

KEY to EUROPE

European Students' Forum
AEGEE Annual Review
2016-2017



STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

We, the members of AEGEE,

young Europeans coming from all regions of the continent, recognise that we are the future and present of our society and that our contribution to the construction of Europe is our responsibility. We come together under a common vision of a democratic, diverse and borderless Europe.

We come together in AEGEE to form an open, voluntary network where we transform our ideas into actions, develop ourselves to participate actively in society, and contribute to the European debate with our independent student's perspective.

We hereby declare these principles to be fundamental to us:

The diversity of Europe has to be valued, and we reflect it in our organisation. The richness of our continent relies on people from different cultures and backgrounds coming together and being united by common values.

Cooperation between people and communities begins with dialogue and mutual understanding. We bring together students from all regions of Europe and create friendships that break stereotypes and prejudices.

Freedom and human rights are essential elements of a European society. Through our work and behaviour, we aim to serve as an example and spread these values among the youth of our continent.

A strong Europe is built upon the foundations of respect, tolerance and solidarity. Following these values, we stand for an inclusive society where citizens enjoy equal opportunities and rights.

Progress in Europe has to be based on knowledge and unlimited access to education. By providing diverse learning opportunities and supporting a European dimension in education, we believe it gives young people better opportunities for the future.

By honoring and promoting these principles we shape a better Europe.

DEAR READER,

It's my pleasure to introduce you to the amazing annual review of AEGEE. Here you will be able to find the most outstanding events, news, happenings, members, locals... during this whole year.

Here you will discover the adventures of this AEGEE year, which is always a pleasure to share with everyone. You will be able to know which were our collaborations, what we are working on and how things are developing throughout the time.



Through this pages, you will be jumping from section to section, discovering the Basis of AEGEE, the Collaborations and our sponsors, then, going to the most visible Faces of AEGEE during this year. After that, you will see the section of our Highlights, the most outstanding events, awards... In Happenings around the Network you will be able to read how our events went, what happened in some places and what we've been celebrating. If you continue reading, you will find the Projects which we were (and on some of them we still are) working on.

Last but not least, we will Look forward to the next events and our next Comité Directeur, who will take care of our organization the next year.

Behind this words, there is an amazing team, full of motivation and AEGEE Spirit, who worked here day by day to make it possible and have it ready for all the AEGEEans who were expecting it.

We really hope that you will enjoy reading it as much as we enjoy working on it.

On behalf of the Key To Europe team,

Alejandra Piot (AEGEE-A Coruña) - Editor-In-Chief Key To Europe 2016/2017

DEAR READER,

Europe's strength is in the dynamism, creativity, innovation and openness of its young people. There is no Europe without youth because each generation must rediscover the European project. Students and young people working together will build the future of the European Union, develop strategies for its effective functioning and take an active role in society. From this perspective, the activities of European Students' Forums are crucial to empower young people to take on this role, strengthen mutual understanding among Europeans, and engage them in building a united Europe.

The key to the success of the European project is the EU's ability to invest effectively in young people – Europe's greatest strength for the future. The EU and its Member States need to develop policies that enhance young people's opportunities and potential within an inclusive and pluralist society which values democracy, equality, rule of law and human rights.



The European Union supports higher education, where the student plays a central role, through cooperation policy and funding programmes such as Erasmus + and Horizon 2020. Investment in the higher education infrastructure is also supported by the European Investment Bank projects, including the European Fund for Strategic Investment. The strategy for further supporting youth and building a better future for them must be developed jointly with young people.

In its contribution to the future of European youth, the European Parliament has consistently supported and collaborated with the Member States to advance youth issues. In 2008, the Parliament initiated, together with the Foundation of the International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen, the annual European Charlemagne Youth Prize to promote European and international understanding. Furthermore, young people's visions for the future of Europe are highly regarded by the European Parliament through the organisation of the European Youth Event which brings together youth leaders and European decision makers to debate under the motto "Together we can make a change".

A fundamental role of the European Parliament remains its active participation in developing and fostering youth policy. The Parliament has adopted numerous resolutions supporting youth including enhancing entrepreneurship, fighting youth unemployment and safeguarding equal opportunities.

The recently adopted resolution on the revision of Erasmus+ shares the European Students' Forum's vision regarding the importance of mobility and its role in current society. It calls, for example, for increase accessibility to the programme, and stresses the importance of the recognition and validation of competences acquired during the stay abroad. Furthermore, it encourages the inclusion of educational mobility as a part of higher education programmes when beneficial to students' personal and career development. All of these initiatives together form the framework of European youth policy that could not be achieved without your contribution. This publication is an important voice in discussing the future of Europe and the key role of students in developing an innovative and competitive European economy.

I wish to thank the European Students' Forum for its work so far, and I look forward to our future cooperation.

Krystyna Łybacka - Member of the European Parliament

DEAR READER,

“The future of Europe is at crossroads” – we have been hearing for some time now. While it is convenient to think of Europe as an abstract concept where we have a place for ourselves as individuals, our family and friends as our closed circle of care, our identity and bigger network forming a community, it is ever so difficult to see our direct impact on and contribution to such an abstract concept.



This is why AEGEE has been the best tool for young Europeans since its foundation in 1985, providing them with the space to realise their contribution, engage with a network of activists, offer the playground for ideas, provoke heated debates among opposing views, break down physical and mental borders and, most importantly, empower the individual's belief in a meaningful cause and purpose. Young people matter more than anything, since they hold the future in their hands.

AEGEE has always been loud and provocative, bringing intriguing and amusing ideas that have contributed to drive the European project forward for decades, AEGEE has always been limitless in its growth and expansion of hearts and minds as well as stretching the physical and conceptual understanding of Europe to its limits,

AEGEE has always been the network that becomes a family by allowing borderless exploration, careful experimentation, challenges of opinions and ideologies, and by realising something amazing together as Europeans.

The Key to Europe 2016/2017 collects only some of the ideas and initiatives by which AEGEE has been changing the lives of young Europeans this year.

The Key to Europe is an annual review, although it is only opening the door to the world AEGEE holds beyond. It offers a glimpse into our vision for the future of Europe, our achievements to turn this vision into reality and our network in its full colour. But this glimpse is only an invitation to join us in our world, to realise ideas and better both yourself and the lives of people around you.

Having been the President of such a wonderful and colourful organisation, I am truly proud to call myself Hungarian by birth, European by identity, activist, creator and explorer all at once: just an AEGEEan at heart.

Get inspired, learn more about our activities, follow our projects and join our cause in building a better Europe since 1985. „So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” (Mark Twain)

Europeanly yours,

Réka Salamon - President of AEGEE-Europe 2016/2017

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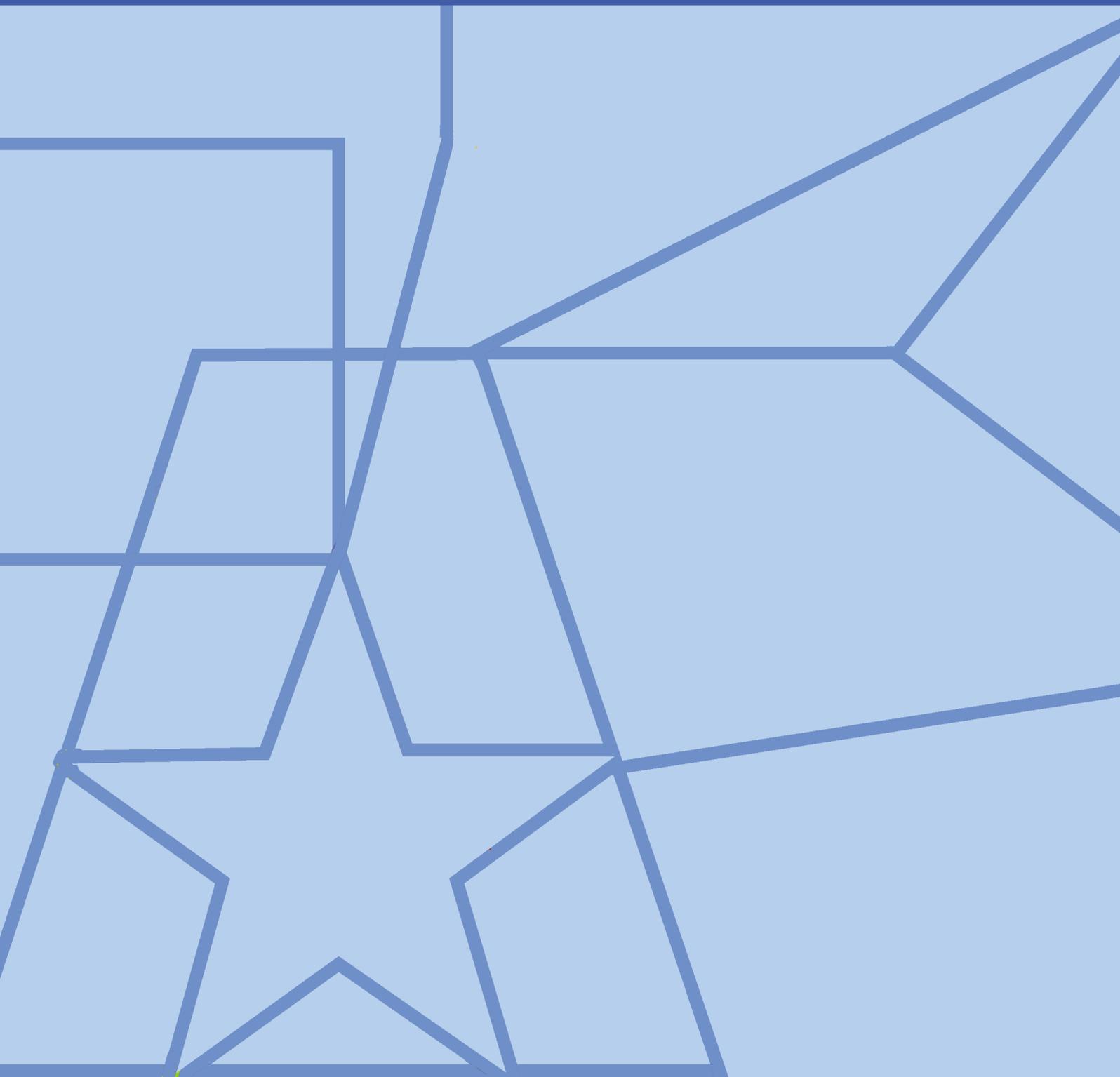
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1. ABOUT AEGEE



WHAT IS AEGEE?

by Erika Bettin, AEGEE-Verona

AEGEE-Europe, or the European Students' Forum, is one of the biggest student organisations in Europe, with more than 13,000 members spread in almost 200 university cities in 40 countries, welcoming students of all disciplines. It was founded in 1985 in Paris under the name of EGEE by political science student Franck Biancheri, and since then it has spread all over Europe with a Network now spanning all over the continent, from Western Europe to the Caucasus and Russia.

The acronym AEGEE stands for Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe. It derives from the first parliament established during the French Revolution, the États Généraux, and the Aegean Sea, where democracy was born 2000 years ago.

Throughout the years, the members have changed and many different activities have been developed, but AEGEE's vision has remained clear: creating a democratic, diverse and borderless Europe, which is socially, economically and politically integrated and values the participation of young people in its construction and development.

In order to transform this vision into reality, AEGEE works as a politically independent, secular and non-profit organisation, which empowers students and young people in Europe to take an active role in society. It creates a space for dialogue and learning opportunities for students and, at the same time, acts as their representative towards decision-makers. In this way, AEGEE strengthens mutual understanding and brings Europe closer to young people.

In order to achieve its aims, AEGEE uses five different means to involve and motivate its members:

Intercultural Exchange

AEGEE creates a space for members of different backgrounds to meet and learn about cultural differences, in order to foster mutual understanding. AEGEE supports mobility and encourages young people to cross borders and make new friends, to break stereotypes and to strengthen tolerance, respect and solidarity.

Personal Development and Non-Formal Education

AEGEE provides learning opportunities for the development of its members through non-formal education and informal learning. By participating in training courses, workshops, and active involvement in the organisation, our members improve their competences (such as leadership, communication and team management skills) which will be useful for their future.

Thematic Projects

Thematic projects, both local and international, are initiatives developed by members of AEGEE. They deal with current challenges in the European society, create awareness among young people and propose solutions from a students' point of view.



Advocacy and Policy

AEGEE gathers the opinions of European students and represents them towards stakeholders through campaigns, lobby actions, conferences and membership in bigger advocacy platforms. In addition, AEGEE informs students and young people about the impact that European policies have on their lives and the opportunities they offer.

Forum for Discussion

AEGEE provides a space for young Europeans to discuss and exchange different points of view from a European perspective, in order to find a common ground. This exchange of ideas happens in all of our activities, but a special place for them is inside our projects, conferences and statutory events (European Planning Meetings and Ago-rae).

Nowadays, AEGEE's network of students and young Europeans provides the ideal platform for volunteers from different nationalities to work together on cross-border activities such as international projects, conferences, seminars, exchanges, training courses, and case study trips. AEGEE operates in a unique structure, as it directly connects its local groups and the European bodies without any national level of organisation, reflecting AEGEE's ideal of a Europe without borders. The European bodies are Project (PTs), Working Groups (WGs), Interest Groups (IGs), Commissions, Committees, and the European Board of Directors, called the Comité Directeur (CD).

Strategic Plan and Action Agenda

Every three years, hundreds of AEGEEans meet to draft the new Strategic Plan. The concept of the Strategic Plan is to foresee a significant change in the organisation and in Europe in three years, and put AEGEE in a key role towards these changes. This is the reason why the Strategic Plan of AEGEE, in the current shape, is divided in two main parts, a thematic and an organisational part, the Action Agenda (AA).

The Strategic Plan 2014-2017 consists of four focus areas, namely Spreading Europtimism, Youth Employment, Youth Mobility, Civic Education. Newly adopted Strategic Plan 2017-2020 consist as well in four focus area with the confirmation of the interest in Civic Education, adding Equal Rights, Youth Development and European Citizenship. Working Groups carry out the thematic goals of AEGEE-Europe described in the Strategic Plan of the organisation. Their goal is to ensure that thematic focuses of AEGEE have been fulfilled.



To put the thematic focus areas of the Strategic Plan into practice within the Network, each year a new Action Agenda is developed during the European Planning Meeting. In this Action Agenda, certain goals (objectives) are given for the aims of the focus areas to be worked with the next year. To help the Network with the implementation of the Action Agenda and to track the progress with it, there is the Action Agenda Coordination Committee. Each year, a team of new members works with the most recent Action Agenda, cooperating closely with the locals and European Level bodies of the Network.

Statutory events

The Agora and European Planning Meeting are AEGEE's statutory events. The Agora is the General Assembly of the association, held twice a year, in spring and in autumn, gathering 600-1000 students for three to four days. The Agora is the place where young Europeans gather in one place to build the future of the organisation together. The main discussions and decisions take place during the plenary meetings. The participants of the Agora also join workshops, prytania (to discuss changes to the statutes of the organisation), progress meetings about ongoing projects, and other programmes.

The European Planning Meeting gathers together around 300 experienced AEGEE members in order to draft the Action Agenda for the upcoming year. Besides working on the preparation of AEGEE's Action Agenda, participants take part in workshops, panel discussions and round table discussions related to the general topic chosen for the event at the previous Agora.

European Schools and Training Events

Non-formal education is an integral part of AEGEE. Most of AEGEE's training events are organised by the AEGEE Academy, in cooperation with other AEGEE bodies who are experts in certain fields such as committees of project teams. These training events are called European Schools. The events focus on a certain theme or topic, for example project management, public relations or fundraising. During these events, participants get a chance to understand how non-governmental organisations operate, and at the same time develop their skills. Diverse training methods, which include lectures, workshops and case studies, create the perfect environment for fast knowledge absorption among the trainees. Along with European Schools, AEGEEans can also attend trainings and develop their skills at events such as Local Training Courses 1 and 2 (LTC), Regional Training Courses (RTC) and Network Meetings (NWM).

Achievements

When looking at the history of AEGEE, the association has had several important achievements, the best-known being the effective lobbying for the creation of the Erasmus programme in the 1980s. In cooperation with the European Commission, AEGEE played a major role in convincing the European Union Member States that mobility programmes are worth investing in. We have continued on this path ever since, promoting programmes and advocating for them, such as Erasmus and Socrates, with the inclusion of more countries, such as Turkey, in the latter. AEGEE is also known for its longest running project, the Summer University project, that gathers thousands of young people each summer providing courses on a wide range of topics from language courses to seminars about political, cultural or environmental issues. Recently, AEGEE projects have been awarded Charlemagne Youth Prize both on national and general levels of competition.

AEGEE HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL

1985

EGEE (the États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe) is founded on 16th April 1985.

1986

EGEE organises, together with Le Monde, the Nuit de l'Europe, a simultaneous event on a variety of topics in seven European cities.

1987

EGEE persuades French President François Mitterrand to support funding for the Erasmus programme. After this meeting, France radically changes its position and becomes a major supporter, and as a result the programme is approved.

1988

The Summer University Project is born.
The organisation's name changes to AEGEE.

1989

The Berlin Wall comes down and AEGEE decides to expand itself to the whole European continent. The East-West Working Group and the Quo Vadis team are established.

1990

Les Anciens is established as our alumni organisation. AEGEE adopts its logo, the "key to Europe", which hasn't changed for 26 years.

1991

AEGEE becomes a pioneer in the field of non-formal education by organising its first European School in Madrid.

1992

AEGEE receives consultative status at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

1993

AEGEE receives official NGO status at the Council of Europe (CoE).

1994

AEGEE creates its first website, being a pioneer among other NGOs.

1996

More than 1000 students are actively involved in the conference series of the Find Your Way project, explaining what students can do in the emerging civil society in Central and Eastern Europe. AEGEE moves its head office from Delft to Brussels.

1997

The "Europe and Euro" project raises awareness of the new European currency, five years before its introduction.

1998

AEGEE organises case study trips to Cyprus, Moldova and the Former Yugoslavia.

1999

AEGEE becomes a full Member Organisation of the European Youth Forum.

2001

The AEGEE Academy is founded.
AEGEE organises major projects focusing on peace and stability under the Peace Academy and Education for Democracy project.

2002

AEGEE launches one of its biggest and most successful projects: The Turkish-Greek Civic Dialogue.

2003

AEGEE becomes a formal member of the European Movement International (EMI).

2004

AEGEE is one of the founding NGOs of the European Civil Society Platform for Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL). AEGEE is one of the founding NGOs and full member of the European Civic Forum (ECF).

2006

AEGEE launches the project Take Control! - ways to democracy in Europe, and starts a campaign to include the European Citizens' Initiative in the Lisbon Treaty.

2007

AEGEE plays a key role in the enlargement of the Erasmus programme to Turkey. Creation of the Sustaining our Future (SuFu) project.

2008

Launch of the YVote2009 campaign to encourage voting of young people in the European Parliament elections. Launch of the YOUrope Needs YOU project, to educate high school students on Europe's impact on their daily lives.

2009

AEGEE wins the Charlemagne Youth Prize for the YOUrope Needs YOU! project.

2010

AEGEE organises the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Conference within the framework of the Beyond Europe project.

2011

AEGEE initiates the Eastern Partnership Project to strengthen civic society in the wider neighbourhood countries. The AEGEEan magazine is launched.

2012

AEGEE launches the Europe on Track project. AEGEE carries out a big advocacy campaign with other youth NGOs and the European Youth Forum for the Erasmus+ program.

2013

Europe on Track wins the European Charlemagne Youth Prize.

2014

AEGEE launches the Y Vote 2014 project and the second edition of Europe on Track, with the EP elections of 2014 in sight. AEGEE Election Observation and Democracy in Practice are also launched.

2015

AEGEE celebrates its 30th anniversary with several conferences all over Europe, including the Night of the Seven Antennae.

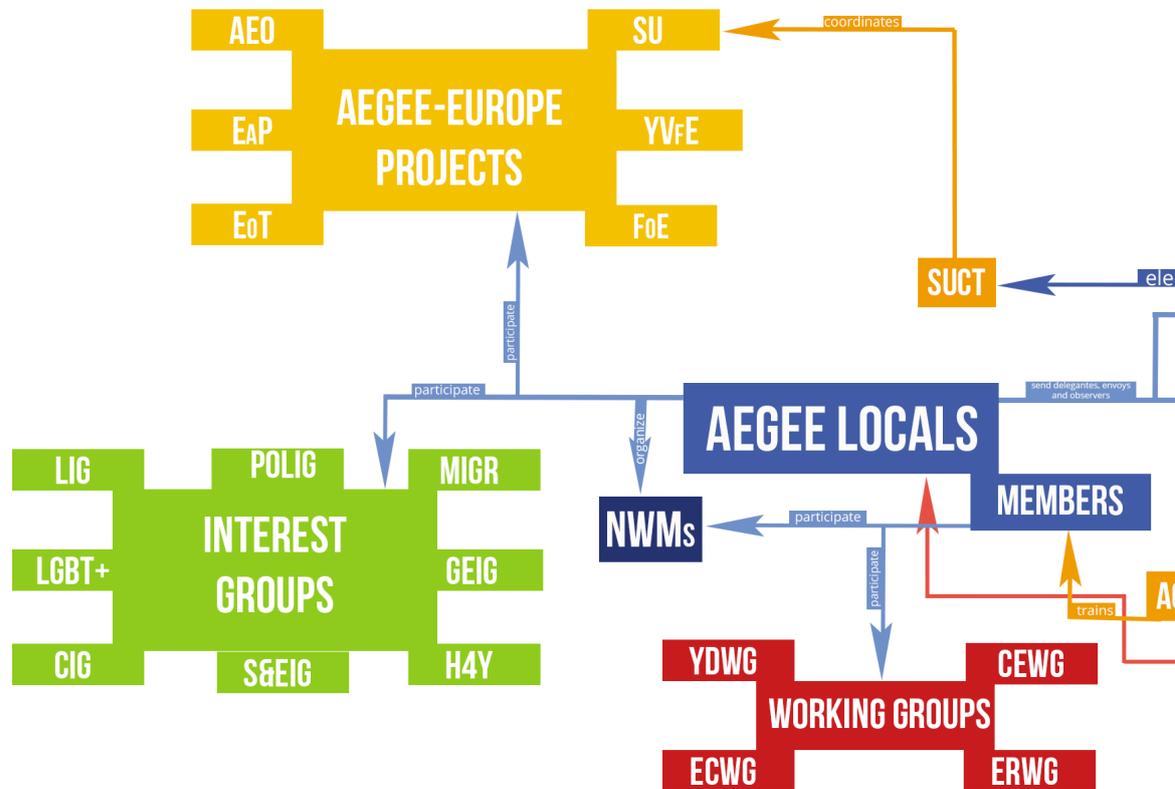
2016

Your Vision for EUrope Project is launched. The Night of the Seven Antennae wins the Bulgarian Charlemagne Youth Prize.

2017

Your faces for EUrope and Summer University project win the Charlemagne Youth Prize.

STRUCTURE



Bodies

Members: 13.000 members of AEGEE's locals.

Locals: Close to 170 local branches of AEGEE's network.

[Find the full list of locals on page 18 & 19](#)

Comité Directeur: European Board of Directors working in Brussels

[Read more about the Comité Directeur on page 43](#)

Agora: bi-annual general assembly of AEGEE.

EPM: European Planning Meeting includes thematic content and Action Agenda drafting.

Chair: Chair Team, responsible for preparing and chairing Agorae.

Academy: AEGEE Academy provides high quality non-formal education training to our members.

NWMs: Network Meetings, discussions and training sessions about topics related to AEGEE's work and topics of interest for young Europeans.

Commissions

Audit Commission

JC: Juridical Commission

NetCom: Network Commission

MedCom: Mediation Commission

Committees

ACT: Action Agenda Coordination Committee

EQAC: Events Quality Assurance Committee

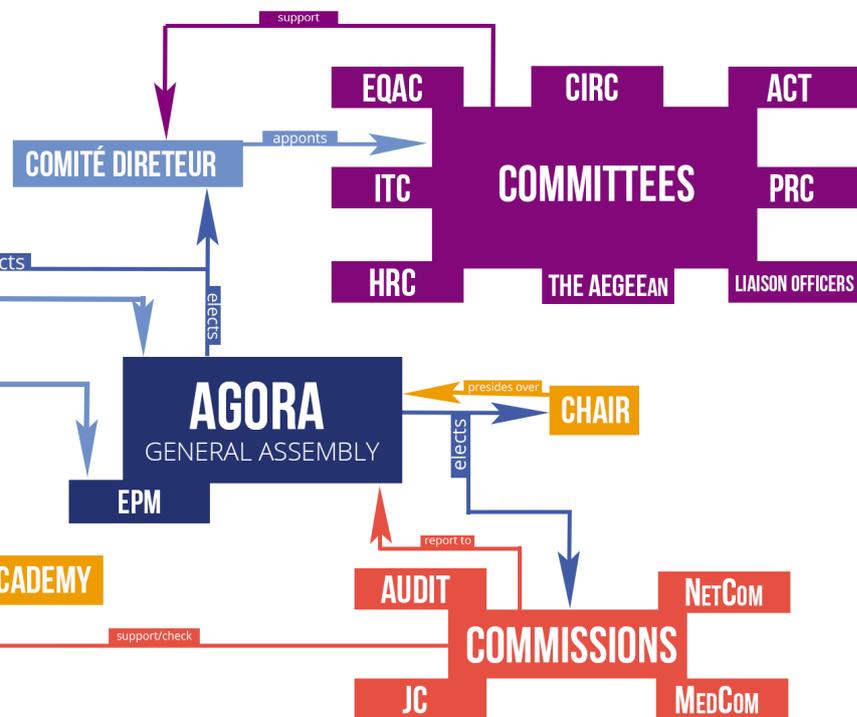
PRC: Public Relations Committee

CIRC: Corporate & Institutional Relations Committee

HRC: Human Resources Committee

ITC: Information Technology Committee

The AEGEEan: AEGEE's online magazine



Projects

- SU: Summer University
- AEO: AEGEE Election Observation
- EaP: AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project
- EoT: Europe on Track
- YVFEP: Your Vision for EUrope Project
- FoE: Faces of Europe

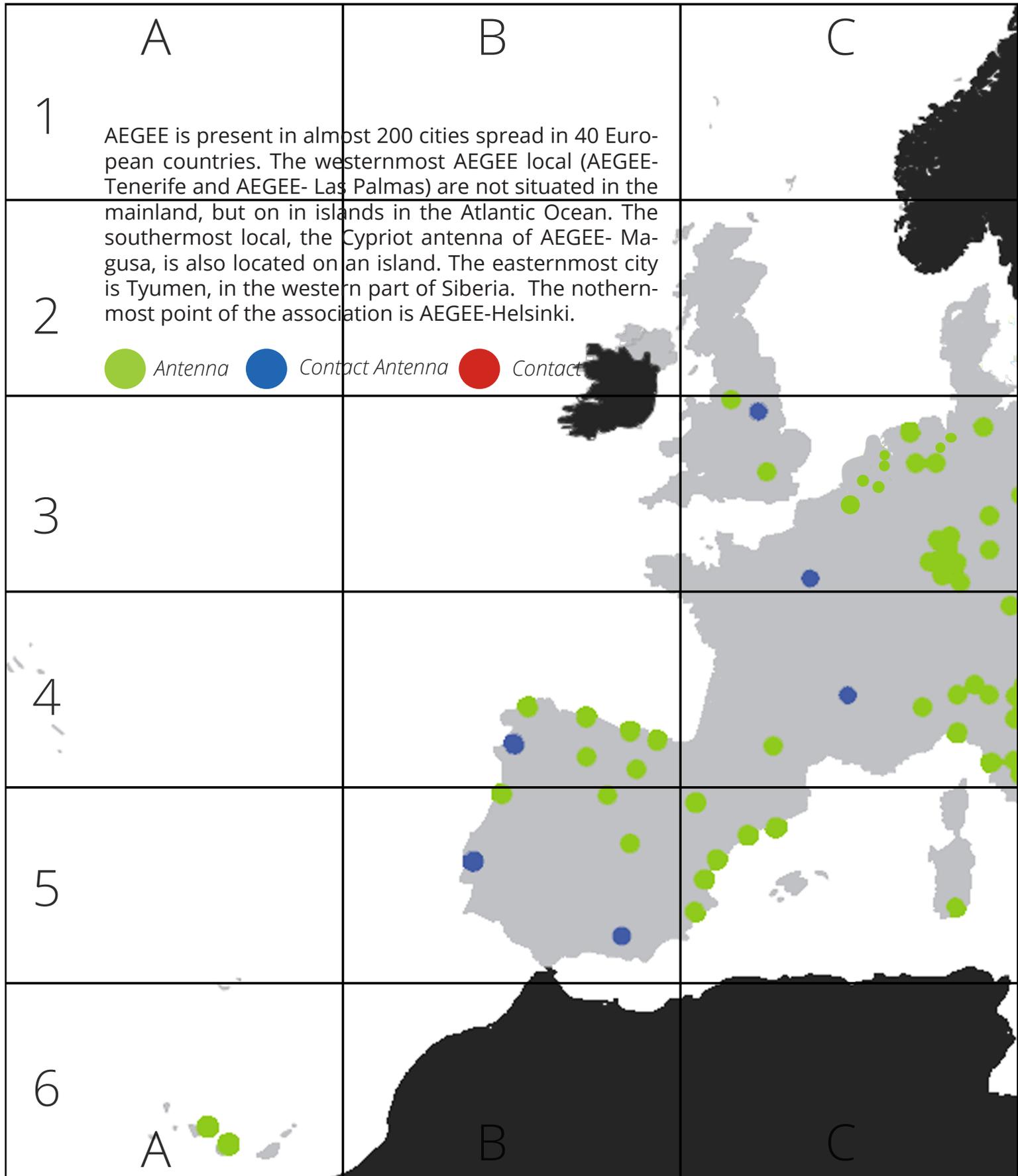
Interest Groups

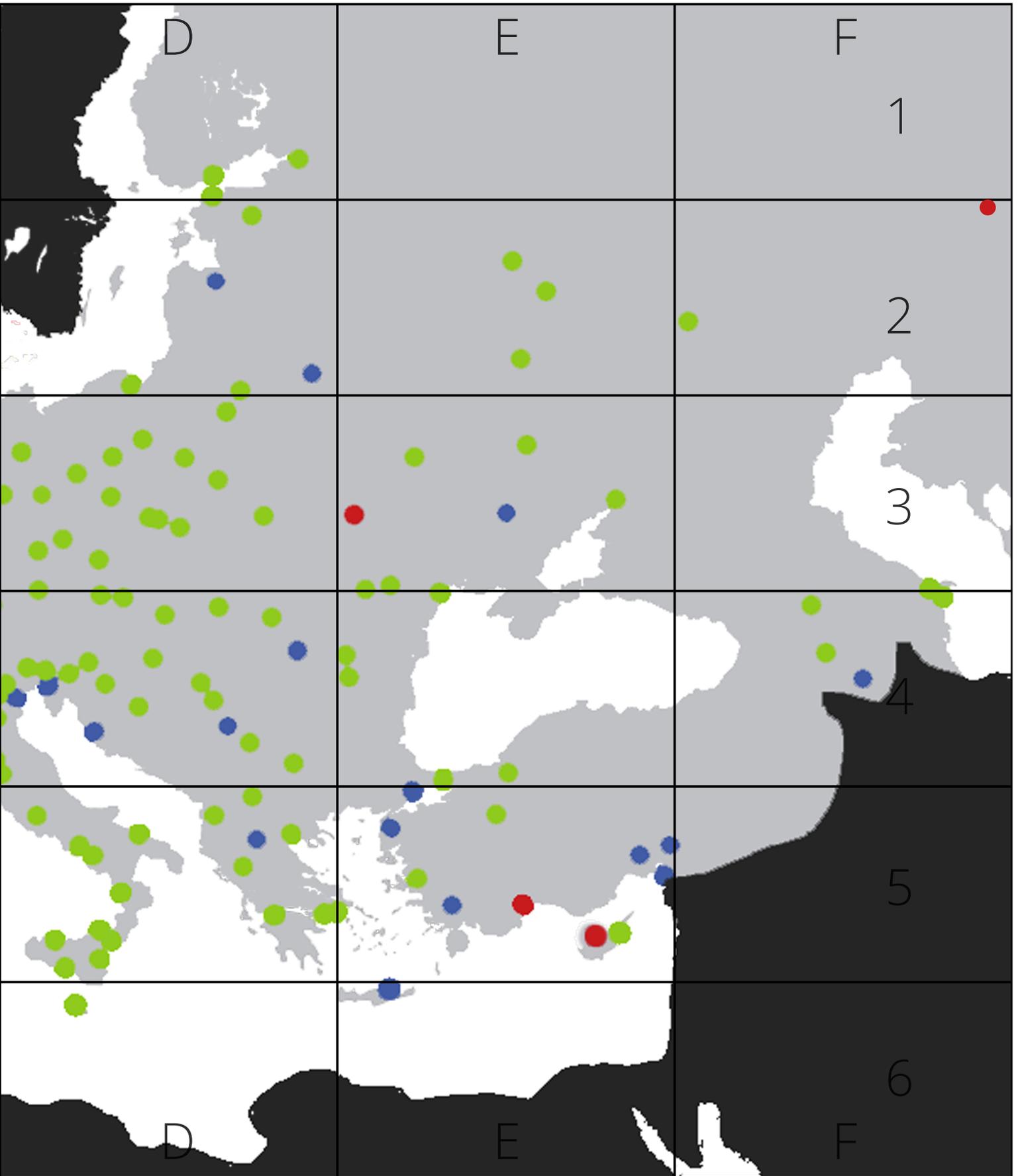
- CIG: Culture
- LIG: Language
- MIG: Migration
- H4Y: Health4Youth
- GEIG: Gender equality
- LGBT+
- POLIG: Politics
- S&EIG: Society and Environment

Working Groups

- ECWG: European Citizenship Working Group
- YDWG: Youth Development Working Group
- ERWG: Equal Rights Working Group
- CEWG: Civic Education Working Group

MAP OF THE NETWORK





ANTENNAE

A Coruña	B4	Gdańsk	D2
Aachen	C3	Genova	C4
Agrigento	D5	Gliwice	D3
Alicante	C5	Grodno	D3
Amsterdam	C3	Groningen	C3
Ankara	E5		
Athina	D5	Hamburg	C3
		Heidelberg	C3
Bakı	F4	Helsinki	D1
Bamberg	C3		
Banja Luka	D4	Iași	E3
Barcelona	C5	Ioannina	D5
Bari	D5	Istanbul	E4
Beograd	D4	Izmir	E5
Bergamo	C4		
Berlin	D3	Kaiserslautern	C3
Białystok	D3	Karlsruhe	C4
Bilbao	B4	Katowice	D3
Bologna	D4	Kharkiv	E3
Bratislava	D4	Köln	C3
Brescia	C4	København	C2
Brno	D3	Kraków	D3
Brussel-Bruxelles	C3	Kyiv	E3
București	E4		
Budapest	D4	L'viv	D3
Burgos	B4	Las Palmas	A6
		Leiden	C3
Cagliari	D5	León	B4
Castelló	C5	Leuven	C3
Catania	D5	Lille	C3
Chișinău	E3	Ljubljana	D4
Cluj-Napoca	D4	London	C3
Cosenza	D5	Lublin	D3
Darmstadt	C3	Maastricht	C3
Debrecen	D4	Madrid	B5
Delft	C3	Mağusa	E6
Dresden	D3	Manchester	C2
Düsseldorf	C3	Mannheim	C3
		Maribor	D4
Eindhoven	C3	Messina	D5
Enschede	C3	Milano	C4
Erfurt	D3	Moskva	E2
Eskişehir	E5	München	C4
Firenze	D4	Napoli	D5
Frankfurt am Main	C3	Nijmegen	C3
		Niš	D4
		Novi Sad	D4

Odessa	E3
Osnabrück	C3
Oviedo	B4
Palermo	D5
Passau	D4
Pátra	D5
Pécs	D4
Peiraiás	D5
Pisa	C4
Ploiesti	D4
Plzeň	D3
Podgorica	D5
Porto	B5
Poznań	D3
Praha	D3
Reggio Calabria	D5
Roma	D5
Rostov-na-Donu	E3
Ryazan	E2
Salerno	D5
Samara	F2
Sankt-Peterburg	D1
Santander	B4
Siena	D4
Skopje	D4
Sofia	D4
Stuttgart	C3
Sumqayit	F3
Tallinn	D1
Tarragona	C5
Tartu	D2
Tbilisi	F4
Tenerife	A6
Thessaloniki	D5
Tilburg	C3
Tiranë	D5
Torino	C4
Toruń	D3
Toulouse	C4
Treviso	D4
Udine	D4
Utrecht	C3

Valencia	C5
Valladolid	B5
Valletta	D6
Verona	D4
Voronezh	E3
Warszawa	D3
Wien	D4
Wrocław	D3
Yerevan	F4
Zagreb	D4
Zaragoza	C5
Zielona Góra	D3

CONTACT ANTENNAE

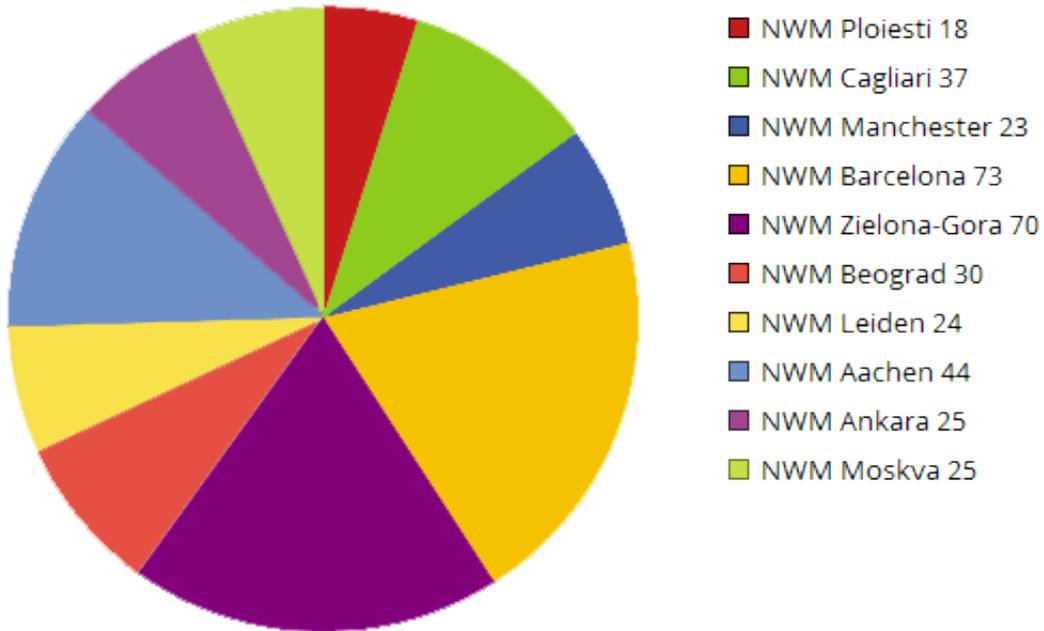
Adana	E5
Çanakkale	E5
Dnipropetrovsk	E3
Ferrara	D4
Gaziantep	E5
Hatay	E5
Heraklio	E6
Kastoria	D5
Kragujevac	D4
Lisboa	B5
Lyon	C4
Mainz-Wiesbaden	C3
Málaga	B5
Minsk	D2
Muğla	E5
Naxçıvan	F4
Padova	D4
Paris	C3
Rīga	D2
Sheffield	C3
Sibiu	E4
Tekirdağ	E5
Tyumen	F2
Vigo	B4
Zadar	D4

CONTACTS

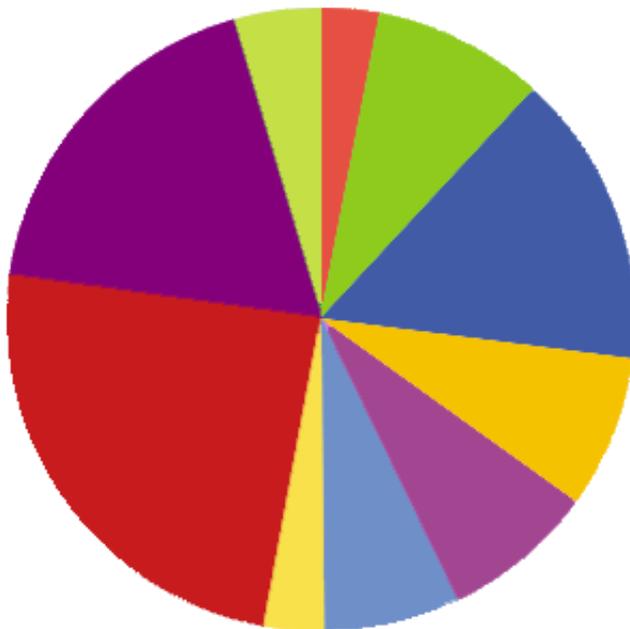
Antalya	E5
København	C2
Nicosia	E6
Vinnytsia	E3

STATISTICS

AUTUMN NWMs 2016



SPRING NWMs 2017



- NWM Debrecen 10
- NWM Thessaloniki 29
- NWM Bilbao 50
- NWM Heidelberg 26
- NWM Nijmegen 26
- NWM Bamberg 23
- NWM Novi Sad 10
- NWM Gdańsk 80
- NWM Torino 60
- NWM Yerevan 15



AEGEE WALL



salvic7
Donauufer Passau >



svenjavandertol



♡ 💬 ➔

♡ 374 likes

salvic7 Boat Party, third year is a row having the best time! #celebrating #aegEE

♡ 💬 ➔

♡ 274 likes

svenjavandertol The things an AEGEEan cherishes for a lifetime #memory
view all 7 comments

philborgen
Copenhagen Busin... >



tonya_onuchina
Warsaw, Poland >



aegEE_heidelberg...



♡ 💬 ➔

♡ 355 likes

philborgen First meeting in the soon to come AEGEE København #culture
view all 5 comments

♡ 💬 ➔

♡ 387 likes

tonya_onuchina The amazing SU has just started in Warsaw! :)
view all 3 comments

♡ 💬 ➔

♡ 294 likes

aegEE_heidelberg_friedrich 30 years Erasmus!
#Erasmus #keytoeurope

sp.papadatos
University of Twente >



♥ 434 likes
sp.papadatos Spring Agora Eschede 2017 #agora
view all 12 comments

... **lorenzoligas_bear**
Costa di Baunei >



♥ 413 likes
lorenzoligas_bear Thanks Summer University
#SummerofYourLife
view all 9 comments

... **oh_alyna_**
Elevador Panorám... >



♥ 407 likes
oh_alyna_ Follow your dreams, thy know the way
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patxiisasti
Teatro Arriaga Antz... >



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patxiisasti Bilbao Aste NaguSEA: Sports, European,
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Przystanek Woodst... >

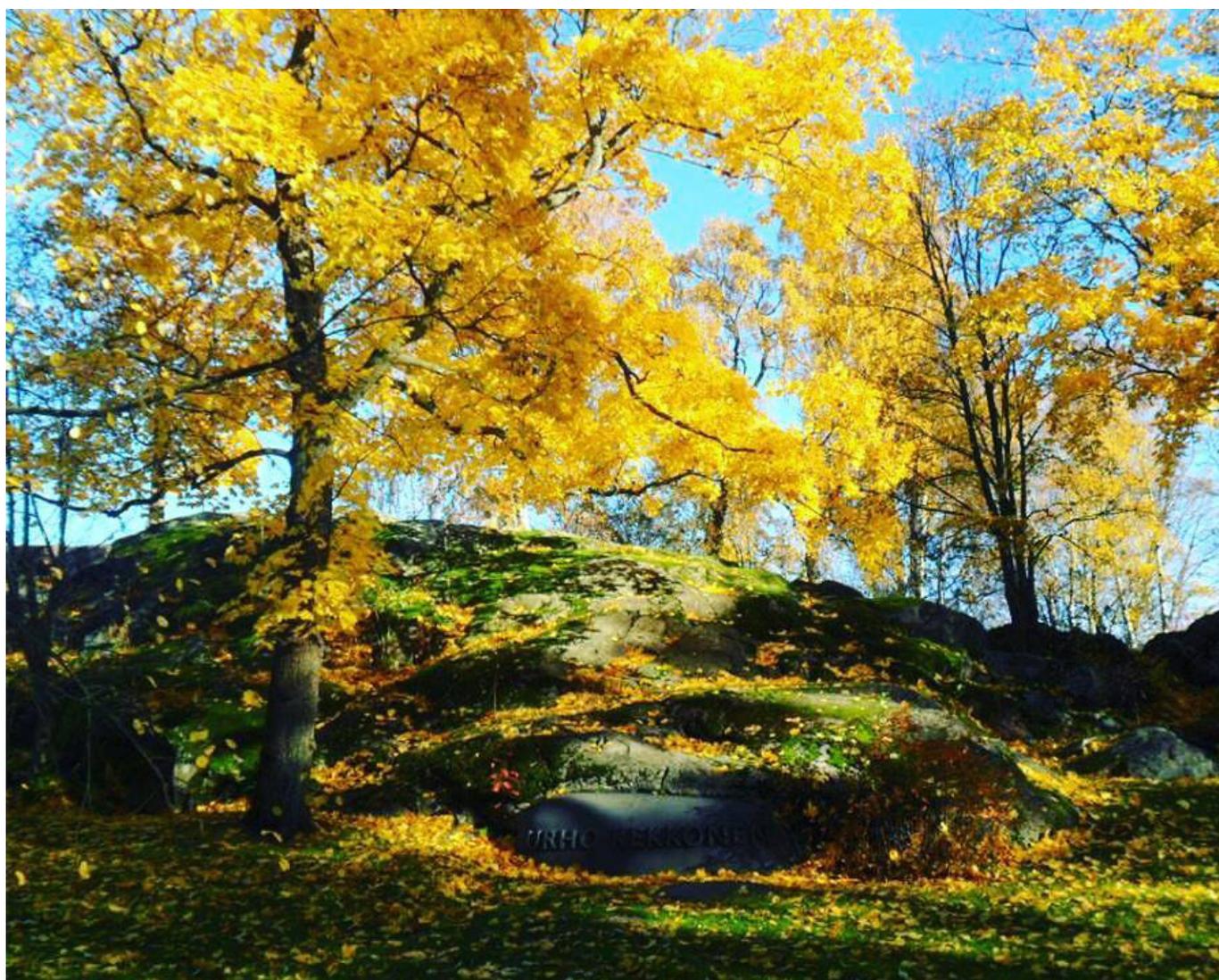


♥ 423 likes
patsipati Some call it Europe we call ir home
#AEGEEiseverywhere
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CULTURE IG PIC COMPETITION

After the success of the Spring edition, the Culture Interest Group launched in 2016 an Autumn Photo Contest with the theme Colours of Autumn. This season could seem gray and without anything special, but instead it is the best time of the year to capture the beauty of nature. Living expositions of reds, oranges, browns and yellows create colourful landscapes that simply beg to be photographed.

Check out our other activities on our our blog <http://www.aegeemomus.eu/>



ACTION AGENDA

SPREADING EUROPTIMISM

63
EVENTS ORGANIZED

2.749
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

AEGEE Heidelberg's "Language Café"
(4 events/236 participants)

AEGEE Nijmegen's "Model United Nations" on
AEGEE Day 2017
(30 participants)

CIVIC EDUCATION

155
EVENTS ORGANIZED

4.731
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

AEGEE Leiden's "Gender Differences in Western
World" lecture
(85 participants)

AEGEE Budapest's "Round table about populism"
with experts
(50 participants)

Europe on Track's "Education for the present,
Democracy for the future"
conference
(80 participants)

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

70
EVENTS ORGANIZED

2.413
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

AEGEE Gliwice's "Business mind" conference
(200 participants)

AEGEE Dresden's "Develop Yourself 3" 4-day work-
shop on job market adaptability
(26 participants)

YOUTH MOBILITY

34
EVENTS ORGANIZED

1.075
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

AEGEE Berlin's/Kyiv's "If I were in your Shoes" Ger-
man-Ukrainian exchange
(19 participants)

AEGEE Amsterdam's/
Beograd's "Home is Where the Heart is"
Erasmus+ KA1 exchange
(12 participants)

NEW FOCUS AREAS

The thematic part of AEGEE

The thematic section of Strategic Plan 2017-2020 defines new Focus Areas, i.e. 4 fields of interest that we as AEGEE focus on for three following years, as of 1st August 2017. Out of 19 submitted Focus Area Ideas participants of Ideas Factory in León have decided on the following ones:



1. Equal Rights - with its main aim to acknowledge young people to tackle discrimination on grounds of gender identity, expression and sexual orientation in combination with other forms of discrimination (connected with race, religion, nationality) as well as to promote equity from an intersectional perspective.



2. Civic Education - connected with all activities directly contributing to the development of civic competences (skills, knowledge and attitudes, required to be an active, democratic, responsible and critical citizen) of young people as well as enlightening decision-makers on the key role of civic education in society and pushing them to take due actions.



3. Youth Development - activities and projects aiming to provide young people with various opportunities to gain transversal skills and competences contributing to their employability as well as personal development.



4. European Citizenship - with an objective to develop a sense of European belonging among young people and empowering them to become both more active and critical European citizens, AEGEE's aim is not only to provide them with education on the socio-cultural differences and similarities of Europe but also to raise awareness on the importance of youth participation in European processes.

INTEREST GROUPS

An Interest Group (IG) is an informal group of AEGEE members interested in one particular topic. The purpose of such group is to create a space in AEGEE to gather members with the same interest and provide a space for discussion for them. At the moment there are 9 of them in AEGEE:

The **Culture Interest Group** consists of enthusiastic European culture's lovers that aim to spread culture in any form, from folkloristic concepts to the international sphere. Its members write a multicultural blog called "Momus" (www.aegeemomus.eu).



The **Migration Interest Group** focus its activities on raising awareness about the current global and European situation of migrants under different perspectives. Its members give workshops on the topic of migration, take initiatives of volunteering and participate in migration-related conferences.



The **Society and the Environment Interest Group** aims to make AEGEE more sustainable and respectful of our planet. It focuses on raising awareness and showing how to be proactive.

The **LGBT+ Interest Group** aims to make Europe a better, more tolerant and more open minded place by raising awareness and creating discussion about LGBT related topics.



The goal of the **Language Interest Group** is to raise the awareness within AEGEE about the value of multilingualism, encourage and help AEGEEans to learn more foreign languages and discuss issues related to language policies, minority languages and language diversity. The main project organized by this interest group is the yearly European Day of Languages.



The **Health4You Interest Group** stands for educating members of AEGEE about health matters. Its goal is to promote a healthy lifestyle among European students and motivate them to adopt it in their lives.



The **Gender Equality Interest Group** creates a space for discussion and learning about issues regarding gender. It strives for equality within AEGEE network as well as outside of it, focusing on gender and taking into account other ways of discrimination from an intersectional perspective.



The new **Politics Interest Group** is a forum for political discussions. Its aim is to educate AEGEE members about politics, break the insecurities related to sharing political ideas and obtain instant news about international politics from locals' perspective.



WORKING GROUPS

After a change in the structure of AEGEE, which was proposed at Spring Agora Asturias 2015, new Working Groups were established to solely work on the focus areas of the Strategic. These Working Groups (WGs) offer a great opportunity for every AEGEEan to enhance their knowledge on the fields they are working on, while also gaining a better understanding of the different perspectives on this topic from the local, national and European sphere.

Until the 31st of July 2017, AEGEE was focusing on four areas, namely Spreading Eurooptimism, Youth Employment, Youth Mobility and Civic Education. Each of these areas has a Working Group under the supervision of an elected coordinator working on the topic and supporting locals with activities and materials.

The **Civic Education Working Group** aims to reinforce and coordinate the development of active and responsible citizens both within and outside the association. It teaches knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for citizens to be active and responsible. Doing so, they address fields as human rights, active citizenship, intercultural communication and sustainability. The members of the Working Group developed a new policy paper on the field of civic education reflecting AEGEE's opinion on the topic, held several workshops on the topic, provided materials to locals and they worked on the European Citizens' Initiative, about which you can read more on page X.



WWW.CIVICEDUCATION.EU

The **Spreading Eurooptimism Working Group** was working on the fulfillment of the objectives given for Spreading Eurooptimism. This working group was trying to spread the European feeling among the AEGEEans.

The **Youth Employment Working Group** aims to fulfill the objectives given for Youth Employment, which include to support members of AEGEE when they enter the job market and creating awareness of youth rights on the labour market. They do this by holding (online) workshops and trainings with relevant professionals, providing essential information on jobseeking, raising awareness of the youth rights on the labour market and encouraging dialogue between policy makers and young people.

The **Youth Mobility Working Group** is the most powerful tool of our organisation to achieve the concept of a borderless Europe. It aims to identify, reduce, and remove barriers of mobility. They achieve their aim by providing expert knowledge on practical aspects AEGEE members can face when dealing with mobility issues and raising awareness of these mobility issues among others. They also hold trainings on mobility programs like Erasmus+.

AEGEE PROJECTS

The **Summer University Project** was born in 1988, with the intention of promoting European integration and is currently the biggest project in AEGEE, which involves more than 2000 young people every year. Summer Universities are events that take place during the summer, in most of the cities where AEGEE is present, for a period of one to four weeks. Understanding and exploring the multicultural dimension of the European continent, tasting its diversity, removing national borders, fighting for tolerance and becoming open-minded citizens are some of the reasons why twenty to fifty young Europeans go on a Summer University.



Europe on Track (EoT) took place in 2012, 2014, 2016 & 2017. Each edition, selected ambassadors travelled across Europe by train, with the support of InterRail, to capture young people's vision on the future of Europe through photos, videos and interviews. In this year's edition, twenty local events and more than one hundred interviews were conducted on the meaning of a borderless Europe.



The **Your Vision for Europe Project** was founded in Spring 2015. The aim of the project is to engage young Europeans from a wide variety of national, social and cultural backgrounds in an open process of collective learning, opinion and will-formation regarding the future of Europe and make sure that their voices are heard. From this project also borned Faces of Europe project an online photoblog which aims at collecting and spreading the stories and personal views of people from different social, cultural and national backgrounds. Its objective is to show the great human diversity of our continent and at the same time to underline a common European identity.



The AEGEEan is the online magazine reporting on AEGEE-Europe's activity. Founded in 2011, it contains articles on European bodies, members, events and current topics in Europe. The Press Team is reporting live on statutory events for members who can't attend.



The AEGEE Election Observation Project (AEO), created in 2014, observes youth participation in elections in Europe and gives young people a chance to learn about democracy in practice. In two years time the members of the AEO have deployed thirteen missions to eight different countries, involving more than 350 young Europeans from at least 34 different nationalities.



COMMITTEES OF AEGEE-EUROPE

A Committee supports the work of AEGEE-Europe in specific organisational fields. Their role is to help locals and European Bodies by providing them with services, information, knowledge, materials and infrastructure needed to fulfill their tasks.

Action Agenda Coordination Committee (ACT)

The Action Agenda Coordination Committee supports the locals and European Bodies in the implementation of the Action Agenda, explains the importance of putting the thematic Focus Areas into practice, and measures the final fulfillment of the goals that we as an organization want to achieve. The team also contributes to the drafting of the new Action Agenda at the European Planning Meeting.



Corporate and Institutional Relations Committee (CIRC)

The Corporate and Institutional Relations Committee supports the financial stability of AEGEE-Europe by developing corporate and institutional fundraising strategies and partnerships. CIRC also assists any local or body that needs help with fundraising.



Events Quality Assurance Committee (EQAC)

The Events Quality Assurance Committee works on improving the quality standards and making the impact of AEGEE events by managing the assessment procedure: from preparing and submitting the event application forms, supporting the organizers, to the final evaluation once the event has taken place.



Human Resources Committee (HRC)

The Human Resources Committee supports and educates the Network of AEGEE in the field of Human Resources Management. Their duty is to raise awareness on the importance of AEGEE Identity, to coordinate the implementation of a tailored HR cycle, to make sure through Internal Education that individual new members receive all necessary skills and knowledge. Finally, they also provide mentoring and guidance to the European Bodies, locals and individuals, for example through the mentorship system during statutory events.



Information Technology Committee (ITC)

The Information Technology Committee supports AEGEE-Europe in everything related to IT by offering support to users and maintaining the hardware. Among other tasks, they are responsible for the development of the new Online Membership System (OMS) and the maintenance of the current one membership system and the mailing lists.



Public Relations Committee (PRC)

The Public Relations Committee supports the AEGEE Network in terms of communication, public relations, graphics design, development and implementation of the Visual Identity. Their members are in constant contact with locals and European Bodies aiding their needs in terms of PR materials, campaign strategies and further tools for improving the visibility of their actions.



COMMISSIONS AND OTHER BODIES IN AEGEE

Commissions

A Commission is supervising and ensuring compliance with the rules that are governing the functioning of AEGEE.

Audit Commission

The Audit Commission is responsible for auditing, checking, reporting, improving and investigating on the finances of AEGEE-Europe, European bodies, AEGEE-Europe events and antennae. They are also actively supporting locals in improving the quality of their Financial Reports and create a space for economic/financial discussions.



Juridical Commission (JC)

The Juridical Commission ensures that the internal functioning of AEGEE-Europe is aligned to its Statutes (CIA). They assist the bodies and antennae of AEGEE-Europe with legal matters, verify the conformity of the Statutes of each antenna, verify the signing of the Convention d'Adhésion with new antennae and integrate the modifications of the Statutes that are accepted.



Mediation Commission (MedCom)

The Mediation Commission acts as mediator in case a dispute occurs between members (locals, bodies). In these cases, the MedCom is responsible for taking decisions, occasionally leading to disciplinary sanctions. They can also act as advisor in case of smaller conflicts and disputes and to help foster dialogue between people. Lastly, they are the ombudsman for cases concerning data privacy.



Network Commission (NetCom)

The Network Commission is the body entitled to strengthen, support and help the Network. It works in close cooperation with the Network Director and all the AEGEE locals. They take measures to help threatened locals and support the new ones, while motivating the antennae to fulfill the Antenna Criteria. Besides that, they organise Network Meetings (NWM), which aim at fostering cooperation, connecting locals and European bodies, sharing best practices and giving advice or directly helping locals.



Others

Chair Team

The Chair Team is responsible for the preparation and coordination of the statutory events of AEGEE-Europe, namely Agorae. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson preside over the meetings, the Secretary is responsible for collecting and taking the minutes of all the sessions and the IT Responsible takes care of the technology needed during the events.



AEGEE Academy

The Academy is an official partner association of AEGEE-Europe, functioning as the organisation's official pool of trainers. Several times a year, the Academy organises European Schools on different topics, as well as other training courses. The Academy addresses the internal education needs of the network and supports locals with trainers and training material whenever needed.



HONORARY MEMBERS

Honorary Members are individuals who have performed outstanding service to or support for AEGEE-Europe and therefore have been awarded the highest recognition in our association. Nominations are submitted by locals or bodies of AEGEE-Europe and are subject to ratification at the Agora.



Franck Biancheri
(AEGEE-Paris) 1989

Honorary President of AEGEE-Europe, Founder of AEGEE, President of AEGEE-Europe 1985-1988. Recognised for the creation of the organisation, for his contribution in launching important initiatives that influenced European policy makers and European students, such as the introduction of the Erasmus Programme.



Georg von der Gablentz
(AEGEE-Berlin) 1993

President of AEGEE-Europe 1990-1992, President of the East-West Working Group, President of AEGEE-Berlin. Recognised for his contribution in increasing the participation of AEGEE antennae in the decision-making process of AEGEE, as well as for his initiatives to open up AEGEE to students from Central and Eastern European countries.



Vittorio Dell'Aquila
(AEGEE-Milano) 1993

Coordinator of the AEGEE Summer University Project, the largest and longest-running mobility project of AEGEE-Europe, from 1990-1995, Vice-President of AEGEE-Europe 1990-1991. Recognized for his dedication to promote, develop, disseminate and support the Summer University Project and for his dedication to promote the use and learning of different languages.



Jeroen Hoogerwerf
(AEGEE-Amsterdam) 1993

Chairperson of the Agora 1990-1991, President of AEGEE-Europe 1992-1993, President of AEGEE-Amsterdam, first Chief Editor of the News Bulletin 1988-1989.



Michael Merker
(AEGEE-Leipzig) 1993

Member of the Comité Directeur of AEGEE-Europe 1990-1992, Vice-President of AEGEE-Europe 1991-1992, Chairperson of the Agora 1994-1995, founder of AEGEE-Leipzig, the first AEGEE antenna behind the Iron Curtain in 1990. Recognised for his involvement in AEGEE's expansion to the East and the foundation of new locals beyond the Iron Curtain.



Zsuzsa Kigyós
(AEGEE-Budapest) 1995

Founder of AEGEE-Budapest in 1990, Organiser of the Agora in Budapest in 1991, the first Agora in Central and Eastern Europe, President of AEGEE-Europe 1993-1994. Recognised for her involvement in establishing AEGEE in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as being AEGEE-Europe's first female president.



Philipp von Klitzing
(AEGEE-Aachen) 1996

Member of the Comité Directeur in 1993/1994. Editor-in-Chief of the OneEurope Magazine 1994-1998, and ongoing support for the past twenty years of AEGEE's technical infrastructure. Recognised for his contribution of introducing the concept of long-term strategic planning and yearplan projects that helped AEGEE to streamline and focus its activities, and also for his enormous dedication to the IT infrastructure of the organisation.



Stefan Recksiegel
(AEGEE-Karlsruhe) 1999

One of the leading people of AEGEE's IT Working Group in the early years of the internet. Administrator of the first AEGEE server, President of AEGEE-Karlsruhe. Recognised for innovations and improvements which he brought forward in the field of IT in AEGEE, and as well for his contribution in establishing AEGEE on Cyprus.



Markus Schönherr
(AEGEE-Passau) 2001

Founder and Speaker of the Visa Freedom Fighters (Visa Freedom Working Group), Financial Director and Network Director of AEGEE-Europe 1997-1998, first generation Network Commission member in 1997, Organiser of Case Study Trip Moldavia in 1997. Recognised for his commitment to the network development in Central and Eastern Europe and his activities to abolish visa restrictions in Europe.



Michiel Van Hees
(AEGEE-Eindhoven) 2002

Member of the Coordination Team of the AEGEE-Europe Yearplan Projects "Find Your Way" in 1996 and "Europe and Euro" in 1997, creator of AEGEE.tv in 2002, creator and organiser of several Media Schools, Liaison Officer towards the European Cultural Foundation in 1996, President of AEGEE-Eindhoven, Main Organiser of the Presidents Meeting in Eindhoven 1996, founder and President of AEGEE-Arnhem in 1998. Recognised for his contribution to AEGEE-Europe projects and for introducing AEGEE.tv and Media Schools.

Olivier Genkin
(AEGEE-Mainz/Wiesbaden) 2005

Project Manager of Yearplan Project of AEGEE-Europe "EU & Europe" in 2003-2004, Speaker of the International Politics Working Group 2000-2004, member of the AddressBook Coordination Team, AEGEE20 Project Team Member 2004-2005. Recognised for his overall contribution to the organisation, development and planning of new AEGEE-Europe projects, establishment of new antennae, constant support to European project teams.



Gunnar Erth
(AEGEE-Szeged) 2006

Editor-in-Chief of five Keys to Europe, among them the 20th Anniversary Book, Organiser of five European Schools, two PRES and several other European trainings, Member of the Comité Directeur 1996, Network Commissioner 1997-1998, Members Commissioner 1999-2000, President of the Human Rights Working Group 1995-1996, Board member of the PRWG, Founding member of the AEGEE Academy, Member of the Coordination Team of the AEGEE-Europe Yearplan Project "Find Your Way". Recognised for his contribution to AEGEE-Europe's publications and human resources trainings.



Silvia Baita
(AEGEE-Cagliari) 2009

President of AEGEE-Europe 2004-2005, Network Director of AEGEE-Europe 2004, Vice-Chairperson of the Agora 2006, PRWG board member 2002-2003. Recognised for being a prime example of female leadership for many years, being a rare person in the history of AEGEE who took both the roles of the President of AEGEE and Chairperson of the Agora.



Kamala Schütze
(AEGEE-Gießen, AEGEE-Teroli) 2009

Secretary-General of AEGEE-Europe 2004-2005, Project Manager and member of the Summer University Coordination Team 2000-2007, Address Book Coordination Team member 2003-2007. Recognised for her years of devotion to the Summer University Project of AEGEE-Europe, and for bringing innovation and quality to AEGEE's biggest and most important project to this day.



Burcu Becermen
(AEGEE-Ankara) 2012

President of AEGEE-Europe in 2005, European Institutions Director of AEGEE-Europe 2004-2005, Project Manager of the "Turkish-Greek Civic Dialogue Project" 2002-2005. Young European of the Year in 2006, awarded by the Schwarzkopf Foundation. Recognised for her contribution to peace-building, people-to-people contacts and cooperation of young people and organisations in the region by managing the large-scale Dialogue Project.



David Stulik
(AEGEE-Praha) 2013

Vice-President of of AEGEE-Warszawa 1991-1993, one of the first AEGEE members who got accepted at Central European University, speaker of the East-West WG - 1993-1994 (helping many east locals open, when we decided to open AEGEE to east), Projects Director and Vice-President of AEGEE-Europe -1995-1996, Coordination Team of Find your Way project of AEGEE-Europe, Coordinator of the Case Study trip to Ukraine in 1995 - establishment of AEGEE antennae in Ukraine, first ever Young European of the Year, awarded by Schwarzkopf Foundation in 1997 (the year this award was created).



Christophe Leclercq
(AEGEE-Köln) 2014

He was part of the first group of AEGEEans who shaped this organisation (involved in the famous dinner with French President Mitterand and the strong lobby towards the Erasmus programme), and after his active time in AEGEE he founded Euractiv, one of the leading online media platforms for European issues. He has provided valuable support to our European Boards in Brussels year after year, with his personal advice and through a special partnership with Euractiv.

Bernhard Müller
(AEGEE-Augsburg) 2017

Honorary member of his local, former AEGEE-Augsburg. In 1996, he was the founder of the Network Commission, during Autumn Agora Athina 1996. He was also the founder of the AEGEE-Academy in Spring Agora Barcelona 1999. CD member from Spring Agora Barcelona 1999, responsible for Internal Education.

PATRONS



José Manuel Barroso

Former President of the European Commission for Autumn Agora Budapest (2012)



Herman Van Rompuy

Former President of the European Council for Spring Agora Rhein Neckar (2013)



Martin Schulz

Former president of the European Parliament for Autumn Agora Budapest (2012), Spring Agora Rhein Neckar (2013) and the Y Vote 2014 campaign (2013-2014)



Viviane Reding

Former Vice President of the European Commission for European Boards Meeting Lublin (2014)



Marian Harkin

(ALDE) Member of the European Parliament for Europe on Track Project (2012)



Juan Fernando López Aguilar

(S&D) Member of European Parliament for the Y Vote 2014 campaign (2013-2014)



Salvador Sedó i Alabart

(EPP) Member of the European Parliament for Europe on Track Project (2012)



Gabriel Mato Adrover (EPP)

Member of European Parliament for the Y Vote 2014 campaign (2013-2014)



Katarína Neveďalová

(S&D) Member of the European Parliament for Europe on Track Project (2012)



Joachim Zeller

(EPP) Member of European Parliament for the Y Vote 2014 campaign (2013-2014)



Eider Gardiazabal Rubial

(S&D) Member of the European Parliament for Europe on Track Project (2012)
Members of European Parliament for the Y Vote 2014 campaign (2013-2014)



Iratxe García Pérez

(S&D) Member of European Parliament for the Y Vote 2014 campaign (2013-2014)



Baroness Catherine Ashton

Former First Vice President of the European Commission for Eastern Partnership Project (2012)



Ban Ki-moon

Secretary General of the United Nations for Autumn Agora Zaragoza (2013)



Androulla Vassiliou

Former Commissioner for Education, Multilingualism, Culture and Youth for European Boards Meeting Valletta (2013)



Eva Paunova

Member of the European Parliament (EPP) and Co-Chair of the Youth Inter-group for the Structured Dialogue on Youth Round Table (2015)

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

The Council of Europe advocates freedom of expression and of the media, freedom of assembly, equality, and the protection of minorities. The European Youth Foundation (EYF) is a fund established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial and educational support for European youth activities.



The EU programme for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. The aim of **Erasmus+** is to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion, as well as the aims of ET2020, the EU's strategic framework for education and training.



EU Careers is responsible for selecting staff on behalf of the European Institutions and Agencies, including the European Commission, Parliament and Council. It provides European youth with information on the career opportunities within European Institutions.



Europe Language Jobs



Interrail.eu is the online company for European rail passes. It sells Interrail passes that lets you travel through 30 European countries by train. Traveling to the adventurous Balkans, the sunny south, or the breath-taking nature in Scandinavia; with the convenience of a rail pass a unique adventure awaits you. Interrail passes are for European travelers only. Are you from a non-EU country? Check out Eurail passes at www.eurail.com.



Pricewise is the largest energy switching service in Europe. In 2013 we helped more than 500.000 European consumers switch supplier and save money. In the Netherlands we also have compare tools for telecom and insurance products. These tools help Dutch AEGEE members save money.



CORPORATE PARTNERS



[SPOTAHOME]

SPOTAHOME.COM is an online booking platform for home rentals.

We personally visit properties to bring you videos, photos, floorplan and detailed information to make the best choice. We offer the most comprehensive listings in Europe. Use the code AEGEESAH25 for a 25% discount on all your bookings.

The N26 logo features the text "N26" in a bold, white sans-serif font, with a horizontal line through the "N" and "2".

N26 has redesigned banking for the smartphone, making it simple and fast. Opening an account takes 8 minutes and can be done from your smartphone. Withdrawals in the eurozone and bank transfers in euro have no fees.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS



StudyPortals is the international study choice platform, enabling students to find and compare their study options across borders. With over 120,000 published courses from over 2,450 participating universities and over 19 million unique visitors per year, StudyPortals is a leading information source for study seekers.



Choose a career that could turn your life around.



Smart, go-getting and multilingual? The EU needs your skills now. Enjoy bending your mind to topical issues, communicating with multinational colleagues, and making a difference for Europe. Stay tuned.



2. AEGEE COOPERATES



A YEAR OF ANNIVERSARIES

This year was a year of many celebrations - 2017 marked the 25th anniversary of the Maastricht Treaty and the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties but also the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus Programme. We participated in and co-created events which were Official European-level celebrations marking the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus Programme took place in Strasbourg, France on 13 June 2017. Many years ago, AEGEE played a key role in convincing the French President to support the Erasmus Programme. Through the years we kept our active role in shaping the Erasmus Programme, for example with the inclusion of Turkey in the programme. This year we celebrated the past by looking into the future - on the event in Strasbourg, Joanna Pankowska shared AEGEE's vision on future of the Erasmus programme while speaking in the panel.



YO!Fest (Youth Opinion Festival) is the annual, political and youth-led festival organised by the European Youth Forum. This year, the event took place in partnership with the City of Maastricht and the Province of Limburg and the event represented a key event for the "Europe Calling" celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Maastricht Treaty. AEGEE, as a partner organisation of the event, had two activities run by our members alone. One other big activity, "The European House", was held together with four other organisations: ESN, WOSM, YEU and IFM-SEI. The event consisted in a momento during which young people could participate in a quick workshop, discuss with policy makers, relax on puffs or pillows and then leave their feedback in a room designed for leaving it feedback. We also had a stand promoting More than education - European Citizens' Initiative - where signatures were collected but also impressions were

kept on the education the participants received in their elementary school - it's never too early for civic education!



AEGEE was one of the official partners of the March of Europe which took place not only to celebrate the 60 years of Rome Treaties, but also to manifest unity against divisions and new walls. During the celebrations in Rome, the Network Commissioner Gabriele Scollo, together with members of locals nearby, joined in March for Europe where they spread special AEGEE leaflets.

LIFELONG LEARNING PLATFORM

Joanna Pankowska has been nominated by AEGEE as a candidate to the Steering Committee of the Lifelong Learning Platform. The elections for this took place the first week of June and we are happy to announce that she has been elected!



The Lifelong Learning Platform is an umbrella representing the European civil society in the field of education. On the picture (right to left order), you can see Brikena Xhomaqi - Director of the Platform, Joanna Pankowska - AEGEE, David Lopez - President, and, elected for the second term, Luis Costa.

LES ANCIENS

There is life after AEGEE !

Imagine yourself a few years away from now: you work in tourism, diplomacy, at a bank or any other sector. At some point you realize that something is missing: the fun of meeting up with people from all over Europe. Then it is time to rediscover the AEGEE spirit...

To keep the vibe of AEGEE spirit in professional life, a group of alumni started Les Anciens d'AEGEE in 1990. Since then, Les Anciens grew from having just one annual event to sometimes six events per year and 600 members. All a bit more quite than in the old days, but with the same vibe nevertheless!

At the beginning of the academic year, Les Anciens come together for 'Back to Brussels' and meet the new Comité Directeur. Sport events excursions around Brussels and a barbeque are part of the program.

This year we have planned to celebrate the New Year's Eve in Skopje and if there is snow, we will go skiing. Are you already tempted to join?



During spring, we meet for our general assembly. In 2017, we tried a new concept to connect to alumni. We invited a particular group to attend the annual Les Anciens Meeting. The members of the very first Network Commission reunited during 'Back to Budapest'. It was a big success as these Anciens were also inviting other alumni to attend the event. More people, more fun!

And there was another nouveauté: thanks to the Comité Directeur and AEGEE-Budapest the current generation of AEGEE members was able to participate in a special programme, the 'TimeCapsule', with workshops by alumni.

For the 2018 edition in Zagreb we would like to reunite trainers and former (board) members of the Academy. With help of the printed edition of the AEGEE Address Book (abolished in 2008) we are able to trace those alumni.

While your antenna might reunite local alumni, les Anciens is the official alumni organization of AEGEE-Europe. Becoming a member is easy.

According to our secretary general, Julia de Cuveland: "If you want to become a member of les Anciens you just need to go to our website www.anciens.org and fill in the contact form under the button 'join les Anciens'. We will provide you with a membership form. As new member, you get a 50% reduction on the membership fee!"

Going forward, les Anciens will be more vibrant, more thematic in approach and with diversified activities to enable having all different age-groups and interests under one umbrella as THE AEGEE alumni organization.

So join us to continue the AEGEE-an lifestyle!

Will we meet you at our Anciens meeting in Zagreb in spring 2018?



3. FACES OF THE NETWORK



COMITÉ DIRECTEUR 2016/2017

By Tekla Hajdu, Network Director 2016-2017

One year ago as CD-elects we were slowly closing our lives in our homes, packing, saying goodbye to our friends, and looking forward to our year in Brussels to be the 54th Comité Directeur of AEGEE-Europe. One year later, we have been through ups and downs, struggles and joys, but all of us think that it was still worth it.

From the middle of July 2016, we have endured an extensive knowledge transfer period to be prepared for the year we will be working with.

The first weeks of August were mostly spent on building up our Activity Plan, and the preparations for the first big task of our year: Ideas Factory León in September, and event that only happens once every 3 years in AEGEE. With the first contact with our European Bodies and the first live meetings of the teams in the house starting from August, the feeling became real: from now on, CD term started with full speed and activity!

The main task in September was as mentioned, Ideas Factory León, where the participants and the Network came up with ideas for the next Strategic Plan to be ratified at Agora Chisinau. We also had the first Autumn Network Meeting for 2016 opening the season for Network Meetings.

Moreover, AEGEE took part in the 17th University of Youth and Development in Molina with a considerable delegation.



October was the month of Agora: for the first time, the hosting local was AEGEE-Chișinău, which gave a special aura to this Agora, where the Strategic Plan 2017-2020 was also finalised and voted upon by the Network. Before Agora, the “GR-EAT multiplier” training took place in Brussels, which linked many AEGEE-ans and young people from other NGO-s.

November was mainly dedicated to Network Meetings and team meetings in the house, the General Mailing, and in the General Assembly of European Youth Forum where our former President, Luis Alvarado Martinez got elected for the President of YFJ and our Board members also actively participated in the processes with a session about e-democracy.

December was mostly about the preparations for EPM Zagreb with the selection and live meeting of Content managers, and many skypes with AEGEE-Zagreb about local organisations.

January 2017 started with the return to the office after Christmas break and then continued with the preparations for EPM Zagreb, including preparatory Skypes for participants. Also, the idea for CD on Track was finalised this month along with the preparations for the route and contacting the locals.

February was the shortest, but one of the most exciting months during our year with CD on Track, EPM Zagreb, and the first European Training Course in the middle of February.

March started with the last stops of CD on Track, and finished with the ETC+/Leadership training where 8 AEGEEans could learn more about the work of CD and how to improve their leadership skills.

April was the month again dedicated to Network Meetings and Agora preparations, and the start of Europe on Track 4th edition with the Education for the Present, Democracy for the Future conference in Budapest while May was mostly about Alumni relations with the General Assembly of Les Ancients, Europe on Track with the special attention to the Mind the Gap conference in Brussels, and of course Agora Enschede where many things happened in a week.

During June, many external events took place, such as the General Assembly of the Lifelong Learning Platform over the European Civic Days, and the second European Training Course with over 10 participants.

Finally, here we are again in July, where our roles have turned: now we are providing the knowledge transfer for CD55, and planning to return to our homes again from the 1st August 2017.

It would be impossible to list everything that happened during the year within AEGEE and in the world as well, which was by itself a challenge due to the happenings in politics: more terrorist attacks all over the world, the US presidential elections, the rise of populism in the political life of Europe, and so on. Hereby we would like to thank the Network, our partners and our supporters who were with us during this year, and we wish all the best of luck for CD55 for their upcoming journey starting on 1st August 2017!

MEMBERS OF THE MONTH

By Erika Bettin, AEGEE-Verona

Every month, The AEGEEan - AEGEE's online magazine, elects a Member of the Month, rewarding them for the work they did for AEGEE. Based on input from the Network and AEGEE bodies, the editorial team choose, with difficulty, the member who did an outstanding job in contributing to the work of the association.

Taha Korhan Salan (AEGEE-Hatay)

Member of the Month of May 2016



AEGEE is filled with gorgeous people and brave ideas. What inspires me personally, are all those different initiatives which allow me to be active. Giving life and structure to your idea is a great challenge worth taking. Be optimistic, because in our AEGEE environment you will find many supporters of your idea. Look forward to a challenge and dream big. This organisation gives you the opportunity to develop your ideas, to analyse situations, to create strategies, to work in a team and to achieve common goals with your fellows. Being inspired and motivated by the individuals that I worked with, I had the chance to exchange ideas, to set up new plans and projects and to build up a prosperous European environment for everyone. In this multicultural palette of young Europeans, we shape our common future with bright ideas!

Firdevs Çazım (AEGEE-Ankara)

Member of the Month - 2016 Summer Edition

When it comes to AEGEE, I've tried to take something from every area of this beautiful platform. Especially during the time I worked for The AEGEEan magazine, I showed my self-confidence and developed myself. I think there is no such thing as working for AEGEE, because people who know and recognise this community in its true sense will always have something more in their career and life. AEGEE taught me how to communicate better with people, how to be a leader when the time for it comes, or how to look at things from different perspectives. If you are in a project, even playing a small role, AEGEE makes you worthwhile. That's why AEGEE is a platform for human development. Whether it's a local in Europe or in Turkey, people are contributing to one another. This makes AEGEE people different.



Katharina Jiménez Weese (AEGEE-Bamberg)

Member of the Month of September 2016



All these wonderful cities I travelled to, awesome events I attended, inspiring people I met, useful skills I gained, different teams I've worked with, crazy European Nights I enjoyed, technically disastrous Skype meetings I endured, lovely reunions I had, unforgettable memories I made... were possible thanks to AEGEE. Without AEGEE my student life would have been cool for sure, but AEGEE just made it so much greater! No university teaches you what you can learn in AEGEE, that's why I am very thankful for all the opportunities AEGEE gave me, which helped me to develop myself, to meet amazing friends, to see beautiful places and to work on building a stronger Europe. May the AEGEE spirit be with all of us!

Ana Gancearuc (AEGEE-Chișinău)

Member of the Month of October 2016

I am absolutely thankful that seven years ago I became a member of AEGEE- Chișinău, embracing AEGEE-Europe's values, culture, people and events. Simply being more open to the world and its possibilities, acquiring new skills or trying to step on unknown fields, I can do more outside of my comfort zone. And here I am, referring to the large variety of possibilities AEGEE has given me. Starting with travelling, discover new places, new people, new cultures and traditions, following with improving my English, then stepping into something totally new for me, involving myself locally as a board member up to the European level. And with the Agora we had the chance to organise last year, I think I can honestly say I am a proud member now. Thank you AEGEE for that!



Francesca Amelia Zorcolo (AEGEE-Cagliari)

Member of the Month of November 2016



The best part of being in AEGEE is to express yourself. AEGEE gives you the opportunity to make new experiences and to grow fast in a challenging environment. You can pursue your interests! Our association offers you all the tools you need to turn passions into realistic projects, always helped and supported by our associates with advices and alternatives. In my opinion, this is the key of AEGEE: to help you pursue your dreams and passions, and to create new contacts to have this ideas realised in a positive, proactive and European environment.

Gabriela Szyszka (AEGEE-Kraków)

Member of the Month of December 2016

For me the most important thing in AEGEE are of course my friends from the whole organisation and the atmosphere during European events. In those moments, I really feel like an inhabitant of a democratic, diverse and borderless Europe. I love helping AEGEEans when they are visiting Kraków or hosting them when I have time. It completely confirms one of my favorite quotes from the movie *Into the Wild*: "Happiness is only real when shared".



Gabriela Geana (AEGEE-București)

Members of the Month of January 2017



The main idea behind the protest is that corruption has gone so far in Romania that we felt it in the air and we couldn't stand it anymore. The new government had released an urgent ordinance overnight which only the politicians who have been under investigation by the NDA (National Directorate for Anti-Corruption), corrupted politicians who are in prison or others about to go to prison would have benefitted from. In other words, they wanted to make the corruption official by law and we couldn't just watch it happen. Immediately after the press conference ended with the announcement,

hundreds of people have gone out in the streets and in front of the Romanian government, demanding to retreat the ordinance and to quit their jobs. That night was the moment all of us just opened our eyes and realised that if this goes on, we will not evolve anymore as a nation, we will decay gradually and corruption will eat us alive. That night was the night we all fought back together to stand up for our democratic rights and stop corruption once and for all. That was the wake-up call and from that moment on, we haven't stopped protesting every night.

Marina Klanjčić (AEGEE-Zagreb)

Member of the Month of February 2017

Almost three years ago, I googled "cheap travels for students", and AEGEE popped up. Here I am now, as Network Commissioner, President of a local and a former European Planning Meeting Main Coordinator, and my goal was just cheap traveling in Europe. I guess AEGEE turned my world upside down in the best possible way a person can imagine. What I thought was impossible suddenly became not just possible, but also successfully achieved. What I learned in this period of time cannot be replaced by any other formal way of education, and all the people I have met influenced me in their own way. The knowledge gained through experience, the amazing friends that started as strangers, the memories that will stay forever - now I just wonder what is the next step? Let's see what the future will bring... I can just say: thank you, AEGEE!



Stella Krokou (AEGEE-Thessaloniki)

Member of the Month of March 2017

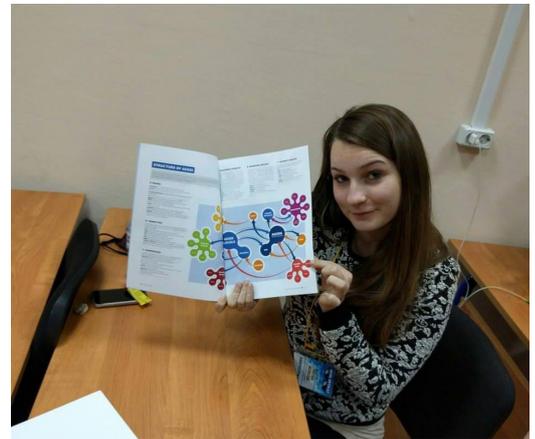


The magical thing you experience once you become part of the AEGEE family is that you feel its presence in every possible aspect of your life from that moment on. You feel it shaping your knowledge of global and European issues, affecting your travel list priorities and improving your communication skills in every language you know. You feel it when you organise a personal or professional activity efficiently, when you feel absolutely confident about yourself and when you see that there isn't any new experience that frightens you anymore. But most of all, you feel it when you think of all the opportunities, challenges and amazing memories you have and you have never even dreamt about! #storyofmyAEGEElife

Petra Buruzs (AEGEE-Budapest)

Member of the Month of April 2017

AEGEE is a playground where you can dream, where you can fail several times, while you are still safe and surrounded by open-minded people and feel the unconditional trust. You can learn by doing, explore different cultures and your limits. You can develop several unreviewed skills, such as selective listening, multitasking, and problem solving. Try different departments and in the future implement it to your work. But, most importantly, you can enjoy what you are doing there. At some point you feel that you would like to give back as much as you received, but later on you realise it is impossible. AEGEE will be always a part of you.



Marta Wnuk (AEGEE-Warsawa/AEGEE-Enschede)

Member of the Month of May 2017



AEGEE has certainly allowed me to live my passion and to make a meaningful contribution in the areas where I felt inspired to act. But AEGEE has also taught me how to find courage and perseverance, and how to stand up for what I believe is right. During my journey in AEGEE I have experienced many truly magical moments and moments of hardship too. It all has shaped me and made me remember those five years as decisive in my life.

LOCALS OF THE MONTH

By Erika Bettin, AEGEE-Verona

Every month The AEGEEan - AEGEE's online magazine asks the Network and the AEGEE bodies to nominate a local that distinguished itself from others thanks to the activities they organised. The editorial staff of the magazine chooses, not without difficulty, the local that stood out with remarkable activities which contribute to the development of young people.

AEGEE-Bergamo

Local of the Month of May 2016

The strength of our antenna is in the group of members. We can work together, and we are a big family. Nevertheless, the strength and success of our projects is also due to the great help given by the city and the university. Something we can improve is our number of activity, not only at the local level, but also at the European level. We can always work harder, and try to improve ourselves and our home: Europe.



AEGEE-Utrecht

Local of the Month of June 2016

Our local is very active. We have many members in different local committees organising activities on a local level, and we organise several European events every year. There is always a nice atmosphere during our weekly social nights, where members enjoy a cheap beer at the bar, dance the night away till the early hours or look at our map of Europe to decide where to travel to next. If I could describe our local in one sentence, it would be "the local where everything is possible".



AEGEE-Podgorica

Local of the Month 2016 - Summer Edition

We are very proud of our antenna, because we have students from all faculties of the university of Montenegro. We have six board members, and one committee. That might be too much but we don't have any problems in functioning. Everybody knows their responsibilities and there is no overlapping. We have thirty-ish members, with ten-ish of them active.



AEGEE-Ploiești

Local of the Month of September 2016



AEGEE for us means an opportunity for empowerment. It is a constant stream of advocacy, networking, civic education and European values embedded within a friendly atmosphere full of remarkable people that pave the way to meaningful debates regardless of the topic. At its core lies the energy and perseverance of each individual to strive for more in his/her community. At a larger scale, it comprises of major events with genuine value and purpose. Summarised, AEGEE is the manifesto of today's young Europeans, aware of their power for change and peace

AEGEE-Chișinău

Local of the Month of October 2016

In the last two years, AEGEE-Chișinău has grown a lot, and this fact is confirmed by the numerous prizes we have won: a special award for civic activism, the prize for the most active NGO, the prize for the best project etc. This way, AEGEE-Chișinău became a youth resource centre, a place of continuous training. We also started to send our members to the National Youth Council of Moldova (NYCM). Now we have two members in the board of NYCM, one of them as Vice-President. We became a youth representative structure, and thanks to that our voice is heard more often. We are happy that a lot more people know about us now, and that different youth portals e-mail us asking to post about our awesome association, especially when they find out via social media about the different events that we are organising.



AEGEE-Manchester

Local of the Month of November 2016



Here in the United Kingdom, Brexit is still on many people's minds. For the AEGEE-Manchester community, this issue is of high importance. Many of us are EU nationals who hope to stay in the country after university and find a job here. Since we could not vote in the referendum, or in last June's election, we need to express our concerns and opinions in another way. AEGEE gave us a platform to do just that. We organised meetings between EU nationals residing in Britain, Remain campaigners and UK citizens. This exchange broadened our views on the whole issue, and we felt more included in the discussions thanks to it. Without AEGEE, we would not have had such an opportunity to participate.

AEGEE-Eskişehir

Local of the Month of December 2016

As board members of AEGEE-Eskişehir, we are trying to show our members that AEGEE is a world that everybody can shape as they wish. While our members are working on a project or an event, we do our best to help them to develop themselves, and have a great experience. Every member of AEGEE-Eskişehir has a serious working discipline, but at the same time they also enjoy their work. After every event, they tell us that all the experiences they had, made them a different person and gave them a new perspective. To sum up, for the members of AEGEE-Eskişehir, AEGEE is a place where everyone can find a place to develop themselves and go on new adventures while getting new life perspectives by striving for a borderless Europe.



AEGEE-Berlin

Local of the Month of January 2017

AEGEE-Berlin perfectly embodies the spirit of AEGEE as an organisation. Our members are not only from every corner of Europe, but of the world. We are committed to improving our city, and all of Europe, and above all we are committed to the AEGEE spirit. We are extremely proud of our members for being engaged in projects on the local level, European level and all over the network! AEGEE-Berliners can always be counted on to join, whether you are trying to start a major project or just meet up for a beer, and that's why we love them.

AEGEE-Düsseldorf

Local of the Month of February 2017

There are a few projects we are working on. Some more history-changing, some others purely for keep our spirits high. We are currently establishing collaborations with other youth organisations, which will help us benefit from each other and spread Euro-optimism throughout Düsseldorf together. It is something that we consider to be crucial and it is nice to work towards the same goal apart from the AEGEE network. In accordance with our Regional Training Course (RTC), we decided to use sports as a mean of team building. We are now doing monthly yoga sessions to keep us healthy and ready for new challenges.



AEGEE-Gdańsk

Local of the Month of March 2017



“Size doesn’t matter” or “nothing is impossible” - it is hard to choose our motto. We like both and we think they equally suit the character of our local. Every event we organised has taught us one thing which we would like to share with you – if you really want to do something, you will find a way. If you don’t, you will find an excuse.

AEGEE-Oviedo

Local of the Month of April 2017

Being part of the AEGEE network is very inspiring for us because it offers us the invaluable chance to meet new people from many places, discover new ideas, acquire new skills that are useful for life and do new things. It allows us to travel, something that we all consider the best way to get cured from stereotypes. All of us like travelling, so what could be better than travelling and learning around Europe? AEGEE trains us in non-formal education (NFE). We like to attend and deliver trainings, and think that all members should benefit from NFE in AEGEE in order to develop themselves personally and within the association.



AEGEE-Torino

Local of the Month of May 2017



Torino is a big city and it not easy to measure our impact on the community. For sure, we are able to create spaces for sharing and discussing and probably a lot of new friendships, relationships and collaborations started during our events. We think that the fact that we can help young people who move to Torino to find their new dimension is already a great thing. In addition, this year we started to collaborate with external partners like start-ups, other associations and the municipality of Torino with which we are planning some activities with the purpose to involve more young people in the social dynamics of the city of Torino and to promote active citizenship.

THE AGORA SEEN THROUGH THE CHAIR TEAM'S EYES

by Erika Bettin, Chairperson of Autumn Agora Catania

Agora. This amazing entity that brings together hundreds and hundreds of AEGEE members twice a year, from all around Europe, in order to decide the future directions of the Association and elect its new representatives. For four to five days, a tight schedule of plenaries, prytania, workshops and progress meetings unfold with the aim to connect, discuss and decide what it's best for our Association.

However, what the Network sees during the event is the fruit of months of preparation that involves many bodies: Local organisers, Comité Directeur, Juridical Commission and Chair Team. The Chair Team, composed by Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, IT responsible and Secretary of the Agora, is elected every Autumn Agora and is in charge of the delicate task of drafting the agenda, selecting participants and, eventually, chairing the entire Agora, when the results of months of preparation will be put into practice.



A position within the Chair Team is definitely one of the most engaging and stressful in the entire organisation, but it brings a lot of rewards too. According to Marta Wnuk, Chairperson of Spring Agora Enschede, "it's way more challenging than people imagine and it's also more enjoyable than people think. Until you step up in the Chair's shoes, you will not realise how many factors you have to take into consideration while chairing an Agora and how many different, often conflicting interests have to be balanced while creating and managing an agenda. A Chairperson has to be able to withstand the pressure and always think of the best possible solution with which the right conduct of the General Assembly can be assured. But despite those difficulties, however, being a Chair has a lot of perks". Enjoying the other side of the table in an Agora has many; they can be found in little things such as running inner jokes that break the tension of chairing, or having the honour to lead a plenary in the exquisite venue of the Donizetti Theatre in Bergamo like it happened for Marta. Tom Simons was Chairperson for four Agoras and two EPMs, from EPM Burgos to Autumn Agora Chisinau, and he feels that "having had the possibility to take on that challenge, despite all the headaches it comes with, has been one of the best experiences I've had within AEGEE".



One of the first bits of knowledge transfer passing from one team to another is definitely to expect the unexpected, studying all the possible scenarios in order to be always ready to react. Difficult situations can always arise and they can take multiple forms as there are multiple procedures that a Chair should know (almost) by heart. "Every Agora provides an unexpected challenge that needs to be dealt with ad hoc, but trying to manage those unexpected situations is part of the fun of being in the Chair Team." says Tom "For me there

were several challenging situations. There was the situation when we had to rebuild the agenda of the last day of Autumn Agora Kyiv almost from scratch the evening before, due to the delays. There was also the whole discussion around the Network Commission statement in Bergamo". Marta echoes "Definitely the closing plenary of Agora Bergamo. It was my first Agora in the role of Chair and we were faced with a quite challenging situation that unfolded during the plenary and had to be handled on the spot. It required very good knowledge of procedures, ability to adapt to constant changes in the agenda and various demands of people, as well as calm judgment despite the stress involved".

The interest and the hype surrounding the Agora creates a lot of expectations in the members that are going to participate, and sometimes the work of the Chair Team is taken for granted. "Often people think it's unfair when their request gets rejected, but the Chair has to weigh in all the stakeholders of the Agora in order to finish everything in time, this means the possibilities provided by the local organisers, but also each and every Agora participant." says Tom. "Rejecting a request is not something Chairpersons do for fun, they always try to accommodate as much as possible, but sometimes people should know that when the Chair says no, there is a good reason for it". For Marta, many participants expect to be selected regardless their motivation letters or members expect that their requests to allocate speaking time are granted. She explains that "Whereas the first it's about performing our tasks with fairness, the second is always a challenge to build the agenda that works on a given day of the Agora given all the restrictions we have".

Regardless all the difficulties, the struggle to accommodate every requests, the rush to amend the Agenda, sitting at the Chair table and looking at members enjoying the Agora repays for all the efforts endured in the preparation. "Some parts of the Chair Team shouldn't be written down but experienced, so I encourage you to run for Chair to find out for yourself" concludes Tom.



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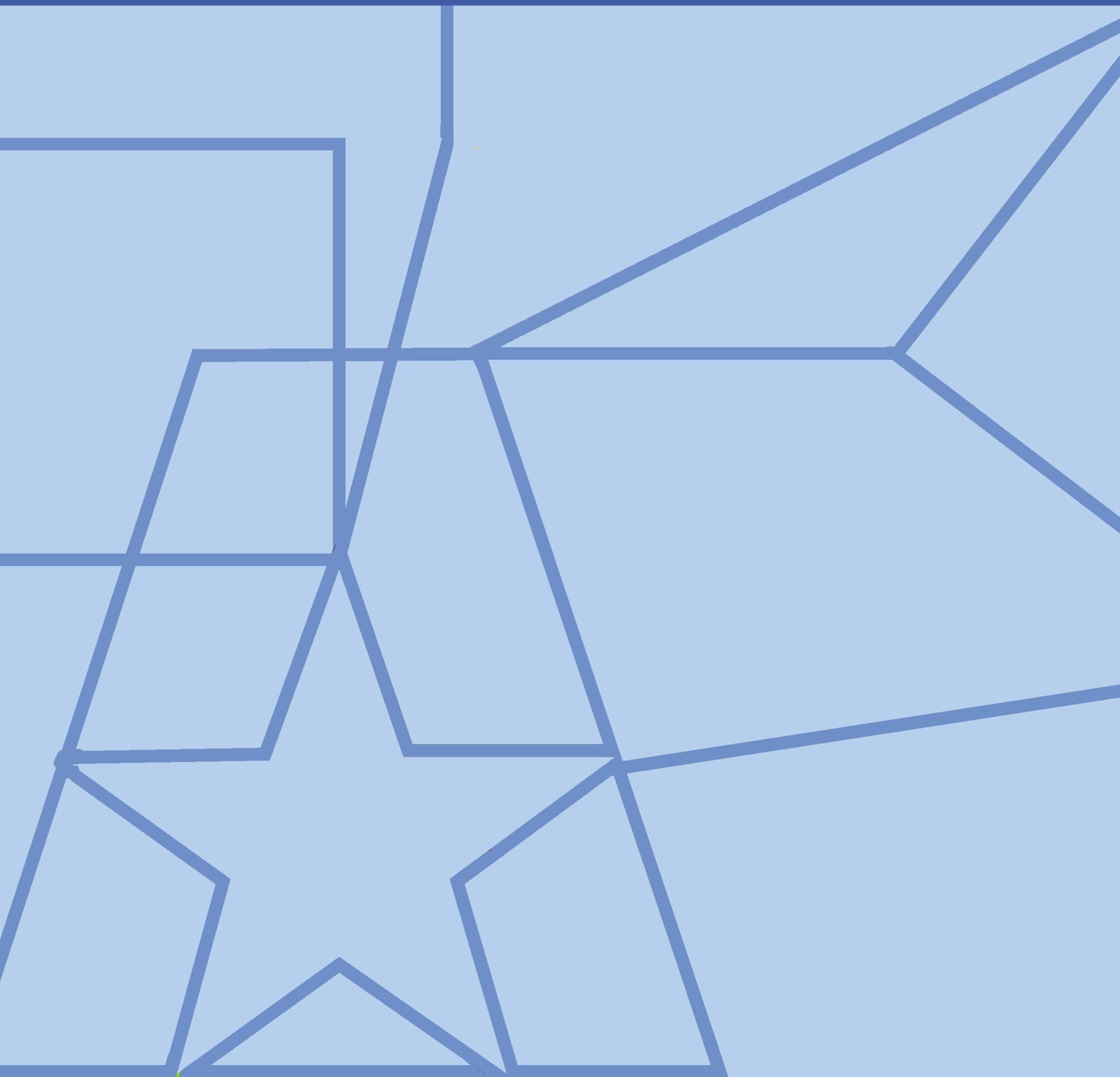
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4. IN THE SPOTLIGHT



IDEAS FACTORY LEÓN

Alberto Arroyo, Laura Pérez Álvarez and Sergio Nistal Prieto

Every three years, an AEGEE local somewhere in Europe, organizes a Planning Meeting so we, the members, can discuss and set our Strategic Plan (our objectives) for the following three years. The last one took place in León, where 16 members coming from AEGEE-León, Madrid, Bilbao and Torino managed to organise an unforgettable event for more than 60 participants, that would give input on where the Network wanted to take our organization.

Everything started in March 2016, when a small group of organisers from AEGEE-León decided that their antenna was more than prepared to organize an awesome event. They wanted to put León in the map of Europe, so they applied for organizing the next Planning Meeting (PM). Then in Agora Bergamo, while some of us were worried about the elections' results, we found out that AEGEE-León was chosen to host the next Planning Meeting!

We felt really cheerful and pleased, willing to start working as soon as possible. Then, Álvaro Nieto (co-main organiser) came to the stage and assured the whole Network that we would be able not only to organize a PM but also made it memorable for everyone. That was just the starting point for the event so we had to work hard in order to have a good team of organizers. We asked for help from other locals and we got a massive participation: it came the time to choose between the 13 applications from the surrounding antennae (and even from AEGEE-Torino and AEGEE-Firenze). Finally, we "hired" people from AEGEE-Madrid, AEGEE-Bilbao and AEGEE-Torino.



The team started to work hard right after the Agora. Despite the risks (especially since most of the organization took place during summertime), we could organize what we and many participants think was one of the best organized events. The recipe for this is basic but important: a satisfactory communication between the Comité Directeur and the local organizers, a good planification of the tasks, an interesting program, a good accommodation, big amounts of tasty food and, last but not least, an awesome team.

During the event, discussions were held about what would be the future Focus Areas, approved later at Agora Chisinau. Participants were highly motivated. But we would like to highlight that some of the discussions and votings were open also for members who could not attend the event, meaning that opinions from a big amount of members were taken into account.

Also, in the programme there were other presentations and activities related to interesting topics. For example, we proudly celebrated the 30th anniversary of the European Voluntary Service, as AEGEE-León is very active on this field (more info on page X, where we can put the EVS article). Thus, we had a specific session given by a representative of the Spanish National Agency.

In the end, not only was this one more example of how we know how to organize amazing events in AEGEE, but also another reminder of how there are many active young Europeans out there, working actively leading the thematic part of our association and willing to discuss in which direction we, both in AEGEE and in Europe, want to go in the future.

AUTUMN AGORA CHISINAU 2016

I have a dream ... a well-known statement by Martin Luther King, which we can relate to us, AEGEE-Chișinău.

AEGEE-Chișinău had a dream, to organize and host Autumn Agora 2016. Despite the fact that our decision was spontaneous, this thought was already present in the minds of everyone from our antenna for a while. We were aware that there was no better moment for us to make this dream come true than when our antenna was this eager to organize such a big event for our organization. Having a strong will and determination, we did believe that everything is possible and when there is desire and the right circumstances, no great distance can be too much of an obstacle.

We put a lot of effort into the location: finding a beautiful and charming auditorium to serve as the main stage, outside of which we could create spaces for intimate and cosy workshops, space to register, space to exchange currency, space to receive meals, and space to buy merchandise. A huge plus, I think, was the resting areas, spaces with beanbags where the participants could relax in between sessions. One of the most outstanding locations was the 'palm room' with real palm trees, just a mere two hundred meters away from the main venue.

Before the Agora, we, in collaboration with Comité Directeur and the AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project, managed to organize a youth conference related to the Eastern Partnership Project, with a very important and actual topic for our country: "Perspective and prospects from Eastern partnership to EU". We successfully recruited a diverse group of international volunteers to assist us in setting up this youth conference, making the organization of it truly diverse and polyglot, a.k.a. European.

The Autumn Agora Chișinău 2016 was certainly successful to transfer information about the various projects, committees, working groups and commissions of AEGEE, it was a successful event in. Like every six months, the Agora is a place where everyone in AEGEE can come together to discuss their ideas and opinions as one big European community, and this edition certainly furthered the cause for a borderless Europe. This Agora took place in the most "borderless" country in Europe, where every EU citizen can enter with just his ID and European citizens from non-EU countries can enter with just their Passport, not needing a Visa.

I still remember the day when I received the news that Autumn Agora 2016 would take place in Chișinău. My feelings were a cocktail of happiness and fear, I couldn't fall asleep that night, the movie of Agora being held in Chișinău was constantly running in front of my eyes. We had many troubles, conflicts, problems. But you know what?, there is no problem that does not have a solution. It was an unbelievable experience with powerful emotions – a real team building activity. We managed to do it all with a very small team, but at the same time a very friendly one. Our international helpers were a big help, and I want to thank them all for that. After all the work we did it is important for us to know that our efforts were appreciated, that the participants really enjoyed it and that they had a nice experience in our city. We put so much love into this event and it was a dream come true.

EPM ZAGREB 2017

by Natalia Klimenko

Few topics are as actual for Europe today as the rise of populism and euroscepticism. Given that 2017 is the year of multiple elections in a number of countries of the continent, this is an issue AEGEE could not but had to pay attention to. Populism and Anti-European Agitation - that was the topic discussed at the European Planning Meeting (EPM) in Zagreb on 23rd-27th of February. Several months after the thematic conference, Key to Europe spoke to EPM Content Manager Eyrin Kyriakidi to find out if AEGEE can successfully react to European political developments.

Time goes by, and several elections in major European countries have taken place since the EPM in February. The long-awaited elections in the Netherlands and in France ended with the victory of pro-European forces. In Germany, the victory of Euro-optimists in September seems a hard fact rather than an assumption. The UK is struggling in the wake of Brexit, for it turned out that a vast majority of the country's population do not support the anti-EU policy of the ruling party. Do you think AEGEEans' fears of anti-European agitation might have been exaggerated?

Eyrin: To reach a conclusion like that we should first search for the source of those fears. Anti-European sentiments come from people who disagree not only with the way that the EU functions, but most importantly, with the European values. Equality, human rights, freedom, rule of law, democracy and respect are only a few of the common values shared by the people of Europe. Our generation has grown up with those privileges and a significant percentage of AEGEEans grew up in a part of the continent which has not experienced a war in more than 70 years, in a world full of turmoil.

Those last things are what, in my opinion, have triggered such a strong reaction, not only from AEGEEans but from the rest of the European citizens, too: The realisation that we have been living in a peaceful and prosperous environment, which could change in the blink of an eye. However, I would like to believe that we have reached a point where we have stopped caring only about ourselves. That we have stopped defending only our own rights and interests. That, amidst of the current crises (e.g. the refugee and the environmental crises), we refuse to look out only for what would be the best for us as individuals, and that we are ready to defend every cause which is ethical and just.

For this reason, I do not believe that our fears were - or still are - exaggerated. It is our obligation to defend what we have and improve it as much as we can. The results of the elections proved that the people realise the danger and they are ready to "fight" for what they believe in.





What other threats to Europe's unity and democracy could you highlight?

Eyrin: The biggest threat to Europe's unity and democracy is Europe itself. The policies that make Europe what it is are a threat, not someone or something from outside of Europe. Yet (even within AEGEE) we have not managed to bridge certain gaps between the nations. Europe is inhabited by people with varying historical experiences and diverse cultures. Different types of governance, different laws, different customs. This is not something bad, something which needs to be eradicated. We simply have to accept and embrace our diversity, exchange the best practices and learn to work together, as we let stereotypes and doubts fade into the past.

Of course, it can be argued that the recent terrorist attacks can pose a threat to our unity, as societies get divided because of religion and privilege. But in the end, it all comes down to social inclusion and fair treatment. So all of those threats come from within, not from an outside enemy. What we need to deal with is the way we function as a union of people, as a society.

Can AEGEE contribute to enhancing EU's image in the eyes of its closest neighbours such as Russia, Belarus, or Turkey?

Eyrin: AEGEE can most certainly contribute positively to the image of the European Union towards Russia, Belarus and Turkey. We should not forget that AEGEE has advocated on a matter of issues which concern both the youth of those countries and policies which would improve their relations with the EU. One example of such advocacy is the introduction of the Erasmus programme in Turkey, as a result of the mobilisation of AEGEE-Europe and the Turkish antennae. Our network can and has had an impact for generations.

However, this does not mean that it is our duty to simply promote the views and policies or the image of the European Union. We have a mind of our own and we can decide when to support and when to stand our ground, as many members did by expressing their disagreement to the refugee re-admission agreement between the EU and Turkey.

Moreover, we should never forget the AEGEEans who come from countries which are not in the European Union. What binds us, as AEGEEans, are our common values, beliefs and vision, not political pacts and treaties. We have developed for decades as a separate entity and this is what we should continue doing. Thus, we should not let people view us as an EU fan club.

How can AEGEE promote active pro-European behaviour of Europe's young citizens?

Eyrin: "AEGEE strives for a democratic, diverse and borderless Europe, which is socially, economically and politically integrated, and values the participation of young people in its construction and development".

Our vision is the guide which shows us what we should do. AEGEE has been promoting active, pro-European, behaviour since the day it got founded. We are organising intercultural exchanges and conferences, we advocate for non-formal learning and we hold workshops.

What has changed is how much attention we have been getting. Since we are not the only students' association that promotes or advocates for those issues, we need to make sure that our voice is heard loud and clear. And this will come in two steps:

1. We need to be active. We need to keep organising trainings, projects, campaigns and events which will help us fulfil our goal and will bring AEGEEans closer to each other.
2. We need to be more vocal about what we do. When we organise something we should try to include our cities, municipalities, and universities as much as possible. When we publish a booklet, we need to make sure that it will be read by as many people as possible.

We will promote active, pro-European behaviour to the fullest of our abilities when we become a much more extrovert network, not only in Brussels, but in our own cities.

SPRING AGORA ENSCHEDE

By Anne-Fleur Karssing, AEGEE-Enschede

It is unbelievable that time went by so fast, and that the Spring Agora Enschede 2017 is now already months ago. Two of the first things that probably will come to your mind when you are thinking of this Spring Agora are the meatballs and the nice showers in the sleeping locations. But there were interesting plenaries and nice parties to remember as well.

The members of the core team remember the Spring Agora Enschede too, looking back at the year that we were organising this great event. We prepared for the Agora by meeting at the AEGEE-Enschede office with the core team weekly, and working there together with the social program committee and the logistics committee. We also planned evaluation sessions in order to measure our progress, and what still needed to be done.



However, preparing the Agora brought us some struggles and challenges as well. One of the biggest challenges we had was our small budget. That made it more difficult for us to get a closed budget, in combination with doing everything that we wanted to do. But we managed to deal with the challenges and we were still able to add some special elements into the Agora. Having the opening ceremony in the Willmink Theatre is a good example - we were really happy that we could start our Agora there.

Our Advisory Board helped us along the way by giving us tips and tricks, together with supervising our budget and our major decisions in order to make sure that our foundation would not go bankrupt. It was good for us to get this kind of advice and to hear their experiences from when they were organisers during the Agora, which was also held in Enschede in the spring of 2012.

When working towards the Agora we did some team building activities with the core team, the social program committee and the logistics committee. These activities helped us to get closer as a team and we learned to work together, which proved to be useful during the Agora.

We could not have done it without the logistics committee, who worked very hard to make everything run smoothly; the social committee, who dedicated all their time to organise the most amazing parties, and all the helpers involved, who woke up very early and stayed up very late, cleaned plenary halls and gyms and were able to always help participant with all the questions they had.

When looking back at the Spring Agora Enschede, we look back at a great event with a lot of enthusiastic Europeans walking around 'our' campus, a great opening ceremony and amazing parties. It is awesome to look back at the Agora, the things that we experienced and learned, and we hope that in a couple of years will still be talking about this amazing Agora!

And remember, dare to act!

CHARLEMAGNE YOUTH PRIZE 2017,

AEGEE PRESENTS WITH TWO NATIONAL WINNERS

by Erika Bettin, AEGEE-Verona

Since 2008 a prize is held in Aachen, Germany, with the specific goal to reward projects of young Europeans that promote European values, education and overcoming cultural barriers. This prize is called Charlemagne Youth Prize and since it was first established more than 400 projects have been submitted.

AEGEE has always been in the first row when it comes to National winners or first places in the competition winning twice in the past six years. Y Vote 2009 - a Europe-wide campaign that informed young people about the importance of the European Parliament elections - ended on the first place in 2009, after winning the National selection in Greece. More recently, Europe on Track won the first place in 2013, being the National winner in Spain. Moreover, the project YOUrope needs YOU! was the Polish National winner in 2009, Sustaining our future won the Dutch National competition. In 2014 AEGEE-Valletta won the National Charlemagne with its EBM in Malta, and finally, in 2015, AEGEE-Sofia was awarded for the Night of Seven Antennae in Bulgaria.

This year in Aachen, AEGEE was present with two projects: the first is our oldest and long-standing project Summer University and the second is the photoblog Faces of Europe, born in the framework of the project Your Vision for Europe.

The Summer University project was born in 1988 with the intention to promote European integration. This project is the main tool of AEGEE to attain this ambitious but challenging target ever since. Since that time, it has been continuing every year with the participation of more than 110 000 young people, inside and outside of the European Union. According to Lucia Gavulová, the project manager, it wasn't the first time that the team applied for the Charlemagne, but this time they succeeded. They were selected as National winners from Slovakia because "our project manager comes from Slovakia, it was kind of a natural choice. Moreover, we knew that there are usually not many applications coming from this country, we took it as a good opportunity for us" says Lucia.



It is a first instead for the blog Faces of Europe, which aims at collecting and spreading the stories and personal views of people from different social, cultural and national backgrounds. Its objective is to show the great human diversity of our continent and at the same time to underline a common European identity.

The decision to apply via Romania, and eventually becoming the National winner there, was taken looking at the nationalities present in the team: "At the time of the application we had two Romanians in the core team of Faces of Europe (Tedi Martinescu and Cosmina Bisboaca).

Since the core team is composed by four members, they were a majority" says Viola Bianchetti, responsible of the project.



Regardless that our two projects didn't win the European prize, they received a certificate and a medal. "And of course a lot of media attention - the National winners got to sit with the Charlemagne Prize winner, the German President and more on stage - for example". says Lucia "Also, we hope this will boost our fundraising and external impact". The process of applying for the Charlemagne started with a detailed presentation of the project and its history. While the Summer University project "focused on the future of the project and its 30th anniversary next year" says Lucia, Viola states that the application "included some examples of the photoblogs published on Faces of Europe".

"Even without winning one of the three international prizes, it is a great chance to give visibility to your project and to network with other volunteers and associations" says Viola, encouraging everyone who is working on a project to apply for the award. Lucia confirms: "It's an amazing opportunity and AEGEE has many interesting and unique projects to apply with".

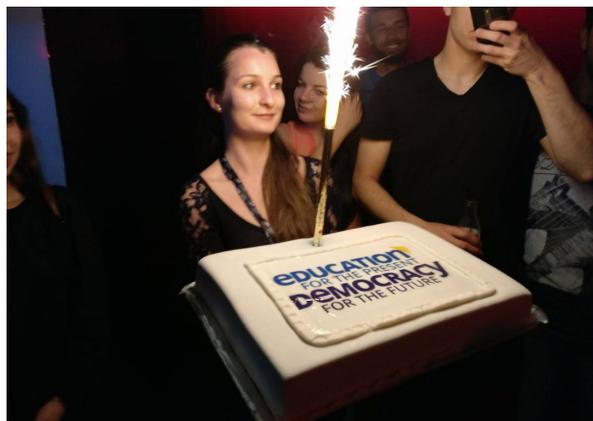
AEGEE DAY 2017

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR EUROPE

By Katharina Jiménez Weese AEGEE-Bamberg

This year on April 16th we celebrated the 32nd birthday of our association. 32 years of building bridges and bringing young Europeans together.

AEGEE Day is a day meant to celebrate AEGEE and what it stands for by organising activities related to one theme all over the Network. After last year's very successful first edition that aimed to break borders, this year we celebrated the AEGEE Day by "Building Bridges". Bridges between people from different countries, cultures and religions, and from different ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds, between the old and the young, between those living within Europe, between the higher educated and the lower educated, between the Eurooptimists and the Eurosceptics, between the politically engaged and those who feel excluded.



We wanted to focus on building connections between things that may appear to be opposite at the first sight, and also to deepen our knowledge and understanding of the challenges that Europe is facing right now. For this reason we invited all AEGEEans to actively participate - only together we are able to strengthen our positive message!

With the help of European Bodies and individual members we came up with over a dozen interesting ideas for activities that locals may organize in their city. They were divided in 3 categories, based on the level of difficulty and effort required: 1. Wood, the easiest; 2. Stone, middle; 3. Iron, the most difficult. Of course locals were as well free to think of their own type of activity and they were also welcomed to organise activities during the whole week, starting on April 16th until April 23rd, not only limited to the AEGEE Day itself.

This year's AEGEE Day core team consisted of Suzan Dilara Tokaç (AEGEE-Eskişehir) and Katharina Jiménez Weese (AEGEE-Bamberg), both PR responsible, Maria Maris (AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca) and Marta Pał (AEGEE-Warszawa), both responsible for the content, and appointed Comité Directeur member Lia Touska (AEGEE-Sofia). Together we came up with the topic, created guidelines, promoted our big day the best we could and gathered the results afterwards. We had 10 "little" helpers, our ambassadors, who were assigned to each Network distribution area and who acted as communication bridge between the core team and the locals.

This year 37 activities were organized in 26 cities, involving over 100 organizers and around 600 participants. Among the most popular activities, there were information meetings about AEGEE and movie sessions where participants had the chance to watch "The Art of the Possible", a documentary about AEGEE. And of course, AEGEEans did not forget to celebrate the birthday of our association in AEGEE style. We would like to thank all the participating locals and European Bodies for organizing great AEGEE Day activities throughout the Network, for Building Bridges all over Europe and for spreading the spirit! We were very happy to see so many activities popping up and bridges being built in every corner of the Network.

Save the date for next year's celebration! 16th of April, AEGEE Day, spread the spirit!

PULSE OF EUROPE

By Matteo Lai AEGEE- Cagliari

Pulse of Europe is a pro-European initiative, which was founded in 2016 as a reaction to Brexit and the presidential elections in the USA. After those elections, there were massive protests against the results. Pulse of Europe wants to be visible beforehand: before the elections in the Netherlands, France and Germany. It is a project that is involving people from many countries of Europe. Its aim is to discuss the EU issues and protest against Brexit and other events undermining the European Union. The members of this big movement do not want to be the "silent majority" anymore, but a visible crowd standing for a peaceful, borderless and cooperating Europe.

The easiest way to join is to participate! There are over sixty European cities where Pulse of Europe takes place every Sunday at 2 pm, which you can find on their website. If there is no such event near your place, you can: contact the initiators from Frankfurt; call the police and tell them you want to register a demonstration; ask your (AEGEE) friends to meet at 2 pm in blue and yellow.

Pulse of Europe members want to contribute our share to ensure that Europe, now and in the future, remains united and democratic and continues to be a community in which regard for human rights, the rule of law, freedom of speech and assembly, as well as tolerance and respect remain integral parts of its essence.

The aim of the project is the preservation and shaping of a united Europe today as it is more important than ever before. The members are convinced that a majority of people believe in the fundamental idea of the European Union and are not prepared to sacrifice it to nationalistic and protectionist tendencies. They believe in the reformability and the continued development of the European Union. They hope to achieve a new European awareness and consciousness that connects people and nations.

The members pursue their goals through special activities and campaigns, through public relations, demonstrations and rallies.

Pulse of Europe is a movement that pursues no partisan aims, is not linked to any interest group and is nondenominational. Diversity is good thing and the European idea can be realized in a variety of ways. It is independent and financed exclusively through donations. In particular, the project receives no financial support from European and other political institutions or organizations.



According to “Pulse of Europe”, Europe must be preserved so that it can be further improved. Reversely, when the EU fails to reform itself it will not survive. European interests must take precedence over national interests. Whoever chooses to exit the Union will consequently have no part in shaping it. The European idea must become comprehensible and citizen oriented again and should be accepted by a majority of its citizens from bottom up. Any divisions among its populations, including the gap between rich and poor, must be counteracted. The most important reform is the European Parliament’s right of legislative initiative. This means the parliament has the power



to make laws’ proposals independently and could cure a lot of EU problems in a democratic way. Also, the voters have to hold their politicians accountable for what is wrong in Europe and not only focus on their national level.

The members of the project can witness, in some parts of Europe, the constraint of certain individual freedoms and this must be opposed. The separation of powers and the rule of law must be guaranteed in all of Europe. Government actions must only continue on the basis of properly executed laws. Independent courts and the free press must be permitted to continue carrying out their supervisory function.

Free movement of persons, goods, money-transfers and services – basic European freedoms – are historic achievements, which made a community out of national states. They ensure individual freedom and prosperity. A reduction of basic freedoms would have dramatic economic and personal consequences.



Only by preserving the totality of basic freedoms can the continued assurance of rights and duties be guaranteed. Special arrangements and exceptions may lead to an erosion of the whole.

You can follow Pulse of Europe on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, learn more about the next event and stay up-to-date. Currently, Facebook page is also available in the language of the following countries: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain. Their activities are also followed by press of several European countries such as “The Guardian” and “El Pais”.

PETITION #ISTANDWITHCEU ALL OVER EUROPE

By Natalia Klimenko, AEGEE Moskva

Education is key for a better future. That is why educating young people, enhancing their hard and soft skills, is one of the core objectives of AEGEE-Europe. Being a students' forum, AEGEE closely collaborates with universities. Yet certain threats to formal education arose this year in some European countries. The Central European University in Budapest has become the centre of a symbolic stand-off.

In March 2017 the Hungarian government threatened CEU with a closure due to the "overseas links" of the institution. Indeed, the university was founded by the liberal US philanthropist George Soros - who has been heavily criticized by Hungary's government. The threat to the university's future prompted street protests in Budapest. A new hash tag #IstandwithCEU was launched in the social media. Hundreds of eminent academicians around the world signed a petition to defend the institution. And of course AEGEE could not but take a firm stance on the situation. On April 4th, AEGEE-Europe together with JEF-Europe called upon the European Commission and the European Council to take action towards the Hungarian attacks on the CEU.

"We are fighting against any restriction of civil liberties and any attempt to undermine democratic pluralism", claimed both organizations in their open letter.

Key to Europe spoke to AEGEE-Budapest President Ákos Glaub to find out more.

How has the situation affected AEGEE-Budapest members and their activities?

Ákos: We were affected deeply with this situation, because CEU is our greatest partner. Many of our programs are organized together with the CEU, in the building of the CEU. Moreover, we regularly take part in courses held by CEU. This close cooperation was endangered in the last few months. But fortunately our relationship with the university is flourishing and we organized more successful events recently with CEU. Not only the organization but also the members of AEGEE-Budapest were sensitive to the recent events, as some of our members are students of CEU, but understandably other universities and their students have followed tensely the happenings too.

What actions has your antenna taken to defend the university?

Ákos: In Budapest, after the first drop of news, we tried to draw attention to the happenings and the currently ongoing situation on our online platforms. Furthermore we encouraged our members and other youngsters to sign a petition and stay updated. Afterwards, many of our members participated in the demonstrations for the unaltered existence of the CEU. But in our opinion the most important activity was AEGEE's three-days-long event, organized with and at the CEU. This event, the Education for the Present, Democracy for the Future was an international conference, where around 100 foreign and domestic youngsters shared their ideas and thoughts on the importance of education.

The background features a complex, abstract pattern of red lines of varying thicknesses. These lines intersect to form a series of irregular polygons and shapes, creating a network-like structure. The overall aesthetic is modern and geometric.

5.

HAPPENINGS
AROUND THE NETWORK

EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES

BREAKING BORDERS WITH LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

The goal of the Language Interest Group (LIG) is to raise awareness within AEGEE on the value of multilingualism, to encourage and help AEGEEans to learn more foreign languages and to discuss issues related to language policies, minority languages and language diversity. After at first being created as the Language Working Group (LWG) at Autumn Agora Budapest in 2012, it was transformed into an Interest Group during Autumn Agora Budapest 2015. Since then, LIG has supported AEGEE locals organising language related workshops and events. The most popular LIG project is the European Day of Languages (EDL). It is also the second oldest ongoing project of AEGEE-Europe, taking place since 2001, when the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE) launched this initiative, with the goals of celebrating language diversity and encouraging language learning.

European Day of Languages 2016

33 events

30 locals + 3 European Bodies



1000 participants

49 languages spoken

Language Workshops, Language Quiz, Multilingual Dinner



The most popular activities

Thank you for spreading multilingualism all over Europe!



Only in 2016, about 30 AEGEE locals and 3 European Bodies organised an EDL event or activity. Over 1,000 participants attended them, speaking 49 languages. AEGEE-Europe acts as a relay between CoE and AEGEE locals, but considering the activities coordinated by other relays, CoE estimates that more than 1200 EDL activities were organised in 2016. LIG suggested guidelines on a variety of activities for celebrating EDL. Different antennae organised activities such as a multilingual karaoke, a conference about "Unity in Diversity" from a linguistic perspective, a sign language workshop and much more. For instance, EDL organised by AEGEE-Moskva in March 2017 was named Lecker, lernen, Liebe, which roughly meant "Taste, learn, love" in German. Apart from the four languages it covered, the hospitable organizers treated the visitors with self-made traditional pastries of each culture, such as German Strudel, English ginger breads, and Swiss fondue. The event had a huge success and was attended not only by youth but by elder people and whole families as well.

Other successful LIG initiatives include the Facebook group "AEGEEans learning languages". Unlike other online platforms for searching partners for a language tandem, this one is completely free, flexible and transparent, and it is restricted to AEGEE members. Besides, group tandems are also allowed. The group was created in November and rapidly achieved a great success, with over 470 members in it and over 65 young people looking for partners to learn 16 different languages. Moreover, LIG shared a popular video in which AEGEE members wish a Happy New Year in 19 languages, as well as another multilingual video about the European Citizens' Initiative "More than Education". In addition, LIG was present at the fairs of statutory events and cooperated with other European Bodies and projects like Summer University Project and AEGEE Day. Finally, the language survey is an idea that originated a long time ago, but it has only been developed this year. It aims for getting a clear image of the language skills, attitude, use and needs of AEGEEans, and its results will be used in future projects.



Among these collaborations, the LIG workshops at NWM Bilbao and NWM Heidelberg should be highlighted, which focused on the topic of minority and endangered languages. During these workshops, which were delivered in April, participants discussed some problems, which arise in regions with a minority or endangered language, including when a minority language should be considered official, the presence of minority languages in education and how minority languages should be protected and promoted.

But what are actually minority and endangered languages? On the one hand, minority languages are languages either different from the official state language(s) or traditionally used within a given state territory by citizens, which are numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population (CoE). On the other hand, a language is endangered when its speakers cease to use it, use it in fewer domains or stop passing it on to the next generation (UNESCO). Therefore, there is a clear difference between a minority language and an endangered language. For instance, Catalan is a minority language and it is not an official language of the EU. There are 24 official languages in the EU, but Catalan is only official in three autonomous communities of Spain. However, it is one of the 10 most widely spoken languages within the EU and is not endangered. Yet, there are 128 endangered languages within the EU (UNESCO).

Sometimes, language policies in regions with a minority or endangered language cause language discrimination and barriers that result in unequal opportunities or even conflicts. In some cases, fundamental language rights of minority language speakers are not respected. For example, some minority language communities do not have access to elementary education in their language. In other cases, the speakers of a majority language are the ones being discriminated. For instance, most traffic signs in some cities, which have two official languages, can only be read in the minority language, even though the most used language in that city is another official language.

The conclusion of the workshops at these Network Meetings was clear: minority languages have to be valued and promoted. Yet, there were very different opinions on the discussed issues. Interestingly, the attitude towards a minority language greatly depends on the region from which the participant comes, which shows the influence local media have on us. For example, most Basques supported learning almost all subjects in primary and secondary school in Basque regardless of the mother language of the student, but most Frisian participants thought that learning all subjects in their language would lead to isolation and difficulties to integrate with Dutch speakers. We asked four AEGEE members to express their view on a minority language and here are their answers:

Álvaro González
(AEGEE-Osnabrück & AEGEE-Heidelberg)
- Basque

In terms of communication, English is undoubtedly an extremely useful language. Nonetheless, is utility a reason to get rid of minority languages, for the sake of pure efficiency? If you ask me, the answer is no. I do not live in the Basque Country anymore, and I barely use Basque currently, but for me, losing the opportunity to use this language would mean losing a pair of glasses with which I regard the world in a different way.

Margriet Zwart
(AEGEE-Groningen) – West Frisian

We are proud of our own language, culture and history, and there is a 'national' feeling about other Frisians. However, nobody wants Frisia to be a separate country. 'Other' Dutch people don't really appreciate our language and most of them don't even acknowledge it as an independent language. Most elderly people only speak Frisian, especially in small villages, but most young people also speak Dutch and they usually move to other cities to study and work. I don't want to live in Frisia, because there are no job opportunities in my field there. I don't think that Frisian will become extinct, because some organisations are very active promoting it.

Carmen Nõlvak
(AEGEE-Tartu) – Võro

Since Võro is spoken in a provincial area far from Tallinn, Estonians don't think about it much. Võro speakers are bilingual and have no communication difficulties when they speak common Estonian. The main reason Võro is in decrease is that the Võros are considered Estonians by both themselves and from outside. They're usually regarded as culturally richer than other Estonians. I've never heard of any cases of discrimination, but there's no serious hype around Võro, which would motivate many people to learn it. Most young people from that area use it mostly when talking to older people.

Anna Gumbau
(AEGEE-Barcelona) - Catalan

Our parents' generation was born under the fascist dictatorship, at a time when the use of Catalan was banned. This means that the generation born in the late 1970s-80s is the first one that was educated in Catalan. In general, I do see a strong visibility of this language now. I think though that it does need official recognition within the EU. The language policy of the European institutions lays in the fact that all peoples have the right to express themselves and be understood in their own language. If people who speak minority languages can't do so, wouldn't that be an uneven playing field for EU citizens?

If you are also interested in languages, do not hesitate and join LIG's Facebook group or send an email to lig@aegee.org. We are an open group of about 30 AEGEE members from all over the Network. Don't worry if you don't speak a lot of languages or you didn't study anything related to languages. We are happy to hear your ideas and share with you our future plans.



AEGEE-ACADEMY IS HERE FOR YOU!

*By Jorge Miguel Vielva, Speaker of AEGEE-Academy 2017-2018
and Antonis Triantafyllakis, Speaker of AEGEE-Academy 2016-2017*

What is AEGEE-Academy?

AEGEE-Academy (or, simply, the Academy, as it is also referred to) is the official pool of trainers of AEGEE-Europe and its main mission is to take care of Non-Formal Education (NFE) inside AEGEE. The Academy does so by organizing week-long training courses, known as "European Schools", by providing trainers and content support for the AEGEE antennae that ask help for their trainings, and by helping the development and work of AEGEE regarding Non-Formal Education.

AEGEE-Academy exists since 1999, and its main activities, the European Schools, began already a few years earlier. Traditionally, European Schools focus on the skills needed to run a youth organization like AEGEE, and at the same time on contributing

to the personal development of the young people taking part in them. Participants of European Schools usually come back home with the feeling of having had one of the most impactful experiences of their life. Recently, AEGEE-Academy has also started to organize mini-European Schools (mini-ES), shorter versions of the European Schools, with the aim to bring NFE to more people.

As previously mentioned, in addition to organizing European Schools, AEGEE-Academy stands by the side of every local and European body in the network. It supports them with trainers and content in LTCs, RTCs, Summer Universities, NWMs, and pretty much every event and activity that can benefit from an educational aspect and from being delivered in an interactive, participatory and fun way: the AEGEE-Academy way.

What has AEGEE-Academy done in the past year?

AEGEE-Academy has been busy with a wide range of activities in the past year. We have organized 3 main events: a Training New Trainers (TNT, previously called T4T, or Training for Trainers) hosted by AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca; and two mini-ES: one on antenna management, together with AEGEE-Valladolid, and one on self-development, hosted by AEGEE-Oviedo. During the TNT in December in Cluj-Napoca, participants got the chance to learn how to become trainers during an intensive training course that left participants with a life changing experience. The two mini European Schools took place during spring instead. In both of them, 21 participants had the opportunity to live a short, but intense and impactful learning experience. Moreover, during the past year, AEGEE-Academy has paid special attention to support the internal education of our beloved network, by working hard to provide support, when requested, to locals in their training events, by attending many NWMs, LTCs, RTCs, SUs, and as well by contributing to the development of the Strategy for Learning and Training of AEGEE-Europe. Furthermore, we have worked to improve AEGEE-Academy itself, by increasing the number and the abilities of our trainers, and by developing strategies for our human resources, our activities and our impact on the network.



What are the upcoming plans of AEGEE-Academy?

The lack of applicants has been a challenge that resulted in a decrease in the number of European Schools organized in the past few years. However, we are confident that this year AEGEEans will continue to enjoy the life changing experience of European Schools. PRES (Public Relations European School) and TNT are already being planned for autumn, and another European School will take place in spring. We also plan to expand our mini-European Schools to other parts of Europe, since we've only held them in Spain for now. Other training courses, like SUPS, have taken place in other parts of Europe and we are confident that this new concept will continue to be carried out. Moreover, we want to organize our first TRAM (Trainers' Meeting, an event just for trainers that haven't been organized in AEGEE yet).

At the same time, we plan to continue to work on supporting our antennae in their training activities, by providing trainers, content, advices and material. Regarding material, AEGEE-Academy has a database of training resources, collected along decades of activities in the network, which we plan to organize and open up to the whole network. We are currently working on the best way to publish our material.

Last but not least, we will continue our collaborative work on developing AEGEE's Strategy for Learning and Training, in cooperation with other European bodies, like the CD, the Network Commission and the Human Resources Committee.



How can you and your antenna benefit from AEGEE-Academy?

There are several ways in which AEGEE-Academy can support you:

Do you want to organize a high quality week-long training event? How about hosting a European School? Or, if that looks a too big challenge, give it a try with a mini-ES.

Are you organizing an LTC, RTC, or any other training activity or event for which you need trainers and content? Then look no further than AEGEE-Academy, the official pool of trainers of AEGEE,

where you can find a list of qualified trainers to help you achieving your learning goals for your participants.

Or perhaps you simply need some material to prepare a workshop, or some guidance about that? The board of AEGEE-Academy is here to support you in preparing high quality content for your events.

Thinking about becoming a trainer, or improving your trainer skills? AEGEE-Academy organizes a TNT every year, provides mentors (experienced trainers) to new trainers and shares many opportunities for the development of trainers, such as training for trainers organized by our partner organizations.

How to access these opportunities and know more?

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EDUCATION FOR THE PRESENT,

DEMOCRACY FOR THE FUTURE

by María Ballesteros Melero

Education for the Present, Democracy for the Future was the Conference awarded with the Franck Biancheri Award 2017 by l'Association des Amis de Franck Biancheri (Friends of Franck Biancheri Association, AAFB) that took place in Budapest, 21-23 April, and gathered more than 80 young people from Europe and beyond.

AAFB is the foundation continuing the legacy of AEGEE's founder and visionary, Franck Biancheri, founded in 2012 shortly after he passed away. Every year, they award a local with the Franck Biancheri Award, in order to empower young Europeans to put Franck's legacy forward while at the same time commemorating his life, ideas and actions.

This year, AEGEE-Budapest was the awarded local, which in cooperation with Europe on Track and the Civic Education Working Group of AEGEE-Europe organised the Education for the Present, Democracy for the future conference, which was at the same time the kick off of the fourth edition of the Europe on Track project. The event took place in the Central European University (CEU) at a time in which freedom of academia and independent, open institutions and civil society are being endangered in the world, in Europe and in Hungary.

The focus of the main conference was based on the paper written by Franck Biancheri in 2001 where he foresaw the risks of non-democratic deviation arising from the foundations of the EU, mainly based on a common currency instead of a direct, democratic involvement of citizens. Throughout 2016 and 2017, it was possible to see how the lack of civic education is leading to the rise of populism and extreme ideas as well as to a return of hate and separatist movements. Furthermore, this unstable moment of crisis is linked to a democratic deficit and a breach between the citizens and the institutions. This cycle has to be broken to make young people's voices heard.

The first day of the conference was focused on the memorial of Franck Biancheri and the celebration of the 32 years of history of AEGEE. On Saturday, we analysed the current situation and recent happenings and trends in Europe regarding a democratic deficit and how it can be corrected from different perspectives. Finally, on the last day we moved to already existing citizen actions and youth-led projects regarding the topic and we had space for participants to develop their own ideas and projects, which we hope to see implemented in the future!

The conference was a great success in bringing people together, exchanging ideas and working towards a common goal: the democratisation of Europe with the active participation of its citizens.

EUROPEAN TRAINING COURSES

By Joanna Pankowska, Communications Director 2016-2017

The Comité Directeur 2016-2017 introduced a new concept for trainings in their Activity Plan: the European Training Courses (ETC). These trainings are aimed at those members who want to be more active in the European bodies of AEGEE.

Local Training Courses (LTCs) and Regional Training Courses (RTCs) equip members with the knowledge and skills necessary to take up responsibilities in AEGEE locals and boards, while the European Training Course aims at preparing members to take an active role in the European bodies of AEGEE. The concept is related to European Schools and Leadership Trainings, but more accessible: The fee is very low (15 Euro), it takes place in easily reachable Brussels and it is only one weekend long. The aim of the events was not only to increase in managing skills and understanding of AEGEE, but foremost, to motivate and inspire AEGEEans to take up tasks of responsibility within the European Bodies of our organisation. After the first year of implementation, I believe we can say that it did succeed.



An ETC is not only a place for training but also for consultation and brainstorming as you can get a sneak peek at the work of Comité Directeur and develop your ideas for initiatives inside AEGEE.

ETCs are also relatively small with participant groups of maximum ten people. Like this, we could ensure the personal relation between trainers and participants, which then resulted in long-term mentoring. The personal relations between participants are also very important – after all we are bringing together a small group of very motivated AEGEEans who are getting ready to take up big challenges within AEGEE. It can only help if speakers of different European Bodies know each other personally and are eager to collaborate.



Dates:

17-19.02.2017

ETC

27.03-2.04

ETC + (aka Leadership Training)

16-18.06

ETC

BERNHARD MÜLLER,

20 YEARS OF NETCOM AND THE ALUMNI AEGEEANS

By Spyros Papadatos, Network Commission

“And now your watch begins.”

This phrase recently started to be used by Network Commissioners when they end their term. It reflects on the responsibility, but also opportunity that they received to support and to brace AEGEE for the future, together with the Commission’s famous motto “to serve and protect.” But how did this Commission come to existence in the first place?

Autumn Agora Athina 1996: Following the moving of the CD to Brussels, the need of a European Body that would travel around the locals and take care of the Network came up. After first discussions in Autumn Presidents Meeting in 1996, during Autumn Agora Athina 1996 finally the creation of a new European Body, the Network Commission was decided. This commission would consist of active AEGEEans from all parts of Europe, eager to support the locals, bringing closer the European level to the locals and develop the Network.

Autumn Agora Chisinau 2016: After the 20th anniversary of the NetCom, I and the other Network Commissioners of Chisinau-Enschede term decided to celebrate this anniversary and honour our commission. Considering that the first Network Commissioners were elected in Spring Agora Enschede 1997 and that the upcoming Agora would be hosted again in Enschede, the timing seemed ideal for what our team had in mind: Honouring one of the most active members of the past, one of the founders of Network Commission and AEGEE-Academy and former CD member, Bernhard Müller, by proposing him as a honorary member of AEGEE-Europe.

Of course, honorary membership is a serious title. It is the highest honour and recognition in AEGEE. So before we could present our proposal to CD54, a lot of research had to be done. It turned out to be easier than expected: By looking at Agora minutes, past Key to Europe editions and by consulting with AEGEEans who worked with him, we were assured in our idea. “The greatest strategic thinker AEGEE has known so far” was how a former colleague of Müller described him. So at this point we were even asking ourselves “why wasn’t this nomination proposed earlier?”



Just one month before Spring Agora Enschede 2017, the AEGEE-alumni event “Back to Budapest” took place and Réka Salomon, president of AEGEE-Europe 2016-2017, had a chance to meet Bernhard Müller in person. Our proposal was sent to CD and accepted shortly after. Finally, in the closing plenary of Agora Enschede, Bernhard Müller was there together with other alumni AEGEEans who came to honour their friend and fellow AEGEEan. He received his honorary membership and gave a visionary speech on the future of Europe in the light of an aspiring Asia. You could tell that the hundreds of AEGEEans following were mesmerized by that speech and we knew we did the right thing.

A lot of things have changed since 1996, but some just stay the same. We are young Europeans trying to shape our future. We are active citizens trying to change Europe. And we are volunteers working for what we believe in. We shouldn't forget our history though and especially the people that made an impact in AEGEE in the past. Our alumni have knowledge and experience that we can benefit from immensely. That is why we should not lose sight of these people and their contributions. Bernhard Müller is just one out of many AEGEEans that shaped AEGEE, yet his example shines still bright after 21 years. He honoured AEGEE with his work, his vision and his passion, and now it was AEGEE's turn to honour him as well.

Closing this article, I would like to thank first of all my team, the other nine Network Commissioners of Chisinau-Enschede term (Alejandra, Aleksandra, Alin, Gabriele, Kristina, Loes, Mareike, Pablo, Stas) as well as Lisa Gregis, NetCommie of Bergamo-Chisinau term who inspired this idea in the first place, and also CD54 for cooperating with us and for accepting our proposal. And, of course a big thank you goes to Bernhard Müller for what he has offered to AEGEE and for coming to Enschede from Asia to receive his nomination and speak to the current generation of AEGEEans. And last but not least, I need to mention and thank the alumni network for what they have given to our organization and for the legacy they left us. A legacy we have to carry on and make even richer, because at some point all of us are going to be alumni. And then our watch will begin.

TWIN ANTENNAE: SO FAR, BUT SO CLOSE

by Erika Bettin, AEGEE-Verona

Sometimes in life it happens. Two very distant souls find each other and decide to walk a part of their path together, united by common interests and projects. Likewise real life, AEGEE locals can find some companions in locals geographically far from them, bounding themselves for one year (or more). Twin Antenna is a project promoted by the Network Commission in order to foster cross-border cooperation between locals, in order for them to share best practices, solve problems together, but, most of all, to create new projects.

Every local is eligible to have a twin antenna in the Network and the process to become twins is very easy. It is enough just to find a suitable match, another local willing to embark on this collaboration and start a marvellous friendship making it official during a statutory event. Currently in our Network, there are six twin antennae: AEGEE-Barcelona and AEGEE-Thessaloniki; AEGEE-Berlin and AEGEE-Istanbul; AEGEE-Delft and AEGEE-Passau; AEGEE-Moskva and AEGEE-Bergamo; AEGEE-L'viv and AEGEE-Aachen; AEGEE-Torino and AEGEE-Ioannina.



AEGEE-Delft and AEGEE-Passau, for example, are in a long-term relationship. They first started to think about becoming twins during the winter semester 2011-2012, when AEGEE-Passau was looking for a soulmate. After having looked for several other opportunities, members of the German local spoke with members of the Dutch local during a statutory event and they both got very excited about this opportunity. They signed the official agreement during Spring Agora Rhein-Neckar 2013, and have been renewing it since then, marking the fourth year of their twinning at Spring Agora 2017. "The bond between AEGEE-Passau and AEGEE-Delft is something special. Every year we enjoy each other's company. Even all the new members find love in the other's city every year. The love between Passau and Delft is even showed in the amount of Twin-couples we have now!" says Tommy Hertog from Delft when asked why both locals keep on renewing the contract year after year. According to Viktoria Reißler, Twin-Antenna Responsible of AEGEE-Passau, the most satisfactory thing in having a twin local is that there will be "always a reason to travel to them (or the other way around), learning about the other antenna, language and culture and organising events for and with each other".

Together they travel to each other's Christmas party, boat parties organised by AEGEE-Passau, Lusturm week of Delft. AEGEE-Passau's members also went to the biggest annual party of Delft 't Collectief and together with what they called "side-love", AEGEE-Bamberg. "Having a twin antenna brings something extra to your local. The contact between Passau and Delft always seems so easy. It is the perfect way to make new friends (and sometimes even love)" concludes Tommy.



A very impressive Summer University was organised by another Twinning: AEGEE-Barcelona and AEGEE-Thessaloniki. In fact, they dared to organise a really bold Travel Summer University; not only travelling in two different countries, but also, by doing so, covering 1.741 km. Their story started with a flag stealing punishment, as explained by Athina Konstatinidou, PR responsible of AEGEE-Thessaloniki: "Almost two years ago they got their flag stolen by the lovely people of AEGEE-Skopje. The "punishment" was a "COME-AND-GET-IT" type of craziness, where the members from Barcelona had to basically travel to Skopje in order to retrieve their flag. Being as wise and time-efficient as they are, they decided to kill two birds with one stone and have a small stop in Thessaloniki on their way. Three days were enough for us to realise the sparkle between us".

After that meeting, AEGEE-Barcelona proposed to the Greek antenna and for two years their bond grew closer. They maintain the relationship via a group chat, always there for each other for any kind of advice and cooperation. In order to have their members to get constantly closer, they reserve "VIP places" in their events such as NWMs and Summer Universities. In one of those a joke turned out to be an amazing adventure. "We came up with the idea during the Summer University "Vampires and Gods" organized by AEGEE-Thessaloniki and AEGEE-Nis last year. Me and Silvana, another member of AEGEE-Barcelona, were there as participants and we started joking about the idea with the greek local organisers." says Néstor Saura, President of AEGEE-Barcelona. They created a WhatsApp group named Barceloniki, name that later became the title of the event, and they organised everything on Skype. How did they moved from one city to the other? Simply, by plane. "In AEGEE-Barcelona we had the experience of a previous SU organised in 2014 with AEGEE-Las Palmas. The oldies of our antenna explained us that some airlines offer a group reservation option with good conditions" concludes Néstor.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!

AEGEE-UDINE, AEGEE-IZMIR AND AEGEE-SAMARA SPEAK ABOUT THEIR ANNIVERSARY

Written by Erika Bettin, AEGEE-Verona

Our Network turned 32 on the 16th of April 2017 and since 2016 the AEGEE-Day has been established in order to create a common day to celebrate our achievements by organising activities and celebrations. This is not all. Every year, each AEGEE local is celebrating its own birthday, valuing their own achievements in contributing to our Network. AEGEE-Udine, AEGEE-Izmir and AEGEE-Samara reached, respectively, the milestones of the 25th, 20th and 10th anniversary within our Network.

AEGEE-Udine is located in the North East of Italy, in the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia. They have around 50 members, organising several projects, also with the help of the very well known University of Udine. In the past year, they organised the Aperitivo (Italian for happy hour) to attract more members, but also hosted one stop of Europe on Track, they organised a Local Training Course to develop soft skills and they are planning to host a Regional Training Course in Autumn. After winning the best Summer University in 2016, they are trying to replicate their success with this year's Summer University called "Wild Taste of Friuli".



Founded on the 13th of February 1992, this year was time to blow on 25 candles. "We actually had two parties for our Antenna's birthday" says Paola Bortoletto, the PR responsible of the Italian Local. "The first one was a members' meeting: we all hang out to eat dinner together and talk about our experiences as AEGEEans. The second one was really special: we went out for dinner with some members of the Comité Directeur. We had a wonderful night talking about our different points of view of AEGEE and what we are planning to do in the future. Such a good experience!".

AEGEE-Udine is very proud of their achievements in the past years, with many events organised in the past years. For them it was also a great emotion to see the former president Teresa Carene Kiambu being elected as Financial Director of AEGEE-Europe 2017-2018. Looking forward to the next 25 years, Paola says that they "would like to see AEGEE-Udine becoming better known and present in the city, in order to become strong enough to host a EPM or an Agora in the future and to involve and make active as many young students of the University of Udine as possible, in order to become a factory of projects and ideas in the following years".

Founded in 1997, AEGEE-Izmir is turning 20 this year. The Antenna is located in Turkey and it is based in Ege University, with more than 100 members and getting bigger every year. They organise several local events, starting with a traditional meeting breakfast for new members post midterm-final events, barbeques, bike tours, online game parties and weekly meetings. They come together at least three times per week discussing PR, FR and having conversational clubs in French and English. "It is not very easy to feel like a family with so many people, says Batuhan Çarıkçı, President of AEGEE- İzmir, "but being a family is our main reason to be proud of our local because we were able to create a real team, showing respect to each other not out of fear, but because of friendship". In order to celebrate their anniversary they rented a house where at least 50 people showed up to celebrate together. "It was an unforgettable night, assures Batuhan "and we cannot pass without mentioning the huge birthday cake!".

What is in store for the Turkish local in the next 20 years? "Buying a flying van which belongs to the Antenna" jokes Batuhan. Coming back to reality, their goal is to become "one of the locals that organises big events like Agora or EPM every five years. But first, we will focus on raising the number of members taking part to the activities of the European level. Then the rest will come".

AEGEE-Samara is one of the Eastern locals in our Network and it was founded on the 1st of April 2007. The Russian Antenna is very small with the number of active members fluctuating from three to twelve, but this is not stopping them to gather together and organise events. In fact, apart from meeting, going to concerts or to the park, most of their activities are focused on recruiting and educating their members.

AEGEE-Samara members know that their city is not easy to reach, but they are committed to offer the best to participants visiting the city. "We are proud of our events – Summer universities and Winter universities. We enjoy planning them and we truly wish to make them worthwhile. Says Polina Chernova, President of AEGEE-Samara. "We perfectly know how hard and expensive is to go to Russia, especially to cities that are far from Moscow, but we always try to make our events as cheap as possible, yet without losing intrigue and interest for our participants".

The celebration for their 10th birthday was nothing loud, but even in its simplicity they made the most out of it. "We went to the pub all together and spent there quiet and warm hours, discussing the upcoming SU" continues Polina. For their upcoming years in the association, they are planning to extend the cooperation with other Russian locals in order to exchange best practices. Even if they are aware that they might not become one of the biggest locals in the Network, every time new members are joining, their enthusiasm is an inspiration and a reason to hope for the future. One long-time dream of Polina is a trip to Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe, although it is very expensive. "I doubt it will ever become true. Still, I have hope in my heart. And I have spare options like organising a Winter University with Tyumen. Hot springs there sound really nice!" Concludes Polina.

CD ON TRACK

By Tekla Hajdu, Network Director of AEGEE-Europe 2016-2017

Between the 13th of February and the 8th of March 2017, 3 members of CD54, Réka Salamon (President), Tekla Hajdu (Network Director) and Zvonimir Canjuga (Financial director) together with the support of the rest of the CD and Network Commission, did a Network trip called "CD on Track" on the way and back to EPM Zagreb to have a direct experience with the locals and to support the „state of the Network" research that was in the Activity Plan of CD54.



The trip involved 30 locals from all over the Network with different activities, focuses and number of members. All of them organised meetings with us and the members, or asked for a session to hold for them. Some of them arranged meetings with their partners, with the university - CD members had the perfect opportunity to experience and better understand the local context our locals are working in.

The sessions covered several topics including the introduction and work of the CD, Human Resources & recruitment, financial management, institutional funding, the structure of AEGEE-Europe, and many more. They were designed to be interactive (not just informative), and they were adjusted to each local's needs. The meetings with the boards and the active members focused more on the current situation of the locals and suggestions/opportunities on how to develop their specific case.

Apart from the meetings and the sessions, we also focused on socialising and getting to know their members, and we were happy to meet with many of them again in EPM Zagreb or in Agora Enschede.

The first edition of CD on Track from our perspective was a successful initiative: we managed to personally visit several locals, and we managed to get a reality check about the current state of the AEGEE Network. Hopefully this idea can be continued in the next CD terms to increase the direct contact with the locals, the visibility of CD and the personal relations with the members.

Quotes:

Reka: "CD on Track was the most out-of-the-box initiative and the best attempt for the board to get the closer to our locals, and see how they are doing in their everyday realities. I am truly amazed by the work of all the hard-working volunteers of AEGEE."

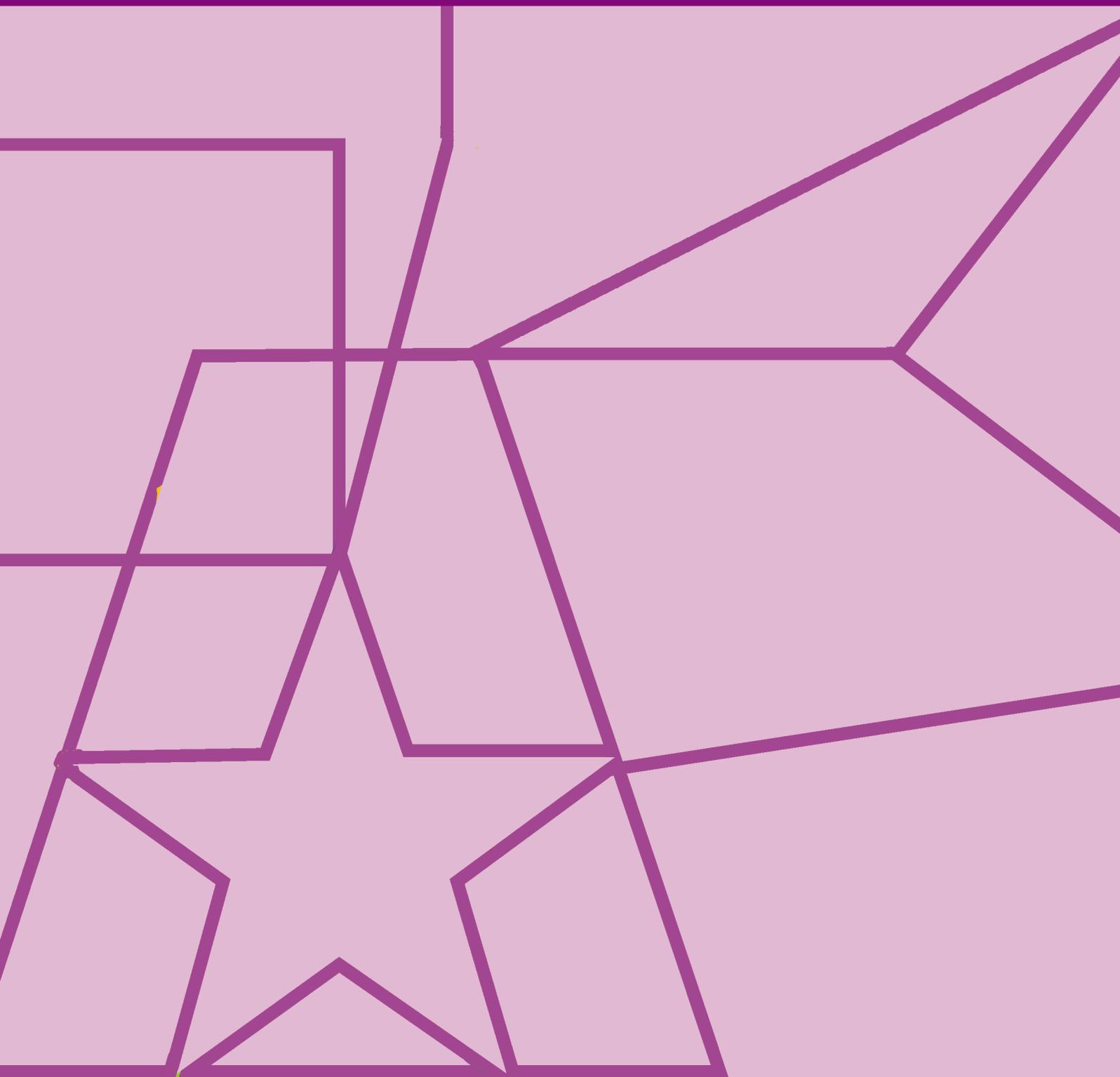
Tekla: "CD on Track gave us a very good opportunity to see our locals in their own environment and experience their joys and struggles they are facing in their own cities. We also met with many different people who were all doing something outstanding in their own cities as a great example."

Zvonimir: " CD on Track is for sure one of highlights of our term. Challenging in both personal and logistical aspect it brought us closer to the locals. We talked with them, trying to understand their local context, which meant a lot for locals and us. No matter what position you have in AEGEE, do not forget that we all are coming from our locals."



Thank you once again for all the locals who participated: AEGEE-Banja Luka, AEGEE-Beograd, AEGEE-Bergamo, AEGEE-Bologna, AEGEE-Brescia, AEGEE-Düsseldorf, AEGEE-Firenze, AEGEE-Heidelberg, AEGEE-Köln, AEGEE-Kragujevac, AEGEE-León, AEGEE-Lille, AEGEE-Ljubljana, AEGEE-Mainz-Wiesbaden, AEGEE-Mannheim, AEGEE-Maribor, AEGEE-Milano, AEGEE-München, AEGEE-Nis, AEGEE-Noví Sad, AEGEE-Passau, AEGEE-Skopje, AEGEE-Stuttgart, AEGEE-Thessaloniki, AEGEE-Torino, AEGEE-Toulouse, AEGEE-Treviso, AEGEE-Udine, AEGEE-Wien and AEGEE-Zagreb.

6. PROJECTS



EUROPE ON TRACK 4

By María Ballesteros Melero

*"We could ignite the spark on many people's critical thinking."
Jorge Sánchez Hernández, Europe on Track 4 ambassador*

Europe on Track (EoT) is a youth-led project where six ambassadors travel for one whole month by train with InterRail. While visiting different countries all across Europe, they capture young people's vision about the future through photos, videos and interviews, give informative workshops and have meetings with local NGOs and the media.

Through the project, a topic of relevance for European youth is brought closer to young people and through the activities carried out, critical reflection on the present state of the European project are facilitated. The project also aims at bringing a new understanding to the diversity of Europe and beyond, exploring what young people want for the future and comparing this vision with the political agenda. It promotes unity and solidarity among young people and advocates for taking part in the decision-making processes in order to train the sensitised and innovative youth of tomorrow.

The idea of EoT came up in 2012, when AEGEE-Europe and InterRail formed a partnership. The first edition of the project was a huge success and was awarded with the prestigious Charlemagne Youth Prize. Two years later, in 2014 (year of European Parliament elections), the second edition was launched: the focus was to promote the importance of youth participation in the European Elections but also the strategic focuses of AEGEE. It took place with the support of Open Society Foundations, that augmented the main project's main message: striving for an open and egalitarian society. Last year, the third edition focused on borderless Europe, finishing at Agora Bergamo, where Europe on Track became an official AEGEE-Europe project.

The fourth edition of EoT focussed on civic education and active citizenship, in cooperation with the Civic Education Working Group of AEGEE-Europe. "Mind the Gap" between societies, between individuals, between governments and citizens, between countries... at a time in which the world seems increasingly divided and polarised.

It started in Budapest on April 21st with the awarded conference "Education for the Present, Democracy for the future" bringing together more than 80 youngsters from Europe and beyond, and it finished on May 23rd at Spring Agora Enschede 2017, where the 6 ambassadors and the project team met again and had the opportunity to present the project and its main outcomes to more than 700 people.



There were a lot of highlights in this edition: First of all, the project reached places it had never before, proving that a borderless Europe is possible, even until Moscow, Chisinau and Grodno.

The first group of ambassadors, "Team Blue", had the opportunity to meet and interview Iryna Bieliaieva, head of Youth Policy Department at the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine. They also visited many high schools during the trip, delivering three workshops in different

rooms in a high school in Kraków in less than three hours, for example. Another highlight of this team were the issues to reach Grodno: The ambassadors were denied entrance at the border in Belarus and had to hitchhike back to Lithuania from where they could take another bus to Belarus and enter through a different checkpoint.

"Team Red" also experienced outstanding moments on their route: They did a workshop together with Modovan High School students who drafted and submitted education-related petition to their national government. The team also presented the preliminary findings at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels in a panel discussion with other experts, which was organised by Comité Directeur. And finally they interviewed the driving forces behind of an initiative that wants to reclaim unused spaces in Napoli for public works, community centers, and education.

"I will never forget my time with Europe on Track – I met the nicest people, had the most candid conversations, and came face-to-face with the biggest issues facing our world. I also met friends for life in places I may otherwise not have had the chance to visit." Brett Aresco, EoT-ambassador.

We want to thank everyone that contributed to make this edition of Europe on Track possible, proving that a united, borderless and democratic Europe is possible.





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30 YEARS OF SUMMER UNIVERSITY

By Adrianna Ziemniewicz AEGEE-Warszawa



The Summer University project was created in 1988 in order to promote European integration and help young people learn more about culture, language, history and traditions of other European countries. The project however has given us so much more: friendships for years and a feeling of belonging to one big, borderless Europe. After almost 30 years, Summer University has become a must in AEGEEans holidays.

Summer is made for adventures

Every year more than 5000 people around Europe take part in the Summer University, the oldest project of AEGEE-Europe. What makes it so special? AEGEE SU offer what Erasmus exchanges offer during university year, concentrated in the time of student's vacation. During two amazing weeks of summer the participants have a chance to get to know 30 to 50 new people from different countries, travel to unique places and discover the country from a local's perspective.

Moreover, the „university“ part of the project is also really important and the participants are encouraged to participate in many activities operating in terms of non-formal education, such as workshops, presentations and discussions. The activities carried out during a Summer University range from academic, (such as classes to learn a foreign language), sports related (learn how to surf or sail) to multicultural ones (get familiar with Italian culture, Spanish history, learn how to cook a traditional dish or attend a photography class). What is more, the Summer University project is based on peer learning so most of the activities are led by young professionals from the organisation.

So what is the recipe for such a SUccess of the project? Bringing together a bunch of active, open-minded people eager to self-develop and let them discover new places, new skills and in the process also themselves.

Summer University Project Schools

The Summer University project is valuable not only for participants but also for organizers. Every year around 500 organizers develop skills connected to event management, intercultural communication, conflict management and much more. For many of them this is the first experience of this kind so every year Summer University Coordination Team organizes Summer University Project Schools (SUPS). Their aim is to teach future organizers about project management, budgeting, leadership, workshops delivering, public speaking and everything else they need to know to organize a great Summer University. This year five SUPS were organized from the end of January until the end of March and took place in Berlin, Voronezh, Tartu, Las Palmas and Skopje.

30th anniversary

In 2018 the beloved project of many AEGEEans will turn 30. This means celebration! The details are not known yet but Summer University Coordination Team and the Anniversary team are working on something big. Locals and European bodies are encouraged to incorporate the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Summer University into their own activities.



ELECTION OBSERVATION PROJECT

By Natalia Klimenko



2017 has been incredibly rich in elections. Citizens of France, Britain and the Netherlands have already made up their mind concerning the development of their countries. Germany will express its opinion in September. The question is: how politically active is European youth and how can we involve them into decision-making? To find out, Key to Europe spoke to Thomas Leszke, Project Manager of AEGEE Election Observation Project (EOP).

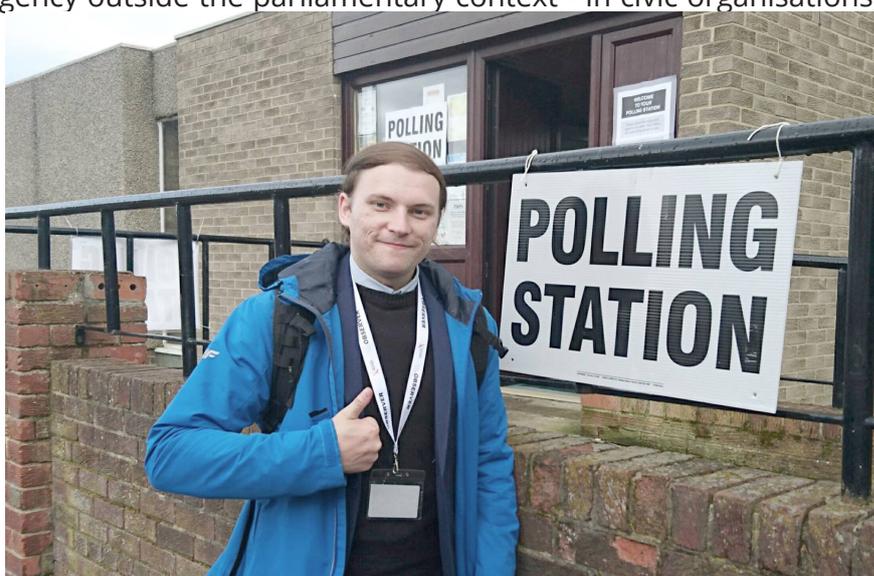
Thomas, we would like to start with a rhetorical question. Why don't young people vote in elections anymore?

Thomas: There are hundreds of ways to phrase this question. And there have been hundreds of occasions in Europe that have prompted parents and teachers, academics and politicians to address this phenomenon over the past decades: Youth turnout is dwindling. Which, in consequence, raises another question: What does the future of representative democracy look like if the young generation of today does not develop the habit of voting, or even just the once widespread conviction that voting is an elementary civic duty?

In recent years, scientific research has produced a considerable volume of studies on the matter. It has been argued that young people struggle with the complexity of political reality today; that they lack relevant education; that their understanding of "community" in times of social media is ever less congruent with the political communities they are supposed to constitute; that they are facing an increasingly technocratic and managerial style of policy making over which they believe their vote has no influence; or that, on the contrary, many of them feel Fukuyama's "end of history" has indeed materialised and that politics is less about fundamental choices and more about "simply doing things better" - the list is virtually inexhaustible.

At the same time it has been argued that young people are not necessarily "apolitical", but that they simply choose to exercise their political agency outside the parliamentary context - in civic organisations, in the media, in their immediate social surroundings or on the internet. While this may be accurate, it leaves the initial question unanswered: What legitimacy will future governments have if they cannot possibly claim to represent an important part of the electorate - that part which politicians habitually refer to as "the future of our society"?

To understand the challenge our democracy is facing, a comprehensive overview is needed of what drives (or deters) young people in elections today. It is this overview that AEGEE Election Observation aims to provide.





Developing a new agenda

Thomas: Over the past year, EOP has deployed international teams of young observers to elections in countries as diverse as Romania or Bosnia and Herzegovina, (the former Yugoslav Republic of) Macedonia or the Netherlands. In doing so, as in all of our 17 missions since 2014, we have focused on the core virtues of our project: training young people to be international election observers, bringing them together with relevant stakeholders in the country, facilitating exchanges with local youth, conducting professional short-term observation missions, reflecting on our experiences and sharing our insights with our various networks. It's a source of great satisfaction to see that with every mission, we have become better at this. This is exactly why the time has come for EOP to set a new aim for itself.

Our vision is to have a single website which shows, for every parliamentary election in every European country:

- figures for youth turnout;
- a statistically relevant survey among young people explaining their individual reasons for (not) voting;
- a detailed report with concrete recommendations based on stakeholders' input;
- a "Youth in Elections Index" based on the initial figures, enabling a comparison across countries and time.

As argued above, we strongly believe that there would be a substantial added value in such an overview about the participation of young people, provided by young people based on input by young people. To a certain extent, the reports of our latest missions do already reflect this conception. Adding a scientific component to an originally activist initiative requires a more systematic approach. And this - over the course of a series of new missions to parliamentary elections in Germany, Czech Republic and Hungary, among others - will be our main priority for the upcoming year.

YOUR VISION FOR EUROPE

“Your Vision for Europe” project has its origins already in spring 2015. One year later, it became an official AEGEE-project in Agora Bergamo. Currently, the project team counts fifteen people. Aside from the project manager, the team is organized in several subteams, which have between one and four members - Impact Measurement, Fundraising, Communication, IT, Content, Finances and Faces of Europe. Despite the fact the team members all come from different cultural backgrounds, from EU or non-EU countries, they believe exactly in the same core values, being the keypoint helping them to actively work towards their aim.

The aim of the project is to engage young Europeans from a wide variety of national, social and cultural backgrounds in an open, discursive process of collective learning, opinion and will-formation regarding the future of Europe and make sure that their voices are being heard. In particular, Your Vision for Europe does not want to convince people how great the EU is, but they rather want young people being informed and in this manner being able to form their own opinion about European topics. At the same time, the project wants to trigger young Europeans to speak up and discuss about topics that influence their generation.

The achievement of this aim is done by several actions. First of all, in 2016-2017, the project has delivered several workshops at local and European events. Moreover, a workshop toolkit has been prepared, by which locals are able to deliver prepared workshops without the presence of a trainer from the project team. Secondly, the project team has been responsible for the content of the conference “Borderless Europe - Blessing or Burden” in Cluj-Napoca at the beginning of May 2016 - for sure their biggest achievement of that year. The conference was organized in cooperation with AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca and “Association des Amis de Franck Biancheri”. Its main purpose was to encourage mutual understanding between young Europeans, that were gathered together not only to acknowledge and discuss their personal viewpoints (that may or may not greatly differ from those of the others), but also to foster understanding that the vision we have for the European Project is shared, showing that whatever problems we may face from where we are standing, could be overcome in the direction in which we are moving. In short, the conference had forty-five participants from all over Europe, great speakers, interactive workshops and meaningful plenary discussions. A final booklet about the conference has been published on different media channels.



Next, the project team launched the online campaign #MyEuropeanMemory. This campaign was framed in the celebration of thirty years of Erasmus+. An event on Facebook was created, where everyone in Europe had the chance to share a memory, moment or experience when they felt European. People could include a picture, tag the persons they experienced it with and use the hashtag #MyEuropeanMemory. By posting it in the event, the stories were collected at one place and could easily be shared. The campaign lasted for one month, starting the 2st of February and ending the 28th of February. The online campaign aimed at collecting different stories that showed a connection with the European project, which is more than only the European Union. The campaign aimed at showing that the European project is part of our everyday lives and that it is made up of different moments captured in our minds.



The final step was for sure the Summer University “Call Upon Young Europeans”, organized in collaboration with AEGEE-Toulouse and AEGEE-Lyon. Your Vision for Europe provided five days of training, taking place in Toulouse. Afterwards, the group traveled to Barcelona. The training focused on European Citizenship and spreading Eurooptimism, allowing for an in depth understanding of the functioning of the EU and the benefits of European citizenship through non-formal education. The Summer University gave special attention to identify and discuss factors that endanger the European project and how to tackle and prevent them, enhancing understanding and creating open-minded citizens. The main focus however were the opportunities offered to European citizens, to all be active citizens and changemakers.

Already early in the project, Your Vision for Europe launched Faces of Europe, an online photoblog on Facebook. The project will be closed at Autumn Agora Catania, but Faces of Europe will continue to exist as a separate project.

THE AEGEEAN, TELLING STORIES SINCE 2011

by Matteo Lai, AEGEE-Cagliari

The AEGEEan was born with the main aim to have a well-informed Network. The team tries to cover what happens inside the association, but it also tries to keep an eye on what happens outside their bubble. According to the current Editor-in-Chief, Federica Soro, “we have a lot of room for improvement and growth in the latter, and I am confident this and the next generation of AEGEEans will be able to develop the magazine further”.

The AEGEEan officially became a project during Spring Agora Bergamo 2016. The team members worked with this new status for a year, but the project was closed at Spring Agora Enschede 2017, since it was not the ideal status for the magazine. They are now working on polishing their a new status of committee, meanwhile they keep on as they always did.

The main reason why the project was closed is because that was not the ideal status for the magazine. They didn't have a status before and they tried to find a solution to that, but they realised that they still need to work on finding a suitable status. For example, since when the contract was signed, of the three people that signed it, just one is still a full-time member of the team. The project members are now polishing their working format as committee, which will give them the same perks of a project with a more suitable structure, and that will be presented for ratification at Agora Catania. The main issue is indeed creating a working format that can ensure the independence of the magazine, while keeping it an activity inside AEGEE-Europe.

About the roles in the team, the Editor-in-Chief is the main responsible of the overall functioning of the magazine, helped by the Chief-of-Proofreaders, currently Maria Zwartkruis, and the CD appointed member, Joanna Pankowska until August 2017, mainly helping with and advising on issues related to the status of the magazine inside AEGEE-Europe and other eventual specific happenings.





In this past year, twelve new people have joined the team. The project currently works with: nine journalists, Vasiliki Andrioti, Matteo Lai, Paola Letizia Murru, Susan Nijsten, Aliona Sytnyk, Firdevs Çazım, Lisa Gregis, Raluca Radu and Gabriela Wasylków; ten proofreaders, Maria Zwartkruis, Ian Clotworthy, Sanne Van der Voort, Anastasia Kruglova, Simona Băieșu, Aliona Iorgov, Meltem Sanlier, Yusuf Arslan, Mireille Voorendt, Iva Kovandova –plus Federica Soro-; and one editor, Federica. Moreover, they can

count on a PR, Javier Pedromingo, an IT, Balint Erdosi, some freelancers, Kimberly Townend and Violeta Croitoru, and the now occasional help by former Editor-in-Chief Erika Bettin.

There is an idea to update the website, and the PR is already working on it. Hopefully, the AEGEEan will show a new look by 2018.

Someone in the Network thought the AEGEEan is somehow influenced by the Comité Directeur. Federica doesn't see it in that way. Journalists are free to write about what they prefer, if it is somehow related to the general mission and vision of AEGEE. They also hosted potentially controversial articles on the website pages. "The AEGEEan" represents AEGEE-Europe. "What I mean by this is not that we should avoid to voice what we feel is going in the wrong direction in the association, if case be. There are multiple ways to express one's opinion, or to report some happening: in my opinion, as the official magazine of AEGEE, we should always strive for impartial, respectful and objective communication" adds Federica.

About what the experience of the team in Agora Enschede, the team was able to handle Agora preparation before the event started, with the increased workload and pressing deadlines to cover all candidates and proposals.

There is the intention to create a Press Team also for the next two Agoras, but it will depend on how many team members will attend Agora Catania and Agora Krakow. Anyway, there are always new ideas that could be explored.

DRINKWISE

DRINK-WISE was an annual refreshing project aiming at youth drinking behaviour. Questioning the reason why young people drink, DRINK-WISE aimed at exploring issues related to drinking and aspects of the drinking culture that make us feel united or divided. Having the opportunity inside AEGEE to travel in different cities, the project highlighted the importance of traditional drinks as part of our local culture and promoted responsible and healthy drinking habits.

The idea comes from a fan made project during Network Meeting in Ioannina 2014, the “iDrink project”. When there was a need to formulate a group, three fellas got a bit drunk, but also highly social. iDrink purpose was to spread the good vibes of AEGEE to students during nights out. Abnormal, but successful strategy, which was followed after many years, but rearranged to the current needs of AEGEE, as the DRINK-WISE project.

From October 2016 with the official launch of the project in Agora Chisinau, until September 2017 (Agora Catania), DRINK-WISE gives the opportunity to many young people to share their own personal views on the cultural aspects of drinking, as well as to get informed about the traditions by other local people. Delivering workshops and other interactive trainings with the collaboration of local antennae, the project managed to engage participants in a teambuilding procedure with the main goal to break stereotypes and mental borders.

With the motto “Think before you drink”, from the early steps of this initiative, another focus was the promotion of healthy and responsible drinking habits. Because many young people don’t know how to protect themselves from mixing drinks and other irresponsible drinking behaviours, which often have disastrous effects on their health. That was the main reason why emphasis was given on informing participants adequately about all the risks related to alcohol consumption, with informative sessions on prevention and right treatment of dangers related to alcohol consumption.



IT'S ALL ABOUT CIVIC EDUCATION

By: Elinne Mertens, Esther Hillmer

During the past year, not only the Civic Education Working Group, but also two Task Forces worked hard to raise awareness for the improvement of Civic Education inside and outside of AEGEE. Various workshops and debates, the registration of a European Citizens' Initiative and a "Travelling Tablets"-Competition to collect signatures are only a few of all the activities which have been carried out.

The Civic Education Working Group (CEWG) is coordinating AEGEE's work on Civic Education, which is one of the four Focus Areas. CEWG ensures that AEGEE achieves its objectives by helping antennae with activities, delivering workshops and raising awareness on the topic. During a one-year term, the team around Aliénor Pirlet,

elected Working Group Coordinator, has done a lot: According to the Action Agenda's Interim Report, all the objectives regarding Civic Education were already achieved!

more than
education



The nine Working Group members have been extremely active delivering workshops on the topic during various occasions such as Network Meetings, Statutory Events and events of external partners. A debate competition during European Planning Meeting in Zagreb has been regarded as a big success. By supporting online campaigns such as "AEGEE Days Without Meat" or "Human Rights Day", members of the WG have promoted different topics related to Civic Education. Moreover, CEWG was involved in the conference "Education for the Present, Democracy for the Future", co-organized by AEGEE-Budapest and Europe on Track Project with support of l'Association des Amis de Franck Biancheri. Europe on Track 4, which took place in spring 2017, ran with "Civic Education" as its main topic.

Another big achievement of CEWG, with the big support of a Task Force, has been the final registration of the European Citizens' Initiative called "More Than Education - Shaping Active and Responsible Citizens" in October 2016.

"More Than Education" ECI aims at putting the topic of Civic Education high on the political agenda since civic competences are regarded as the basis for a democratic society. It addresses the long-standing need for the EU member states to reconsider the uncoordinated and partly inadequate educational policies by calling on the European Commission to provide support and incentives for improvement of Civic Education.

ECI is a democratic tool which gives citizens the opportunity to propose legislative action to the European Commission. However, while it has been viewed by many as a chance to mobilize millions of citizens in Europe for a good cause, the ECI as a tool is heavily criticized for being too restrictive and bureaucratic. The collection of one million signatures across the EU is an extremely difficult mission. The Task Force has faced many problems regarding human and financial resources. It is probably the first time that an ECI has been started only by volunteers, without any donor or institutional funding behind. Therefore, overcoming technical and legal obstacles and being officially registered is already a big achievement.



Another positive outcome is that by running an ECI, AEGEE members have learnt about Citizens' Initiatives as a democratic tool, gained new campaigning skills and have achieved a better understanding of Civic Education and its current state in Europe. In addition, the ECI enables AEGEE to profile itself as a stakeholder regarding Civic Education, whereby the ECI has been the trigger for participation in many high-level events both on the topic of Civic Education and revision of ECI as a tool. Being present at such events gave Task Force members important networking opportunities, resulting in more long-term cooperation with different partners for potential future projects. Furthermore, since the Task Force gained personal experience with the tool, it

was contacted by several academics and future ECI organisers regarding the (improvement of) ECI as a tool. The European Commission started a consultation process about the revision of the initiative, where the Task Force has given its feedback, highly relevant because of the policy paper on relevance of ECI, written by Policy Officer Júlia Hanesz.

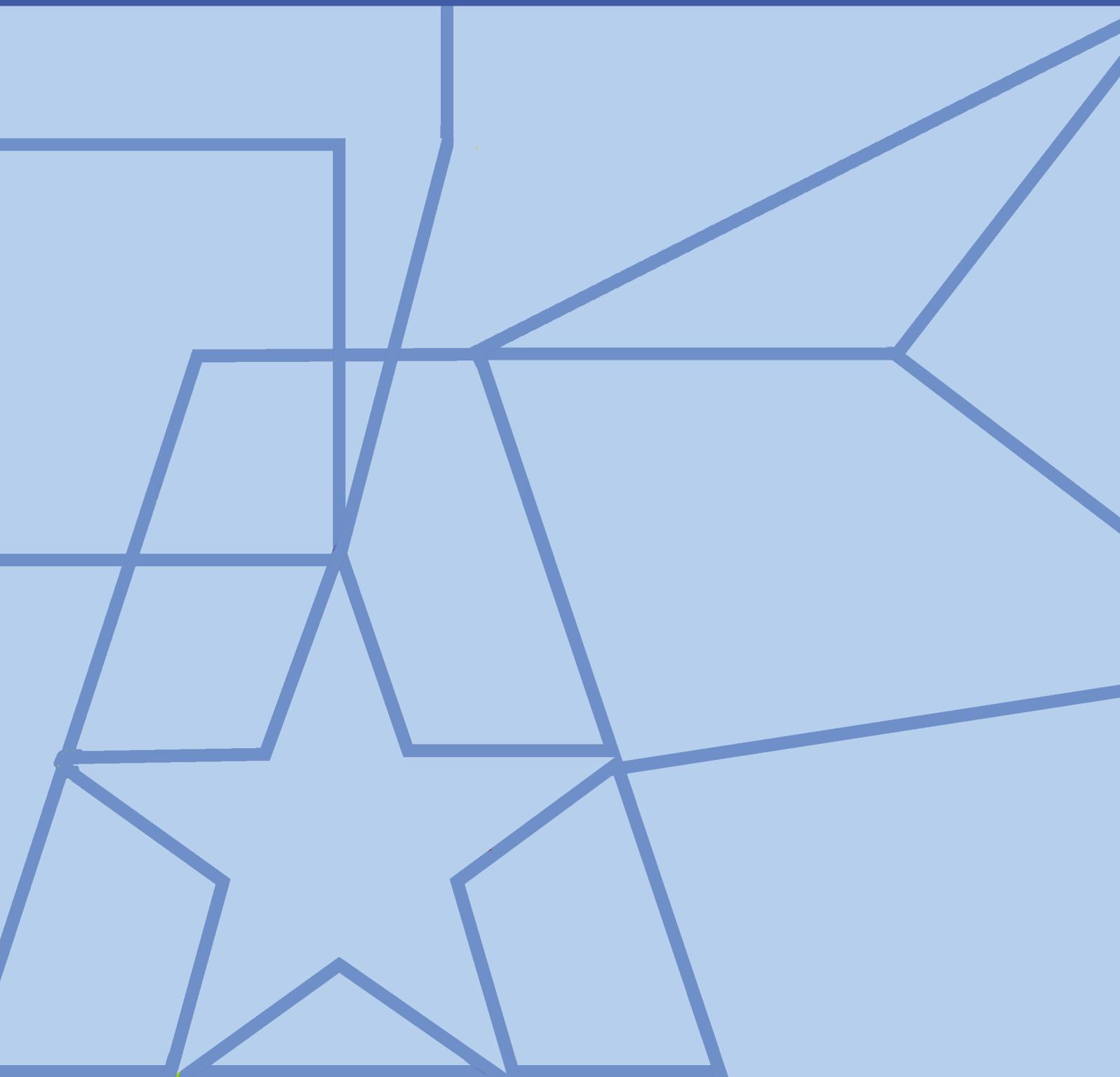
Because of the fact that Civic Education should be improved in all European states, while people from non-EU countries are not allowed to sign the ECI, the Task Force also started a regular petition with a similar claim. This gives citizens from outside the EU a chance to express their support with the aim of "More Than Education".

Within the frame of the ECI campaign, various events have been organized by the Task Force and AEGEE antennae in order to collect signatures and deliver knowledge about ECI as a tool. For instance, an action where two tablets to collect signatures with are travelling around Europe. The year of signature collection will close with a conference in Brussels to reflect on opportunities and challenges of organizing an ECI.



WWW.CIVICEDUCATION.EU

7. LOOKING FORWARD



COMITÉ DIRECTEUR 2017/2018

Dear network.

An exciting year lies ahead of us. During our time in AEGEE, we are always encouraged to step out of our comfort zone. Step after step, we embark new challenges that we never thought we would take. Here we are, presenting ourselves to you as the Comité Directeur 55.

Our aim as Comité Directeur is also to foster the participation of all members in our organisation and to support our members to develop joint initiatives that contribute to the mission of a united Europe. It is an honour to work for you, and we will do what we



can to represent the amazing work of all AEGEE members to the external world, while tackling the challenges within our organisation as best as we can, together with all of you. During this year we will learn incredibly much as CD members: about others, about ourselves and about teamwork, about Brussels, Europe and more.

This year is an exciting year for AEGEE. We are starting up four new focus areas on Civic Education, European Citizenship, Equal Rights and Youth Development. This is the year that we celebrate 30 years of Summer University and the year that we prepare for Yvote 2019. This is the year of Agora Catania, the European Planning Meeting in Yerevan and Agora Krakow. The Autumn network meetings will take place from Gaziantep to Utrecht, from Alicante to Sankt-Petersburg and more will come during the spring. Already during the summer, we noticed that AEGEE members are bubbling with new ideas, and international teams are already knocking on the door of our house to share their ideas for the year with us.

We would like to thank all members who are putting their trust in us and thank everyone who has been supportive so far. These first months, the experienced members around us felt like parents guiding us in the right direction, and like parents, we try to make them proud. We invite all of you to join our journey through the academic year of 2017-2018, a year in which we as young Europeans learn, act and fight for the democratic, diverse and borderless that we envision as AEGEE.

Europeanly yours,

Comité Directeur 55:

Adonis, Fabrizio, Florian, Loes, María, Marco, Teresa

AUTUMN AGORA CATANIA 2017

OUR BURNING LOVE FOR THE AGORA

AEGEE-Catania, regardless of its age, has always been very active in the AEGEE scenario because of its events, events that have always left something in everybody's hearts. That something is easy to write and say, but almost impossible to explain. Is it the skills of the organizers? The experience? Is it the warm heart of the people here? Is it the amazing group of participants? Could it be the beauty of Catania perhaps? You see? It is not easy.

After all, the things that AEGEE-Catania has been through in 13 years were what brought us here: hosting the next Autumn Agora. Almost impossible to explain, but so powerful to blindly follow the Main Organizer and getting on board.

No one told us to do it, no one expected to be a part of it, no one knew how hard it would be and guess what? We are here. With the burning love and passion that, in my humble opinion, make us unique.

This Agora changed the antenna a little bit, it was a sort of link to the past and the roots of the antenna: we could never expect the founding fathers of AEGEE-Catania to give us a call, as excited as us, and to say "We heard that our dream has come true... Can we be part of this dream?"

This Agora shaped the antenna and its future, through it we had a vision of the path that we will take in the years to come: a lot of new events, fresh new members ready to give their best, new contacts with local and international institutions, a better connection with our Network.

Autumn Agora Catania gave us something old and something new, an harmonic dualism that can open Catania to all the AEGEEans and that can make this beautiful island closer to the European Union.

Gabriele Nicotra
President of AEGEE-Catania



EPM YEREVAN 2018:

ROCKING EUROPE SINCE 782 B.C.

By Armenak Minasyants, Main Coordinator of the EPM Yerevan

Albania? Oh, sorry no, Romania? Ohhh, Armenia? Really? Hmmm, where is it?

This is one of the most common ways that average young European starts discovering one of the most unique and one of the oldest European cultures! AEGEE-Yerevan, which was established back in August 2010, will be the first South Caucasian local in history to host an AEGEE statutory event.

For many years, different generations of AEGEEans in Yerevan were planning to apply and to bring a statutory event to this South-Eastern part of the AEGEE network. Nevertheless, these ambitious plans are settled and grounded with the in-depth understanding and perception of youth policy aspects in Europe, via experienced, skillful and permanently functioning Board and Secretariat of AEGEE-Yerevan.

“EPM Yerevan 2018 will be truly amazing! We do not want to host just a statutory event in AEGEE, but we want to set up a brand-new quality benchmark for the upcoming EPMs and Agoras to follow. This network has an amazing potential and we want to help in unleashing it. If you want to be the best you need to work overtime, and this is ideally about us. The positive emotions and feelings are simply indescribable, as this is the event we have been waiting for 8 years”, comments Ani Khachatryan, Secretary General of AEGEE-Yerevan and one of the Main Coordinators’ of EPM Yerevan 2018. Alongside with Armenak Minasyants, she will be leading the group of 50 local organizers and helpers.

Worth to mention, AEGEE-Yerevan has always been one of the most progressively developing locals in the network. Being located outside of the EU, it has mostly contributed to successful implementation of various thematic projects, majorly focusing on the spreading of Eurooptimism and boosting the youth work and civic education on the regional level. On the other hand, it has hosted already 2 Network Meetings and the Board and the members of the antenna are constantly active on various European level events.

The EPM Yerevan 2018 will also coincide with the 2800th anniversary of the foundation of Yerevan, thus making it one of the oldest cities in Europe! Hence every participant will join also the solemn ceremonies taking place across the city. On the other hand, the upcoming EPM will be also very special for its amazing pre-events taking place in two of the Armenia’s neighboring countries!

So, what can be better than traveling to the undiscovered corner of Europe in a company of another 250 AEGEE friends? Whether you think everyone in Yerevan is a “masshole” or you get along with everyone there, the people in Yerevan do not compare to any other group of people in Europe. There’s a sense of community that comes from everyone yelling at each other that doesn’t compare to anything else. Plus, whenever something happens to the city, good or bad, everyone stands as one.

Brace yourself, prepare your stomachs, fasten your seat belts and get ready for the most exciting project of your life!

SPRING AGORA KRAKOW 2018:

THE FIRST AGORA FOR AEGEE-KRAKOW.

The idea of organising Agora was present in AEGEE-Krakow since a long time but one of the most important moments that helped the Polish Local, born in 1991 and celebrating its 25th anniversary, to make the decision, was the Opening Ceremony at Spring Agora Bergamo 2016. Even the most experienced members, who had already participated in few Agorae claimed that it was the most beautiful spectacle they had ever seen at any AEGEE event. AEGEE-Krakow members, aware of the logistic challenges that organising a statutory event brings along, came to the conclusion that everything is possible when you have a positive attitude and a determination to reach your goal. The members of the board 2016/2017, at the end of their term, made the research of the possible places that could be used for accommodation, plenaries, workshops etc. It turned out that the city of Krakow gives all the citizens a lot of possibilities when it comes to the facilities. It became clear soon that all the members were enthusiastic about organising Agora, so they immediately started to work on the application form.

The board members and the possible core team were informed about the result a few weeks before Agora Enschede and it has been really hard not to show happiness. Anyway, they managed to keep the 'poker faces' until the hosting local of the next Spring Agora was officially revealed. Also Magdalena Barwinek, President of AEGEE-Krakow, right before the announcement, was really stressed out. But as soon as she stood in front of the microphone, she had a look at the audience and she could see lots of smiling faces, so she instantly forgot about the stress.



The core team is already working on the Agora. Their Local Agora has been already organized to accept the budget and to choose the Main Coordinator of the project, Karolina Lapczyk – the former President of AEGEE-Kraków and the initiator of 'Agora Kraków' idea. We could not imagine a better person on this place! Karolina already organised several meetings to discuss the most important issues and she is willing to continue it even during the summer break. There are also lots of people who are not present in Kraków, but they will give help working online. The team is determined to prepare the Agora in an excellent way.

AEGEE-Kraków has never organized an event as big as the Agora, but it succeeded in preparing smaller international events. In November 2015 they hosted 150 participants of Autumn Network Meeting - Awaken The Dragon. In April 2016 they were responsible for the logistics of 2nd Youth Summit, the international conference for 100 participants, related to the topic of corruption, lack of transparency and accountability and their implications on our lives. They also organized smaller events, as AEGEE Eastern Partnership Youth Convention in 2015 and Y Vote Convention in 2014. In the past, they hosted two statutory events – European Boards' Meeting in 2010 and the Presidents Meeting in 1992.

Right after the hosting local of Spring Agora 2018 was announced, the Polish Local started to get lots of proposals from other AEGEEans, willing to help it with organising Agora. So the open call for helpers will be announced.

AEGEE-Krakow can count on the support of the public institutions, private companies and the universities' funds. Furthermore, the Agora is a big-scale event, that will have a valuable meaning in the context of promoting the city of Kraków. The Core Team already started to prepare the fundraising strategy to collect as much funds as possible and to provide their participants with the best facilities.

AEGEE-Krakow cannot wait to show an unforgettable Agora with the spirit of both experienced members and young people very often recruited thanks to an effective PR strategy that encourages students to join the organization. The new members will probably start their AEGEE experience on the local level and then, as they gain the proper skills, they will be encouraged to join the Agora team. Some old members who are not active anymore already got very excited about organising the Agora because they already offered their help. We hope to see you in Krakow in April!

THE TEAM



Alejandra Piot
Editor-In-Chief
AEGEE- A Coruña



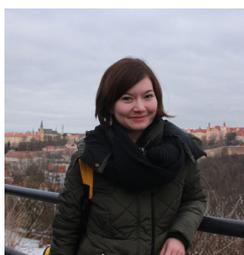
Natalia Klimenko
Editor
AEGEE-Moskva



Laura Pazienza
Creative Director
AEGEE-A Coruña



Ainuddin Faaeq
Photo Database Manager
AEGEE-Mugla



Karina Kho
Photo Database Manager
AEGEE-Moskva



Marina Krivonosova
Photo Database Manager
AEGEE-Voronezh



Adrianna Ziemniewicz
Journalist
AEGEE-Warszawa



Erika Bettin
Journalist
AEGEE-Verona



Matteo Lai
Journalist
AEGEE-Cagliari



Marta Labanowska
Journalist
AEGEE-Warszawa



Patrycja Figarska
Journalist
AEGEE-Warszawa

AUTHORS

Adrianna Ziemniewicz
Alberto Arroyo
Alejandra Piot
Anne Fleur
Antonis Triantafillakis
Armenak Minasyants
Constantine Bakiris
Elinne Mertens
Erika Bettin
Esther Hillmer
Gabriele Nicotra
Joanna Pankowska
Jorge Miguel

Katharina Jiménez
Laura Pérez
Loes Rutten
María Ballesteros
Marta Labanowska
Matteo Lai
Patrycja Figarska
Réka Salamon
Sergio Nistal
Spyros Papadatos
Tekla Hajdu
Theijs van Welij

PROOFREADERS

Balint Caesar (AEGEE-Budapest)
Daniel Memarpour (AEGEE-Madrid)
Derk Snijders (AEGEE-Delft & AEGEE-Enschede)
Federica Soro (AEGEE-Cagliari)
Mareike Ritter (AEGEE-Heidelberg)

Peter Tar (AEGEE-Manchester)
Spyros Papadatos (AEGEE-Ioannina)
Stefania Di Martino (AEGEE-Bergamo)
Svenja Van der Tol (AEGEE-Nijmegen)

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CONTACT INTOMATION

Rue du Noyer/Nostelaarsstraat 55
1000 Brussels, Belgium
headoffice@aegee.org
www.aegee.org
Phone secretariat: +32 2 246 0320
Mobile secretariat: +32 483 675 625 (BASE)
Fax_ +32 2 246 0329

PROJECTS

AEGEE ELECTION OBSERVATION
eop@aegee.org
www.projects.aegee.org/eop

SUMMER UNIVERSITY PROJECT
suct@aegee.org
www.aegee.org/su

EUROPE ON TRACK

europeontrack@aegee.org
www.aegee.org/europeontrack

YOUR VISION FOR EUROPE

yourvisionforeurope@aegee.org
www.yourvisionforeurope.com

GR-EAT

projects@aegee.org
www.gr-eat.eu

MY-WAY

coordinator@mywaystartup.eu
www.mywaystartup.eu

EUTH

info@euth.net
www.euth.net

OPIN

mail@nexusinstitut.de
www.opin.me

OTHER BODIES

LES ANCIENS

www.anciens.org

AEGEE ACADEMY

board@aegee-academy.org
www.aegee-academy.org

THE AEGEEAN

aegeean@aegee.org
www.aegee.org/magazine

AEGEE - EUROPE
EUROPEAN STUDENT'S FORUM

KEY TO EUROPE
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Rue du Noye / Notelaarsstraat 55
1000 Brussels, Belgium

+32 2 246 0320
headoffice@aegee.org



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