lobbying for youth priorities. The first ten days I spent co-organising the **Youth Blast**, the official Conference of Youth preparing almost 2,000 young people from over 100 countries for the events and negotiations to come, and even more important, bringing



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them together to forge partnerships for the work to be done beyond Rio+20.

The second part of the month was taken up by Prep-Com III, the final round of negotiations on the text before the arrival of Heads of State, ministers, and other high-level visitors. For three days (13-15th June 2012), I was sitting at the chair table, while around me the traditional Big 3—EU, US, and G77—took the lead for the last time, with the smaller players—e.g. Mexico, Canada, and Norway—chipping in from time to time. For the first time, I was able to take part in high-level international negotiations—literally from the first row—lobbying the key players with the priorities of global youth during the breaks and in between sessions. You quickly get the hang of it!

Towards the end of PrepCom III however, it became increasingly clear that those three days would not be enough to conclude the negotiations on the text. While Mr. Sha Zukang—the Secretary-General of the conference—had said at the beginning that these were the final “make or break” days, by the last night of the meeting, only 37% of the text had been agreed ad ref.

Unavoidably, around midnight, it was decided that **extra days** would be added, with the **Brazilian hosts** taking over the chair. Generally lauded as “land of Olympian diplomats” and “guardian of the multilateral system”, Brazil now had the complicated task of bringing delegations closer to each other, because nobody was looking forward to another summit debacle with late-night stand-offs like in Copenhagen.

Instead of allowing the negotiations to drag on into overtime, the Brazilians produced a new version of the negotiation text and steamrolled it through. Only taking on amendments if the proposer could show unanimity among delegations, they managed to **force a consensus** with just 24 hours until the summit. Good news for G77—who got most of their views into the text; not so good for EU, Norway, and Switzerland—whose president even cancelled her attendance of Rio+20 after their ambassador got insulted by the Brazilian chair for voicing strong objections against some particularly weak sections of the final text.

And then came finally the high-level summit, the **grand finale** of the Rio+20 process. In the opening statement of the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY)—the official youth constituency for the UNCSO process, through which AEGEE is also represented—we spelled out our ‘**red lines**’ that were not addressed in the outcome document: recognition of planetary boundaries which should not—but are increasingly being—crossed in order to secure a safe living space on our planet; a High Commissioner for Future Generations to provide a voice to those unheard in decision-making processes; and rights to food, water, and health. Red lines in the sand, it turned out, to be washed away by the successive waves of pre-written speech upon pre-written speech, delivered to an audience of barely listening colleagues and peers, with the odd member of civil society sitting in the dark back of the room, straining our ears—in vain mostly—for a spark of hope in the endless line of statements.

# FROM CAPE TOWN TO RIO DE JANEIRO

## PART II



That **spark of hope** came on the last day of the conference, in the person of EU Commissioner for the Environment Janez Potočnik. In a meeting with European youth, he shared our general feeling of disappointment in the outcome document, but at the same time pointed to some hopeful outlooks after Rio+20: 1. Reaching out to like-minded, more ambitious delegations—the so-called **paragraph allies**; 2. Gradually increasing global commitments, using sometimes unexpected or unintentional **ratchets** in the text; and 3. Realising at the **regional**—mostly European—level some of the concepts whose time apparently has not yet come at the global level, such as the Ombudsperson for Future Generations, or Official Youth Delegates.

One of the delegates at the conference exclaimed that “No summit can be reduced to a text!” While

this means that we have to give “them” some time to strengthen the legacy of Rio+20 with further negotiations and implementations of the text, it also means that “we” have to start thinking about how to **follow up** on Rio+20. How can we continue to engage youth in this never-ending path to a sustainable future?

The coming weeks and months will be central in developing our position towards Rio+20 and the **road to take** after it. AEGEE is not an environmental organisation, but with our active Environmental Working Group and the growing interest in sustainability among our members, there are nonetheless plenty of issues for us to tackle within this conference’s outcome. Besides, Rio+20 goes **beyond the environment**, and opens doors towards increasing youth participation in democratic processes, youth-led job creation, and non-formal education.

Many people have **inspired** me on this long road from Cape Town to Rio de Janeiro: Mario Giuseppe Varrenti and Christian Eichenmüller for giving myself and twenty other AEGEE-members the chance of reaching beyond our comfortable European bubble; Dóra Kocsis for introducing me to the many opportunities of AEGEE and her continuous work on the MDGs; Nicolò Wojewoda, the director of the Road to Rio+20 coalition of youth organisations for sustainability, of which AEGEE is also a member; and many more within AEGEE and the European Youth Forum. I hope to have been able to pass some of that inspiration with this piece and **challenge** every member of AEGEE to take up the important task of starting the follow-up of Rio+20.

Achieving a sustainable future is no easy task, but let us bear in mind the words of Nelson Mandela, one of The Elders providing moral guidance to the Rio+20 process: “It always seems impossible, until it is done.”

*Written by Mathieu Soete,  
Delegate to Rio+20 Conference, Speaker of the Environmental Working Group & member of AEGEE-Leuven*



# ECO-REHABILITATION OF MINING HERITAGE IN SARDINIA

The **ECO-Campus project** was organised by AEGEE-Cagliari in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Cagliari, Iglesias and Carbonia. From 26th May until 10th June 2012 we hosted 24 young people from all over Italy and Europe.

The ECO-Campus was conceived as a European multidisciplinary path of higher education on the topic of recovery and redevelopment of the industrial and archaeological mining heritage of the Sulcis-Iglesiente area, called "Multidisciplinary models and strategies of eco-rehabilitation of the Sulcis-Iglesias mining heritage".

- Naturalistic engineering as a mean for the environmental development, with the transformation of old dumps from accumulations of mining waste to artificial reshaped hills, and to be integrated into the urban structure;
- Protecting the landscape, conceived as a complex interrelationship between land, environment and man;
- Industrial archaeology as a mean to remember the important industrial past of Carbonia and re-propose the rich cultural heritage;

The training was an opportunity for the participants to



The participants worked hard, supported by many activities and excursions during which they had the opportunity to discover the culture and the natural beauties of Sardinia: history, architecture, industrial archaeology: in terms of their variety and diffusion, the mines in Sulcis-Iglesiente are some of the most significant and extensive of the past centuries in Italy. The Sardinian Geomineral Park is the first in the world to be recognised by the UNESCO.

The course had three main topics:

compare and test their skills under the supervision of world-renowned professors, including Prof. Luis Martins Placido (Ministério da Economics, and Inovação Desenvolvimento Ministry of Economics Portuguese), Architect Henry Buergl (President of the Conference of States Parties to the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe) and Prof. Francis Shoemaker (Landscape Architecture Departement at the University of Minnesota - USA).

*Written by AEGEE-Cagliari*

# GREENING AEGEE

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP IN 2012

In the chronicles of AEGEE, each Agora tends to be remembered for one specific event or topic. During Spring Agora Enschede 2012, the presence of founding father Franck Biancheri was on everyone's lips ... Autumn Agora Istanbul 2010 saw some of the longest late-night plenaries of our history ... At Spring Agora Leiden 2010, the people that managed to make it to the Netherlands after the outbreak of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano were warmly welcomed with cold tents and walking buses ... And Spring Agora Valletta 2007 in its turn, will always be remembered for the birth of the Environmental Working Group (EnWG).

Started by a small group of AEGEE-members concerned about the environment and our impact on it, in the five years of its existence it has grown to be one of the largest Working Groups in AEGEE, with 110 members and over 600 supporters. The EnWG has since developed into a body aiming to (1) Raise awareness on the state of our planet; (2) Discuss solutions we can achieve together; (3) Collect information on the sustainability of the Network; and (4) Support sustainable AEGEE events.

These aims are supported by a number of recurring events and activities. Each year around May, the European Day of Environment marks a period in which EnWG encourages Antennae around Europe to organise local events with a focus on certain environmental topics. During the long days of summer, EnWG works together with a lot of Summer University (SU) organisers, as part of the GreenSU project to introduce green themes at many SUs, with environmental and sustainability workshops, extra care for the SU's footprint, and other green activities.

Spreading the importance of sustainability as part of our daily lives, has also led to the idea of organising our (AEGEE) lives more eco-friendly. Starting with some statutory events, more and more organisers choose to plan their events with more care for the environment, while participants are looking for ways to reduce their impact when travelling all over Europe. Since the Spring Agora Alicante (2011), the Agora Travel Survey aims at giving an overview of how AEGEEans travel to European events, and promoting ways of green travelling.



Additionally, the EnWG conducted the Ecological footprint Survey at Spring Agora Enschede (2012), to find out how we can change our daily habits in order to further reduce our impact on the environment. To set an example, but also to help the Comité Directeur (CD) in decreasing their annual energy bill, a group of EnWG members met in Brussels during the Green Week at the end of May 2012, in order to "green audit" the CD house and look for possible ways to reduce energy and water wasting.

In a big Network with a large diversity of topics, it is not always easy to find interested members for each topic. Nonetheless, the Working Group has managed to involve more and more AEGEEans in its events and discussions.

EnWG has made further innovations to put their aims into the focus of AEGEE members by organising monthly social meetings for everyone interested in the current topics. Additionally the monthly Working Groups' Newsletter serves to share all activities of the EnWG with the AEGEE members.

All these efforts have resulted in many candidatures

# THE EARTH IS OUR BUSINESS

from EnWG members in the latest elections at Spring Agora Enschede, further increasing the importance attached to the environment at the European level; a growing demand for workshops at local events; and an increasing number of event organisers considering sustainability as an important factor in the planning of their activities. Furthermore, a number of AEGEEans have been following an online course on global environmental issues, and represented AEGEE at various **sustainability conferences**, including the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). At this last conference, AEGEE also co-organised an event called Beyond Rio+20, rallying youth for a sustainable future. For more on Rio+20, read *From Cape Town to Rio de Janeiro* (page 44)

Sustainability is always a work-in-progress, and we still have a **long way to go** before the work and events of AEGEE will have a zero impact on the environment. But the good news is that, five years after its birth in Valletta, the Environmental Working Group is still growing, and becoming more and more active!

*Written by Hans-Peter Bretz, AEGEE Aachen, and Mathieu Soete, AEGEE-Leuven & both members of the Environmental Working Group*



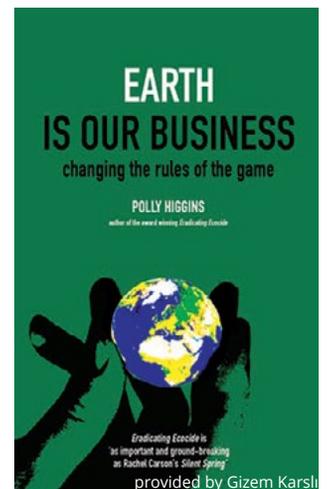
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*"Ecocide is the extensive damage to, destruction of or loss of ecosystem(s) of a given territory, whether by human agency or by other causes, to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been severely diminished."*

"The **Ecocide** is like a virulent Japanese knotweed" Polly Higgins says. It spreads out of control, sucking life out of all that comes in its way, strangling the life out of the very air we breathe. Ecocide is the unstoppable train of destruction created by us, which can only be stopped by us. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each and every inhabitant of the earth to take an action to stop ecocide in different levels. In the process of eradicating ecocide, a focus on creating awareness on individual and community level is essential. In other words, the legal duty of care that we seek with ecocide law proposal should be supported with grass-root activities. Such acts will bring together top down and bottom up approaches for the same aim and result in one peaceful earth.

In this regard, AEGEE will take its stand and fulfill its responsibilities. With the roundtable discussion on the ecocide law proposal that took place in Brussels right after the Rio+20, we just made the first base.

The roundtable discussion welcomed three prominent speakers: Polly Higgins, a barrister, author and creator of new laws to protect the earth, who presented the concepts of the Ecocide, Prof. Dr. Mustafa Akaydin, the Mayor of Antalya Metropolitan Region, who presented the sustainable development strategies of the city of Antalya together with the Solar House and Ecological Education Center project of the city and Emir Kir, State Secretary of the Brussels-capital region responsible for Urban Development and Environmental Maintenance Minister who talked about how the vast capital region is tackling the challenges of reducing greenhouse gas



# THE EARTH IS OUR BUSINESS

## PART II



emission by 30% till 2025. Mathieu Soete, Speaker of the Environmental Working Group of AEGEE-Europe, concluded the line of speakers. It was very well said by Mathieu that youth's role in the struggle for a sustainable future is underestimated, taking into account that the younger generation presents with itself as one of the most interconnected entities on the whole planet. Consequently, together with the speakers the representatives from various NGOs and the European Commission brought together different opinions and positions for a common interest; ensuring environmental protection on an ever more crowded planet.

Being aware of our responsibilities, AEGEE-Europe has made the following statement:

*Today, when Europe is standing at a critical moment in its history by virtue of economic struggles, we, the European Students' Forum, demand a Europe grounded on respect for the nature, human rights and economic justice.*

*Herein, deeply concerned with the unjust violation of ecosystems through human agency, we call for an action to pave the way for a green economy. In this regard, while declaring our responsibility, we will put our experience forward and support the European Citizens Initiative as a tool for participating directly in the development of European Union policies and calling on the European Commission to establish a legislative proposal on this matter; a law of ecocide.*

*In this process, while calling for a legislative proposal, AEGEE, a strong supporter and provider of non-formal education, will fulfill its responsibilities by training grass roots on sustainability and clean technologies and consequently bridge the gap between the grass root and top down approaches that are equally required.*

*Written by Gizem Karšli,  
Projects Director and from May-August 2012 also Vice-  
President of AEGEE-Europe & member of AEGEE-Ankara*

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- relevance
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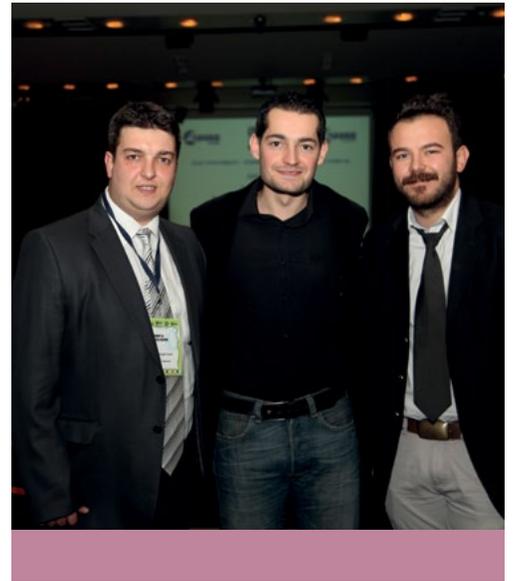
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# EVENTS CALENDAR

Events are in many people's opinion the part that shape AEGEE. It grants a big opportunity to all members of the Network to meet, get to know each other, have fun and learn, all at the same time. Being such a big Network, it creates the opportunity for many different creative individuals to fulfil their ideas together with their antenna, which in the end leads to events being organised around

Europe that fit to whatever interests all the different members of AEGEE may have. From Summer Universities in Bulgaria to Winter Universities in Italy, there are events gathering young Europeans every single month of the year. The next ten pages will take you to exotic locations such as Malta and Georgia as well as to the antennae placed in the North such as Ogre and Tallinn.

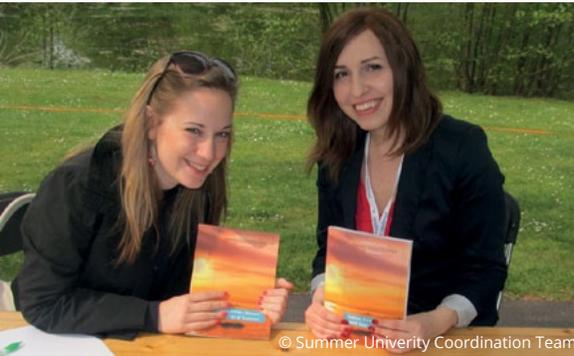




## THE SUMMER UNIVERSITY COORDINATION TEAM

## SUMMER UNIVERSITY IN CAGLIARI

## SEEKING FORTUNE IN SOFIA



© Summer University Coordination Team



© Emanuele Aini



© Petya Ivanova

In the term of the SUCT 2011 the team achieved a great success at the Spring Agora Enschede. All proposed changes of the general rules concerning the project were voted upon positively. This way, the new type of Summer University – Summer Course Plus was introduced.

Moreover, we already made some steps to establish a new coherent visual identity for the project. The Summer University booklet of 2012 and other promotional materials already had a new distinguished style and design and were available to the locals also in PDF format. The questionnaire about the new logo conducted among AEGEE members provided us with many interesting points to be further developed.

As we strive to make the best out of the project, we decided to ask all the organisers to prepare a video along with their participants concerning youth participation, life without AEGEE and student volunteerism or the vision of the European continent in 2030, ensuring that the longest-living project of AEGEE will keep developing.

*Written by Summer University  
Coordination Team*

Summer equals hot and sunny weather, making people seek the South, towards Italy, which is what AEGEE-Cagliari Summer University participants did. Organised by a cohesive team, this SU was successful in every manner with great participants from all over Europe who were welcomed with a party on the beach, where we danced barefoot on the seaside. Furthermore, these young European students got to attend a swimming pool party, eat pasta with the people of Masullas and its mayor, take part in long and interesting discussions, have lunch in the countryside and listen to an organiser reading entries to the Gossip Box in a special mix of Italian, English and Sardinian dialect. From Suit Up parties, to canoeing down Italian rivers and exploring the city through games, as well as swimming in the beautiful Mediterranean Sea, this SU provided laughter, memories and fun to the organisers and to the participants, who will remember this event forever when they continue travelling throughout Europe.

*Written by Emanuele Aini,  
AEGEE-Cagliari*

„For the fortunate man, all the countries are his homeland.“

Those are wise words of Erasmus of Rotterdam and even though they were spoken hundreds of years ago they sound more than relevant today.

At least for happy AEGEE members who had the great chance to “shake the summer and catch it in a shot,” because whoever comes to the Balkans, for sure, leaves a piece of his heart in this blessed place or with some of the great and enthusiastic organisers consisting of 90 % girls. The winning formula is equal to 22 participants, eight days, Sofia and Varna, crazy people, dedicated organisers, all-night parties, a number of workshops, photography lessons, dancing, hiking, trips, relaxation at the beach, a basic Cyrillic language course and a lot of AEGEE-spirit. This was the whirlwind of fun that managed to shake Bulgaria last summer and to leave fantastic memories with many of our new friends, who we hope to welcome soon again on the Balkans.

*Written by Liliya Buyuklikyska,  
AEGEE-Sofia*

## UP TO THE PALACE - FORUM OF DEMOCRACY -

## WHERE OLDIES MEET NEWBIES



© Frederic Renisch



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© Alexandres Huynh

### Can we still rescue Europe?

A group of AEGEEans tried to get an answer to this difficult question. Therefore they went to the castle of Hambach to one of the debates named "Hambacher Gespräche" known for talks with prominent personalities from society, politics and science. "The European Future" was the topic that experts from science and policy wanted to discuss.

Professors and politicians tried to explain the financial collapse, debt crisis and several aspects concerning this topic to non-experts of this field. In addition, they presented their possible solutions and discussed them with the other debaters and the audience.

After the official part of the discussion, the guests were invited to continue debating their point of view within smaller groups. Two wineries from the region presented selected local wines served with pretzels to give a smooth ending to this interesting event.

We were all grateful for getting a lot of inspiring ideas concerning Europe's future!

*Written by Anneke Guhn,  
AEGEE-Mannheim*

Informal talks at the Spring Network Meeting (NWM) Granada made the way for one of the most popular events organised in Spain last year which took place in a small, charming village called Mangiron near the Spanish capital Madrid.

These active AEGEE members wanted to organise a team-building oriented event to keep the motivation high after the end of the summer among their members, so that the ones who had been abroad for a Summer University (SU) had the opportunity to see their SU mates from the Network again. Furthermore, they wanted to create an event to give the opportunity to the boards to meet new members and try to make their AEGEE activity last beyond the Summer University.

AEGEE-Madrid knew the perfect place to organise such event and took the responsibility of organising a post-summer event that brought together Summer University first-timers and members who had not been accepted to a SU, as well as experienced AEGEEans.

Many experienced AEGEE members

from the Network were involved in the brainstorming process, building the event with the aim to activate new people in order to gain new board members.

Finally in September, AEGEE-Madrid hosted and divided 130 participants into teams representing the different "houses" under the unified theme of the book and television series "Game of Thrones". "Remove" became the name of the event in which AEGEE members competed against each other through games and fun, as well as were listening to interesting presentations such as the infamous "Where does Europe End?" presentation by former Project Manager Juan Sordo (AEGEE-Oviedo).

Friendships were built and numerous "regular" AEGEE members were turned active.

All in all it was a very successful event which will return in 2012. Next time the location has moved to the city of Valladolid, where the recently re-created antenna will try to repeat the success.

*Written by Patricia Juhl Anthony,  
AEGEE-København*

## VINTAGE CULTURAL ACTION DAY



©AEGEE-Tbilisi

## PASSING THROUGH SERBIA ON THE WAY TO THE AGORA



© Jüri Kirpu

## PREPARE YOUR OWN WORKSHOP WITH POLISH TRAINERS



© Marcin Starzak

In Georgia, the Cultural Action Day in October had to be related to vintage and it was on that day in October that AEGEE-Tbilisi confirmed their presence at a local vineyard where they were given clear instructions about how each grape had to be cut individually, while being careful not to bring any harm to the vine. Working hard on that hot day, these AEGEEans managed to keep helping each other out through songs, jokes and laughter. Although the work was demanding, it was interesting to learn something about winemaking. As a result, up to four tons of grapes were collected in boxes and put on the truck. Later, at the Supra (Georgian traditional table full of food and wine) prepared by the host family, the 15 volunteers learned that the economy made it impossible for the family to hire workers for the vintage.

"At that moment all 15 of us looked at each other amazed at the same time being proud of what we did. We thought that we went there to have fun – it turned out that we really made a difference."

*Written by Tika Kukhianidze,  
AEGEE-Tbilisi*

Belgrade, a city that never sleeps, prepared an unforgettable ride for all AEGEEans on their way to the Autumn Agora in Struga 2011!

They spent three days discovering Belgrade's bohemian soul and exploring culture and customs of Serbia. In only three days the participants explored the rivers of Belgrade on a cruise, as well as visited major city landmarks such as the very famous Kalemegdan Fortress, the largest Orthodox church in the Balkans St Sava Temple, the shopping street Knez Mihajlova and the bohemian quarter of Skadarlija.

They conducted experiments in the Nikola Tesla Museum and admired a variety of traditional Serbian outfits in the Ethnological Museum. Furthermore they attempted to learn the traditional dance of "kolo", a circle group dance where dancers hold each other's waists. They also enjoyed the spicy Serbian cuisine.

In the end, the goodbye was not just to the forty participants but also to almost two hundred AEGEE members who made a stop in Belgrade on their way to the Agora.

*Written by Sonja Buic,  
AEGEE-Beograd*

If you have ever tried to carry out training, you know how difficult it is to arouse interest in a group, particularly if you are a first-timer.

Therefore AEGEE-Poznań came up with the idea of organising the Polish Trainers' School – a project for students who want to develop their training skills.

During our event, 23 participants acquired skills concerning the preparation and evaluation of a workshop, learning how to stimulate a group, how to break the ice and motivate the participants and what to do in crisis situations.

Finally, they put into practice the acquired knowledge in their own short training sessions that were assessed by experts, who also gave useful tips and shared their experiences with the prospective trainers.

AEGEE-Poznań has been organising the Polish Trainers' School since 2009, going from targeting only AEGEE members, to enabling Polish students in 2011 to participate, and the successful event is returning in 2012 as well.

*Written by Marta Pszczółkowska and  
Milena Bogielczyk, AEGEE-Poznań*

THE COLOURS OF  
LANGUAGESCONSEJO JUVENTUD DE  
ESPAÑA VISIT THE  
CANARY ISLANDSMAKING BUSINESS  
REALITY

© Diana Ondža



© Luis Alvarado Martínez



© AEGEE-Kyiv

In November 2011, AEGEE-Riga with a motto "Speak mottled!" (Runā raibi!) organised its 10th European Day of Languages.

During the three days, with 12 different language lessons and with around 200 attendants, we were speaking Turkish, Danish, Icelandic, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, Norwegian, Lithuanian, German, Georgian, Latgalian (dialect in Latvia) languages and expressing ourselves in sign language. The leaders of the lessons had different backgrounds, but all of them were passionate about the language they presented – they were representatives from the language centres, international students and volunteers.

Participants were introduced not only to the basics of everyday communication, but also to cultural aspects through dance, music and games.

AEGEE-Riga is grateful to various organisations, especially Riga City Council, for their support to make this event such a success and a piece of inspiration to learn languages.

*Written by Diana Ondža,  
AEGEE-Riga*

AEGEE-Las Palmas hosted together with other local youth organisations and the local youth platform of the city, the II Education Forum of the Spanish National Youth Council, which gathered around 80 participants representing various youth organisations and members of the Youth Council.

An event that alongside participants from AEGEE members counted the presence of the president of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and the Minister of Education of Spain, as well as researchers, entrepreneurs, teachers and parents for speaking positions.

Having the highest youth unemployment rate in Europe and seeing the most educated and prepared young people leaving the country gathered participants with the aim of addressing the reality and the challenges in the field of formal education, participation of young people in the life of their educational centres and questioning if the current education system adapts to the needs of young people nowadays in Spain.

*Written by Lucille Rieux,  
AEGEE-Las Palmas*

The main aim of AEGEE-Kyiv's first educational project "Stand up! Start up" was sharing with 100 enthusiastic and creative young participants aged 18 to 35 practical knowledge about starting a private business.

The first step was a training course in Finance, Marketing, Strategic Planning and Project Management in practice, involving workshops from external partners from the Ukrainian High Business School and Kyiv National Economic University. The second step was a business plan competition, in which a competent jury evaluated every single business plan paying attention and analysing both the innovative and practical aspect of every idea as well as the overall business plan. The third step was a great final conference gathering young and successful entrepreneurs who commented on the business plans and whose expertise led to the tough decision of electing a winner, who were two girls with the idea of creating an online shop with night-dresses and pyjamas.

This event made everyone involved believe that impossible is nothing!

*Written by Olga Chumak, AEGEE-Kyiv*

# CHRISTMAS 2011 AND NEW YEAR EVENTS 2012



© AEGEE-Iasi



© AEGEE-Napoli



© Annika Luure

## IT IS FOREVER CHRISTMAS

**Kindness** is a universal language and there is always need for more. This is why AEGEE-Iasi organised a social project called Forever Christmas. With the help of Carrefour, Iasi Staff and Santa's helpers a.k.a. AEGEE-Iasi volunteers brought presents, such as food, clothes, toys and school equipment, to 70 boys and girls aged 8 to 14 from the Placement Centre "C.A. Rosetti" Iasi. There children can spend time learning, playing and they also get food and benefit from other social programmes. Our volunteers also organised some activities such as an origami workshop where they created Christmas decorations in order to give the children a pleasant time. The Forever Christmas project also brought Santa Claus to a family in Suceava, a town near Iasi. Their smiles were the greatest Christmas present for the AEGEE-Iasi volunteers who are grateful for the outcome of one of their dearest projects... Forever Christmas.

*Written by Catalina Filote,  
AEGEE-Iasi*

## THE BEAUTY AND THE BEAST III

**"The Beauty and The Beast III - Midnight Edition"** was held in Naples between 27th December 2011 and 3rd January 2012. As the name suggests, it was the third edition of one of AEGEE-Napoli's most successful projects. Our aim was to show both sides of the magnificent city: organised crime and environmental problems on one side and art, culture, gastronomy and wonderful landscapes on the other. 25 participants gathered to enjoy one of the craziest New Year's Eves you can ever imagine. The city itself lit up with immense fireworks during the whole night.

*Written by Claudio Armandi,  
AEGEE-Napoli*

## I FEEL SLOVENIYA VOL. V

**AEGEE-Maribor** organised their fifth edition of 'I feel sLOVEniya,' where 80 participants visited the Slovenian city Maribor. The programme was full of activities such as skiing at Pohorje. Besides being in the mountains, the participants spent

the last week of 2011 doing a city rally, a flag walk up Piramida hill and a treasure hunt. Besides, the various thematic parties and the participants singing until dawn will never be forgotten.

*Written by Teja Rajšp, AEGEE-Maribor*

## SNOW HAPPENS!

During the last days of December 2011, 27 participants from 11 different countries gathered in the capital of Estonia to welcome the New Year at an event called „Snow happens! AEGEE-Tallinn's Winter Bash!“ . Moreover, what also made the event special was AEGEE-Tallinn's 20th birthday celebrated on a grand gala evening, which brought together not only AEGEEans from all over Europe but also founders, honorary and former members of AEGEE-Tallinn. The participants also visited Tallinn's cosiest cafés during a café crawl, tried ice skating in the middle of the Old Town and of course welcomed the year 2012 in a way that will hopefully never be forgotten.

*Written by Elis Koido, AEGEE-Tallinn*

## WHO'S BEHIND THE MASK?

## AEGEE HOLIDAYS OF FUN



© Beata Owsiana



© Borjan W. Zafirovski



© AEGEE-Toruń

## TUSCAN CHARM FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE

For six days 30 AEGEEans experienced very hospitable Italians always fulfilling wishes of the participants, even if that meant ice cream at 1 am at night.

In three days, we visited the most outstanding and marvellous cultural places such as the Uffizi Gallery, Accademia with Michelangelo's statue of David, the cathedral as well as private palaces including Palazzo Pitti and Palazzo Vecchio.

The New Year's Eve celebration took place at a private house in the Tuscan countryside surrounded only by vineyards and olive trees. AEGEE-Firenze prepared a traditional Italian five-course meal, which was followed by a memorable party. Those events together with a crash-course in Italian made this journey unforgettable for the participants leaving AEGEE-Firenze and its city in their hearts.

*Written by Stephanie Müller,  
AEGEE-Heidelberg*

One of my favorite things about AEGEE is that it lets its members not only visit many countries but also to experience the must-see events that take place there.

AEGEE-Treviso, a small antenna not far from Venice, took the responsibility and showed not one, not two, but three cities to participants in just four days: Treviso, Venice and Padova. All this along with the Venetian Carnival, one of the most renowned carnivals of the world, which already started in the year 1162! Everyone got to experience and enjoy the true spirit of the carnival. The first shock was all the different and at times bizarre costume.

It is true, you have to dress up and feel the carnival spirit and everyone was there – from queens to servants, from bats to Darth Vaders. Everyone who is someone was there! The traditional Venetian masks were gorgeous. It took our team an eternity to get to the main square just because we needed to take pictures of ALL the beautiful masks that walked by, capturing wonderful AEGEE memories!

*Written by Olga Volovik, AEGEE-Kyiv*

One of the main events that AEGEE-Toruń organises is "Magiczne Ferie."

After the initial success in 2008, the antenna knew that they would continue with this winter holiday for children, where AEGEE-Toruń cooperates with elementary schools from rural areas. For a few days all effort is made to give the children unforgettable memories.

In February 2012 special attractions were provided for the 5th edition of the event. Children could attend themed workshops (art, dance, vocal and sign language) and visit museums such as Museum of Gingerbread, Planetarium, Museum of Ethnology and the ruins of the Teutonic Castle. The performance of "Pinocchio" and the Irish dance show aroused many emotions among the children and AEGEE-Toruń.

Of course, the most important thing was providing a hot meal after a busy and fruitful day. This event gave us a lot of satisfaction and the planning for next year's edition is already in progress.

*Written by Aleksandra Zalecka,  
AEGEE-Toruń*

## RAISING AWARENESS ON THE MDGs

## MAKING AEGEE HISTORY IN THE LAND OF HARRY POTTER

## TWENTY YEARS OF AEGEE-VALENCIA!



On 7th March 2012, members of AEGEE-Piliscsaba completed a year-long cogitation showing their engagement towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) through hosting their first conference on the MDGs, as well as an exhibition, in the framework of the UN Academic Impact initiative. Speeches delivered by representatives of numerous NGOs tackled the issues of the eight MDGs such as eradicating poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality rates, improving maternal health and ensuring sustainability. Most of the exhibited pictures were taken during a European event called "Picturing the MDGs! - Visualisation of the Millennium Development Goals," which took place in August 2011. The aim of the event was to visually introduce the MDGs, as the organisers found pictures more expressive than words.

The pictures and articles introducing the MDGs caught the attention of teachers as well as students in the University hall of Piliscsaba.

*Written by Dora Kocsis,  
AEGEE-Piliscsaba*

One out of the 17 Network Meetings (NWMs) in the spring of 2012 organised by the serving and protecting Network Commission together with three antennae being AEGEE-Abertawe, AEGEE-Sheffield and AEGEE-Durham took place in London. Location in a city filled with culture and an easily accessible melting pot in the unique and mysterious country of England (despite the fact that there is no AEGEE local there currently) and the year 2012's focus on the Olympic Games and the Jubilee were special features that made it stand out. Participants and trainers who arrived from all over Europe: from Russia through to Croatia, Hungary and Austria to Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom and many more touched upon topics such as human resources, the International Politics Working Group (IPWG) and public relations strategies during an event that all in all was a great start to put back the United Kingdom on the AEGEE map and if everything goes well, we can expect more events in the upcoming period!

*Written by Beáta Matuszka,  
AEGEE-Budapest*

Every year AEGEE-Valencia organises its most famous event in March which is devoted to the two weeks long local festival "Las Fallas."

This year the event "Let's burn Valencia with the Orange Phoenix" taking place on 19th March was not only a celebration of the traditional event in Valencia but also the antenna's 20th anniversary. During the days leading up to this celebration in the middle of March effigies are created and they are part of the big fireworks setting the whole city on fire during the biggest fireworks of the year. Before that there are a multitude of processions through the streets of Valencia followed by a pyrotechniques competition called la Mascletà.

This unique programme brought the true AEGEE spirit by celebrating the birthday together with 25 participants from more than 23 antennae. AEGEE-Valencia members gathered together with the participants of the event in front of the Central Market and the AEGEE crowd continued to enjoy the city, fireworks and the celebration.

*Written by Ekaterina Malysheva,  
AEGEE-Valencia*

DUTCH HEARTS FOR  
THE BALKANSWHEN GOUDA MEETS  
ROQUEFORT... FOLLOW THE RAIN-  
BOW AND FIND YOUR  
TREASURE!


# BOSNIË

## CONFERENTIE

© AEGEE-Nijmegen



© AEGEE-Utrecht



© AEGEE-Groningen

In April 2012 AEGEE-Nijmegen organised the two day conference 'Bosnia where the world stood by' at Radboud University Nijmegen. The focus of the event, set up by eight members that lost their hearts to Bosnia and Herzegovina during a trip through the Balkans, was the war that took place throughout the whole of the Balkans during the years 1992 - 1995. Ten different Dutch and international speakers like the (former) peace activist Mient Jan Faber and Hasan Nuhanovic, survivor of the Srebrenica genocide, gave over a hundred visitors a global idea of what happened in the 90s. The event focussed especially on the Srebrenica genocide with special attention to the role of Dutch forces that were sent to the enclave of Srebrenica on behalf of the United Nations (UN). Furthermore, the general role of the UN and Dutch military during peace-keeping missions were discussed. For the participants it was an highly informative, inspiring but also thought-provoking conference. In general the participants left impressed by the often emotional insights.

*Written by AEGEE-Nijmegen*

To celebrate AEGEE-Utrecht's 25th Birthday, AEGEE-Utrecht and AEGEE-Toulouse organised in 2012 a thematic exchange on the topic of euroscepticism.

During the first week in Toulouse in February and the second one two months later in Utrecht, members of both antennae met to debate and discuss on the topic of euroscepticism and European identity including the questions if the European Union is too bureaucratic, and if the integration of a national state weakens the country. Furthermore, it was talked about the generally interesting question for AEGEE of how European integration can be supported in our national states.

Although rather close in distance, Dutch and French cultures appeared to be more different than the participants had expected, big AEGEE-Utrecht meeting small AEGEE-Toulouse was a deep associative culture shock.

It is through an incessant stream of bawdy songs that a mutual understanding nearing total was reached and a lasting bond born.

*Written by Nolwenn Donsimoni,  
AEGEE-Toulouse*

From 27th April until 1st May 2012 AEGEE-Groningen organised an Agora pre-event with the main theme Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) -acceptance in Europe. This topic was chosen because there are still many problems to overcome on this subject and the differences between countries on the acceptance of homosexuality are huge.

By organising such a pre-event we wanted to inform European students about the situation in various countries, provide an open atmosphere for discussions and motivate people to become active in the fight for LGBT-rights. Activities included many profound discussions, a visit to the world's largest Gay art gallery, a movie night in cooperation with the Groningen LGBT student's association and lectures about the history of LGBT-rights, the situation in different countries in Europe and even in the United States.

Overlooking the whole event with its fantastic participants we are happy to say that the event was a success!

*Written by Katinka Nauta,  
AEGEE-Groningen*

## LIGHT THE OLYMPIC TORCH



© AEGEE-Patra

*Or a way to send a message of eternal peace to the world*

The Olympic ceremony took place in London on 27th July 2012 but it all started on 10th May, when the ceremony of the Lighting of the Olympic Torch in Ancient Olympia took place. For the first time AEGEE-Patra organised a four day event focusing on that day.

Hence, members of our Network, locals and Erasmus students had the chance to visit ancient Olympia, learn about the ancient Olympic Games and the represented ideals such as worldwide peace.

They were present when eleven Greek women, representing the Vestal Virgins, performed a celebration to light the Olympic Torch by calling to God Apollon. The torch was light then through the power of the sun. Already in ancient Greece this event was a reason for big celebrations and festivities throughout the whole country.

For this year's Olympic Games the torch lead the world to the meeting point in London after shortly travelling through Greece.

*Written by Christos Gkagkas,  
AEGEE-Patra*

## EUROPE AT THE FEET OF LATVIAN KIDS



© Edgars Prieditis

In order to raise awareness about Europe among children in rural areas of Latvia and to make them feel like European citizens, who they are through abolishing all kinds of boundaries, both physical and psychological, AEGEE-Ogre realised a Youth In Action funded project in March and May. Members of AEGEE-Ogre together with Erasmus students from Germany, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine visited rural schools in the district of Ogre spreading different cultures to children eager to learn more. Foreign participants got to share their culture with both 4th graders and 12th graders, through different activities such as games and short films about the presenter's country for the youngsters, while the older kids became involved in discussions and seminars, resulting in eye-opening upbeat discussions. For some, this programme opened their eyes to a whole range of new possibilities; for others, it was a chance to see themselves and their place in this world from a completely different point of view.

*Written by Patrica Juhl Anthony,  
AEGEE-København*

## EU GAMES OF SOFIA



© Daniel Angelkof

In the form of a city rally, AEGEE-Sofia organised on 11th of May an educational game in order to commemorate the Day of Europe, which is an annual celebration of peace and unity in Europe.

40 pupils in their 10th and 11th grade were competing and running through Sofia in order to get closer to the awards and learn something about the European Union. They had to answer questions such as "When did Bulgaria join the EU?", "How many member-states are in the Euro zone?" and to recognise Jose Manual Barroso on a picture.

Even though such topics are not part of the knowledge they receive in school, all the teenagers showed they are very open and enthusiastic for Europe.

The event was organised in cooperation with the local offices of both the European Commission and the European Parliament, as well as the Polish and French cultural institutes. It was so remarkable combining education with fun that AEGEE-Sofia is sure it will turn into a regular tradition.

*Written by Liliya Buyukliyska,  
AEGEE-Sofia*

# AEGEE CELEBRATES ...



© AEGEE-Valletta



© Freek Ruigrok



© Attila Balogi

## V FOR VALLETTA

Last December, the Malta Experience returned once again with a bang to open AEGEE-Valletta's 15th Anniversary as the clock struck midnight and made way for 2012. The lucky participants were hosted in Palazzo Abela, a 300-year-old palazzo; and during their stay in Malta they had the opportunity to visit the magnificent capital city of Valletta with its various historical buildings and streets dating back to the Knights of St. John. Together, we walked past the ancient Roman cart ruts which lead to the Medieval 'Silent City' of Mdina, and the 'Old Capital' of Malta.

Undoubtedly, there were endless parties in our entertainment hotspot Paceville, the heart and soul of Maltese nightlife. The highlight of the event was perhaps the New Year's Eve party, which took place in the wine cellars of the Palazzo Abela and which featured an acclaimed DJ spinning some sizzling sets at this exclusive OPEN-BAR party. This marked the start of the 15th Anniversary of our antenna, a celebration of 15 years of AEGEE spirit and a promise for more years

to follow!

*Written by Mariella Rapa,  
AEGEE-Valletta*

## 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF AEGEE-UTRECHT

Founded on 21st May 1987, AEGEE-Utrecht now celebrates its 25th year of existence. As our local Anniversary Working Group, we organised various activities to make this year unforgettable for our members. A sex-change party, a trip to Belgrade and Sarajevo, a week full of various local activities such as a pub crawl, a family day and a surfing event. Thanks to three supporting working groups we also enjoyed the final conference of „Where does Europe end?“ in Utrecht and a nice gala evening in a cosy fortress.

In the end we will publish a special anniversary book marking this great achievements.

*Written by AEGEE-Utrecht  
25th Anniversary Working Group*

## BIRTHDAY GALA IN BUDAPEST

AEGEE-Budapest celebrated its 22nd birthday this May by organising a gala event, which attracted many current and former members. This year, we took a trip

down memory lane and listened to inspirational speeches by our former members, and we could also enjoy the presence of Gunnar Erth, a legendary icon in the AEGEE world. We learned wonderful things from our former leaders and we are looking forward to future challenges, starting with Agora Budapest 2012.

*Written by Péter Mészáros,  
AEGEE-Budapest*

## LITTLE ANTENNA - BIG CELEBRATION

This March all members of the little AEGEE-Ogre family came together to celebrate the antenna's fourth birthday. The party was spent in a friendly atmosphere while recalling all the activities of the past year and developing ideas for new projects, such as the European Carpet project and Midsummer Night Event, which took place later during spring and summer, and preparing for the Autumn Network Meeting.

Nice and creative activities were organised during the whole evening. All ended with a tasty birthday cake.

*Written by Iveta Arnite, AEGEE-Ogre*





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