

Key to Europe



AEGEE
★EU20PE★
YEARS

MCMXCI

AUTH DESIGN

FINEST
GRAPHIC DESIGN

Our Mission We work hard to fulfill the demanding commissions of our clients, working at the highest artistic level with state of the art technology. We keep every project in hand from the first abstract ideas up to the production and distribution of a finished product.

Achievements The majority of our new clients is acquired by public tenders. We feel our greatest strength is our success in maintaining the confidence of our clients and collaborators, who return to us over the years with a constant stream of new projects.



Imprint

Key to Europe

Publisher
AEGEE-Europe
PO Box 72, B-1040 Bruxelles-Etterbeek 1
Phone: +32-2-245 23 00
Fax: +32-2-245 62 60
E-mail: info@aegee.org
Web: www.aegee.org

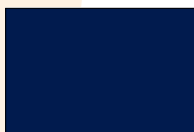
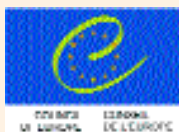
Key20 Team
Chief editor: Gunnar Erth
Editors: Olivier Genkin, Urška Špeh, Virág Szabó
Primary proof-reader: Chris Miller
Supporting proof-readers: Victoria Shenay,
Rikke Ansbjerg A Larsen

Special thanks to: all authors and sponsors,
Attila and Gabi Auth, János Blaskó, Balázs Horváth,
Csaba Koródi, Tibor Vörös, Christoph Stroh, m,
Dorian Selz, Philippe Portalier,
Dorothea Heister-Hovestadt,
Michael Merker and the Comité Directeur.

Design: Auth Design Kft., Budapest
Printing: Stadium Nyomda Kft., Budapest

Circulation: 25.000 copies

Copyright: AEGEE-Europe, 2005
All rights reserved
ISSN 1026-227X



Contents

Greetings4

Foreword by Bronislaw Geremek4
Salutations by Silvia Baita5

The idea: students for European integration . .6

Statement of principles8
The history of a growing network10
Structure and activities14
Life after AEGEE24

Fields of Action28

Active citizenship30
Cultural exchange32
Higher education34
Peace and stability36

20 years, 20 people38

1985: Franck Biancheri40
1986: Christoph H. Vaagt44
1987: Christophe Leclercq48
1988: Vittorio dell'Aquila52
1989: Maria Alvarez56
1990: Michael Merker60
1991: Gisella Gori64
1992: Ulla Bisgaard68
1993: David Stulik72
1994: John Stienen76
1995: Oleh Kyriyenko80
1996: Zsuzsa König84
1997: Bart Neerscholten88
1998: Bernhard Müller92
1999: Fani Zarifopoulou96
2000: Berber Hettinga100
2001: Jasna Bogdanovic104
2002: Andrei Popescu108
2003: Burcu Becerman112
2004: Olivier Genkin116

Facing the problems of the future120

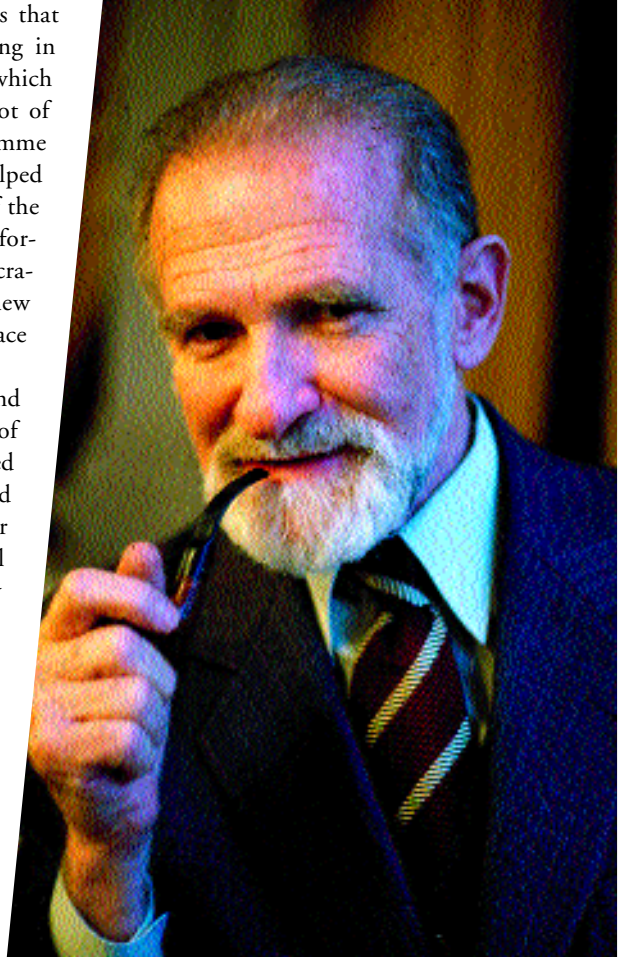


Dear Reader,

Twenty years ago I could only dream about the changes that have now occurred in Europe. At that time I was living in Poland and had to face the oppression of a system which denied its people their democratic rights. I suffered a lot of personal hardships after I became head of the programme council of Solidarnosc. Yet, I held to my beliefs and helped facilitate the round table talks that led to the abolition of the Polish communist party's monopoly on power. Later, as foreign minister, I had the privilege of supporting the democratisation process in my country, and its integration into a new and better Europe. Poland has now regained its natural place in the European family.

AEGEE also kept to its beliefs over the past 20 years, and helped shape a Europe which looks so different from that of 1985. At that time your vision of a stronger, more integrated Europe, and your input to the European Commission and other institutions made a real difference. After 1989, your association supported the democratic changes in Central and Eastern Europe with many initiatives, but most of all by bringing people from East and West together, showing them and helping them understand each other's reality. Your work, however, is not finished yet – and neither is mine. Despite last year's accession of ten countries to the European Union, the process of European integration is far from finished – both within the EU and throughout Europe as a whole. Economically the gap between the Central European and the Western European member states has to be closed. We need more long-term thinking in the European Union to achieve this aim. We must emphasize the role of the European Solidarity Fund in the post-accession process. However, we must develop Europe not only as an economic area, but also as a civilisation, a community with a specific canon of values. We have to work on it.

As professor for European Civilisation at the Natolin campus of the College of Europe, I have often discussed with my students such questions as: Is there a European identity? What importance has the European idea in times of globalisation? The process of ratification of the Constitutional Treaty will create an opportunity for a debate on such general issues. AEGEE has also been searching for answers to these questions, in large Europe-wide projects such as "Youth and Globalisation" in 2003 and "Europe's Identity" in 2004. This shows me that even after 20 years, your association has not lost its spirit and is still focussing on questions of significance to every single person on this continent.



And that's not all. The next enlargement of the European Union is right in front of us. Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Turkey want to join the EU, and in the long run, the number of countries will rise further. Ukraine, after its marvellous "orange revolution", is demonstrating its strong European identity and its aspiration to become a member of the EU. It is good to see that AEGEE has been supporting progress towards stability, democratisation and active citizenship in the new candidate countries for more than a decade. You have already arrived where the EU is still trying to reach. Therefore, your groundbreaking and grass-roots support for this process will remain as valuable as ever.

I wish you every success for your next 20 years and beyond.

Yours,

Bronisław Geremek
MER, Patron of AEGEE-Europe

Words of Welcome

*Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis,
vita memoriae, magistra vitae...*

(M. T. Cicero, De Oratore 2:36)

“History is the true witness of times, the light of truth, the life of memory, the teacher of life.” With these words, the Roman orator Cicero exhorted us to strengthen our arguments by solidly grounding them in lessons from the past. This is the year for us to take a lesson from the past and look at our future with more in our hands than just hope. Our first 20 years are, for AEGEE, the solid basis upon which we continue to build a splendid future.

I feel privileged to write to you here, as a representative of the European board, witness and leader of this process. We have a great opportunity to learn something from the past, from our founding fathers, who were able to manage an association like AEGEE when communication was much more difficult and we had far fewer tools than we do today.

The association in these short years has developed so fast that it is amazing for me to list the challenges we undertook and the innovative ideas we developed, both related to our active participation in society and also to the internal organisation of our association. What is important is that we have held on to our belief in strengthening the European conscience, also defending by all means the lack of national level as a tool to achieve our aims of a united Europe.

Our network has been growing rapidly all these years and expanding ever faster in the Eastern part of Europe. We passed from 7 antennae in 1987 to 260 across 43 countries in 2005. By 1996, there was clearly a need for a body which would “serve and protect” our local branches, helping them to develop and grow – and thus, the Network Commission was born. Three years later, the AEGEE-Academy was added, with the mission of organising regular human resources training for the network.

I remember some moments in the past when our association seized the chance to make history – such as the Belgrade student protests in 1996, the Kosovo conflict in 1999, or even a few months ago, when some of our Ukrainian branches helped to monitor the repeat presidential elections there. We showed that we were able to make a difference. Our involvement in civil society and defence of equal opportunities for European students was particularly fruitful in 1997, when our members from Turkish speaking locals successfully lobbied for Turkey's participation in Socrates II. Other outstanding projects included Peace Academy in 1999, Education for Democracy



in 2000 and Turkish-Greek Civic Dialogue 2002-2004. Our activities in the field of mobility were equally successful: Find Your Way in 1996, Borderless Europe in 2000 and Quo Vadis Europe? in 2001, just to name a few.

The Summer University project, our greatest milestone in the field of mobility, celebrates a special birthday this year, becoming 18 – and adult. Most impressive of all, however, is the list of achievements in our main field of action: higher education. AEGEE's lobbying work helped the Erasmus programme come into being in 1987. I also think of our participation in the UNESCO Conference on Higher Education in 1998, and the projects Socrates on the Move and Eureka in 2000/1.

History repeats itself, as philosopher Giambattista Vico said. In his opinion, history develops according to three ages – from the age of barbarousness to that of discretion and back again, in an endless cycle. Too often in AEGEE we failed to learn from our own mistakes and we were unable to play a proactive role in civil society. Sometimes we let things pass us by without contributing much to their direction, whereas in other times we were the real promoters of change.

We should grab the chance offered to us by this special year, 2005, to create change and be the progressive factor. It is up to us to break the cycle and create the association we want. Never forget the fact that despite our mistakes in the past – we are still here, ready to build our future.

Happy birthday AEGEE, I wish you another 20 years of success!

Silvia Baita

President of AEGEE-Europe 2004/5

Starting from a spectacular students conference about the future of Europe in Paris in 1985, AEGEE developed into a dynamic network with 260 branches all over Europe - a network with no national level. The association became a frontrunner of many European developments. After 20 years of existence, AEGEE is stronger than ever before.



Susanna Ritala at the Agora in Constanta, May 2001

The idea:
Active students
for European
integration



Statement of Principles

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

Hereby declare

Our belief that, while cherishing our diversity and respecting the character of our regions, we can find on the basis of our cultural and historical heritage the principles that unite us and guide us in our effort to strengthen the European conscience,
Our faith in a Europe symbolising liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law, and our will to co-operate with institutions that promote these concepts,
Our resolve to establish an open Europe which recognises the importance of all cultures in the shaping of its past, present, and future and which plays an active role in fostering peace, stability and prosperity throughout the world,
Our intention to promote unlimited access to education as being of fundamental importance to increase mutual understanding,
Our desire to encourage student mobility in order to fight prejudice and xenophobia by increasing people's awareness of different cultures, and
Our strong belief that our association is a unique platform enabling us to contribute to these visions of Europe.

The Presidents of AEGEE-Europe

Franck Biancheri (Paris)	April 1985 - April 1988
Vieri Bracco (Milan)	April 1988 - Nov 1988
Frédéric Pélard (Toulouse)	Nov 1988 - Nov 1989
Adolfo Dominguez (Madrid)	Nov 1989 - May 1990
Achim Boers (Delft)	May 1990 - Nov 1990
Georg von der Gablentz (Berlin)	Nov 1990 - April 1992
Jeroen Hoogerwerf (Amsterdam)	April 1992 - April 1993
Pavel Miladinovic (Prague)	April 1993 - Nov 1993
Zsuzsa Kigyós (Budapest)	Nov 1993 - April 1994
Dorian Selz (Geneve)	April 1994 - Nov 1994
Christina Thorsson (Lund)	Nov 1994 - April 1995
Egens van Irterson Scholten (Enschede)	April 1995 - Nov 1995
Christoph Strohm (Cologne)	Nov 1995 - April 1996
Jordi Capdevila (Barcelona)	April 1996 - Nov 1996
Gerhard Kress (Mainz)	Nov 1996 - April 1997
Peter Ginser (Karlsruhe)	April 1997 - Nov 1997
Sergio Caredda (Gorizia)	Nov 1997 - April 1998
Hélène Berard (Aix-en-Provence)	April 1998 - October 1998
Stefan Seidel (Augsburg)	October 1998 - April 1999
László Fésüs (Szeged)	April 1999 - Nov 1999
Fani Zarifopoulou (Athens)	Nov 1999 - May 2000
Oana Mailatescu (Cluj-Napoca)	May 2000 - Nov 2000
Karina Häuslmeier (Passau)	Nov 2000 - Nov 2001
Pedro Panizo (Valladolid)	Nov 2001 - May 2002
Tomek Helbin (Warsaw)	May 2002 - Nov 2002
Mark de Beer (Enschede)	Nov 2002 - May 2003
Diana Filip (Cluj-Napoca)	May 2003 - October 2003
Adrian Pintilie (Bucharest)	October 2003 - April 2004
Nicola Rega (Torino)	April 2004 - Nov 2004
Silvia Baita (Cagliari)	Since Nov 2004

Since 1985 there were 29 Presidents of AEGEE-Europe. Only AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca and AEGEE-Enschede have provided two presidents.

The CD of spring 1999 had three Presidents of AEGEE-Europe in its ranks: Oana Mailatescu (l.), Fani Zarifopoulou (3rd from l.) and László Fésüs (3rd from r.).



20 years - 20 facts

Did you know that...

1 AEGEE is a non-governmental and politically independent non-profit organisation.

2 AEGEE's main aim is to develop an open and tolerant society by promoting co-operation, communication and integration among young people in Europe and beyond?

3 AEGEE started in 1985 with students from nine Western European cities and currently comprises around 17.000 members in more than 250 local branches of 42 European countries. Since 1985, 70,000 students have been members.

4 AEGEE members are not only students of all faculties but also young professionals.

5 You can find former AEGEE members holding important positions in international institutions, running their own businesses as consultant and in the media sector.

6 AEGEE's headquarters have been situated in Brussels since 1996, a short tram ride from the EU institutions.

7 AEGEE does not have a national level, just a local and European level.

8 AEGEE has always been quick to take advantage of new technology, using internet telephone software, electronic membership and digital voting systems.

9 AEGEE has been taken part in politics at the highest levels, promoting ideals such as openness in higher education, peace and stability, active citizenship and cultural exchange while staying independent of all parties.

10 AEGEE has always been a pioneer regarding its thematic focus, dealing with issues such as European credit transfer systems, European defence policy, the Middle East, ecology, international job mobility, European economy, extra-European relations, AIDS and human rights.

11 AEGEE is not only active on the European continent but also deals with issues such as transatlantic co-operation.



12 AEGEE has been one of the decisive forces behind the creation and continuity of the Erasmus programme. Without AEGEE, 1,220,000 Erasmus students between 1989 and 2004 might not have had the chance to study abroad.

13 AEGEE lobbied successfully on the topics of education, peace and stability, while counting on the support of Europeans such as François Mitterrand and Mikhail Gorbachev.

14 AEGEE has consultative status at the UN, operational status at UNESCO, consultative status at ECOSOC and participatory status with the Council of Europe. AEGEE is also a member of the European Youth Forum and has close relations with OSCE and the World Bank.

15 AEGEE was one of the first European NGO's to expand beyond the iron curtain.

16 AEGEE offered support to students in Bosnia, supported democracy movements such as in Serbia and in Ukraine and set up a grant programme for students from the Balkans.

17 AEGEE was one of the first European NGO's to accept local branches in Turkey.

18 AEGEE organises around 250 international conferences and other events per year. A total of more than 200,000 students took part in an AEGEE event so far.

19 AEGEE's Summer Universities have given more than 50,000 students a unique European vacation.

20 AEGEE has made special professions for disabled people to join all its activities and projects.

From Paris in search of Europe: The story of AEGEE

1985-89: The beginning

The 16th of April, 1985 is remembered as the day that AEGEE was born. A conference entitled EGEE I aimed to overcome the continuing paralysis of the European integration process, and so created a common platform for 700 young Europeans from nearly all of the EC countries. Held in Paris, EGEE I was coordinated by Franck Biancheri. The views of the participants were presented to national and European institutions. Later, the participants began to establish local groups to promote European integration in their home cities, thereby creating a network which was called AEGEE from 1988 onwards. During this early stage, AEGEE took a big step with the successful lobbying campaign for the implementation of the Erasmus Mobility Programme. Our network then quickly expanded to include EFTA countries.

1990-95: Embracing the East

After the Berlin Wall crumbled, AEGEE opened its doors to students in Central and Eastern Europe. The East-West Working Group and the Comité Directeur of 1990 - known as the "Quo Vadis" group - promoted this new direction. Their approach not only led to extensive growth in the network, but also developed all members' understanding of Europe. The growth of the network in the East carries on to this day, with many creative ideas being born in these locals.

1996-99: Professionalism and new projects

By 1996, both the size of the network and its external contacts had grown considerably, creating the need for a strong administration. The Head Office moved from a small room in the University of Delft to a house in Brussels. The members of the Comité Directeur live and work together on these premises, taking advantage of the closeness of the European Institutions. This is a strategic posi-

tion, it allows both the European board and the wider network to concentrate on Europe-wide thematic projects, each featuring 10 to 20 conferences, seminars and other activities. Some highlights include the 1996 "Find Your Way" project, which was directed towards leaders of youth NGOs, and the 1997 "Europe & Euro" project, about raising awareness of the new European currency, five years before it was introduced.

2000-2005: Supporting the EU Enlargement

and democratisation in the East

Significant network growth has continued into the first years of the new millennium. Our 260 local branches organised 135 conferences and seminars and 99 Summer Universities in 2004. Two focuses in particular became obvious: AEGEE successfully offered its 15 year old experience in bridging East and West in the environment of the EU enlargement in 2004, for instance within the framework of the project "Europe's Identity". The other focus regards conflict resolution in war-struck Balkan and initiatives to strengthen democracy and reconciliation in countries such as Ukraine and Cyprus. This was reflected by new projects which consisted of "Education for Democracy", whereby the AEGEE network successfully conducted a scholarship programme that enabled students from war-torn Kosovo to study at universities in Western Europe. However, AEGEE members do not just talk about the problematic "Hotspots" - which, by the way, is the name of our biggest project in 2005. Members of AEGEE-Beograd were in the frontline when the Milosevic regime fell in autumn 2000. And during the demonstrations in Ukraine against the election fraud in December 2004, AEGEE took a firm stand for democracy.



The early years: “We got so much support”

In the first years of AEGEE's existence, the network grew rapidly. “It was not so difficult to found an antenna,” remembers Dorothea Heister-Hovestadt, who started AEGEE-Köln and AEGEE-Saarbrücken. “Of course, we could not make a promotion desk and say that we are a network with 17.000 members in 260 branches. We exaggerated a bit and said we had 10.000 members,” says Dorothea with a smile.

However, the early members didn't often need to exaggerate, since the message of AEGEE spread easily. “A European-minded organisation that had no national level was something unique. At that time studying abroad was very bureaucratic, so we were offering a great way to get to know Europe, to be European. AEGEE-Europe became a major actor in setting up the Erasmus programme.”

In Germany, support was also given by student councils, who offered their rooms and resources, and from university rectors. In the Netherlands, strong student associations supported AEGEE – in some antennae the existing associations even had a statutory right to seats in the board of an AEGEE branch. “In Saarbrücken, our university president was very enthusiastic about AEGEE. Once we went to his office to ask for support, and just after entering the room he said: where can I sign?”, recalls Dorothea.

AEGEE-Saarbrücken was given an office and use of university facilities for free. “On the second day of our first congress Tele-Communicating for Europe in 1989, the university president improvised a reception, personally serving us food.” Businesses also supported AEGEE in great style, according to AEGEE alumnus Dirk Berndsen. “For one event in Berlin in the 80's we were lent ten BMW for the weekend.”

Whenever AEGEE was founded in one place, it usually did not take long for a new antenna to start in a neighbouring university city. “A lot of events were then co-organised by several nearby antennae,” says Dorothea. The network was also spreading with the help of friends – and relatives. The Heister family is the most prominent example in the history of AEGEE. “Three of my siblings and I were active in AEGEE, and we all founded antennae,” says Dorothea. Her sister Ursula established a local in Aachen, her sister Elisabeth started two in Bonn and Freiburg, and her brother

Johannes, who was general secretary and vice president of AEGEE-Europe between 1986 and 1988, founded his own antenna in Kiel.

AEGEE's early development was not very structured. “In the early years, there was no strategy of trying to develop AEGEE in specific parts of the network,” says Dorothea. However, even at this early stage, “regional responsables” in the CD were looking after specific parts of the network – an ever-growing task that was handled full-time by the Network Commission after 1996.

Although founded in Paris, AEGEE was never really strong in France. “There were a lot of antennae, that's true. However, in many cases these were just one or two people. That was enough to get into the address book as an antenna,” explains Dorothea. “In that time the rules were less strict than today”. She blames the demanding system of study in France for AEGEE's failure to become deeply rooted. Only in Paris was AEGEE ever really strong, thanks to the Grandes Ecoles. “In Paris there were even sub-antennae at the different universities,” adds Dirk Berndsen. Dorothea is afraid that the new bachelor/masters system now developing across Europe will be bad for AEGEE. “People will study faster – so they will have less time for AEGEE. In this respect, we were really lucky to have created AEGEE in a different time”.

Gunnar Erth



The eye of AEGEE

Philippe Portalier became known as the photographic eye of AEGEE's early years. He discovered EGEE in January 1986 in Leiden, during the first simultaneous seminars “Europe-Students”. As delegate from EGEE-Paris, he participated in the first Agora at EGEE II in Munich in April 1986. He became President of EGEE-Paris from June 1986 to June 1987 and led the organisation of two local events. The first one was “Les premières rencontres de la pharmacie européenne” in 1986, the other was named “Le marketing politique en Europe” in 1987. The talented photographer participated in the European Parliament elections as candidate on the list of IDE in 1989.

AEGEE 1995-2005: Growth in the East

In early 2005, the AEGEE network comprised 178 antennae, 40 contact antennae and 40 contacts, spread across 41 countries. The association has around 17,000 members, a figure that has risen more than 25 percent since 1995. In short: the AEGEE network appears to be strong and stable.

The biggest part of the growth of the past decade occurred in Central and Eastern Europe. This should come as no surprise, given that AEGEE restricted itself to the European Community member states until 1989. The first Eastern antenna to be founded was AEGEE-Leipzig, in January 1990. They were quickly followed by Cluj-Napoca, Budapest, Prague and Warsaw. "The idea of Europe, and European integration, here was new and fresh," said Michal Pesta, Network Director in the CD in 2000.

AEGEE's growth in Central and Eastern Europe (CEEC) slowed after 2000, with the Balkans becoming the fastest growing region of our association. In recent years, our Turkish network has grown at a rate of several new branches every year. In 1992, AEGEE-Istanbul was the first antenna founded in Turkey. In Romania and the former Yugoslavia the total number of members has quadrupled in less than 15 years. Also in 2004, the first branch in the Caucasus region was founded in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Nevertheless, the Netherlands has traditionally been the greatest AEGEE stronghold, thanks to its well-established culture of student associations. About one in five AEGEE members are Dutch, about twice the share of the second and third most active countries – Romania and Italy. Poland has the fourth largest membership, followed by Turkey and Germany.

As a general rule, Dutch branches tend to be very big with numerous committees and a very serious approach to the total AEGEE agenda. Italian branches, on the other hand, are rather small and tend to focus on organising Summer Universities and taking care of Erasmus students. However, this is not always accurate, especially since in the past five years, more and more Italians became active on the European level.

The network also has its weak points, unfortunately. These are mainly in the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. "Most British antennae were established and run by continental AEGEE members visiting the country on Erasmus programmes," explains Calin Haiduc, network director in 2000/1. "After their 6 to 12 months of study there, the newly established antennae often fall apart after their



Elena Severin, AEGEE-Chisinau.

departure." High travel costs cannot fully explain the lukewarm attitude in these countries, since the UK has more cheap flights to the rest of Europe than any other country. Students from Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania are willing to travel for several days by bus to attend AEGEE meetings in other parts of Europe.

Ukraine is a special case. Our AEGEE members there are eager to contribute to European projects. However, they have great trouble attracting participants from the West to their events, with the positive exception of last December's initiative to monitor the repeat presidential election.

France is another weak area, and has been the focus of several network development plans over the past decade – with limited success. This might sound strange, considering that AEGEE was founded in Paris and French antennae played a very important role in the first five years. Some critics suggest that the shift of AEGEE from a bilingual French-English association to an English-dominated one largely explains this phenomenon.

"Quality not Quantity": the main priority in the last few years has been to strengthen existing locals and train our members better – as opposed to simply increasing the number of new locals. This concept was implemented after the Agora in Poznan, in November 1999. "Stricter criteria in the association's statutes have been applied since then. Antennae are now obliged to organise an international event per year – which led to a sharp increase in the number of events", explains Calin. According to this change of priorities, the procedure for assessing the viability of new contacts also became stricter.

In 2003, after a request to join the association from people from Kazakhstan, AEGEE recognised its partners outside Europe as "connections": associated non-AEGEE bodies. Tomsk in Siberia was the first connection to join. In the words of Silvia Baita, the current president of AEGEE-Europe: "After 20 years of explosive growth, AEGEE has moved into a new phase. We are now focused on settling down and creating a more mature network."

Gunnar Erth

The network's future: from the bottom up

At the beginning of my term as speaker of the Network Commission in 2001, I realised that a more efficient Netcom is crucial for AEGEE – but it could only work if we moved fast, with no bureaucratic delays or slow communication. Therefore, 2001 was devoted to breaking the isolation of small AEGEE antennae, by involving them in larger projects. We encouraged cooperation between large and small antennae, and recruited more Netcom helpers to coordinate everything.

Today, AEGEE's enlargement into Eastern Europe has almost stopped. The network conditions seem to be the same everywhere. The smallest antennae are barely surviving, and although new ones are still being founded, they often have very poor chances of growth. Human resources are also a problem for many big antennae. Nothing has changed in the areas where AEGEE is weak or nonexistent, such as Portugal, the British Isles, Norway or France. Many young Europeans feel that with EU enlargement already proceeding well, AEGEE has less and less of a clear purpose. The result is that members are increasingly using AEGEE as a party network.

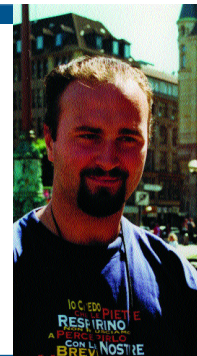
The solution lies in the network. All strategy and activity plans need to focus on the network's requirements. Nowadays the European level is providing most of the thematic part, leading the projects and giving a direction to the network. I propose the opposite. AEGEE-Europe's job is to take care of the net-

work, to preserve it, enlarge it, make it stronger, in order to create a fertile environment for ideas. However, in the long run those ideas can only come from within the association, from its heart, the network.

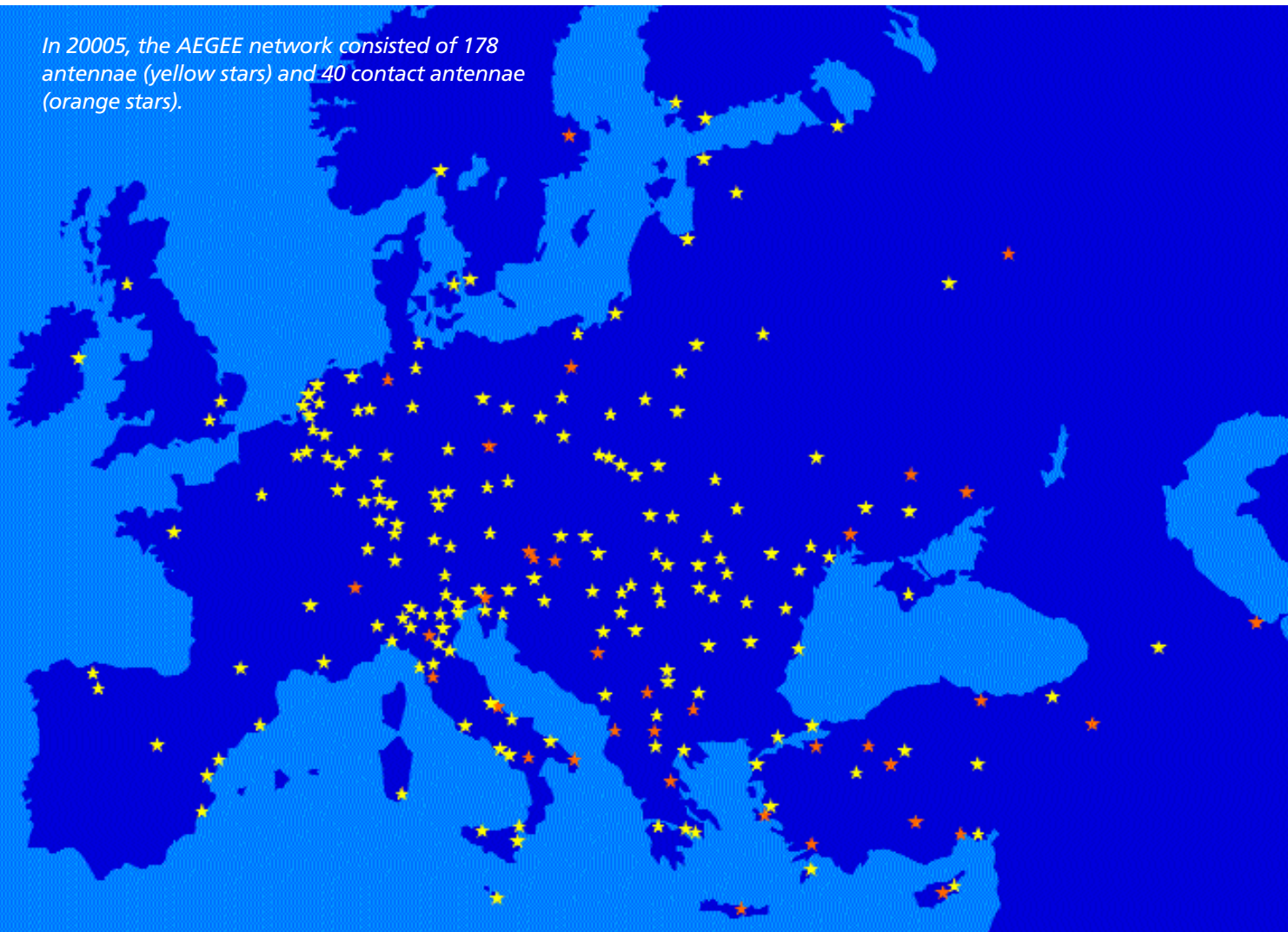
Since Europe itself is constantly changing, AEGEE cannot set its aims or activities in stone – but at least it should create them from the bottom upwards. For our future, it's less important how many antennae we have and where they are located than what they are able to do; what do their individual members contribute to the whole? We risk losing sight of quality as we add quantity. Now we must apply this conclusion. **Davide Calenda**

AUTHOR

Davide Calenda joined AEGEE in 1996. He has been president of AEGEE-Venezia, speaker of the Network Commission and also co-founder of the BoBiGoSa Working Group. "I will always remember the big hugs from my region that I received at the end of my mandate as NetCom speaker at the Agora in Athens in 2002." Davide now works in a cultural centre in Mestre, the counterpart – on dry land – of Venice.



In 2005, the AEGEE network consisted of 178 antennae (yellow stars) and 40 contact antennae (orange stars).



AEGEE's structure – no national level

One of the factors distinguishing AEGEE from other student associations is its unique structure. We do not have a national level, thus linking the European level directly to the locals: our individual antennae in European student cities. This structure gives AEGEE a truly European dimension, reflecting our ideal of a Europe without borders. There are many ways for AEGEE members to become active, such as joining one of the Europe-wide working groups and project teams, representing their local at Agoras, or even candidating to lead AEGEE at European level on the Comité Directeur or one of the Commissions.

Agora: AEGEE's General Assembly – the Agora – meets twice a year, usually in May and November. Up to 1000 AEGEE members gather for four days in one city to discuss and vote on proposals, projects, strategies and policies, and to elect a new CD and Commissioners along with any other vacant positions.

Antenna: Local AEGEE groups are called “antennae”, “contact antennae” or “contacts” when they are not yet fully registered. They usually organise at least one European event per year, as well as a number of local activities. The AEGEE network currently has around 250 antennae and contact groups across 41 European countries.

Comité Directeur: The Comité Directeur (CD), often referred to as “AEGEE-Europe”, is the governing board of our association. It consists of up to nine elected AEGEE members from at least four countries. Every CD member has a particular area of responsibility, but as a team, the CD is the main coordinating and representative body of AEGEE. Among its responsibilities are contacts with the EU institutions, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, as well as other student associations and the media.

Commissions: The Commissions are elected to support and monitor the work of the CD. There are four in total: the Audit Commission, the Members Commission, the Juridical Commission and the Network Commission.

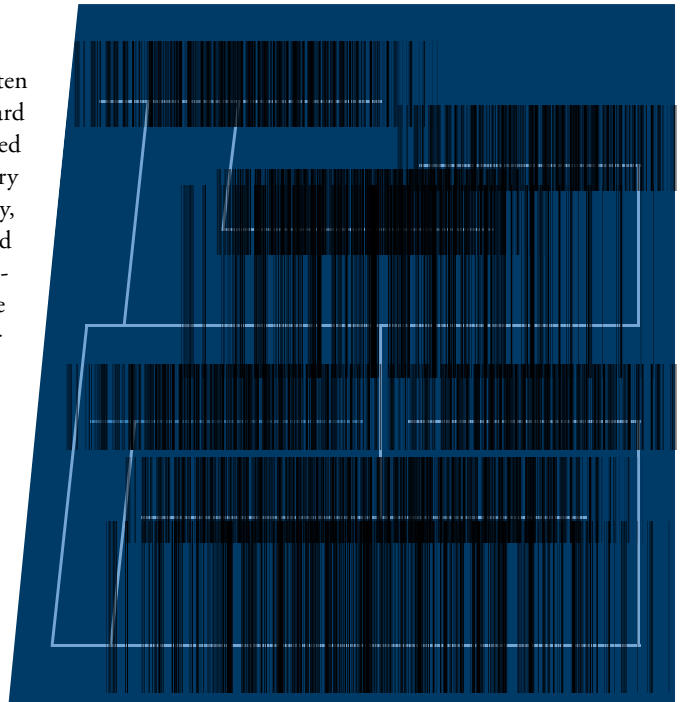
European Boards' Meeting (EBM): At the EBM, several hundred active members meet to discuss and learn about the future, both of AEGEE and

of Europe in general, through projects, workshops and other activities. Until November 2000, the EBM was known as the Presidents' Meeting, and it was intended as a statutory meeting to prepare for the next Agora. Between 2001 and 2004 the Presidents' Meeting was replaced by the Planning Meeting, which served as much more of a think tank. The EBM is an ongoing attempt to combine both concepts.

Liaison Office: Liaison officers and agents are appointed by the CD as points of contact between AEGEE and other organisations, institutions and companies, both on the European and national levels.

Project Teams: International project teams manage AEGEE's Europe-wide projects. The teams, consisting of volunteers from different participating locals, manage the conferences and other activities organised as part of each project.

Working Groups: Our Working Groups represent a foundation of knowledge – as well as continuous efforts to learn more – on various topics of importance to AEGEE. They bring together international groups of AEGEE members who are interested, and often skilled, in a specific field. Some focus on a noteworthy theme, such as human rights, while others offer support to the network in a particular discipline, such as information technology.



Activities

With 100 Summer Universities and 140 conferences, study visits and projects every year, hardly a week ever passes without an AEGEE event.

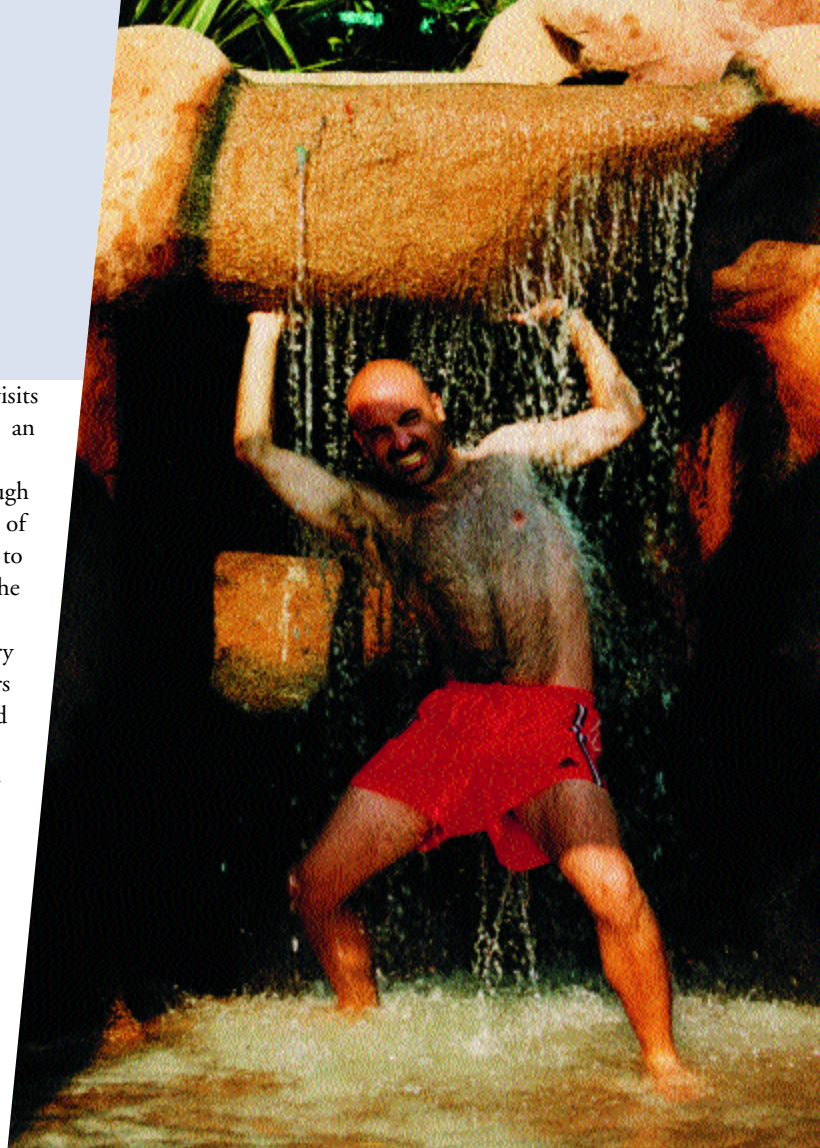
Case Study Trips (CST): around 20 participants travel through one or several countries, conducting field studies by means of questionnaires and interviews. A CST offers the perfect way to learn more about some of Europe's less-explored regions. The first CST took place in 1993, exploring Albania.

Conferences: European conferences are organised literally every weekend by different antennae. AEGEE members and outsiders meet to discuss current issues and exchange knowledge and ideas on a variety of subjects.

Projects: European projects bring together a series of conferences, seminars, CSTs and other activities, all focused on one chosen topic. The results can even be used by decision-makers to help them develop policies.

Summer Universities (SU): On SU, our members can learn Italian cooking in Salerno, become a medieval knight in Münster, sail on a ship in Peiraiás, volunteer in a children's theatre in Zaragoza, be a movie star in Istanbul - and more.

Training Events: As well as hundreds of local training courses run by the antennae, the AEGEE-Academy organises "European Schools", where participants can improve their skills in PR and fund-raising, among many other topics.



Fields of Action and strategic planning

When AEGEE was founded 20 years ago, there were almost no other student organisations working with the European institutions. AEGEE was able to give input, and even influence policies, in various fields, including education, culture, active citizenship, the environment and the European job market. However, from the very first change of generation in 1988, AEGEE faced a high turnover of people in leadership positions. This led to frequent reinvention of the wheel in certain fields.

At the same time, more student organisations started to work with the European institutions. Usually they concentrated on one specific field such as education or the job market, creating a situation where in each of AEGEE's fields of activity we faced a specialised competitor. There was a real risk that AEGEE's holistic approach, which made it open to students of all faculties, would become a weakness of the organisation. The challenge was to keep our holistic approach, but to maintain expertise in important fields. One early step was the introduction of the Yearplan in 1993. Since

then each year AEGEE has focused a substantial number of its activities on a maximum of three Yearplan topics – reduced to just two from 2000 onwards. In the frame of a Yearplan, a big project is usually put together from many separate activities throughout the network, such as conferences, surveys and discussions.

The Yearplan was a big success, but a Long Term Programme tool introduced in 1994, aiming to define a three-year strategy for AEGEE, turned out to be too abstract and achieved little. In 2000 the Long Term Programme was replaced with four Fields of Action and a Strategy Plan. The role of the Fields of Action is to present the core activities of AEGEE, helping to shape our external image. The four fields are Higher Education, Peace and Stability, Cultural Exchange and Active Citizenship. They are described in more detail in the following section. The Strategy Plan was introduced as a new internal planning tool, setting up a detailed strategy for all the Fields of Action, as well as internal aspects of the organisation such as human resources and finances, over a three year period. With the Fields of Action, the Strategy Plan and the Yearplan AEGEE now has flexible tools to focus its activities. At the same time, it keeps its holistic approach.

Sebastian Klüsener



Breathing AEGEE at number 15

Walking through rue Nestor de Tière, one can notice a house different from all the rest. The door is covered with strange stickers. And not only the door is strange, but even the building is peculiar because this is not a normal house. It is another world. This is the AEGEE headquarters. From here the nine elected members of the European board of directors, the Comité Directeur (CD), lead the association, supporting the network with its projects and administration. Above all, they live in Brussels in order to represent AEGEE externally and to lobby for AEGEE's strategies, priorities and opinions.

Whilst some are still sleeping because they've been working till dawn, someone else at 8 am is rushing to the office to answer a ringing phone. Silvia Baita, President of AEGEE-Europe, is already going through her notes for an important meeting with the European Commission. The others who woke up early are now sitting in front of the computer starting their daily work, showing off the latest fashions in pyjamas.

Downstairs you can see Secretary General Kamala Schütze struggling with the printer as she tries to print the agenda for the next meeting, but the machine prefers to print Chinese letters instead of her beautiful document. The fax machine is still sleeping despite Network Director Leon Bakracski begging it to wake up, because he is trying to send a fax to one of the new contact antennae.

In the meantime, elegantly dressed Fundraising Director Adam Kucza is rushing for an external meeting, while Human Resources Manager Iza Jurczik is meeting online with the AEGEE-Academy, in her favourite sweater. Projects Director Rob Tesh and Burcu Becerman, in charge of contacts with the European institutions, are busy in the social room upstairs, brainstorming about the contents of the next Yearplan conference, in order to create the perfect application for a Youth programme grant from the European Commission.

One desk further on, as PR Director I am struggling with Treasurer Jovica Karanfilov to increase the budget for the lat-

est PR materials. In the meantime Silvia arrives back from the Commission, a wide smile on her face – the meeting was very successful. She prepares a full-flavour real Italian espresso for the entire team, because we need to stay wide awake for a five hour long CD Meeting today.

It's already 9 pm when you start to notice the tasty smell wafting into the office. One by one, everyone goes to peep into the kitchen, until the dinner bells rings. Usually by 10pm everyone is sitting around the table together with any guests in the house. This is the only time when all the CD members meet in an informal way, to share gossip and a big bowl of sangria. Later, some still return to their computers, others clean the kitchen and the rest still sit at the table chatting with the guests. Midnight is already some hours past and slowly the office is emptying again, but around 3 am the phones start a concerto of different ring tones. It's Philipp von Klitzing, honorary member of AEGEE-Europe and IT genius, always trying to make things a little bit better.

Living and working together means sharing every single personal and professional moment. Every team member has a different character, habits, working style, and approach to life. Once you get in the house you learn to enjoy every sort of cuisine, to appreciate different religions, even to understand English jokes and stop putting ketchup on pizza. After a few weeks you will understand Merhaba, Je m'appelle, Kif int?, Buono, Auf Wiedersehen, Jó ejszakát, Dziekuje, Dobro utro because you are living in a true Babel of languages.

Building a team out of this multicultural group requires a lot of effort, tolerance and patience. But this unique adventure is changing all our lives forever, giving us valuable experiences and unforgettable memories. As CD members, working full-time on a voluntary basis, all of us have the chance to learn more about ourselves, improve our skills in various fields, and lead the association where we think it should go – to do our best for AEGEE and its members.

Virág Szabó

From Paris to the heart of the EU – the AEGEE head offices

AEGEE-Europe has passed through several head offices before finally settling down in Brussels in 1996. In the beginning AEGEE had its headquarters in Paris, followed by a short period in Amsterdam, before moving to Delft. After several years at Mijnsboulevard 11, AEGEE-Europe was hosted by AEGEE-Delft in the modern building of the civil engineering faculty. However, by 1995 the increasing professionalism of AEGEE-Europe prompted a change in the way its Comité Directeur (CD) worked. Until then, the CD members lived at their homes all over Europe, and met on a regular basis in various places, often before or after Agoras, PMs or conferences. In between meetings, however, only a small group living relatively close to Delft would regularly pass by the head office. Costs of communication were rocketing at this time. That's why the idea developed for a central, residential head office. Autumn Agora 1995 in Budapest accepted the motion. Brussels was the obvious choice. AEGEE-Europe already had many contacts with the European institutions in the Belgian capital, but at this point, meeting with officials in Brussels often meant taking the night train to Brussels, changing into business attire in the Central Station's public toilets and calling from a payphone to announce one's arrival at the institution.

Similar hit-and-run tactics were applied to the search for a new home in Brussels. A small delegation of our CD walked the streets around Schuman square, looking for "à louer" signs. We finally agreed to rent space in a house on Chaussee St. Pierre in Etterbeek - a former brothel, as we heard later from a neighbour. The location appealed to us not only for its proximity to the European institutions. The most famous snack bar for Belgian fries was just around the corner, too.

The office was rented per 1st of January 1996. We arrived with a rented truck full of banana boxes with documents, office furniture we got for free and old beds bought for a few cents from the university dormitories. It turned out that neither gas nor electricity had been connected yet. We spent most of the day driving around in the heated truck, looking for more

The idea: students for European integration

furniture. During the first nights we wore all we had brought but still froze until finally, three days later, the utilities were connected.

Nevertheless, the CD members soon felt at home in Brussels. In the bubbling enthusiasm at the office, work on projects often went on until early in the morning. However, the building's structural faults and rather high rent persuaded AEGEE-Europe to move the office in September 1996, first to the Rue de l'Orme and two years later to its current location in Rue Nestor de Tièrre 15 in the Schaarbeek district. Here, the community of CD members even inherited a flock of chickens in the garden. The technical infrastructure had also greatly improved by this point – hardly comparable to the three computers that we brought to Brussels in 1996.

One thing has stayed constant - the head office has become more than the place where basic administration records are kept. It has become the beating heart of a great association. **Christoph and Connie Strohm**

AUTHOR

Christoph and Connie Strohm

were respectively president and secretary general of AEGEE-Europe from 1995 to 1996. Christoph (now 34) had been a member of AEGEE-Köln since 1992. Connie (33) joined AEGEE-Amsterdam in 1993. Both were elected to the CD in 1995. They married in 2000 and so far have three children. Christoph works as an attorney-at-law in Apeldoorn, and Connie works as a dentist in her practice in Vaassen.



The first head office in Brussels.

Working for the future

AEGEE and its working groups



Working groups are the thematic counter-part of locals. They came about just three years after AEGEE was created. In 1988, David Randall and Johannes Heister founded a working group for people interested in East-West relations, relations that within those years were to be turned upside down. As the people of Eastern Europe claimed their rightful freedom, the East-West Working Group (EWWG) shifted from talk to action. The EWWG became an active partner for new antennae in the East and fostered the enlargement of the network. Also numerous conferences were organised under the wings of the EWWG.

The idea of creating a working group on interesting topics quickly caught on, and the Environmental Working Group came next. Founded in 1990, it brought together AEGEE-members concerned with pollution, sustainable development and other environmental issues.

Probably the best example of a working group combining ideas with action is the Education Working Group (EWG). Founded as the Erasmus Team, there was also a Tempus Team once; the EWG members did everything from arranging bikes for exchange students to helping shape European education policy. The EWG refused to replace its Hungarian delegate to the Euro-

pean Commission's Erasmus taskforce, Zsuzsa Kigyós, with a Western European, showing European education should be open to all students. At another critical juncture the Turkish antenna and the EWG led by Alper Akyüz successfully campaigned for the inclusion of Turkey in the new Socrates program.

North-South relations, Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, Culture and International Politics all inspired a working group at some point, as well as the Europe of the Regions. There was once even a Health Care Working Group. And it didn't stop at topical subjects.

Common interests in practical subjects led to the establishment of groups like the Public Relations and Fundraising Working Groups to support the work of AEGEE-Europe. Then the Information Technology Working Group (ITWG) was founded. Through the years, the ITWG ensured that AEGEE stayed at the cutting edge of technology. People like Stefan Recksiegel and Philipp von Klitzing helped to establish a technical infrastructure nobody in AEGEE can live without today.

I myself was part of the North-South Working Group, a small group of people that felt that the world was larger than Europe. As its speaker, as Working Group Director in the Comité Directeur and ultimately as President of AEGEE-Europe I was keenly aware of the shortcomings of the working group format, too.

Persuading people to work together and keeping them motivated over long distances is a daunting task. Many activities were organised around the theme of a working group, but without the active involvement of the working group. Continuity is a constant struggle. And yet working groups have prospered against all odds. More than any other organ, except for the Comité Directeur, they embody the AEGEE spirit. AEGEE shaped its working groups well. Topics that excited our members gave birth to them. They also shaped AEGEE. Over the years the interests of the working groups have provided the subjects for more conferences and been part of the Year-plan more often than any others. Therefore I hope that there will be as many and as diverse working groups in the next 20 years as there were in the last.

Egens van Itersen Scholten

AUTHOR

Egens van Itersen Scholten joined AEGEE-Enschede in 1992. Soon he became speaker of the North South Working Group, Vice President and President of AEGEE-Europe. "The things I am really proud of are our Asia conference, the initiation of the Find Your Way project, convincing the Agora to establish an office in Brussels, setting up an AEGEE local in Tuzla in 1995 and the Via Egnatia SU." Egens studied Industrial Engineering, but today works as a banker for Fortis, a Belgian/Dutch banking and insurance multinational, in New York.



AEGEE's current working groups

AEGEE-Academy: The Academy, founded in 1999, provides strategic support for AEGEE's work by training and motivating members. It organises training seminars, provides trainers for local training courses and maintains a large database of teaching materials.

BoBiGoSa Working Group: BoBiGoSa is a forum that aims to increase transparency and idealism in AEGEE. Past initiatives include informal limits on fees for events and a short introduction to AEGEE at every summer university.

Culture Working Group: The CWG, founded in 1997, aims to enhance knowledge and understanding of Europe's cultural riches. In 2004, the Culture Working Group organised the first Performing Arts Summer School as its new flagship event.

Dance Working Group: The DWG, founded in 2001, believes that we can only forge a united Europe by knowing the traditions of each other's cultures, such as dance. One of the DWG's most recent successes was the Dance Action Day in 2004.

East-West Working Group: The EWWG played an important role in the first enlargement of AEGEE into Central and Eastern Europe. The further integration of the easternmost antennae is an ongoing challenge, while AEGEE's expansion into the Caucasus touches on serious issues of East-West politics.

Education Working Group: The EWG is the meeting point for people who are interested in the European dimension of higher education. It campaigns for the creation of a European Higher Education Area, suggests improvements to the Socrates programme, and helps provide information about university exchange programmes.

Human Rights Working Group: The HRWG, founded in 1994, addresses issues such as civil society, migration, and crimes against humanity. It organises conferences on human rights issues, and its members campaign against human rights violations.

Information Technology Working Group: The ITWG deals with all information technology matters within AEGEE. Divided into different taskforces, they manage the IT infrastructure of AEGEE-Europe, train CD members to use the technology available, and organise IT European Schools.

International Politics Working Group: Since its foundation in 1997, the IPWG has been organising a wide variety of conferences, seminars and workshops on international relations and politics issues. The IPWG also provides speakers and workshop leaders for events. In 2004 the IPWG coordinated the Yearplan project "Europe's identity".

Public Relations Working Group: The PRWG supports the Comité Directeur, working groups and antennae in PR activities. Up to twice a year it organises PR European Schools. It also develops strategies for attracting and involving members at all levels of AEGEE.

Visa Freedom Fighters: The VFF campaigns for "free movement of persons" within Europe, including the abolition of visas within Europe wherever practical. They maintain an online booklet on visa regulations.

Voyage Working Group: The VWG is the youngest Working Group in AEGEE, established in autumn 2003 with the aim of sharing practical information about travel among AEGEE members. They provide both advice and statistics concerning AEGEE-related travel.

AEGEE-Academy broadens approach

It's already been six years since the AEGEE-Academy started its work. Several generations of members have been trained. Now we are exploring some new possibilities.

Up until now, AEGEE's human resources training was rather internally focused. However there are many other associations working in the same field as we do. We have started looking for potential external partners for the Academy. An example of an outcome is our partnership with the Junior Chamber International (JCI). We believe that by joining each other's training events, exchanging concepts and experiencing different approaches towards youth trainings, we can improve the quality of our work.

Following this idea we created a new concept for our Training for Trainers (T4T), which was tested in March 2005.

Both internal and external trainers taught the attending participants how to use new methods and training tools. However, the range of our courses goes much further than the T4T or the well known European School 1 or 2, for example, look at the huge number of Local Training Courses. Antennae are able to find a number of useful tools that facilitate preparing high quality training on www.aegge.org/academy. An even further step in this development is the Human Resources Database. It enables AEGEE members willing to get involved in some projects to look for currently open positions and gives the project managers and AEGEE bodies' possibility to easily search for human resources they need.

Francesca Fedrizzi

AEGEE-Academy speaker 2004/5

AEGEE-Ljubljana:

A year in the life of an antenna



All 260 local branches have their own distinct character. Some antennae in the Netherlands, such as Utrecht, Delft or Enschede, have a clearly-defined structure with hundreds of members, and organize countless local and European activities per year. On the other hand, many branches in the rest of Europe have as few as ten members, but still manage to organise a Summer University every year.

AEGEE-Ljubljana, with its 200 members, is one of the biggest antennae in our network – and one of the most active, too. The members are full of energy, very outgoing and have great, innovative ideas. Their conference “Europe’s (Torn) Identity” was awarded Event of the Year 2003. Last year too, AEGEE-Ljubljana organised many successful events. With some impressions of these events, we hope to give you an idea of the spirit of AEGEE.

The event of the year

“Europe’s (Torn) Identity”, 11th-19th October of 2003, was awarded a special honour. It received the title EGEE XIX, marking it out as our 19th Event of the Year, and the first one to receive the award by a full Agora vote. At this keynote event of the Yearplan project “EU & Europe”, 42 participants from 20 nationalities reflected on their own regional, national and European identities, investigated the centrifugal tendencies that Europe faces, and attempted to discover what really makes us European. The event, co-organised with the International Politics Working Group, took place under the high patronage of Danica Simčič, Mayor of Ljubljana and Erwan Fouéré, head of the European Commission Delegation to Slovenia.

Olivier Genkin, Project manager “EU & Europe”

SU “From the Alps to the Adriatic – Who dares?”

Every summer since 1998, we have dared a few dozen thrill-seeking AEGEE members to spend two weeks in July exploring our little, but lively country. In 2004, our Summer University “From the Alps to the Adriatic – Who Dares?” took place between July 11th and 25th. A small group of organisers led 37 pan-European participants from the high peaks of the Alps to the clear waters of the Adriatic Sea. In

Health is our passion.



SCHWARZ

PHARMA

between, we visited everything from tiny charming villages in the Karst region to dynamic cities like Ljubljana or Piran. We biked down steep hills in an adrenalin rush, then relaxed with picnics on peaceful lake-sides. Pushing each other from a fishing boat into the warm sea was almost as much fun as being pushed into a freezing river by our white-water raft guides. We climbed walls, made campfires, performed a play and took to the catwalk in our own fashion show. We joined in scout games and danced with old folks to Slovenian ethnic music. We ate ice-cream, watermelons and even grasshoppers. We survived long walks, tiring bus rides and a small earthquake. But we were abundantly rewarded – with beautiful weather, great experiences, and long-lasting friendships.

Maruša Zupanc, SU organiser

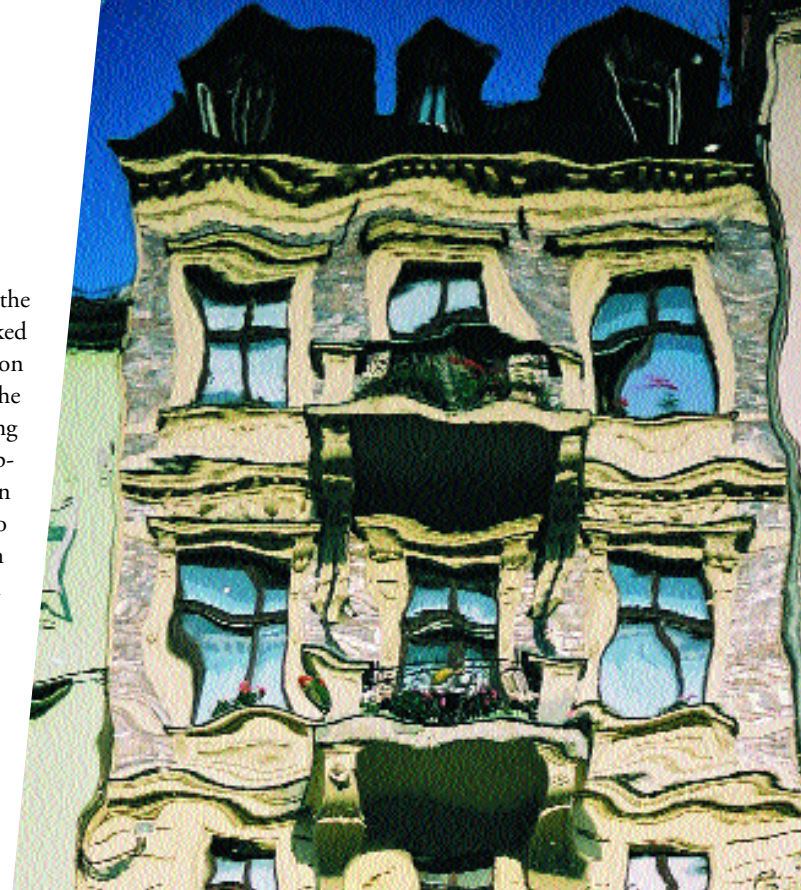
Magic exchange: Ljubljana-Utrecht-Valletta

In our exchange, 7th-14th May 2004, we hosted people from AEGEE-Utrecht and AEGEE-Valletta. The memories will stay with us forever – including a song about us, written and sung by the Utrecht group. We discovered the magic of fairy tales through a fancy-dress ball and a puppet show. A wild bike tour of the city raised our adrenalin, and after the theatre night we looked at some participants through new eyes – truly there are stars among us.

Nataša Florjančič, Exchange Coordinator

Rainbow Regional Meeting 2004

AEGEE-Ljubljana will always hold special memories for me. At the beginning of my AEGEE life, this antenna was always



there. Whenever I needed someone to make me smile, or help to sew my trousers at the Agora, they helped me. Unfortunately, it was a long time before I had the chance to see Slovenia for myself, but finally I was able to attend one of their events – the Rainbow Regional Meeting in 2004. I was really impressed. The event, 22nd-24th October, was more than well organised. What most impressed me was AEGEE-Ljubljana members' professional but still friendly approach. I'm always looking for new opportunities to visit Ljubljana.

Virag Szabo, Director for Public Relations

Traditional Slovenian Drinks and Habits

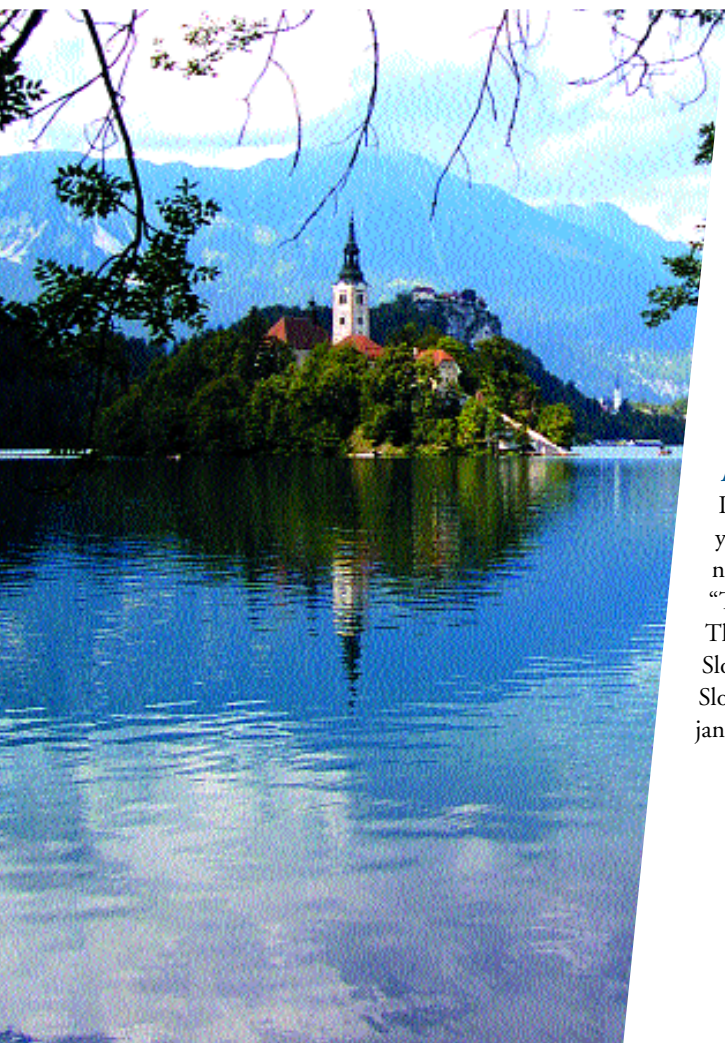
"Traditional Slovenian Drinks and Habits" is a weekend event which takes place every year in mid-December, in the beautiful Slovenian Alps. The most recent sixth event, and many of the previous ones, took place in Kranjska Gora, the heart of Slovenian winter tourism. One of the highlights is the performance of a local folk dance group, which always sparks great enthusiasm among the participants. Every year about 60 people join in, mostly from Croatia, Italy, Serbia and Montenegro – and many of them come back for the next time too!

Tina Baloh, TSDH-organizer

Ambitious plans for 2005

In December 2004, we elected a new board of nine enthusiastic young people. The board is already busy organising as many – if not more – cool events as last year. In March 2005 we hosted "Training for Trainers", a training event for Academy members. This year's Summer University will have the title "Sleepless in Slovenia", and of course we will see another edition of "Traditional Slovenian Drinks and Habits", plus our part of the exchange Ljubljana-Oslo-Eskeshir-Termoli. Se vidimo!

Ursula Kordis



Lobbying in AEGEE



The creation of AEGEE in 1985 was itself an act of lobbying for European integration, the core goal of the association. The establishment of AEGEE was clearly aimed at creating an organisation, which could represent students all over Europe, expressing their opinions concerning the issues of European integration towards politicians and decision makers. Looking back now, after 20 years of various activities and initiatives, we can state without a doubt that AEGEE has always been present and active when important European decisions were taken.

The definition of lobbying is making a direct attempt to influence decision makers through personal interviews and persuasion. Lobbying can also include attempts at indirect grassroots influence, such as attempting to create a climate of opinion favourable to a desired goal. Some say that AEGEE's biggest lobbying success took place back in 1987, when AEGEE managed to largely contribute to the decision to implement the mobility programme Erasmus in Europe.

When European Communities' politicians once again put agriculture ahead of students in their budget plans, young people associated within AEGEE decided to fight for the rights of students. The determination of these students led to a dinner with Francois Mitterand, then President of the Republic of France, which resulted in a major change in EC planning and the Europe-wide introduction of the famous student exchange programme.

If we look for important milestones in AEGEE's lobbying history, it is impossible to forget the events that were organised in war zones and other conflict areas. Such as the statutory meeting in Novi Sad – just two weeks before the city was attacked by NATO forces. Or the Peace Summit in Istanbul in 2000 – one that promoted tolerance and understanding in Europe. Or even a statutory meeting in Famagusta in Northern Cyprus – shortly before the controversial enlargement of the EU. All those meetings aimed to raise awareness and attract the attention of the decision makers, showing them that students are not afraid to express their fears and opinions.

European decision makers have started to recognise the power and unique capabilities of AEGEE and this – a success of indirect lobbying – led to large financial support from the European Institutions. Thanks to this recognition, AEGEE was able to organise the event cycle "Find Your Way", which educated several hundred youth NGO leaders. In the same year, 1996, AEGEE was invited as the only students' NGO to a round-table talk on the Euro currency in Brussels, where AEGEE-Europe president Christoph Strohm suggested promoting the Euro among young people, who could spread enthusiasm in their countries. As a result of this initiative, the European Commission supported our 1997 project "Europe & Euro" with 200.000 Euro. Later on, in 2003, AEGEE played an active role in gathering the opinions of the academic world on the Convention on the Future of Europe.

AEGEE also put forward a proposal concerning the creation of the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter (ESC) on the right to higher education. This practical amendment was aimed at introducing students' rights into the Council of Europe resolutions, and was the first initiative of this kind undertaken but also a representative of the youth.

However, significant lobbying should not only mean something widely featured and publicised. It also means effective and efficient, and AEGEE's record is certainly full of those special moments. Thanks to successful lobbying on local and regional levels, AEGEE was and still is considered to be a spokesman of the student world. Local municipalities and national authorities had not previously thought of consulting AEGEE members on topics concerning students. [Megi Chudzik](#)

AUTHOR

Megi Chudzik (24) joined AEGEE in January 2001. After establishing AEGEE-Rzeszow, she joined the CD as Director for PR in 2002. Megi has been a chief editor of the Key to Europe in 2003/4, and also PR officer of AEGEE-Academy. After completing her degree in Communication Management, she is now working for TomTom in Amsterdam.



Patrons of AEGEE-Europe

Over its 20 years of existence AEGEE has enjoyed the support of a wide variety of statesmen and cultural personalities, including Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan, François Mitterand, former President and Jacques Chirac, current President of France, Prime Minister of Belgium Guy Verhofstadt, EU commissioners Günter Verheugen and Danuta Hübner, Secretary General of the Council of Europe Walter Schwimmer, and Pat Cox, former President of the European Parliament. At present, AEGEE-Europe enjoys the patronage of the following distinguished European personalities:



Mikhail Gorbachev, born in 1931, was the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1985 until 1991 and its president in 1990/1. In 1990, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. He is currently president of the Gorbachev Foundation.

Bronisław Geremek, born in 1932 in Warsaw, is a Polish social historian and politician, and a former advisor to Solidarity leader Lech Walesa. He served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1997 to 2000. He has also been Chairman of the OSCE. Since May 2004 Professor Geremek is an MEP.



Václav Havel, born in 1936 in Prague, writer and dramatist, was participant in the Prague Spring of 1968. He was president of Czechoslovakia from 1989 until its "Velvet Divorce" in 1992, and then became president of the new Czech Republic. His second term

ended in 2003, but he remains actively involved in politics and runs the Dagmar and Václav Havel Foundation along with his second wife.

Jacques Santer, born in 1937, was Prime Minister of Luxembourg for ten years, resigning in 1994 in order to become President of the European Commission. From 1999 until 2004, he was a member of the European Parliament, and he has also been president of the World Bank and governor of the IMF.



Rita Süßmuth, born in 1937, has been a professor in the fields of sociology and psychology. In 1987 she was elected to the German Parliament, serving as its President between 1988 and 1998.



Eric Froment became president of the Conference of European Rectors in 2001. A professor of Economics, he was president of the Université de Lyon 2 from 1991 until 1996. Professor Froment has also been secretary general of the Conférence des Présidents d'Université from 1999 until 2001.

Wolfgang Thierse, born in 1943, replaced Rita Süßmuth as President of the Bundestag in 1998. With an academic background in culture theory and esthetics, Mr. Thierse became active in the oppositional Neues Forum in 1989 and later joined the SPD, becoming a member of parliament in 1990.



Catherine Lalumière, born in 1936 in Rennes, France, was the first female secretary general of the Council of Europe. In 1999 she was elected to the European Parliament, among others serving on the committees dealing with foreign affairs and defence policy.

György Konrád, born 1933 in Debrecen, participated in the Hungarian Uprising against Soviet occupation in 1956. The novelist and essayist was jailed. He is now president of the Academy of Arts in Berlin and vice-president of PEN International.



Árpád Göncz, born in Budapest in 1922, is a Hungarian liberal politician. After spending five years in prison following revolutionary protests he began to work as a translator and writer in 1963. In the 1980s he was a founding member of the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ). He served as President of the Republic of Hungary from 1990 until 2000.

Dr. Kenneth J.R. Edwards, who holds a PhD in agricultural botany, has held several positions at Cambridge University. He was vice-chancellor of Leicester University from 1995 until 1999 and president of the Conference of European Rectors until 2001.

Daniel Tarschys, born in 1943, holds a chair as Professor of Political Science at Stockholm University. He has also been State Secretary for the Swedish Prime Minister's Office in 1978-9, and Secretary-General of the Council of Europe from 1994 to 1999. As a member of the Swedish Parliament, Tarschys chaired the Standing Committees on Social Affairs and on Foreign Affairs.

AEGEE members as entrepreneurs

What to do after quitting AEGEE? Many active members acquire a great deal of leadership and management skills – so it comes as no surprise that many of them open their own business later on. One of them is Michiel van Hees, honorary member of AEGEE-Europe. Gunnar Erth asked him about AEGEE members who want to open their own business.



Michiel, you founded your own business. What is it about?
I founded CQ procesmanagement in 1999 after working for a hospital for three years. It is a company that provides training and consulting on process management. Our clients are mainly hospitals, but we also deal with universities, government agencies and Schiphol Airport. I grew into the business gradually, because a lot of hospitals were very interested in my work. However, the idea to start a business has been in my head since I was young, especially since both my grandfathers and my father had their own businesses.

Is it difficult to deal with employees, when you are their boss - compared to the friendship and motivation-based leading style in a voluntary NGO?

We are two partners that work full time and we are equal. We have many freelance professionals working with us, but this is still not a boss-employee relationship. They assist us in our projects but they have their own responsibilities. It is a different situation from working in AEGEE, but decisions are still taken based on discussion and motivation. Actually, some of our freelance professionals come from the network of AEGEE.

Is AEGEE preparing people well to found their own business?

Well, yes and no. Many members of AEGEE are free-spirited people who are not afraid to take a risk. And that is exactly the qualification you need

to be an entrepreneur. AEGEE also gives you the opportunity to try things. The project "Find Your Way" in 1996 certainly gave me skills like budgeting and financial planning. However, AEGEE doesn't help you recognise business opportunities, so you have to get those insights from other places.

Which other skills are needed?

You have to be able to recognise opportunities and know what your weaknesses and strengths are. You must have patience, because things can move slowly - but they can sometimes go very fast as well. You must be able to deal with insecurity, because one day you may have lots of butter on your bread, but another day there could be no bread at all!

Which other former AEGEE businessmen do you know?

The first one who springs to my mind is Bart Kruitwagen, founder of AEGEE-Nijmegen. He launched several companies. Marcus Khoury, a former CD member, started an international law firm in Saudi Arabia. From my own antenna, AEGEE-Eindhoven, there are several members who have started a business, in fields such as project development, consulting, architecture, advertising and ICT. And there are many more, of course.

Can you suggest business areas where AEGEE people have good chances?

There is no limit to this. I've seen many good people in the fields of training, project management and management in local and European boards. But not all of them are suitable. There has to be an entrepreneur inside you, you have to believe in it, because most business owners work harder than normal people and they don't make much extra money.

So all in all, is it worth trying?

Yes, it is a great feeling, if you can build something. It is great to see that your clients are happy to choose you as a partner. It is a brilliant feeling to enter your office, turn on the computer, look around and realise that that you created it. However, the best thing is that it makes brilliant stories for your grandchildren. I cannot wait to tell it to them one day.

Michiel van Hees

"I was attending a Summer University in Croatia without knowing what it really was," recalls Michiel van Hees. He was convinced to join a friend on a trip to Zagreb in July 1994. Later on, Michiel became president of AEGEE-Eindhoven, organised the biggest Presidents Meeting in AEGEE history in March 1996 and was part of the project teams of "Find your Way" and "Europe and Euro". In 2001 he created AEGEE.TV and the AEGEE Media Schools.

Former AEGEE members: Career at international organisations

Organising an international conference, following a capacity building project in the Balkans, managing a group of people from different backgrounds - this sounds like the work of an AEGEE member, but it's not. These are actually some of my daily tasks as an Associate Pro-



Jordi Capdevila at an Afghan village assembly.

gramme Officer at the OSCE. Many AEGEE members have chosen a career in international organisations, building upon the experience that AEGEE brought them working in multicultural environments in trans-European projects and managing people.

Some examples? Just imagine a UN helicopter roaring above the mountainous landscape of Kosovo. Below, the destruction caused by years of war and rebellion. On board, David Chillaron, a former AEGEE-Barcelona member, headed towards an important meeting in Belgrade. David's work at the United Nations Mission in Kosovo are fundamental to keep this tiny province in peace.

David's humanitarian work involves in kicking squatters out of their illegally occupied houses, returning them to the real owners. "My job might seem simple, but it involves a lot of diplomatic skills. I must never use force," says David. He stresses how well AEGEE prepared him

for this task. "My years in AEGEE were fundamental to my embrace of the idea of co-operation among countries, above any kind of deep-rooted national feeling".

AEGEE members, though focused on European affairs, often explore new frontiers as they advance into professional life. Let's go for a moment to Kabul, Afghanistan, where a meeting between the new democratically elected authorities and development agencies is taking place. At the negotiation table, representing the Asian Development Bank, Jordi Capdevila presents the multimillion dollar project that his organisation is planning to implement broadening the capacity of the newly established Afghan police and judicial system.

Jordi, a former AEGEE-Europe president, used to manage large amounts of funds during his work in our student association. "Multimillion Dollar projects are like fish in the market, they can be good or bad. My job is to choose the good ones," says Jordi, while sitting in his apartment in a residential compound on a Manila hilltop.

Returning to Europe, in Vienna we find an example of the East-West balance that AEGEE has always tried to promote. Jasna Bogdanovic, a former AEGEE-Novisad President, is rushing to a meeting in one of the many conference rooms at the UN City. In these offices, more than 4000 professionals from all UN member countries work every day. Jasna, a consultant for the United Nations Environment Programme, enters the elevator and presses the button to go to the 17th floor. "This is like a world-expanded AEGEE," says Jasna while reviewing her final notes for her intervention during the workshop on radioactive waste remediation in the Ferghana valley. "Working for an international organisation is not very different from what we did in AEGEE. As a matter of fact, I find AEGEE better organised and goal-oriented than many of the institutions I am working with on a daily basis. AEGEE members can play an important role at development agencies or international organisations," adds Jasna. These are just few examples of the added human capacity that AEGEE brings to its active members. I am sure that we will see many more cases in the future – after all, most former AEGEE members just recently started their careers.

Raul Daussa

AUTHOR

Raul Daussa joined AEGEE because he wanted to have fun and meet people from other countries. "Soon after I realised that I enjoyed working with people from different places and got much more involved", he recalls. Raul became President of AEGEE-Barcelona in 1998 and organized the Agora in the following spring.



Peter Ginser, Les Anciens Co-ordinator

The AEGEE dinosaurs are still walking the earth



Peter Ginser and Michiel van Hees.

Les Anciens, the alumni organisation of AEGEE-Europe, is bubbling with energy. It was founded in 1990 by Johannes Heister, a former vice-president of AEGEE-Europe, in order to serve as a collective memory to the association, and to offer advice when it was needed. The 300 Les Anciens members meet several times per year at their own regular events, in order to stay in contact. Gunnar Erth asked Peter Ginser, co-ordinator of Les Anciens since 2002, about the development of the alumni circle.

What is the purpose and potential of Les Anciens?

Les Anciens is a forum that enables former AEGEE-Europe companions to stay in contact and also provides the occasion to get to know the people that have been active in previous generations. It also allows the members to stay in touch with the active AEGEE net-

work as well as networking with their fellow Anciens. Our common AEGEE background offers a good basis for interesting new activities for young professionals with international spirit. Also, Anciens provides AEGEE with a big knowledge pool from the past - and good contacts in various companies and institutions.

Who are the members?

The 300 members of Les Anciens have finished their active life in AEGEE. Previously they had all been active on the European level. In order to join

the network, two active members have to nominate the person to the coordination team. The Secretary will then send an invitation.

How is Les Anciens coordinated?

Les Anciens has a Coordination Team consisting of a coordinator and a secretary, elected for a two year period. Since last year we have extended this official coordination team, adding an activity coordinator to plan and promote the various Les Anciens events. Apart from this coordination team, a number of members organise local activities.

Anciens is turning 15 years old now. How has it developed?

Les Anciens has developed not only in terms of number of members, but also in terms of activities. Instead of one annual meeting, we nowadays run a number of smaller and larger events to give everyone more chance to interact personally. We certainly will push for even more gatherings, because just like in AEGEE, the interests of its members vary quite a bit from just having a good time with old friends up to acting as a strong alumni organisation. We can provide a good framework for these different objectives.

What future developments do you see? More event-oriented? A service provider regarding job opportunities? A discussion forum? A lobby institution?

We want to strengthen the interaction of Les Anciens members. We have members with very interesting occupations in various companies and institutions. This is not only about potential job opportunities, but also background information on highly interesting projects conducted by our members in their jobs. We do not only want to sit together telling the same stories over and over again, but develop further as we grow in our personal lives.

How was 2004 for Les Anciens? What were the highlights?

2004 was a remarkable year for us. The idea of adding an activity coordinator to the team helped to boost the association's life considerably. The Les Anciens meeting in Athens in May 2004 was a great gathering under the warm Mediterranean sun, and it showed that there is good spirit in our network. We also ensured a good transition in the most important job of the association: Kerstin Klopp-Koch has taken over the secretariat from Janina Victor. She will continue the excellent work performed by Janina in the past two years.

What are your plans for 2005 and beyond?

The next Les Anciens meeting will again take place again on the Mediterranean coastline, this time in Cagliari. In January, we already had already a Squash tournament in Brussels, which was



Dirk Berndsen during an Anciens sailing regatta.

extended with a cultural programme and an AEGEE party - a true Back2Brussels event. On top of that we have a number of other events around Europe in the pipeline. We are also working on our online representation. We would like to create a virtual community to enhance interaction between the members. As we are physically very spread out, this medium is important to stay in contact.

How are the relations between Anciens and AEGEE-Europe?
Les Anciens and AEGEE-Europe are in touch on several levels. Apart from the official contacts between the European board of AEGEE-Europe and the Les Anciens coordination team, various members remain in close contact with AEGEE. The joint activities range from individual support in fundraising activities and knowledge transfer,

The idea: students for European integration

to direct funding of European board assistants via our Continuity Fund. Anciens members have also actively driven the set-up of a foundation which helps starting up and managing larger projects. We are in contact with the European board to develop further interaction, depending on the need.

Do you still follow what is going on in AEGEE?

I still receive the mailing list of AEGEE-Karlsruhe and always read the weekly *Telegramme* of the European board with great interest. I try to meet with the European board at least once a term to figure out how they are doing and to see what we can jointly improve.

What are your wishes to AEGEE's 20th birthday?

20 years is a very long time indeed. In our active AEGEE time, we were still a youngster among the student associations. But a track record of 20 years now gives us a sound background and credibility. The association has developed in a remarkable way and taken on an important role in the education sector. We overcame a lot of obstacles and borders and looking ahead I am very optimistic. AEGEE plays an important role in shaping truly European minded people with the drive to change. In this sense: very warm congratulations to AEGEE. It has contributed a lot towards European integration and changed many lives over the years - and will continue to do so.

Peter Ginser born in 1972, was president of his home local, Karlsruhe, in 1995/6. Peter joined the CD in November 1996 as Projects Director. "My main task was the start-up of the 'Europe and Euro' project. Half a year later I was elected president." After one year in Brussels he returned to his electrical engineering studies in Karlsruhe. Since 1999, Peter has been working for Accenture as Technology Consultant in Financial Services. ERT



Hotel & youth hostel
for travellers

Find **Your** travelling style also in Egypt!

*The New Palace Hotel: Not just **your Hotel** in downtown Cairo, we also arrange **your tour through Egypt***

- Different tours for different people: **you decide** what, when, how.
- Easy, **uncomplicated, friendly** organisation.
- **Low prices** for students and budget travellers.
- **Diving** at the red sea, **sailing, safari**. For groups and individuals.

www.newpalacehotel.com, info@newpalacehotel.com

AEGEE is focusing its activities on four areas: Higher education, peace and stability, active citizenship and, finally, cultural exchange. In this section, the main ideas and some of the greatest successes in these areas are presented.



AEGEE participants at the students protests in Belgrade, 1996.

Fields of Action



Active European citizens in a globalising world

In today's globalising world, our life is affected by decisions taken in far away places and at all kinds of geopolitical levels. This makes it important that citizens give feedback to decision makers not only on local and national, but also on supranational and global levels. Active citizenship was a core field of action for since the beginning. The related activities follow two main aims. One is to motivate young citizens to participate actively in decision making processes. The second is to lobby European institutions and other government structures for initiatives that support integration and citizen participation in decision making.

In November and December 2004, the people of Ukraine gave an example of how much citizens can achieve if they unite at the right moment – an initiative that AEGEE members actively supported. Without these mass protests, a new second round of voting in the presidential elections would have been unlikely. However, active citizens can also do harm - for example if they direct their actions against minorities or disabled people. Therefore, AEGEE also needs to take a normative approach promoting values such as respect for the other, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We attempt to do this by bringing people with different cultural backgrounds together, in a European organisation based upon democratic principles.

The European network of AEGEE offers a platform where people with common interests can cooperate. People can use the links between AEGEE, European and global institutions to get a better understanding of how decisions are made. Through its training body, the AEGEE-Academy, the organisation also offers members the possibility to gain skills and knowledge which help them to play an active role in society.

Projects and Conferences

Several projects and conferences dealt with the topic of active European citizenship from EGEE 1 in Paris in 1985 up to the "Youth and Globalisation" Yearplan project in 2003 and beyond. A highlight of the first years was the establishment of the European Moot Court Competition in 1988, which aimed to promote awareness of European law among students. With the collapse of the communist bloc in 1989, the role of citizens and civil society in transition countries became a big topic within AEGEE. Already on the 9th of November 1989 the AEGEE Agora in Salerno decided to open up towards Central and South European countries. Another focus point at that time was the relation between society and environment. Under the impression of the Chernobyl disaster and based upon the growing belief, that solutions to global environmental problems can only be found on supranational level, three Environmental Weeks were organised by the Environmental Working Group between 1990 and 1992.

Also the first Yearplan of AEGEE "Towards a Better European Society" in 1993 was dealing with the topic active citizenship. At that time many societies in Europe experienced a rise of xenophobia. Therefore AEGEE organised the "Striving for Tolerance" project. Its results enabled the organisation to give strong input to the conference "Europe against Discrimination" of the Council of Europe which was finalised by the Declaration of Strasbourg. Out of this project the Human Rights Working Group was born. Another highlight was the "Find Your Way" Yearplan project in 1996, focusing on the empowerment of young people in former communist societies to participate actively in building up countries sharing common European values.

At the end of the 90's, mental and physical borders became an important focus point for AEGEE in this field of action. With the eastern enlargement of the EU, the candidate countries were forced to introduce new visa regimes towards Eastern European countries. In the "Borderless Europe" Yearplan project in the year 2000, innovative solutions to limit mental and physical obstacles to mobility were discussed. Another important event was the 2001 "Summit of 28" in the European Parliament in Brussels. Through a simulation game, it gave 120 students the opportunity to discover how decision making processes will function in an enlarged EU with 28 members.

Lobbying for active citizenship

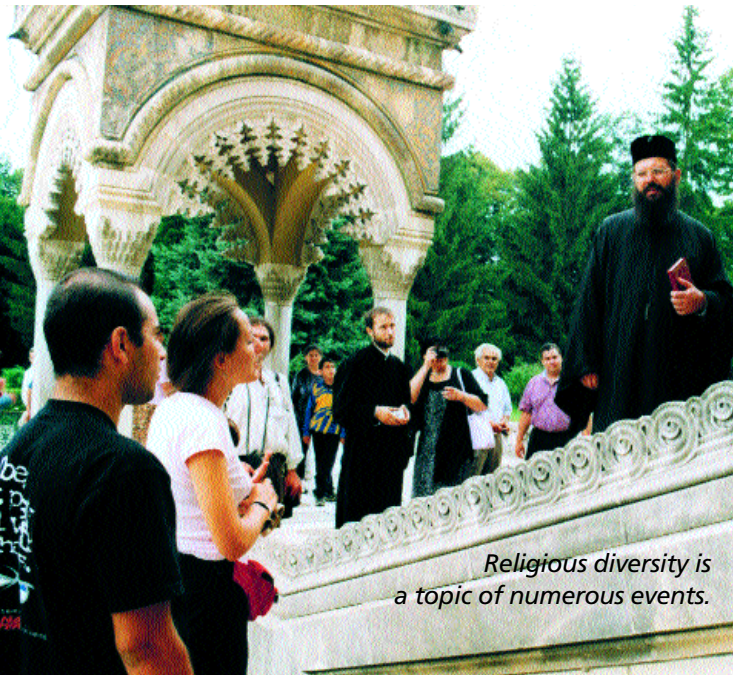
Among our lobbying initiatives, the first major one was to lobby for the Erasmus programme at governments of European Community member states in 1987. It culminated in a dinner



with the French president François Mitterrand, which turned out to play a decisive role in making the European governments decide to start the Erasmus programme. With the fall of the Iron Curtain, another important activity was lobbying for the abolishment of obstacles to mobility. Several letter campaigns were directed to European governments to abolish or simplify visa regimes. From 1993 onwards, a Visa Booklet was published to support AEGEE branches in case they needed to write a visa invita-

tion. From 1998 onwards, various activities in this field were bundled together and the Visa Freedom Fighters were founded as a working group of AEGEE-Europe.

Over the last 20 years, it turned out to be a constant challenge for AEGEE to be a lobby and a mass organisation at the same time. In the beginning, when AEGEE was still a very small organisation with close relationship to the European Commission, it was a very efficient lobby organisation that was very attractive for idealist people with visionary thoughts. But from its foundation onwards, there was never a doubt that AEGEE should become a mass organisation spreading the idea of European integration and active European citizenship among young Europeans. By growing bigger, the workload on the executive bodies of AEGEE rose. As a result, the organisation became less attractive for people with visionary ideas. In the last decade though, AEGEE managed to make its internal administration more efficient, which makes me optimistic that the organisation will also in the future be flexible enough to deal with these two, sometimes conflicting, goals at the same time. **Sebastian Klüsener**



Religious diversity is a topic of numerous events.

AUTHOR

Sebastian Klüsener joined AEGEE-Heidelberg in 1996. From 1999 to 2000 he was a CD member, responsible for European Projects and IT. He co-ordinated the Borderless Europe project and served on the steering group of Socrates on the Move. Sebastian holds a degree in geography and is currently working on his PhD, on the effects of globalisation on the livelihoods of Ukrainian village school-leavers.



Caucasus Case Study Trip

Hidden behind the veil of the Soviet Union for most of the 20th century, the Caucasus region is situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. What about its culture, what is the everyday reality of young Georgians, Armenians, Azeris? These were a few of the questions that 15 AEGEE members set out to discover during a Case Study Trip to Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan between 13th and 31st August 2003. Accompanied by six students from Georgia and five from Armenia, the first week was spent travelling all over Georgia, after which we separated: one group went to Armenia and the other to Azerbaijan. After a week, the team reunited in Tbilisi to exchange experience and information they had found.

Through a series of meetings, we had the chance to get first-hand information on the situation in the area, and were also

able to share the AEGEE spirit with our hosts. It was amazing. This unique experience opened the door for AEGEE to expand further towards the East – as it happens, at the Agora in Skopje in April 2004, the first Georgian branch joined our network. I learnt so much during the process and fell totally in love with the region. People there have a unique culture and respect for human nature. It was quite hard to get used to their feelings about time, you can easily get stood up there for more than 45 minutes, and everybody thinks it's normal. Also decision-taking was strange - imagine a group, usually consisting only of men, talking for 20 minutes and more, only to decide about something that was already decided two days before. Crazy moments, but the truth is that the Caucasus is a lot closer to Europe, culturally and historically, than most of us realise! **Aliki Louvrou**

Cultural exchange



Cultural exchange is not simply one of the main fields of action of AEGEE – the association's most successful project is at the heart of it: Summer University. Every year more than 5000 students apply for around 100 Summer Universities taking place all over Europe, to satisfy their curiosity about the history and people of the country of their destination (more information on pages 54/55). On the same basis works the Find Europe project. Moreover, cultural exchange is included as a by-product of every single conference or seminar, as well as in exchanges between antennae.

However, there is much more to it than this standard definition. AEGEE's whole approach is based on a broad and active cultural exchange. It is a process, or maybe a state of mind: being ready to give, receive, and change yourself, avoiding the pitfalls and temptations of judging. Getting to discover cultures is a breathtaking adventure which fully involves body, mind and emotions. "Get to know others, to discover yourself better": bearing this motto in my mind, I went to my first AEGEE event in North-Eastern Romania. Southern Italian as I am, I was challenged to leave my warm home, with my family only partially approving my long absence. On arrival, something extraordinary happened: after a forty hours trip with two transport strikes, two beautiful girls came to pick me up at the train station. Being so far away from my small world, this kicked up my impulse to let myself go completely. The sensation of being completely open, for the first time in my life, was incredible.

Five years have passed since that time. I came to realise that the most crucial element of each meeting is the "AEGEE spirit". It gives a meaning to all the differences that exist among us young Europeans, enables their coexistence; a productive, though not always easy, exchange that over-

comes barriers. Ultimately AEGEE spirit and cultural exchange coincide: it is the only path to European integration.

Since you are employing your consciousness to make sense of the chaos of the universe, you have the power to create what you truly want. Cultural exchange helps you to become aware of the universe, stretching your old, small world. It helps you see that in this larger universe you have an important role to play – by being active in AEGEE, you shape the world through your actions. AEGEE also provides a way to find a reply to many of your unanswered questions, by showing that the universe you want to see depends on you: you will meet others who see things in different ways. You accept relativism and find a better point of view on issues that bother you.

In AEGEE, everything starts with friendship. When curiosity sparkles, self-awareness increases. One's own culture and personality find equally significant counterparts in others; through understanding the differences, we question and realise our own self identity better.

Recently, my project fellow from Germany visited me here in South Italy. During his stay, we visited an important institutional responsible, who talked with us about three different topics at the same time, and also made phone calls, received other guests and photocopied many documents. I saw my German friend puzzled at some points. A clash between the different cultures would have put our goal in danger, getting lodging for a local SU. But nothing like this happened: the meeting was a success. Always focus on the relationship quality prior to the content of the communication, see the emotions of the other besides the body language, realise that if something looks like an obstacle then there must be a more successful perspective. Curiosity, friendships, relationships and increased self-awareness: this is what everyone can get out of an SU, a Find Europe event, a Case Study Trip or an exchange.

Fabrizio Fantini

AUTHOR

Fabrizio Fantini, born in 1979, is widely known for his intensive involvement with the Summer University project. He has been head of the Summer University Coordination Team. This Ph.D. student in Applied Mathematics in Operations Research also founded an AEGEE local antenna in Termoli, Italy.



Find Europe

Find Europe is a new, culture-oriented project, which runs events that are shorter than Summer Universities and take place the whole year round. It was born in 2003 and is organised by the Find Europe Coordination Team (FECT). Among its aims, lie the organisation of AEGEE events during special celebrations and traditional events all over Europe. Through the organisation of a framework around these festivities, Find Europe events promote the diversity of our cultures.

The project also aims to equip participants with skills and knowledge related to intercultural learning and youth work and the idea of dialogue among cultures through artistic expression, which is becoming a fast-growing trend within AEGEE. Find Europe events last at least three days and offer at least one meal per day for a maximum of 10 euro a day. They always include a speed language and AEGEE course, one local speciality dish per day, and an average of at least four hours of cultural programme per day.

The eight-day event "Discover the culture and natural wonders of Georgia" was the first AEGEE event in this particular country, so a new AEGEE antenna in a new country was born out of Find Europe. "We had 10 participants from all over Europe to whom we showed our culture and country. This helped both sides to change their attitudes about each other. We realised that we had much more in common than we believed," relates Tamuna Kekenadze, President of AEGEE-Tbilisi, his memories from the event, which lasted from 19th till 27th of September 2004. "When the bus driver drove the entire group, 18 people, to his home, it totally surprised our participants. For Georgians it's usual," recalls Tamuna a special episode. "I will never forget the faces of my foreign friends".

Aiga Grisane, President of AEGEE-Riga, has special memories, too: "Everything started with the great new years' celebrations 2002/3. Among local friends we celebrated kekatas, our traditional Latvian carnival, which was not much practiced during soviet times." So they decided their next AEGEE events had to be in similar style - and Find Europe offered the perfect platform. "We organized two more Winter Universities: (sp)ICE matters, expressing our culture to our guests. We celebrated new year four times, each time according to a different tradition!"

Fabrizio Fantini

The SU Project School

In 2005, the Summer Universities (SU) turn 18. Organising SUs has so far involved roughly 100.000 people: participants, organisers, sponsors, institutions. An important new action to improve this project is the yearly training event Summer University Project School (SUPS). 30 AEGEE members gathered for the first SUPS in the beautiful Italian city of Salerno, from the 28th of November till the 4th of December, 2004. With this new training, that I had the honour to organise, we wanted to shake AEGEE. The EU enlargement of 2004 offered new challenges. Now we needed to be more incisive in our actions, to keep people's attention on the message that integration still has a long way to go. At the SUPS, we trained some youth leaders in order to spread good, organisational culture at home. New SU participants will get better events and understand the AEGEE message more clearly. Becoming more motivated about organising projects themselves, they will take their place as the next link in the chain. We are setting off a virtuous circle.

The complex object of training was project management; with specific reference to the Summer University project's yearly life-cycle: from planning till follow-up. It was extremely hard work for both the SUPS organizers and the participants: "To organize the first SUPS was like a dream," says Ugo Simeoni, AEGEE-Salerno's president. "The participants worked like no one else has for a week". Ugo also admitted that even his team learned a lot about improving the SUs of AEGEE-Salerno - even though they are already rated among the best organisers in Europe.

We believe that antennae that send participants to a SUPS, will be able to perform better with their SUs. Kasia, participant from AEGEE-Poznan, has already asked me: "When will the next SUPS be?" Very soon for sure!

Fabrizio Fantini



AEGEE & Higher Education

Since its very beginning in 1985, AEGEE has put a huge effort into its attempts to improve European higher education. The European project cannot be fully realised without a truly European education system to synergise with the existing national systems, most of which were conceived more than 40 years ago and hardly adapted since.

One of the key factors in the success of such a large educational system is student mobility. That is why AEGEE has always dedicated a lot of effort to supporting mobility schemes. One of our first and most remarkable successes was the lobbying campaign for the implementation of the Erasmus programme in 1986 and 1987. AEGEE representatives had a series of meetings with several government representatives, crucial in this respect being a lunch with French president Francois Mitterrand.

"Student mobility has always been the biggest issue for us in higher education," emphasises Rob Tesh, projects director of AEGEE-Europe in 2004/5. There is still not enough financial and academic support even within the Erasmus programme, and outside the Erasmus countries we still have a mountain to climb. Says Rob; "AEGEE is the organisation with the deepest knowledge of this issue in Europe, so we will carry on working hard".

A key player within AEGEE is the Education Working Group (EWG). Since its foundation in 1994, the EWG has been working constantly to improve AEGEE members' knowledge of the European higher education scene, and has supported the implementation of projects concerning this field. At the same time, EWG has been supporting local Education Working Groups and Erasmus Working Groups in various antennae. These allow AEGEE to help integrate Erasmus students into the local student life.

"In the long run we want AEGEE to actively participate in the education policies and programmes of the European Commission, as well as the Council of Europe, UNESCO and UN," says Silvia Baita, president of AEGEE-Europe in 2004/5. "Since the Council of Europe named 2005 the European Year of Democratic Citizenship through Education (EYCE), we would like to seize this chance". Together with a revived Education Working Group, AEGEE wants to inform more of its members about the new action programme on lifelong learning and other education programmes such as Jean Monnet, and to promote the Bologna Process. "We have to start lobbying for the countries that are already passing through the Bologna Process. We also want to enhance our cooperation with other organisations



such as the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) and Erasmus Student Network (ESN)," concludes Silvia.

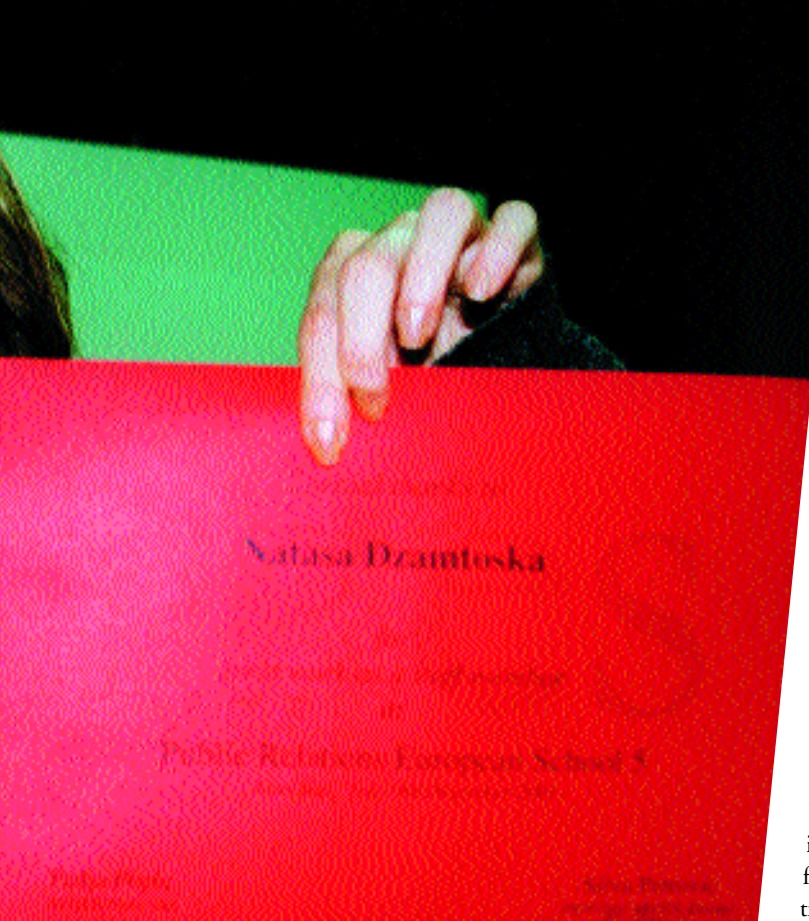
AEGEE's efforts can be grouped into five main categories: supporting the Socrates programme, building a European higher education area, communication about higher education, improving access to higher education and the importance of non-formal education.

Supporting the Socrates programme

Socrates Action Day: Autumn 1997 saw the first Socrates Action Day, since repeated another five times. This project not only promoted the Socrates programme, but also helped to reveal its weak parts, as a first step to solving them. Each year the number of antennae involved in the project rose, reaching even more people.

Socrates On The Move: One of our most successful projects, Socrates on the Move was a joint initiative of AEGEE, ESIB, ESN and the European Commission. The project took place for the first time in 2000. It produced a joint statement on the importance of mobility, the setting up of a collaborative network among the European student organisations and European institutions working in the field of mobility and the dissemination of information concerning mobility within European education. Its success was continued by Socrates on the Move II in 2001.

It is not just chance that made these projects into winners: "AEGEE and Socrates have the same philosophy: learning by doing, by experiencing Europe through mobility. Each of them have great programmes, it would be such a waste not to put them together," says Andrei Popescu, former Speaker of EWG and Socrates on the Move project manager.



Communication and improving access

European Day of Languages: A key element of intercultural communication is the ability to use different languages effectively. For this reason, AEGEE especially welcomed the Council of Europe's initiative to declare 2001 the European Year of Languages. In this framework, our European Day of Languages project tried to raise awareness of the richness of linguistic diversity, to publicise the advantages offered by language skills for personal development and intercultural understanding and to disseminate information about different learning methods. By means of our annual celebration of the European Day of Languages, this project has become one of AEGEE's best known.

Education for Democracy: After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the education system of a whole region is still in reconstruction. This gave us the idea behind Education for Democracy, just after the war in 1999: helping students travel to more established democracies to continue their studies, in the framework of a scholarship programme. AEGEE is continuing this programme today.

Building a European higher education area

Eureca: many people are poorly informed about changes to the European education system, such as the Bologna Process. Our Yearplan project in 2002, Eureca: European Education Campaign, took these aspects into consideration. A proposal was made for a number of improvements, offering a new line of action to the stake-holders in these fields. The main points included mobility, Europe-wide recognition of professional and academic qualifications, the importance of non-formal education and the need for a life-long learning system.

Universities to Debate Europe (Unidebate), focused on students' opinions and debates on the future of Europe, was another great example of cooperation between different pan-European organisations (AEGEE, ESIB, ESN and JADE) and the European Commission. The results of the three well-organised international debates, the debate marathon of 100 universities and the final conference were highly appreciated.

The Bologna-Berlin-Prague project (BPB) was born as a natural continuance of Eureca. It was meant to act as a platform for students to voice their opinions on the Bologna Process. "Unfortunately, due to the procedures of the Berlin summit, individual students' organisations such as AEGEE could not even attend the event, never mind speaking there," regrets Adrian Pintilie, former BPB co-ordinator and also an ex-President of AEGEE-Europe. "However, workshops organised at several Agoras, a conference in Bologna and a website have at least informed our own members about the Bologna Process".

The importance of non-formal education

In order to support and complement formal, academic education, various NGOs provide valuable opportunities for less formal education. This happens on two levels: the first one via training courses and the second by means of simply working as a volunteer on NGO-run projects. Students can acquire knowledge and improve their soft skills; abilities such as team-work and leadership.

AEGEE has set up an sophisticated internal education system. European Schools provide knowledge and improve project and organisational management skills. Their functional components operate on both the local and European levels. Some specialised training courses have been also developed: Public Relations European School, Fund Raising European School, Project School, Summer University Project School and last but not least, Training for Trainers, which aims to polish the skills of the next generation of School leaders. All these provide a solid foundation to build true Europeans.

Radu Racareanu

AUTHOR

Radu Racareanu has been an AEGEE member since 2002. He worked as local PR Director. "In March 2005, I was the local coordinator of the European School in Bucharest. I have also being chosen as PRWG projects director". At the moment Radu is finishing his first Bachelor's in International Economic Relations and has begun studying for a second one in Sociology and Psychology.



Active for peace and stability

A war is regarded as a matter of states. However, AEGEE names “peace and stability” as one of its four “main fields of action”. One could see this as ridiculous: a students organisation fighting – amongst other things “by the way” also for peace and stability? Is this realistic? The answer is of course, yes.

When I joined AEGEE in the summer of 1997, the fields of action were not defined yet as clearly as they are today. However, the plan to build an International Politics Working Group (IPWG) made me wonder whether these aspirations were realistic. Existing working groups dealt with either East-West relations or Human Rights. The IPWG was invented by the Secretary General of that time, Sergio Caredda, to follow a more serious academic approach. The founding concept talked of our own publications and a library. The whole approach sounded somehow elitist. Wouldn't this isolate the IPWG from the rest of the network?

During the Presidents' Meeting in Veszprém in September 1997 I expressed my doubts. As a result I got elected as speaker of the IPWG. Our first big event, the Summer University “Perspectives for the Balkans”, took place in co-

operation with AEGEE-Beograd, and attracted people who were rather untypical for AEGEE: young academics, who were interested in the situation in Milosevic's Serbia. However, hardly any of them were typical AEGEE members. Was this proof that AEGEE and international politics did not really go well together?

For the second year, we planned a series of conferences dealing with the changes in Central and Eastern Europe that had taken place since 1989. “Ten years of Transition” was the title of two conferences that took place in Gdansk and Timisoara and there was then a Summer University in Lviv. In addition, two factors had placed strong influence on our work. The Agora had decided the so-called “Peace Academy” to set the Yearplan project of the association as a whole. A large part of AEGEE was dealing with matters of war and peace during this year. We got involved in many projects carried out by AEGEE branches, helped writing concepts and making contacts. For example, a Kosovo workshop in Münster sent experts from South East Europe to Erlangen and helped bring about the Peace Summit in Kusadasi.

The other factor energising our work was less pleasurable: during the Nato attacks on Serbia between March and June 1999, people from Serbia, Western Europe and from the East had very emotional and controversial debates on our discussion list. Right before the war the second Case Study Trip Former Yugoslavia had explored the situation; many had been at the Presidents' Meeting in Novi Sad in March 1999. For the Westerners, it was a sobering experience to read from acquaintances about the experience of Nato bombs detonating somewhere nearby. For the Serbs and for many Eastern Europeans it seemed ridiculous how some of their friends in the west could justify such action. The mailing list IPWG-L provided something that no official media could achieve. It gave a personal dimension to real politics.

The Kosovo conflict and the war against Serbia created more awareness of the situation in South East Europe. In a joint effort, the project Education for Democracy (EfD) was brought to life. However, a disappointment was that after the problems in South East Europe disappeared from the media, also the support for EfD within the network also fell apart. Every year, fewer and fewer people took the challenge of arranging everything for a guest student at their university. In the current fifth year, only one single girl from Kosovo could be invited. AEGEE's persistence in making big efforts to realise our own activities with regard to peace and stability should thus not be overestimated.

The IPWG today is an integral and strong part of the network. It contributed to all of AEGEE's Yearplan topics since then. Highlights were for example, the final conference of “Borderless Europe”, which included the simulation “The Union of 28”, or the yearly study trip “IPWG goes to the Hague” taking place each





Tuzla, Bosnia.

year since the first generation of EfD students took part. Current network projects such as “EU and Europe” were shaped to a large extent by the IPWG.

As the IPWG has become a supportive structure and not just an isolated group, today it is deeply rooted within the network. From my point of view, AEGEE should involve the existing working groups more in realising big projects, but only if they have a clear function and a kind of ownership for activities in their field of interest, will their task and purpose will be clear to everybody within the network.

AEGEE does not just declare its aim of being European – it simply is. The network had to deal with international problems such as the Cyprus conflict or the Kosovo problem and it offered realistic solutions some of them long before real politics did so. Every issue must be understood in its implications for locals working under very different conditions in different parts of the continent. Because of this, experienced AEGEE members gain a deep understanding of the complex European realities and learn to identify with Europe as a whole.

So what about our ambitious aim to contribute to peace and stability? It is not our high aims with which AEGEE gains attention, but our easy accessibility and low entry barriers. Defining the network as a pressure group for specific interests - with the one important exception of students' affairs - runs the risk of reducing potential rather than increasing it.

AEGEE is driven by the general principle of exploring the common rather than struggling for the one and only correct point of view. It is not constructed as a political force. In some cases, AEGEE might be able to influence political developments by contact with politicians or the public thanks to cre-

ative potential, successful projects and the impressive size of the network. It might even be able to give small contributions to developments in high politics, during the last years for example in Serbia or Ukraine. However, more important than our actual achievement in any field is the experience that common action is possible. AEGEE does not do politics; it is politics.

In Europe, we learned that peace and stability are not a final result which can be preserved by power, but rather a process needing persistent effort. AEGEE teaches its members how to contribute, how to interact, how to interrelate their own interest with that of others, how to make, to obey and to change rules. The network shows that personal involvement pays off in various ways. In this sense, AEGEE contributes to peace and stability by its mere existence. **Frank Burgdörfer**

AUTHOR

Frank Burgdörfer, born in 1972, joined AEGEE after returning from an Erasmus year. Between 1997 and 1999 the student of political science was speaker of the new International Politics Working Group, and also member of the coordination team of the project Education for Democracy. Frank, who lives in Berlin, founded the Agency X3 which realises civic education projects. He is also writing his PhD in Political Sciences.



Cyprus in Europe

The First European AEGEE Conference in the Buffer Zone on Cyprus, which took place on 12 September 2003, was a great success. 25 Greek and Turkish Cypriots, together with 45 students of 16 different European nationalities participated in this event, which gave them the possibility of engaging in an open dialogue concerning the situation on the island. The conference was a pre-event to the Planning Meeting in Magusa. At the conference, discussions about the divided island took place with input from speakers, as well as personal experiences offered by teachers working in Cyprus. With such a delicate topic, it was very difficult to manage. Several speakers were forced to cancel their participation due to the potential political implications of the event, and our main institutional partners pulled out as well. All these obstacles did not stop us from fighting for our ideals. This conference proved again that AEGEE is a living example of overcoming prejudices and acting.

Diana Filip, President of AEGEE-Europe in 2003

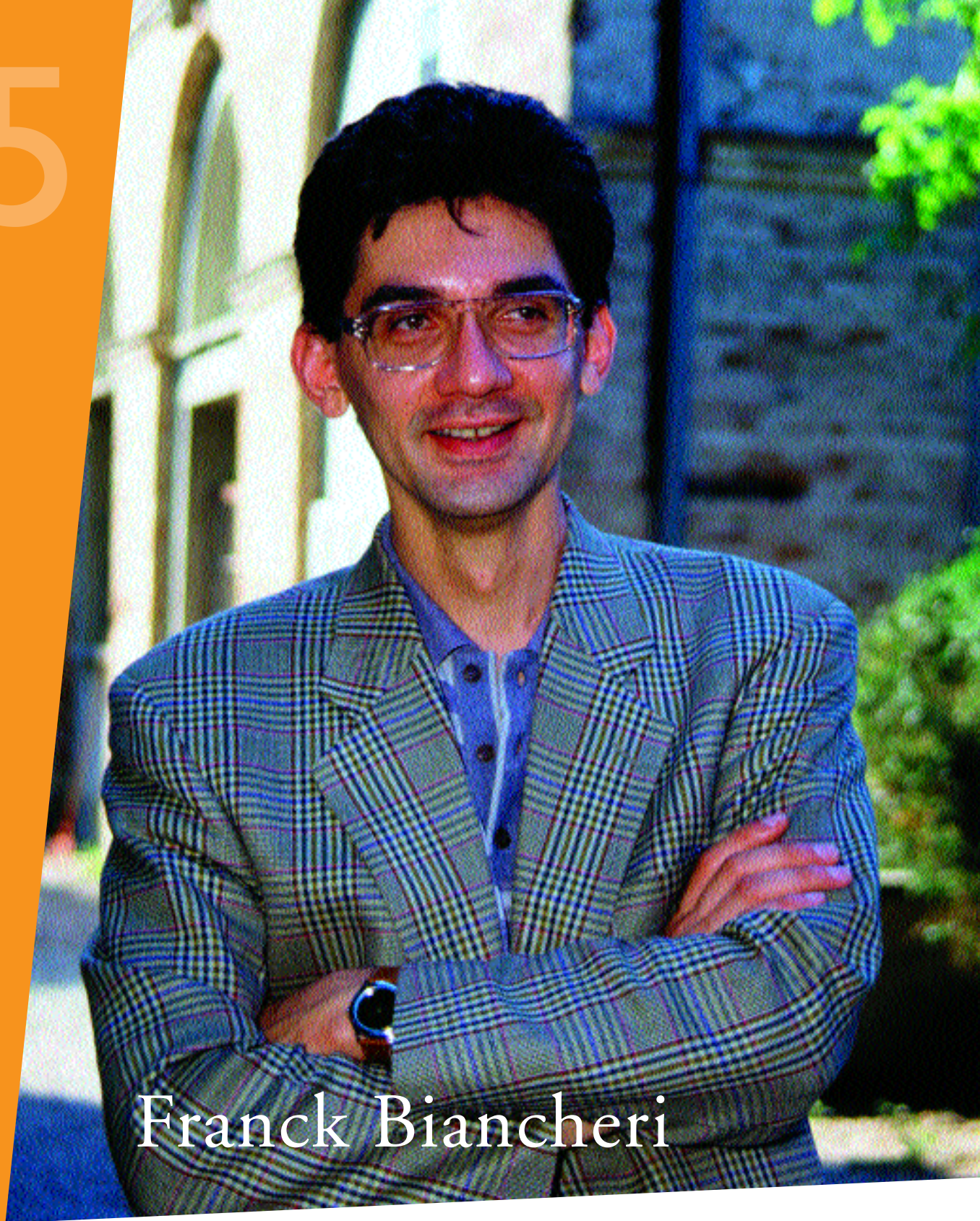
AEGEE would be nothing without its members. It is impossible to tell who were the most important and most active. Therefore, this chapter does not even attempt to be complete, but presents a variety of great members, from North and South, East and West - and different generations. In addition, there are some highlights from our events and projects of the past 20 years.



European School Prague/Liblice, 2000.

20 years,
20 people





Franck Biancheri

Already halfway there. “I want to work actively for European integration for 20 more years, until 2025. This will make a total of 40 years, as I started with AEGEE-Europe 20 years ago. Then I’ll let the next generations take over,” says Franck Biancheri, who founded AEGEE in 1985. The energetic French think-tank leader will be 64 years old by then, but he was already listed by Time Magazine as one of the “Top 20 European Heroes” in 2003 – joining a group of famous personalities like Nelson Mandela, Zinedine Zidane and Pope John Paul II. The reason for this recognition was the New Europeans Democracy Marathon, organised by Franck.

However, no one would have predicted this success when Biancheri started his studies in the early 80s. His reason for entering the elite French university Sciences Po did not suggest a future leader of European integration. "I was mainly a scientific person, made my baccalauréat with a focus on mathematics," he recalls. "I did not want to become an engineer. But I was still unsure exactly what I wanted instead. While I thought about it, I decided to enter Sciences Po – mainly because it is located in the centre of Paris."

Soon he became involved in university politics and served three years as president of the "Bureau des Elèves", the student office of the university. This was when Franck developed the idea of creating AEGEE. "I missed quite a few classes because of my activities. The teachers were often flexible though, adding the missing points out of respect for my commitment," he remembers. Franck Biancheri graduated from Sciences Po in 1984 and registered himself for the preparatory classes to enter the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA), but for three years he never attended a single class. By now, Franck knew what he wanted to achieve. "AEGEE and all its activities were what I was looking for, not ENA."

What followed is history. Years filled with ambitious events – and great fun. "We often travelled by car to the events. I had an R5, and we went with five people and no reimbursement." For three years, Biancheri led AEGEE as its first president – an enormous achievement, never equalled by any of his successors.

It hurt a lot to leave AEGEE after dedicating three years of his life to it, but Franck's involvement in European matters did not end at that point: In 1988, he was already involved with several other initiatives, such as the Prometheus-Europe network and the Initiative for a European Democracy (IDE), an initiative connected with the 1989 European Parliament elections in Spain, Holland and France. For all these activities, Franck needed more than just ambition. He also required a clear vision, lots of energy, communication skills and a very good instinct. Franck himself credits his success to his efforts to be a pragmatic and independent thinker. "My aim is always to solve problems. I want to be as independent as possible, from other people and from political parties and institutions," he states. "This is what I always tried to do, first with AEGEE and now with Europe2020. We want to solve the problems that we can see, not the questions that others try to impose on us."

This forces him to be better informed than others. "By staying at the heart of networks of many thousands of people, I get the relevant information very quickly, because I always avoid having more than one intermediary layer between me and the people concerned," he stresses. "However, I rarely read books about the EU, since most of them just repeat what has already been said". Biancheri has ten people working for his think tank Europe 2020 as permanent staff. There are also many volunteers, depend-

ing on the activities to be carried out.

20 years have passed since AEGEE was created, but some things never change: "I still go abroad very frequently. There are periods of several months when I am away almost every night." Franck is still a master networker. "I keep in touch with many people even from the first years of AEGEE." As he says this, Franck begins to smile. "When I visited the Baltic States during the New Europeans Marathon, I went to Riga for the first time. Entering a lift in a building, I met another young man who was inside who asked me 'Are you Franck Biancheri? I am the founder of AEGEE-Riga and am glad to meet you!' My father, who was with us at that moment, told me later that he would never have believed the story if he had not seen it with his own eyes."

Olivier Genkin

The mission is not over yet

How do you see AEGEE's mission today?

AEGEE has played an important role in the democratisation process of the EU and the rest of Europe, mainly by integrating students from every country and faculty. The fact that AEGEE can now look back over two decades of history proves an impressive level of continuity in its activities. This is already valuable in itself. AEGEE's main goal today should be to develop methods for creating true Eurocitizens. It should also continue to build bridges within the EU, and between the EU and its neighbours, both on the European continent and on the world stage.

What do you think of the recently drafted European constitution?

This document doesn't really spark my enthusiasm. The European Convention involved nobody younger than 45 years, keeping it mainly oriented towards the past. The draft constitution tries to solve the problems of the past 10 or 15 years, but ignores the predominant question of how to involve 500 million ordinary people in the management of Europe. I feel the draft represents progress, but it is still far from sufficient.

What do you think about referendae as a tool of democracy regarding EU matters?

I appreciate the principle of referendae a lot, since it is essential for the people to decide. But we have to be aware of the fact that calling a referendum on the accession of new members to the EU may in practice mean the end of further enlargement.

What do you think about the proposal for a "privileged partnership" with Turkey?

It should not be forgotten that we, via Prometheus and Europe2020, first presented that idea in 1995.

EGEE I – Foundation of a strong network

April 16th 1985 will always be remembered as the dawn of AEGEE. On this day a huge conference opened in Paris, called EGEE I, aimed at overcoming the ongoing Eurosclerosis, the paralysation of the European integration process. The roots of this event lie deeper still, going back to January 1984. This marked the start of a six-month cooperative initiative between the student offices of five “Grandes Ecoles”; prestigious French schools for professional graduates. They were Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris, the science and technology oriented Ecole Polytechnique, the engineering school Ecole Centrale and the business schools HEC and ESSEC. “We knew that we had to work together in order to create results with this partnership,” remembers Franck Biancheri, who was president of the “Bureau des Elèves” at Sciences-Po and the coordinator of the initiative. “Our



The first Comité Directeur.



original aim was to organise a huge student party in Paris, but the project had to be cancelled in summer 1984”.

Franck arranged another meeting in January 1985, at which 15 of these students began to organise EGEE I. “In order to get sufficient visibility and really achieve something, you need to aim high, you need huge events. A small conference would not be heard,” Franck stresses. That’s why EGEE I put a big effort into ensuring wide media coverage, particularly through a partnership with one of the largest French newspapers, Le Monde. The print media offered entire pages of advertising space, printed brochures and posters for the event, all for free. Radio and television also contributed – RTL supported EGEE I with editorial help as well as advertising. “I could use the huge potential – in terms of contacts and credibility – that these Grandes Ecoles have in France.”

The name of the students’ conference was deliberately chosen for its double meaning. On one hand, EGEE is an acronym for Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l’Europe, which referred back to the original Etats Généraux, the assembly that ignited the French Revolution in 1789. On the other hand, it also brings to mind the Aegean Sea – la Mer Egée – where democracy was born 2000 years ago. “A significant part of the population, especially youth, felt that if there was any hope for the future it would no



longer come from national politics. So the door was open to try something else, and why not Europe?», explains Franck Biancheri.

“A major problem was how to contact European students, since at that time student exchanges simply did not exist,” recalls Franck Biancheri. “Especially to reach British students was very difficult. There were no Internet and e-mail facilities yet, so we had to go via embassies and the international contacts of the universities”. This was not easy, especially since the organisers had no personal contacts either. So they had to work with the European embassies in Paris and the French cultural centres around Europe to try and make contact with European students.

The team managed to create a platform for 350 young Europeans to gather in Paris from 16th until 22nd April 1985, under the high patronage of François Mitterrand, President of the French Republic, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, former President, Jacques Chirac, Mayor of Paris, and Raymond Barre, former Prime Minister. The original plan was to attract students from just four countries, but President Mitterrand insisted on inviting students from all ten member states of the European Community at that time.

The participants were lodged in youth hostels and students’ dormitories, at the organisers’ expense, creating a significant hole in the budget. “The participants even got their travel costs reimbursed,” remembers Franck Biancheri. The conferences took place daily in seven different venues, at Sciences-Po, Polytechnique, ESSEC, HEC, Sup-Télécom, ENA and La Sorbonne.

The week was very intense, starting with a plenary session on the first day, followed by many parallel lectures by over 60 speakers. There was also a series of seminars on important topics; European Cultures, Images of Europe, Unification of Europe, European University System, European Defence, Common Foreign Policy, New Challenges of a Social Europe, Future of Industrial Europe, Europe and Environment, Research and Development, and Europe and the Third World. This programme was accompanied by receptions at the Assemblée Nationale and the city hall of Paris, a nightly boat trip, a European film evening and a final Gala at the Opera.

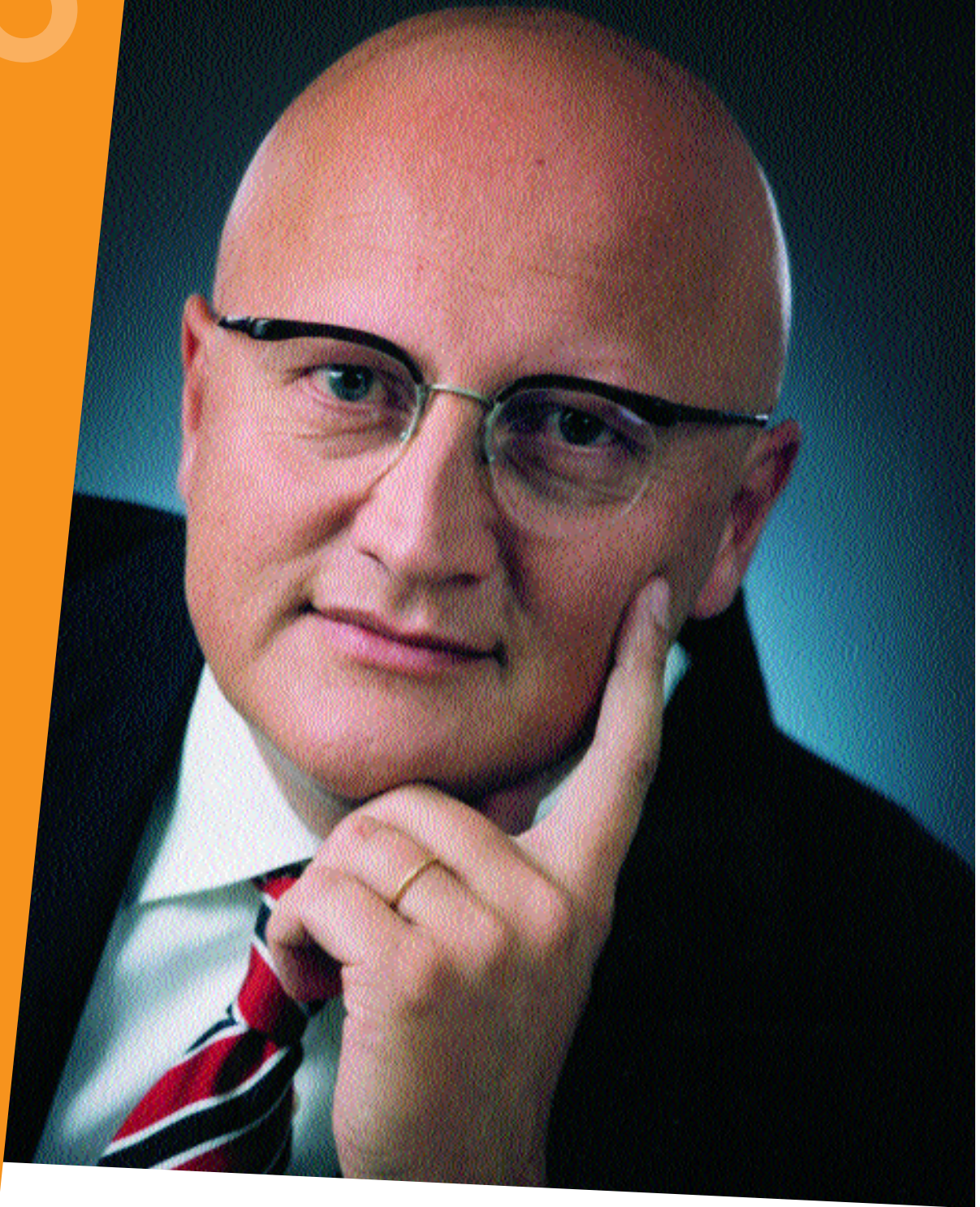
A European Night took place at the end of a busy day of debates. “We realized that a party for the participants of a congress is an important element of AEGEE’s mission. European Nights are normal student parties, but the participants of the congresses who are discovering Europe give them a very special flavour,” says Franck Biancheri. The emphasis on the social aspects of its events has always marked an important difference between AEGEE and other seminar organisers.

After the final plenary session on April 22nd, a closing gala at Château de Maison Laffitte marked the end of EGEE I and at the same time the birth of the association that we know today. “Even a few weeks before EGEE I, the idea of a follow-up was being openly discussed,” says Franck. As more and more people became interested in the project, some members of the team, feeling that it would be a very important congress with great promise for the future, began to ask “what’s next?”.

EGEE-Europe was officially created in July 1985, with statutes drawn up by representatives of eight local EGEE groups in Paris, Milano, Brussels, Leiden, Munich, Nice, Strasbourg and Luxembourg. One year later, EGEE-München organised the congress EGEE II. The start was not easy, since EGEE I faced a deficit of 80.000 ECU, which would have to be paid before continuing. “Without the founding generation and their efforts to find money, AEGEE would have ceased to exist after its first congress,” Franck stresses.

After twenty years, Franck Biancheri points out that there had been other “classic” European movements and groupings at that time, but nothing specifically for students. “As a students’ organisation, we were naturally competing with other students’ associations,” concludes the AEGEE founder. „However, we proved to be something new and unique!”

Olivier Genkin



Paris, Elysee Palace, 15th March 1987. A young student from Munich, Christoph Vaagt, takes part in a meeting between Francois Mitterrand and an EGEE delegation – the students will successfully promote one of today's most important and popular student programmes throughout Europe: the Erasmus Mobility Scheme. And during the meeting, Christoph Vaagt will have the possibility to talk to the French president personally. On his question "Et vous Monsieur, vous êtes le représentant d'Allemagne?" he replies "Non Monsieur Mitterrand, je suis représentant de l'Europe!"

This short anecdote illustrates the personality and thoughts of Christoph Vaagt. His drive to overcome mental borders and prejudices and his vision of a unified Europe based on a common European identity, an identity founded on common achievements. Above all, it indicates a straightforward, independent and open mind, filled with clear visions as well as passion and commitment to achieve them, and always searching for new opportunities and challenges.

In 1985, when EGEE was founded, Christoph Vaagt was studying law in Aix-en-Provence. And though he heard about the foundation of a new European student organisation, he did not get involved until he moved to Munich in 1986. He soon became president of EGEE-München, one of the six founding antennae, and was responsible for the organisation of the Second European Space Congress in 1987. Christoph convinced Franz Josef Strauß, the Bavarian prime minister, to donate 30 000 German Marks.

In December 1987, Christoph Vaagt also got involved at a European level, as secretary general of AEGEE, as the organisation was renamed due to a legal dispute with another organisation in France. His vision was of an open and transparent organisation with active member participation on one hand, and the further promotion of AEGEE among European students on the other. This phase was characterized by a strong, swift expansion of the network – between 1987 and 1989 the number of antennae climbed from 15 to 75 and AEGEE truly became a European student network.

However, the expansion was not always easy to manage and coincided with tensions between the founding generation of AEGEE and its successors. “In this phase, as secretary general, I often had to mediate between the European and the local level and between different factions within the network,” Christoph recalls. A situation which apparently suits him – he was able to remain neutral and he did not have to position himself on either side. And he remained so independent that he had the possibility to help launch a Europe-wide project: the European Law Moot Court, a

simulation and competition between European law students.

In 1988, when Christoph Vaagt had the initial idea for Moot Court, at a beer garden in Munich, he was a scientific assistant at the Institute for International Law at the University of Munich. The fact that a European law competition of this kind did not exist at that time seemed an incentive, not an obstacle. Christoph presented his ideas – to raise awareness of the subject of European Community law and to promote contacts between law students throughout Europe – to the president of European Court of Justice, Lord Mackenzie Stuart. With his active support and the support of his successor, Ole Due, Christoph was able to recruit patrons, sponsors, and judges.

Soon the European Law Moot Court Society was founded in Munich. Most teams participating in the first European Moot Court, which took place at the European University Institute Florence, 23rd – 28th October 1989, were recruited from the AEGEE network. 24 delegates from ten European countries participated in this initial simulation. This great success was the foundation of one of today's most renowned law students' competitions worldwide – still inspired by the founding ideas of AEGEE. In 2005 the Moot Court will celebrate its 15th jubilee.

“It is the characteristic spirit of the association, which fascinated everyone so much,” says Christoph Vaagt. “AEGEE has trained me better than university for my private as well as my professional life as a lawyer and as a management consultant”. He learned to organise, to negotiate, and to work in an international team. In AEGEE, every member has the possibility to make projects and events come alive and bear responsibility that an organisation would normally not entrust to a student. And there were seldom any failures, since everybody was committed with their hearts. Nearly every project was a success.

And what would be his wish for the future of Europe and AEGEE? “My version of Europe is marked by responsibility for each other, freedom and mutual respect,” Christoph stresses. It is the diversity of Europe, which is its greatest strength. And this is also true for AEGEE. “AEGEE is a microcosm of Europe. It represents so many different ideas and is always sensitive to new developments. Everything that AEGEE does represents Europe. AEGEE, in this sense, can do nothing wrong”. **Sebastian Schopp**

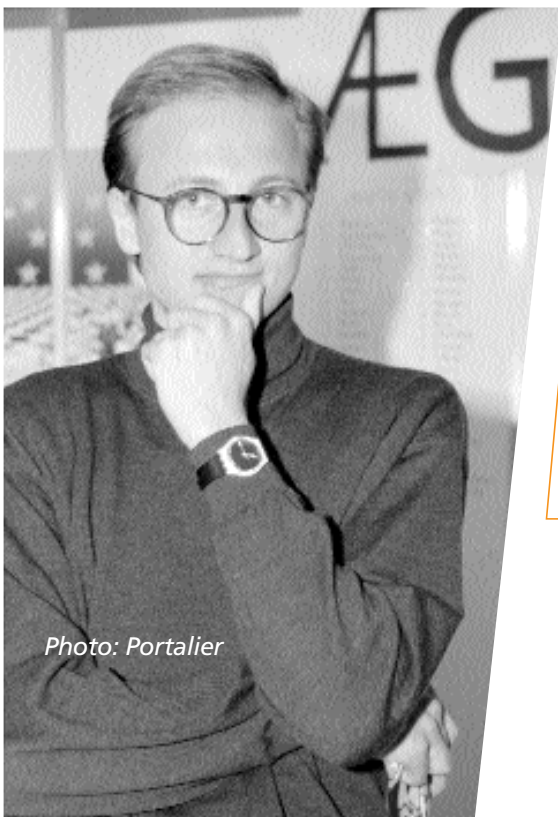


Photo: Portalier

AUTHOR

Sebastian Schopp, born on 8th of November 1979, got involved with AEGEE-München in August 2002 and joined the association three months later. He is mainly involved in the PR activities of his home antenna and studies Communication Science, Politics and Economic Geography.

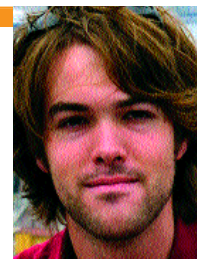




Photo: Portalier

The Night of the Seven Antennae

It was one of the most legendary and ambitious events in AEGEE ever: the Night of the Seven Antennae in March 1986. Connected by a satellite link, seven antennae made their own Eurovision show with interviews, music performances and high profile guests from politics. Philippe Micaelli, vice president of AEGEE-Europe, co-ordinated the magnificent event. Gunnar Erth asked him for details.

Who had the idea for the event?

After the first congress in Paris we wanted to organise another big event which would also be special. During a Comité Directeur session I explained that we could use the latest state-of-the-art video communication by satellite, we could be the first student association to organise a live satellite multicast streaming video between seven antennae.

What was the programme of the events?

The programme in each city had the same guideline: fun with a European political message, entertainment and guests known for their European involvement. We had singers, a fashion show and 3D video movies. Concerning speakers we had for example two European Commissioners: Manuel Marin, in charge of education, and CT Davis, in charge of transport. Bavaria's prime minister Edmund Stoiber participated as well as Michel Jobert, a former French Minister, Pierre Pflimlin, President of European Parliament and Gaetano Adinolfi from the Council of Europe. So far this event has stayed unique.

How did you organise the event?

I was easily able to find a project leader in each city. Together with Franck Biancheri, who was in charge of the political dimension of the show, I made the

coordination at the European level, and each city had the freedom to manage the content themselves. The core team was composed by Ricktus Osterhuis in Amsterdam, Elena Drutskoi in Brussels, Andrew Oldland in London, Béatrice Anacker in Munich, Guillaume Petruski in Nice, Stéphanie Paix in Paris and Frédéric Rossi in Strasbourg. I was really stressed during those four months.

How did you manage to arrange the satellite link?

I was not an engineer and I knew very little about live video transmission and how to produce such an event. But from my point of view, if an idea is good the technical aspects can be solved. During the four hours broadcast we did not have any problems. We got the full support of the Belgian, Dutch, English, French and German ministries of telecommunication, and of different professional broadcast companies. Franck Biancheri had to lobby the French government very hard, especially Mitterand's advisers, to obtain that the French authorities accept to pay up to 50 percent of the whole operation.

How many people saw the transmission?

The number depended of the size of the chosen place in each city. For instance, in Paris we rented Bercy, a huge place where concerts or car races are organised. In London it was inside the Kings College, in Brussels it was a big place named Plan K. At least 10.000 people saw and participated in this first multicast video transmission by satellite through seven towns in Europe.

Philippe Micaelli was an AEGEE member in the first hour. "In 1985 I met Franck Biancheri and joined his team a few weeks before the first EGEE congress. I am proud to be one of the pre-EGEE I anciens," he remembers. Philippe is proud that AEGEE-Europe students "never accepted to play the game of the EU institutions in order to get a job into the system". After ten years as trader in the financial market, the former Econometrics student founded several companies, the latest being in the IT sector.

What were the main results and the impact of the event?

Externally it established AEGEE-Europe, this very young student association, as a real partner for institutions and companies. Internally it demonstrated that if we want something to happen that seems impossible, it could still really succeed. The EU Commission paid for 200 copies of the ten minutes summary of the show that I made in the following weeks. These tapes allowed AEGEE-Europe members to show the video all around EC universities to thousands of students. This boosted AEGEE's development.

Is it true that AEGEE-Bruxelles went bankrupt because of it?

The total budget was around 600.000 euros. AEGEE-Bruxelles was aware that if they could not get into the show, then the whole event would become impossible, as the Belgian Telecom was part of the connection bringing the images from and to Amsterdam as well - on this part, the link was made through ground connections. If they had stayed away, Amsterdam would have been obliged to cancel as well. All of us hoped to find solutions but in the end we could not and AEGEE-Bruxelles preferred to shut down rather than keep on trying to find the money.

Do you see potential for events of this kind?

Yes I do. I think that this kind of event could be done again but in a different way, with more interactivity and more places. With Internet, good webcams, big screens and fast broadband it could be fun to organise a common video stream on the same day where people could choose what they want to see or what they want to send through a website. It would be not difficult to organise.

Some event highlights of 1986

January	Brussel (B): European Student – Utopia or Reality?
	Leiden (NL): Industrial Europe
	London (UK): European Space Technology
	Paris (F): European Defence Policy
	Milano (I): European Financial System
	München (D): Integration of South Europe
	Nice (F): Towards a Data Processing Europe
	Strasbourg (F): Media in Europe
March	All over Europe: The European Nights
April	München (D): EGEE II - Convention Week
July	Madrid (E): Spain's & Portugal's EU entry
October	Nijmegen (NL): Cross-Borderline Development
November	Heidelberg (D): Europe & Middle East
	Heidelberg (D): Agora
	Brussel (B): Presidents' Meeting
	München (D): European Monetary System
	Toulouse (F): European Space Congress
	Paris (F): Pharmaceutical Industry in Europe

Space: the final frontier

The European space industry with its flagship, the successful Ariane rocket is a rare success story of industrial cooperation among European companies and the EU member states. Space travel appeals greatly to young people and therefore was selected as a topic for many AEGEE congresses between 1986 and 1992. The first was a Space Weekend in Toulouse in November 1986. Since the theme was so interesting and the industry eager to provide speakers, a second congress of this type took place in Munich in 1987, dedicated to the future space of transportation vehicles.

This event was a hallmark for AEGEE since it brought together not only students, but also managers from the European industry. Even the president of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the German and French ministers that were in charge of these issues attended the event. They all assembled in connection with the Millennium Plan of the European Space Organisation, which was approved just the week before. It foresaw a major initiative to bring Europe into manned space flight with Hermes, a space shuttle of European origin, a project which was later abandoned due to technical reasons. This event made AEGEE highly visible in industry circles and attracted many more students.

A third space congress, organised again in Toulouse in November 1988, included many more themes and made AEGEE look more professional. Legal questions related to space were touched. Delft was the next antenna to carry the torch, with a fourth space congress organised in 1992. This event gathered more than 350 participants and was organised by four antennae: Aachen, Delft, Eindhoven, and Enschede. The major theme of the event was the future industrial usage of space.

While the organisers of Space IV dissolved the Space Foundation that they had founded as they were unable to find another antenna to organise a follow-up conference, another organisation, Euravia, a 50 year old society of aeronautical students was re-established during these fora and carried on with a series of more specialised events. This is a very good example of how AEGEE revived an older pro-European organisation which had lost enthusiasm over time.

The space industry, together with the aeronautical industry, is today's biggest success story in European industrial policy. It seems extremely worthwhile for AEGEE to closely watch the developments in this area. It is something which may inspire pride in young Europeans and therefore motivate them much more than any technical detail could.

Christoph Vaagt

Christophe Leclercq



Photo: Portulier

If there is one AEGEE member who successfully used in his professional life what he learnt in AEGEE, it is most probably Christophe Leclercq. Born in 1962, Christophe developed the job fair EuroManagers, which became so successful that it was turned into an enterprise. Later on, the French founder of AEGEE-Köln was CD member between 1986 and 1988. In 2000 he founded EurActive Media, a policy portal specialising in EU affairs. Marcus Khoury interviewed Christophe Leclercq, who now lives in Brussels.

What does your schedule look like on any given day?

Living close to the Brussels EU area, I put my kids on the school bus at 7.50 am, and then I walk to the new EurActiv office right next to the Berlaymont, the EU Commission headquarters. A part of our editorial team, the so-called news shift, starts working at 7 am; the rest of the team arrives at 9 am. There are 25 people on our team, including five former AEGEE members. I spend the day on editorial strategy, future EU projects, meetings with potential sponsors and interviews with potential team members – we are recruiting! Lunches are in restaurants with friends or partners.

How do you manage the balance between your professional and your family life?

Together with my English wife - whom I did not meet in AEGEE - I have three children: Armelle is six, Oscar four and Ariane two. We decided to put them in the English section of the European School. This way, their accent will be lighter than mine. I probably work too much for a young father, but with great support at home, despite a working wife. My colleagues respect my week-ends. Most importantly, I feel EurActiv makes a difference to Europe, hence my motivation is still strong after six years and I don't mind earning less than my market value. If I could cut my two hours of daily e-mails, it would become more bearable. Even so, what I fear most is not work and stress but boredom.

Do you think your children will grow up to face a better world at the age of twenty than you did?

Their minds are already much broader than mine was at their age. When I was six, living in Lorraine and having spent less than 20 days outside France I hardly knew that there were other languages, whereas my children have multilingual friends who just moved to Boston and Beijing, so they keep in touch via the parents' email. If we keep terrorism under control, then they will live in a better world than I did.

AEGEE turned 20. How were you at that age?

At 20, in 1983, I was finishing my first degree, at the Paris Institute of Politics. I was heavily involved in association life, for example as Secretary General of the student union, where I met Franck Biancheri. Throughout my studies at Sciences Po, a quarter of a century after the treaty of Rome, I never had one hour of teaching about European integration. I remember a conversation with Franck about setting up some European student organisation. We considered organising a conference at Sciences Po with Simone Veil, the first President of the elected European Parliament.

How did you first find out about AEGEE?

At the time of the first congress EGEE I in Paris, I was an exchange student abroad, so I missed out on that historical

event. While following a summer course in Munich in 1985, we had a visit from EGEE-München. I looked at the brochure and saw that I knew half of the organisers from Sciences Po. At that moment, I was working for Renault Germany and trying to write a PhD in Cologne. So the following spring, I went to EGEE II, in Munich, and joined the nearest antenna: EGEE-Heidelberg.

Then you co-founded AEGEE-Köln. What made you want to found a local antenna?

In Cologne, the key people who helped set up the new antenna were Dorothea Heister and her friends at the students' council. The German students chose me as President, because I knew "the Parisians" who were leading AEGEE. After our first event, EuroManagers'87, I handed over this role to Ulricke von Lonski, well supported by Marc Dietrich, Bettina Sauer and others. They were fantastic; we still keep in touch. I thanked my Cologne friends by getting elected to the CD, to promote issues that were important to Germans such as the environment and Eastern Europe.

Did you expect AEGEE to turn 20 one day?

Yes, we always hoped for that. That's why Johannes Heister set up the alumni organisation, Les Anciens, after just a few years of AEGEE existence.

What impact has AEGEE had on your life?

AEGEE, and mostly my main project EuroManagers, is one of the key reasons why I dared to be entrepreneurial again later on. Shortly after the project, I entered McKinsey as a management consultant, at 24 and without an MBA, which was unusual. It would not have happened without AEGEE. Later on, I became an EU official, and missed in the "eurocracy" the enthusiasm and creativity of my younger years. This, together with the need for better EU information, is what led me to create EurActiv with a few partners.

Have your expectations for European integration from your first AEGEE years been fulfilled?

Broadly speaking, yes. AEGEE itself had many interesting ideas, but not really an overall vision for Europe. I was involved shortly in the think-tank Prometheus, mainly writing with 20 others the programme of the future European party IDE. We envisioned events such as the re-unification with the East, the creation of a single currency and widespread student exchange programmes. All this has been achieved. We wanted freedom from the Soviet threat - it is gone. On the social front, the fight against unemployment failed, but this is more a national competitiveness issue. We were also hoping for a European defence and more autonomy from the US. There, progress has been more modest; but just give it a few more years!

EuroManagers: Creating a European job market

The idea behind EuroManagers was simple and fresh: to create a cross-border marketplace for graduates' jobs. In 1987, everybody was talking about the internal market of 1992, and AEGEE was lobbying for the Erasmus mobility programme. It became clear that companies would need more European managers, and students would look for careers suited to their international education. Therefore, as founding president of AEGEE-Köln I suggested organising a colloquium on cross-border recruitment of European graduates in Cologne.

The response from universities and sponsors to our event was great. Many large companies such as Commerzbank, Siemens, Henkel and business schools such as Insead, HEC and Essec agreed to join. The colloquium became EuroManagers'87, the pilot project for a larger event the following year.

I contacted two potential partners in Belgium: Spiros Nomicos of AEGEE-Bruxelles and Christian Hunt of AEGEE-Louvain-La Neuve. We decided to aim for a large job fair in Brussels. We had some professional experience in marketing and finance and wanted high standards. Quite a few of the Comité Directeur members were doubtful of our chances of success. To motivate us and to reduce the risk for AEGEE, we got the green light for creating an independent association, and it was set up in August 1987.

One year of hard work followed. We cooperated with a professional exhibition company, AEGEE-Europe, AEGEE-Bruxelles and 20 "EuroManagers contacts" all over Europe.

In February 1988, EuroManagers'88 included both a well-attended congress with wide press coverage and a forum, bringing together six companies and 30 universities with visitors from Brussels and beyond.

A few months after the event, I joined McKinsey: EuroManagers needed new management. I introduced Stéphane Wajskop, a young Belgian lawyer, to the project. He and Christian transformed the fair into a "suite-based selection event": Selected candidates were invited to meet employers in the suites of a prestigious hotel. Since they could not agree with AEGEE-Europe on any further cooperation, EuroManagers continued its activities alone as the Hunt/Wajskop company EMDS. They had great success in the following years. In 1994, for example, the seventh EuroManagers forum gave 675 top graduates, selected from 20.000 inquiries, the opportunity to meet recruiters from 34 multinational groups. They launched Euroengineers and several other products, and had up to ten offices around the world. In addition, our concept of a cross-border job fair for graduates, which was completely new, has been copied many times since then. What became a profitable company also clearly contributed to European integration.

During the dotcom boom, EMDS was taken over by Vivendi at a high price and then sank into decline. Later, it was abandoned as part of Vivendi's restructuring. It still exists on a smaller scale, but I cannot help feeling disappointed. Anyway, we should rejoice at the tens of thousands of graduates who found a job outside their country thanks to this venture born from AEGEE.

For many years, I have heard the question: should the CD have refused to let EuroManagers become independent? My answer is: certainly not, it was a natural development. Organisations, like children, leave home when they grow up. Good parents should not be upset but proud. We planned a separate structure right from the start, immediately after the Cologne pilot project, with the explicit agreement from the CD and information given at the next Agora in Leiden in 1987. There were only few questions at that time, but more were posed later – once it became very successful. In fact, the biggest clash was with the think-tank Prometheus, whose founder was trying to use EuroManagers as a funding machine for the future party IDE, which ran candidates in the European Parliament elections in 1989. We maintained our autonomy, and I still believe that it was the right choice.

A more general point is: should AEGEE encourage its projects to become professional and leave the student organisation? The answer for me is a clear yes. AEGEE is in an ongoing process of self renewal anyway. Of course, it is best to do this with good written principles and experience from the past is helpful. If AEGEE had not allowed us to carry out the EuroManagers project when we were in our twenties, perhaps we would not have been able to help AEGEE today – 20 years later.

Christophe Leclercq



Europe meets Africa

The first AEGEE event that concentrated on matters outside of the European Community was the Europe-Africa congress, organised by AEGEE-Paris from 7th until 10th December 1987. This event aimed to promote the establishment of an association of the same kind as AEGEE-Europe. Moreover, in combination with the Europe-Latin America Week organised by Jean-François Monteil and AEGEE-Strasbourg a few weeks later, the event was an attempt to constitute the embryo of AEGEE's external relations policy.

Alain Mathioudakis, president of AEGEE-Paris, and Ibrahima Din, the African student who was in charge of the congress managed to attract 100 African and 200 European students. European Commissioner Lorenzo Natali gave the keynote speech in the Grand Amphithéâtre of La Sorbonne next to the French minister for co-operation, Michel Aurillac.

"The highlight that is still in the memories of many was a reception at the Elysée Palace by French President François Mitterrand, attended by around 50

European and 50 African participants," recalls Bart Kuitwagen, participant. The follow-up with the African students, though, was less effective. Despite the general euphoria at the end of the final meeting, a network comparable to AEGEE has never been established in Africa. "We were, once more, 10 or 20 years ahead," concludes Franck. **Olivier Genkin**

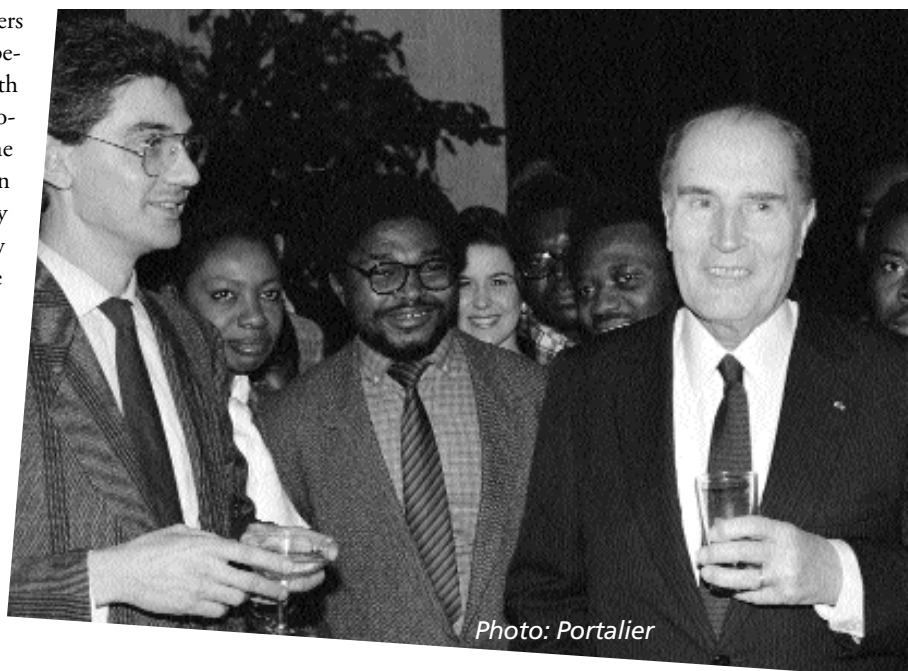


Photo: Portalier

Some event highlights of 1987

January	Heidelberg (D): European Ecology Politics
February	Leiden (NL): Agora
	Leiden (NL): EGEE III - Europe, Unfinished Symphony
March	Amsterdam (NL): Which Defence for Europe?
	Delft (NL): Genetic Engineering in Europe
	London (UK): Air Transport in Europe
	Köln (D): Euromanagers 1987
	Madrid (E): Mediterranean Environment
	Milano (I): A Technology Strategy for Europe
	Nice (F): Sports in Europe
	Paris (F): Political Marketing in Europe
	Lyon (F): Media in the Membership Countries
April	Athina (GR): Between Europe & Middle East
July	Heidelberg (D): European Literature
August	Madrid (E): Apoikia Summer Camp
September	Delft (NL): Presidents' Meeting
October	Nürnberg (D): Europe Beyond Reykjavik
	Hamburg (D): Completing the Internal Market
November	Louvain-la-Neuve (B): European Currency Unit
	Sevilla (E): Agora
	München (D): European Space Congress
December	Paris (F): Primer Congress Europe-Afrique

Air transport in Europe

Deregulation and security were the focus of the colloquium "Air Transport in Europe" by EGEE-London, which took place from 3rd to 8th March 1987. "This topic provides us with a good example of European cooperation, in both an economic and political sense," announced Tim Rogmans, president of EGEE-London. During the autumn of 1986, European transport ministers had discussed the obstacles to liberalisation of European air fares in a series of meetings. The issues raised concerned consumers and governments, as well as both state-owned and private airlines. Sadly, Tim was proved right with the following statement: "With terrorism becoming a major problem for all airlines, co-operation in combating it is necessary".

Most of the conference was hosted by the London School of Economics, and it welcomed around 50 people. Representatives of KLM and British Airways spoke on deregulation and privatisation issues, along with academics and politicians. One of the highlights was the evaluation of "consumer interests and deregulation" by Mr Lipman, Executive Director of the International Foundation of Airline Passenger Associations. In the context of this event, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher accepted the patronage of EGEE. **OG**

Vittorio dell'Áquila



Flattened against the wall by a ceaseless waterfall of eloquent sentences and overwhelmed by a record number of different ideas per minute - that is how an interview with Vittorio Dell'Áquila feels. Vittorio, honorary member of AEGEE-Europe and Summer University coordinator for several years, has no trouble at all in expressing his ideas in a friendly, genial manner, and he puts them forward in the language he considers most adequate for the situation described. "I am a linguist, and this is not only my profession, but also my hobby and my passion," he explains.

This becomes obvious when he discourses on Swiss linguistic flexibility in a mixture of French, German and Italian. Asked how many languages he speaks, he answers in an elusive way. For somebody who can teach at university level in eight different languages, it is easy to follow many more, but much harder to define the exact number. Vittorio states his credo: "If you know English, Italian and Swedish, you can automatically understand Norwegian, Friesian, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese and so on. Speaking only one language, be it French, English or whatever, diminishes anyone's possibilities."

His liking for languages didn't come only when he joined AEGEE-Milano in 1988, but dates back to his childhood. Although he wasn't raised bilingually, he considers French his second language as it was spoken at his mother's place. "My grandfather used to live in Beijing, consequently English and Italian were spoken at his home". At school, Vittorio first learned German and English, then ancient Greek and Latin. At university he moved on to Swedish, then picked up some Finnish when he lived in Finland later on.

One could expect a linguist to seek out a European association like ours for the sake of languages, to explore regional dialects and encounter native speakers. This applies to Vittorio, but only in part. Of course AEGEE supported his interests a lot, but before joining, he had already made ten InterRail tours in eight years. Some details of Vittorio's time in AEGEE, from 1988 to 1995, include his Comité Directeur position as vice-president of AEGEE-Europe and membership of the Juridical Commission. Later in this period, he was known for years as the one-man Summer University Coordination Team. He mentions, in a humble tone: "It was my idea to have a multilingual Summer University booklet, and I see that this concept was kept until today".

Vittorio watched many people he met through AEGEE become diplomats or EU consultants. "Not me; maybe if I had studied Economics, but as a linguist I had a different focus". He attends many international conferences and meets with people from many associations. They attempt, for instance, to create an atlas of European languages and in the process, to practice linguistics in a European, multi-cultural space. So Vittorio is still active within a European structure. He adds with a giggle: "But imagine that the average age in the meetings I attend nowadays is around 70! I am one of the youngest."

What he especially likes is that at the same time as working at a European scale, he has the chance to work locally. For example, his project for the municipality of North Lombardy, for which he is examining the dialects of that region according to the idea of a "cultural Europe", in which languages mix and have always mixed.

Today, Vittorio still lives in Milan with his partner Silvia, also a former AEGEE-member, and his two little daughters. Silvia is a psychologist working in market-

ing which is fairly different from what Vittorio does. But still the two of them have a common project: psycho-linguistics. Their daughters are already bilingual as they attended a Swedish-speaking school while living in Finland. "It is easy for me to take care of my children as I mostly work and do my research at home. From time to time I teach at colleges in Milan or the Dolomites and travel to conferences."

The birth of his first daughter marked the start of his slow retirement from our association. Leaving AEGEE was not planned – it just happened. Vittorio recalls a time when AEGEE had been his whole life, when he had been totally addicted. "I did have friends from outside AEGEE," he remarks. "But they all became members. It was absolutely normal at my time that AEGEE took over reality. You couldn't study and at the same time be active in AEGEE-Europe, that is: the Comité Directeur."

Reminiscent of the Agora in Bonn when he was elected into the CD, the first thing that springs to his mind is the political game between the two competing candidature lists. His name was on the Quo-vadis-list. "We were a progressive, liberal list, in favour of expanding the network towards Central and Eastern Europe. I remember Michael Merker's historical speech. He said that even Vladivostok or any other city in the world could be part of AEGEE, if only we thought they were European." People seemed to have liked it, as the list members were elected.

No doubt, Vittorio still feels close to AEGEE with all his heart. One of the first topics he mentions is the proposal that AEGEE should organise a five to seven day long Summer School about linguistic law, linguistic planning and multilingualism. "If an AEGEE local would volunteer to be responsible for the logistics and the participants, I could find lecturers for minority languages in Europe," he suggests. Two or three permanent lecturers, one of them Vittorio himself, would provide the courses - naturally in different languages! "Picture this: A lecture entitled 'French – a way to kill languages'," says Vittorio with a small laugh and contagious fervour. "Anyway, I learn from my students each day, so such an event will also be very beneficial for the teachers. AEGEE will hopefully implement this idea."

Tine Bader

AUTHOR

Tine Bader, born in 1981, has been a member of AEGEE-Passau since April 2001. She was president of her antenna, as well as speaker of the Network Commission. In autumn 2003, she became board member of the AEGEE-Academy. Tine, a student of linguistic, economic and cultural sciences, is organising the next European School 2, which will take place in autumn 2005 in Ankara.



Summer Universities – a story of success

This summer your holidays will be different: there will be no more boring days on the beach, hardly moving and always complaining. You will go where the local people go, you will try original food, experience a different culture to the max - and you will have active and open-minded young people as company. That's what you can expect when you apply for a Summer University (SU).

An unforgettable two-week summer experience spent with a group of young people from different academic backgrounds from all over Europe for as little as 120 Euro – this



is the essence of Summer Universities. And the organisers try to fulfil all your wishes, after spending months on preparations, and show you their country as hardly any visitor gets the chance of experiencing it. In short, they will turn you from a tourist into a friend.

Summer Universities are the most successful AEGEE project ever. History was made in 1988, when 11 summer language courses were organised in ten different cities in Europe – Amsterdam, Barcelona, Heidelberg, Kiel, Madrid, Milan, Orleans, Paris, Seville and Toulouse. 290 lucky peo-

ple participated. Daisy Kopmels, the CD member in charge of supervising the project, even visited all of them personally. Still, the idea of the project was quite disputed at that time. Some AEGEE-Europe critics thought that this was deviating AEGEE away from the very serious conference-focused approach the association had until then.

And they were right somehow: the Summer University – AEGEE's oldest still ongoing project – changed the character of the association. It opened it up, giving it mass appeal, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, where students after 1989 were eager to travel to the west, but could hardly afford it. Antennae like AEGEE-Budapest were famous for attracting more than 300 members per year with the help of Summer University campaigns, right after the SU booklet was presented at the spring PM. So the SUs created a huge new member base as a positive side effect.

The popularity of Summer University rising unstoppably, more and more courses were organised. In 1989 there were already 16 and in 1992 the amount of Summer Universities exceeded 50 for the first time. Nowadays, about 100 courses

take place every year. But the increase in the number of courses is not the only change that occurred. Anyone who applies for an SU today has to fill in an online application form, where he can choose three courses, one of which he will be pre-selected for. It has not always been like this. In the beginning, participants sent handwritten applications.

Some might argue however, that this system – despite being slow – had its advantages. Some application forms were accompanied by beautiful drawings, stories or even folders with complete photo reports. Delegates, who attended an Agora up until the one in Maastricht in April 1998, after which the system was computerised, remember how they handed over the huge pile of forms from their local applicants to the Summer University Coordination Team (SUCT), which then spent the whole Agora in a backroom. There they were making one pile for each Summer University, trying to distribute the applications as evenly and fairly as possible to the different events. This was necessary, because some places like Madrid or the classic Travelling Summer University of Scandinavia attracted more than 200 first-choice applicants usually for less than 30 places. In 1999, the programme Lama made the pre-selection more efficient – and nowadays applications can be sent straight from the web.

Not only the application methods changed however. Initially designed to teach AEGEE members foreign languages, the social programme came a clear second. In the afternoons of the first SUs, trips were planned for the participants and at the end of the event, there was one organised party. Full stop. The organisers wanted to make sure that only people who showed a serious interest in the course would come.

Through the years, SUs were taking a new direction. Today we can offer six kinds of Summer University: Language Course, Language Course Plus, Summer Course, Summer Course Plus, Travelling Summer University and Summer Event. Today, it would be unimaginable to have an SU without parties. In fact, the purpose of applying for most people is rather the fun that comes along with a SU than the course which is often neglected by the organisers.

Since 1998, language courses are in a minority. Today, some local branches offer the very same Summer University as five years ago – minus the language course they once included. While in 1999, out of about 20 Summer Universities in Germany only one of them was not a language course, nowadays the language courses are an exception. However, there are also very positive trends. The number of Travelling Summer Universities has increased a lot in the past years, offering the participants more cultural insights. Also the topics chosen are more imaginative than before, but often they barely touch their potential.

Attracting more than 5000 applicants per year, the Summer Universities are AEGEE's main tool for recruiting new members. The way they feel about the quality of the event usually decides whether they want to become active members themselves – and maybe even organise a Summer University of their own.

Tine Bader & Gunnar Erth

Some event highlights of 1988

January	Kiel (D): Multi-Linguality, a problem for Europe
February	Brussel (B): Euromanagers 1988
	Louvain-la-Neuve (B): Presidents' Meeting
March	Lyon (F): EEC and Eastern Europe
	London (UK): European Week 1988
	Strasbourg (F): Europe – Latin America
April	Milano (I): Agora
	Milano (I): EGEE IV – European Internal Market
May	Mainz (D): EuroDefence 1988
	Reims (F): Droit Communautaire
June	Berlin (D): Second European Cultural Week
	Hamburg & Lübeck (D): Agricultural Policy
July	Heidelberg (D): Political & Economic Implications
September	Athina (GR): South Europe Towards 1992
October	Saarbrücken (D): Presidents' Meeting
	Aachen (D): Initiatives for International Education
November	Orleans (F): Agora
	Utrecht (NL): The Aims of Higher Education
	Köln (D): Art Europe
	Toulouse (F): Third European Space Congress
	Freiburg (D): AIDS – Problems in Europe
December	Bonn (D): European Food Market

Summer Universities Types

Language Course: This is the perfect course for people who want to learn a foreign language. The two-week long course offer at least 16 hours of language tuition.

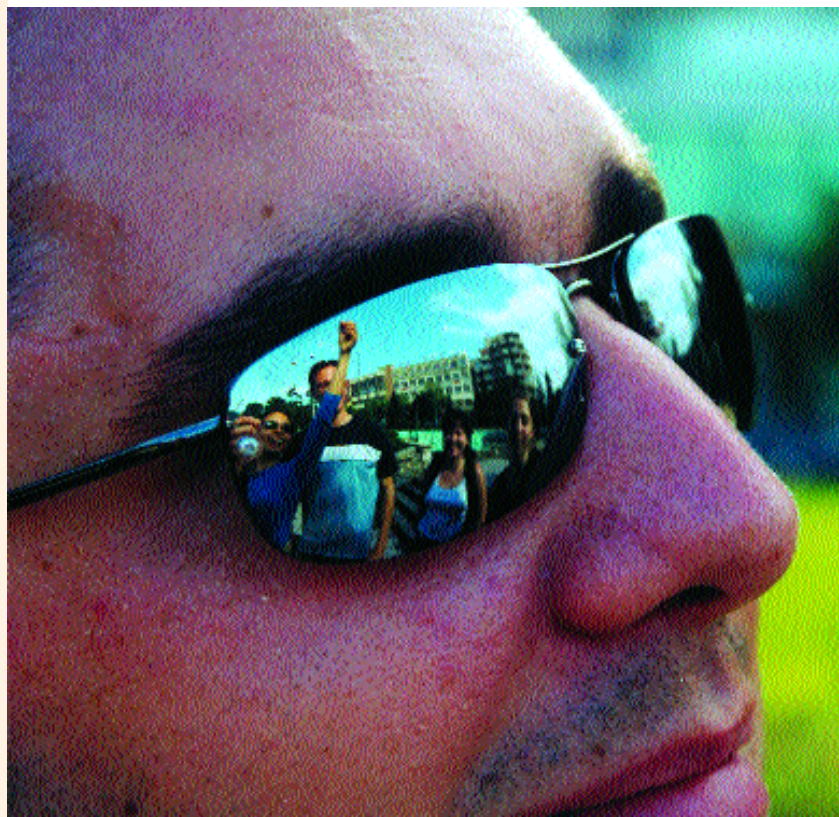
Language Course Plus: This course follows the same format as the language course, except that it can last 2-4 weeks and participants receive at least 20 hours of intensive language tuition by professional teachers.

Summer Course: This type of Summer University can have a cultural focus or any other topic of interest for participants. It lasts between two and four weeks, and the organisers provide at least 10 hours of tuition.

Summer Course Plus: These intensive courses about specific topics have a duration of two to four weeks, and participants receive at least 20 hours of tuition by professional lecturers.

Travelling Summer University: Becoming more and more trendy, Travelling SUs are organised to show off as much as possible of a region or a country. At least two AEGEE locals are involved in the organisation, and the group stays in at least four different places.

Summer Event: These are Summer Universities "light". They last only one to two weeks and their programme is less strict. Normally they are organised by new antennae or contact antennae who don't have the resources yet to organise a full SU.



Maria Alvarez



15 years ago, at a time when e-mail and Internet were things that only a few high-tech freaks knew about, the magazine NewsBulletin was AEGEE's main information tool. Published monthly by a team of editors headed by Maria Alvarez from AEGEE-Oviedo, it provided the network with gossip, information and reports. "In 1989, I was a studying German at the local Official School of Languages, when somebody there told me he was going to spend some days in Germany with AEGEE. I attended the Summer Universities of AEGEE-München and of AEGEE-Aachen, the latter being on computer science," she recalls her first steps in AEGEE. "In autumn 1989, AEGEE-Oviedo took over production of the monthly NewsBulletin after AEGEE-Amsterdam. At first only 300 copies, quickly increased to 1500 copies, were distributed to 250 addresses all over Europe". Today, Maria, a member of the CD between 1990 and 1992, works as a banker in Oviedo.

Describe yourself at the age of 20, as you know that AEGEE is turning 20 years old.

I was not a very good student, studying at the last minute just to pass my exams. I preferred to do some other things, like working and helping organisations, but in my town there were not so many things to do. Then I discovered AEGEE, standing for the idea of Europe, or even the wider idea of Einstein's "one world": students building bridges across Europe. Later, I learned a new motto from Rainer Emschermann: "Pluralism as a goal and democracy as a way". In 1992, within six months I passed the exams corresponding to two years of classes of Economics. Unlike most of the CD members of the time, my European experience did not influence my choice of career at all. I began working for a bank and bought my first flat.

How would you describe yourself now?

I'm still working for the same bank in Spain, an institution with 125 years of history and 1500 employees. Until some months ago, I was the head of the foreign section, now I am director of the department of projects. I have a daughter of almost two years and live with my family in a house outside Oviedo. Life is not so easy, and I struggle to see my daughter awake, at least for some minutes each day, always arriving home too late. Still, I keep in touch with some AEGEE members, especially with Silvia Negrotti of AEGEE-Milano, whom I still consider my soul-sister.

AEGEE-Oviedo is said to be the biggest antenna ever, with 2000 members. How was this possible?

AEGEE-Oviedo was founded by a group of people with a large experience in associations; some of them still heading big associations in Spain today. They were very professional, quickly arranging a telephone and fax, a meeting room and computers. We acted as mentors for the Erasmus students, organised exchanges with other antennae and common visits to congresses. We formed our own sports group, as well as some discussion groups, and weekly party nights with the Erasmus students. Mostly through the parties, and with the Summer Universities as our European offer, the antenna managed to enrol almost 2000 members under the Presidency of Enrique Riesgo, called Kike. Unfortunately, some three presidencies later, AEGEE-Oviedo almost disappeared - to reappear with renewed strength in 2000.

You became famous for publishing the NewsBulletin for AEGEE-Europe. How did you make it?

In AEGEE-Oviedo, we published 27 editions of the NewsBulletin. Times were so different then: no mobiles, no digital cameras, no Internet, no e-mail, bad software. It sounds as if we are talking about prehistory. We had a post box where we received all the letters and photos, and tried our best to rewrite texts received by post or fax. The result, our

Newsbulletin, would look like a school newsletter today, but fifteen years ago it really looked great. The antennae could receive information only by the various newsletters, which were really expensive and slow. In 1990, we moved to laser printers and opened our first EARN account, a predecessor of e-mail, but we did not get many messages, as only a few antennae had an account themselves.

How did you finance the NewsBulletin?

AEGEE-Oviedo was lucky to have the support of our university, which paid for the printing and mailing of copies to the antennae and the "NewsBulletin fan club". For almost half of the issues, we had Maria Jesus Andres drawing for us. Everyone in AEGEE-Oviedo was engaged in making the NewsBulletin, and everyone would lend a hand with packing, labelling, boxing and transporting. It was real team work. We always loved receiving antennae changes and photos with the boards, but what I remember most is our own articles, the letters of the editors or opinions. It was also very nice when somebody sent an open letter to all the antennae. There was no censorship from the NB team or from the CD.

You were Vice-President of the Quo Vadis CD. How did you experience this big turning point in AEGEE?

At the Agora in Paris, in spring 1990, most of the people noticed a kind of disappointment and controversy. Almost nobody wanted to join the CD and eventually we elected a list with only 15 members. For some reason, there was a misunderstanding between some antennae and the CD concerning the aims of the association and doubts were raised about the structure. For the following agora, presidential candidate Georg von der Gablentz managed to recruit a list of people under the name "Quo Vadis", known at the antennae level for their work, but without much experience at European level. Rainer Emschermann contacted me, and with the support of AEGEE-Oviedo, I joined them. At the Agora Bonn in November 1990, for the first time the delegates had two candidate lists to choose from, and this was good, as it is for any organisation. Though it could be seen as a sign of division, it was in fact democracy; it enriched AEGEE's global discussions. If I could go back in time, I would join the CD again.

Which was the best year for you in AEGEE?

1991 was the year I worked hardest for AEGEE. I was a CD member and at the same time still printing the NB. Attending CD meetings and congresses took most of my time that year. Fortunately, the University of Oviedo also supported us with travel expenses, but I remember eternal train rides. Nevertheless, wandering around Europe and explaining our work was the most enriching experience AEGEE gave me. It opened up my universe and made me feel a real European.

Embracing controversy

In 1989, history became a rollercoaster. That November, the Berlin Wall came down, pulling the Iron Curtain with it. The opportunity of a lifetime for our organisation was suddenly in our hands. The Eastern extension of the network was a great dream for many active students, who believed in democracy and civil society – let alone the chance of getting to know the once-forbidden unknown. Yet the change was not so easy to make. At that time AEGEE was still an organisation for students from the European Community (EC). While the need to open up towards the east seemed imminent to many people, there were still different opinions on whether or not to act. Our founding president Franck Biancheri greatly valued AEGEE's lobbying work for European students' causes at the EC level. He and many others felt this could only be maintained with a strong core group of antennae, situated as close as possible to Brussels. There was an imminent fear that AEGEE would lose its influence by loosening the ties.

Two years earlier several CD members were even expelled for allegedly offering support to the creation of AEGEE antennae in Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. In fact, there had only been discussions about opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. However, even this contravened the resolution of the autumn 1987 Agora in Seville, which stated that the extension of AEGEE outside the EC was permissible only in democratic countries which had a "feeling of belonging to Europe".

Internally not everything was at ease, either. AEGEE had experienced massive growth. The number of antennae had risen from 15 in 1987 to 75 in 1989, so personal contact became much harder to organise. Many AEGEE branches wanted better communication within the network and with the Comité Directeur. At this time the CD had 20 full members and 10 suppléants – but few of those were actually working. The existing candidate list system for CD elections implied, de facto, the centralised choice of future CD members by the current ones. This system could not respond to the new demands of the association's changing face. The inflexibility of AEGEE's internal procedures could lead to the alienation of selected CD candidates from those they were supposed to represent. The turning point in AEGEE history came at the general assembly held in Italy in November 1989. Literally as the Berlin Wall crumbled, the Agora in Salerno decided upon several serious matters con-

cerning our internal structure as well as the future aims of the organisation.

The leadership at that time was still refusing to give way to major changes, but they faced strong opposition. As a result the number of CD members was reduced by half to 16, including suppléants. The working structure was still inadequate though, since there was no central office or house for the CD, forcing them to live at home and do their AEGEE work by telephone. This general assembly was becoming aware, however, that AEGEE now had the chance of being the first students' association to unite people across our entire continent.

After a heated discussion, it was decided to open up the network to interested students in EFTA countries and in Central and Eastern Europe. From Salerno onwards, the political framework of AEGEE would change to reflect the reality of a changing Europe, abandoning the original tightly focused perspective. The East-West Working Group started work at this point, establishing Eastern Contact Groups all over Eastern Europe to ensure a constant exchange of ideas and cooperation.

In this atmosphere of rapid change, AEGEE was ready for the first and only successful opposition CD list – "Quo Vadis". Led by Georg von der Gablentz, Quo Vadis was elected at the November 1990 Agora in Bonn. Its ideas were reflected in the motto "Students are building bridges across Europe". Indeed, the CD itself was heading for reforms, and Georg made effective use of his Presidency to introduce some of them. At the next Agora in Amsterdam, in April 1991, the electoral system was changed – one of the goals of the Quo Vadis list. Since that time, CD members have always been elected as individuals, personally responsible for their moral reports.

Since the historic decision at the Salerno Agora, AEGEE has been adapting to another definition of Europe beyond the EC. While the political ambitions of the organisation as such have faded, extensive growth in the East has changed the character of the network and given all members a new understanding of Europe. This growth in the East still continues – and our most creative ideas are now born in these locals where the idea of a unified Europe remains strong and fresh.

Bernd Knüfer

AUTHOR

Bernd Knüfer, born in May 1977, joined AEGEE-Erlangen-Nürnberg in 1998, eventually becoming president. This Bavarian student of Political Science and Political Sociology has also been active on European level – Bernd served four years on the board of the International Politics Working Group, and has been a Network Commissioner and tutor at several training events, not to mention chairing countless workshops at more than ten Agoras.



IDE in the 1989 EP elections

In 1989, the platform “Initiative for a European Democracy” (IDE), founded by members of AEGEE, took part in the European Parliament (EP) elections with lists in France, The Netherlands and Spain, obtaining around 100.000 votes. The birth of IDE amid the transition from AEGEE’s founding generation to the next stirred quite a malaise. The existence of IDE required that AEGEE, having lost the monopoly of a certain model regarding the building of European integration, fine-tune its position as a non-partisan association; on the other hand, AEGEE’s founding president and many of its most visible members were at the heart of IDE. IDE intended to counter the ambient Eurosclerosis. IDE wanted to breathe renewed energy into the EP to claim more competences and play a decisive role. IDE sought to promote through the EP some concrete policies regarding education, the learning of a second language, and the development of cross-continental communication infrastructures that would foster European citizenship by helping to bring together, in all spheres of education, work or leisure, nationals from the member states. IDE also spoke for the need for the EC to look eastwards.

Some event highlights of 1989	
January	London (UK): Human Rights
February	Amsterdam (NL): Envi’rhine’ment
March	Lyon (F): Presidents’ Meeting
	Louvain-la-Neuve (B): European Week
	Leiden (NL): Terrorism in Europe
April	Berlin (D): East-West Relations in Europe
	Madrid (E): EGEE V - Women in Europe
	Salamanca (E): Agora
	Rotterdam (NL): European Finance
May	Nîmes (F): Road Security
	München (D): EEC Development after 1992
	Saarbrücken (D): Tele-Communicating
June	Heidelberg (D): Identité Européenne
July	Hamburg (D): EEC-EFTA: Partners in Europe
	Karlsruhe (D): New Sports in Europe
September	Amsterdam (NL): Presidents’ Meeting
October	Delft (NL): Transport in Europe
	Aachen (D): Working in Europe
	Groningen (NL): Southward Bound Future?
	Firenze (I): Moot Court
November	Salerno (I): Agora
December	Oviedo (E): Healthy Europe
	Sevilla (E): Europe of the Regions

IDE inspired incredible teamwork. Some even saw the election as the beginning of a EuroMP career. We had a vision but very little money, hardly any experience and the national electoral laws against us. Although we obtained the backing of some major donors and the assistance of some very valuable profes-



Photo: Portalier

sionals, we received the majority of our funds and support from family and friends. None of the Member States’ legislation allowed non-national candidates in a list; in Spain, in order to run in the election a list had to be backed by 150.000 signatures, or 50 from elected representatives.

It seems a miracle we made it to the elections. Yet we did, with not just one, but three lists. We organised press conferences, pasted posters, distributed stickers and benefited from free advertising on radio and TV. We broadcast different spots but shared a unique slogan and the same posters and stickers. Some felt disappointed with the results. I had never expected to secure more votes than those of family and friends so I found the results satisfactory. Nonetheless, I am disappointed when I do not find IDE cited in reference books about the building of European integration. IDE was the first real European electoral initiative. We were trailblasers. **Carmela Barcia**

AUTHOR

Carmela Barcia Bustelo (37) studied in Madrid and at the Institut de Science Politiques in Paris. She joined the Spanish Diplomatic Service in 1996 and is currently posted as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Spanish Embassy in Dakar, Senegal. Carmela joined AEGEE in 1986 and served as Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe from 1987 to 1988. In 1989 she was IDE campaign coordinator in Spain.



Michael Merker



Energy. Will power. These are the things that spring to mind, when you meet Michael Merker for the first time. "He has always been someone who was ready to explore new worlds," says his proud mother. For AEGEE, he became the symbol of the integration of East and West – no one else was as active as Michael in spreading the AEGEE spirit across Central and Eastern Europe. Michael, born in 1967, studied in Leipzig and is now working for the European Commission in Brussels. He remembers clearly how he discovered AEGEE. "Directly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, members of the East West Working Group approached me and other students. They invited me for a meeting," which took place in Freiburg in January 1990.

“One month later we founded AEGEE-Leipzig with assistance from AEGEE-Bonn,” remembers Michael. Full of energy, the new AEGEE branch organised its first events. “We got visitors from everywhere. Everyone wanted to see the city where the Monday Demonstrations took place, which initiated the end of the GDR regime”. Michael managed the transition into a new Europe with surprising ease, compared to many of his fellow countrymen. A Europe without restrictions, or artificial borders, offered huge new opportunities. However, many people, forced to take on the values and rules of Western Germany overnight, still find the transition difficult, even 16 years after the GDR’s collapse. “This period was causing an exciting rush of blood in me. My generation had to find a new home,” says Michael. “We did not want to focus on a new nation or a new system, we wanted active exchange with students from all over Europe – be it from Prague, Cracow, Zürich, Milan or Athens. Europe was our new home”.

This was in great contrast to the poor deal the GDR offered to students active in extracurricular activities. In socialist times the government controlled all student activities through its youth organisation – there was no chance to speak freely or to take any initiative. His mother remembers the excitement of Michael in that period. “He felt like being a bird who could finally fly,” she says. “Every time he came back from his AEGEE trips he told many stories about them. But he immediately moved on, in order to discover something new.”

However, these were not only exciting times for Michael. The whole AEGEE network faced the quest for a fresh perspective, a search for a new identity. AEGEE had been a Western European association until 1990. With the reopening of the East, the organization was forced to find a new structure which would suit its future needs. “The Berlin wall was not only present in the minds of people in the East of Europe, but also in the West,” says Michael. “In its first years in the 80’s, AEGEE only addressed student matters within the EC. At the time the Wall fell, this approach was in peril already, because people knew that Europe was bigger than the EC. The collapse of the communist countries opened the door once and for all”.

The ongoing debate on the future of AEGEE escalated at the two Agoras of 1990, at Paris in May and Bonn in November. It was finally resolved by the election of the new CD under president Georg von der Gablentz. “I was elected into this new European board as first representative from the East,” remembers Michael proudly. His task: building up the AEGEE network in this part of Europe. “I was full of energy and enthusiasm. Within a short time I assisted the establishment of AEGEE in Budapest, Prague, Krakow, Poznan and other places”.

Michael became a “flying ambassador”, as we described the members who were actively involved in enlarging the network. He still gets excited when he thinks of those days, the time when he was creating something new, building people’s enthusiasm to participate in a wider European network. No one had a bigger influence on building up AEGEE in the East than Michael – despite the fact that there were no cheap airlines, the Internet was not widespread and no discount private phone operators existed. Moreover, people in the East responded best to personal contacts, which created another obstacle. It’s said that in one year Michael used 12 Interrail tickets in a row. “I made many friends for life in that time”.

Even today, living today in Brussels with his family, Michael benefits from his AEGEE experiences. “In my daily work for the European Commission this understanding of different parts of Europe and its people is clearly an advantage. AEGEE enabled me to work in a team with people from different countries and various backgrounds. After having been part of the AEGEE enlargement, I found myself working for the EU enlargement and that brought me to Prague where I was very lucky to meet my wife, and now we have a daughter.” Michael’s working environment is surely much more structured and on a different level than his time with AEGEE. However, he still appreciates the art of achieving much with limited resources that AEGEE is practicing.

Still, there is much to do, both for the EU and for AEGEE, Michael stresses. “Although Europe might look more united and secure today, just below the surface there are many tensions”. Today, other questions are probably more important than those of 16 years ago. “People are asking, what they should do in the present Europe where everything seems so well established. Which values does Europe represent today and possibly tomorrow? What should political representation or education policy look like?”, sums up Michael. “AEGEE has an important role in all of this”. The main task is not so much to create professional structures or engage in lobby work, but to keep focused on actively creating Europe. “Europe is a big puzzle everyone can explore, and contribute to with a small piece. It really needs everyone.”

Dorian Selz

AUTHOR

Dorian Selz, born in 1971, caught the AEGEE virus when he travelled to the Presidents’ Meeting in Krakow in 1992. The student in economics soon became president of AEGEE-Geneve, and later joined the CD. In 1994, he was president of AEGEE-Europe. After the publishing of the 10th Anniversary Book in 1995, on which he worked with Michael Merker, Dorian decided to move on from AEGEE.



Facts and myths from the north

Northern Europe is more than just polar bears or legends about Santa. It is home to a small and very special region of our network. The story of AEGEE in the North began in 1990, after the network was opened to EFTA countries in 1989. Finland became the first country to host an antenna. "Turku with its three universities was a perfect place for this," recalls Paula Kinnunen, who was one of the 15 founding members of AEGEE-Turku/Abo in February 1990. "The name created some confusion, there were many members in Central Europe who in vain tried to locate Abo on their maps. The explanation: Abo is the Swedish name of Turku".

In April 2001, Paula Kinnunen joined the CD in order to take care of the development of AEGEE in the Nordic countries. However, progress was slow, because the travel distance was large. "In addition, the AEGEE logo was connected with the European Community at a time when there was a lot of suspicion towards European integration all over Scandinavia", Paula adds. The following year meant a breakthrough, when AEGEE-Turku hosted a Presidents' Meeting. In 1994 a tradition was established which still proves extremely popular today: the first Traveling Summer University in Scandinavia took place, showing off culture in Aalborg, Copenhagen, Lund and Turku over three weeks.

Yet, today less than five percent of all AEGEE members are living in the "Northern Region", which includes Scandinavia and the Baltic countries, a part of Russia and Northern Germany. The number of members has been steadily decreasing – from 575 in 1996 down to 426 in 2004. At present, there are 11 branches in the region. AEGEE-Helsinki organised the spring Planning Meeting in 2002 as the last statutory event held in the North so far. Unfortunately, through the last years there haven't been more than five big thematic events, and there is still hardly any active participation in AEGEE-Europe or its events.

There are many myths and explanations for AEGEE being weak in the North, such as "Northern people are too individual". This is clearly wrong, as Finnish people are seen to be the most organised people in the world. In my university there are about 50 clubs for 2000 active students. However, student unions in Scandinavian countries play a big role in student life. AEGEE cannot compete with their services and budgets. "European issues are not interesting for Nordic students" is another myth. "This is nonsense," says Lars Nautrup from Uppsala. He thinks that the common Scandinavian wrongfully considers Europe to be

about tariffs and economics, and says that AEGEE has to replace this attitude with the spirit of Europe. AEGEE in the North seems to be too political for fun-seekers, but not political enough for those who want to influence European affairs. Scandinavian students are extreme in their political activities; either there is no interest or they are very active, but then AEGEE is not influential enough for them.

"Northern countries are in the periphery of Europe" is another argument. In fact, Nordic students do not have that much money to do weekend trips around Europe. However, nowadays it is easier to get new friends abroad, for example through organisations or just travelling by yourself – also due to the new low-cost airlines.

As a conclusion, I think the way that we promote AEGEE could be more visionary. Also more co-operation with organisations and student unions could be a solution - we can get synergy by using the resources, knowledge and networks of all organisations.

Susanna Ritala

AUTHOR

Susanna Ritala, born in July 1976, joined AEGEE in 1998. From 1999 until January 2005 she was board member of AEGEE-Helsinki, for two periods being president. In 2002/3 Susanna was Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe. Nowadays she is coordinator of the AEGEE Address Book. She is currently finishing her studies in International Business.



Russian church in Helsinki.

Seven years on the front page

Some facts: the second contact established in the East after the fall of the Iron Curtain; seven consecutive generations of CD members from 1997 until 2004, including two Presidents of AEGEE-Europe; several members in the chair team, Network Commission, Juridical and Members Commissions as well as 50 local and international events organised in 15 years. These are just the most visible achievements of AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca.

I cannot imagine the last decade of AEGEE without the strong influence of one particular antenna - and it happens to be my own. The story began with Marco Kalbusch, founder of AEGEE-Passau and AEGEE-Leuven. He came to Romania shortly after the 1989 revolution, to help with the distribution of the first humanitarian transports. Marco convinced a few students from Cluj-Napoca to join AEGEE.

Officially, our antenna started its activities on May 9th, 1990. Cluj-Napoca was not the biggest university city in Romania, but its rich history and its situation in the heart of Transylvania makes it an attractive place to found an antenna. Unfortunately, during the first six years some big mistakes kept us from becoming a strong and trustworthy local. AEGEE Cluj-Napoca was a close club of friends, who used AEGEE to obtain personal benefits. I remember trying to join AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca back in 1995, but being kicked out of an office

Some event highlights of 1990

January	Enschede (NL): European IT Market
	All over Europe: Environmental Week in 17 cities
	Bonn (D): Fortress Europe?
February	Amsterdam (NL): Japan – A Magic World
March	München (D): Presidents' Meeting
	Leiden (NL): Culture Clash in Economic Cooperation
April	Madrid (E): Is Europe Forgetting Latin America?
	Rotterdam (NL): Mergers and Acquisitions
May	Paris (F): Agora & EGEE VI – Europe is Our Time
	Berlin (D): A European Future for German Question
	Saarbrücken (D): Education, Invention & Innovation
September	Karlsruhe (D): Presidents' Meeting
October	Utrecht (NL): Eurolawyers & Euroculture
	Nijmegen (NL): European Media Policy
	Mainz (D): The European Wine Market
November	München & Salzburg (D/A): East-West Relations
	Bonn (D): Agora
December	Milano (I): TEAM 90 – European Academic Manager
	Salamanca (E): University in the 21st Century Europe

full of second hand stereo and TV sets. Similar situations occurred in other locals in the region.

In 1996, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca finally became an open student organisation that I could join. The irony is that I joined AEGEE intending to travel abroad and buy a car. During these hard times, people like Markus Schönherr supported us and other antennae in the region, beyond my power of understanding. That was a real cultural shock for all of us.

It was in 1997, at the Agora in Enschede, that Dan Luca became the first member of AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca to be elected to the CD. We were finally breaking the first psychological barrier. Soon after, the CD and the Network Commission were approving our efforts to build a solid AEGEE network in the region. In 1998, we organised the first AEGEE tour, driving all over Romania for two weeks, assisting in the establishment of 17 new antennae. In 1999, Dan Luca left the CD and Oana Mailatescu took over. One year later, at the Agora in Utrecht, she was elected President of AEGEE-Europe, and I became Network Director - still without a car. Together, we helped organise the first Agora on Romanian soil. It was the newly formed AEGEE-Constanta that took the challenge. Right before the Agora, in spring 2001, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca organised an amazing conference, the final part of the Borderless Europe Project. 120 participants from all over Europe, a great programme and an amazing organising team led by Diana Filip, president of AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca at that time.

The Agora in Constanta was my farewell event; at least that was what I thought. By this time, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca was among the ten largest antennae in the network, with 250 members. In spring 2004, Diana Filip became President of AEGEE-Europe. It was the sixth generation of CD members we had given AEGEE-Europe and the 2nd President. Next to us, only AEGEE-Enschede managed to provide two presidents.

No other local in the history of AEGEE ever succeeded in having such continuity at both the local and the European level. Between 2003 and 2004, Horea Crisan became the 7th and so far last CD member coming from Cluj-Napoca. Also for me, it was time to leave, after serving one day as chairman of the Agora, which was leading me back to Constanta. And by the way, I have a car now.

Calin Haiduc

AUTHOR

Calin Haiduc, born in 1976, did countless AEGEE tasks. He was board member and president of AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca, Network Commissioner and Network Director in the European board and concluded his AEGEE career as being Chairman of the Agora. In 2004 he terminated his active membership. The graduate in economics is living and working with his wife in Brussels.





Gisella Gori

The mother of the Education Working Group, Gisella Gori, turned it into the most active working group of the early 90's. Gisella was certainly one of the most successful AEGEE members of the early 90's. The now 35-year old Italian also founded AEGEE-Firenze and was responsible for education projects in the CD. All this had a big impact on her life. Today Gisella is working as a lawyer at the Secretariat of the Social Charter in DG II Human Rights of the Council of Europe. Gunnar Erth spoke with her.

How did you join AEGEE?

During my studies I met new friends from Florence; Valeria, Carlotta and Lucia. One of them had got to know about AEGEE at the students' fair in Milan. We four girls decided then to found AEGEE-Firenze. As you can see, our antenna has a long tradition of a matriarchy. We did not really understand what it was all about, but since we were all Political Science students and Europe-enthusiastic, we decided to go for the big adventure. We then went to an AEGEE-Bologna meeting, where Silvia Negrotti from AEGEE-Milano explained us the ABC of how to set up an antenna. Our first event was, clearly, a Summer University.

Describe yourself at the time you founded AEGEE-Firenze and now.

At that time I was 20: I was studying always a lot, and having fun in trying to do things completely new such as starting an association, looking for a headquarters, trying to understand what fund-raising for a Summer University meant. Now I am 35. I suppose I am a typical female representative of my generation in the sense that my priority is the balance between private and professional life. I have one son, Iacopo, who is three years old and is already bilingual Italian and French. I work an 80 percent week at the Council of Europe. This solution is perfect for me. I have time to spend with my son without losing the pleasure of working for European issues.

You were Erasmus responsible in AEGEE-Firenze. Were you Erasmus student yourself?

Indeed I was an Erasmus student in 1991/2 at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. It was a highly interesting experience and a very formative one as regards the knowledge I gained of the French society - I had no idea then that I would end up living in France. At that time I became a member of the Erasmus WG and this was the beginning of my European adventure. Being Erasmus responsible in AEGEE-Firenze was a nice job since it consisted of helping the Erasmus students in finding accommodation, organising social events for them, giving them a chance to get more in touch with Italian students - which is not easy in Florence.

Why did you transform the Erasmus WG into the Education WG?

I was always attracted to working for AEGEE at European level and the field of education was my main interest. The goal behind the development of the Erasmus WG into the Education WG was increasing the relevance of AEGEE as a valuable partner for European institutions. It was no longer question of only helping with physical mobility of students. AEGEE should also have the possibility of expressing students' concerns and ideas as it regards the European dimension of education as a whole. This

also reflected the development which occurred at the time in the EU, with the move from Erasmus to the Socrates programme, of which Erasmus is just one component.

From November 1993 until November 1994 you were a CD member. How was your CD time?

I decided to join the CD during a dinner in Delft before the Agora. Why? I guess because it is in my nature to go for challenge. My CD time was the best year for me in AEGEE. We had been very successful in creating a team that worked well together and also had a lot of fun. Looking forward to a CD meeting was a very pleasant feeling. On the one hand, we were doing something important for European youth. On the other hand, we were able to do this with a group of people of different nationalities drawn together by a common ideal. For many years after the end of our CD time we used to meet, we set up a common mailing list to stay in touch, and still today I meet with some of my former CD colleagues.

What impact has AEGEE had on your personal life?

The most important steps in my professional and private life are all somehow connected to AEGEE. My experience as Education WG president gave me the idea to my Ph.D. thesis and the key for being successfully admitted to the European University Institute. It also gave me the chance to do internships at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and at the European Commission in Brussels. Thanks to the Ph.D. coupled with the professional experience I got during the internships I successfully passed the Council of Europe competition for Italians later on. And last but not least, in Strasbourg I met my future husband.

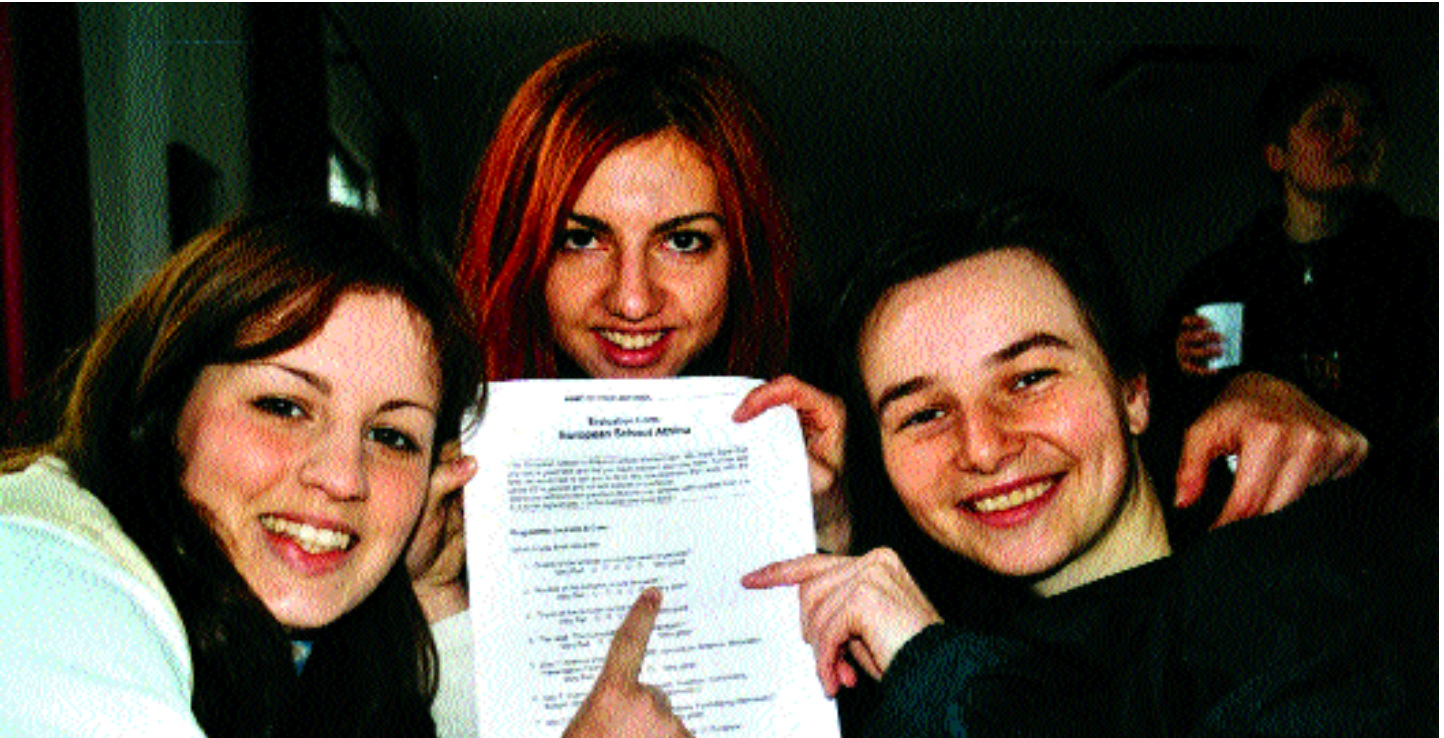
Do you still keep any contact with AEGEE?

I rather keep contacts with people than with AEGEE itself. I participated in just a few events since I quit the CD. I thought it was better to go far away to avoid being unable to break off a very particular period of my life. It was also time to go for new challenges. I still helped for certain activities, especially as regards the Education WG. I am also a member of Les Anciens.

Have your expectations of European integration from your first AEGEE years been fulfilled?

Many of them have been met since European integration made such progress in the past ten years. Still, what causes me pain is to see that the "people integration" lags far behind. It seems to me that society as a whole is still divided into an elite following European integration and a majority who do not care. And this notwithstanding all the efforts and the money the EU puts into making Europe meaningful to European citizens. This is rather discouraging. Let's hope the Constitution will allow some further steps in this direction.

Changing internal education in AEGEE



Since 1991 AEGEE has created a real tradition in human resources training. It started out with very successful European Schools in Madrid and Berlin. The European Schools (ES) at that time were organised to educate and scout for talent that could be active at the European level of AEGEE. They did not have a standardised structure, but combined knowledge for AEGEE beginners, such as PR for an event, with question sessions with the present CD members and discussions about the political role of AEGEE. Often they also included workshops, in which the participants developed original event types and projects. The quality of the European Schools differed very much from time to time. In 1995 I became the Internal Education responsible in the Comité Directeur. I felt that AEGEE's training approach should shift its focus from internally oriented training to a complete curriculum that would be focused on skills development.

After the first experiments at the European School in Malcesine in 1995, these thoughts were put further into practice with the training aspect of the "Find Your Way" project in the following year. In this project, training courses were specially tailored for the organisers of the five forums and of the final conference within the project. This resulted, for example, in a

very successful European School in Gliwice in July 1996. There something new was introduced: a week long simulation game, in which the students had to organise a mock congress. I came to the idea of having such a simulation game after I attended a negotiation game organised by the Clingendael Institute. I found that going through a simulation made me understand the issues much better than by just listening to some theory. The idea of a simulation that would take a complete week was completely new for a European School.

During the simulation game, the different teams had to fulfil certain assignments such as approaching companies for funding or writing press-releases. Other elements that were introduced were the case manager - working under very high pressure - and the use of specific tutors per team. The enthusiasm of the partic-

AUTHOR

Jeroen van Eik joined AEGEE-Maastricht in 1991. He started AEGEE-Grenoble, helped to set up the "Find Your Way" project, invented concepts for different internal education events and spent one year in the CD in 1994/5. Jeroen, who studied Management, International Economic Relations and International Politics, works as an business consultant for York International.



ipants during this ES made it an immediate hit. I am proud to say that this game, developed together with Edwin Janssen, was copied at many European Schools to come afterwards – and is still in use today. It gradually changed into a concept of an off-the-shelf product that could be easily used each time when a new training school was organised.

The most important development, after the standardisation of the European School and its redirection towards personal skills was in May 1999 the creation of the Academy, the Human Resources Working Group of AEGEE. The Academy aims to enable and support successful internal education in the long term. After the AEGEE-Academy came into being, the amount of courses organised within the network quadrupled, and its quality and diversity improved dramatically. The Academy is the one working group in which experienced former AEGEE members and current members are working together, face to face.

I am very proud to have been a member of the Academy right from the beginning. Sometimes I even test new teaching methods for my business – so AEGEE is a pioneer once more. I hope that an old idea which evolved in the Find Your Way project will be picked up again: organising schools for event organisers within larger projects to make them understand their subjects even better. This will contribute to better conferences which should keep AEGEE in its rightful place: as the number one forum in Europe for committed young people. **Jeroen van Eik**

First Agora in the East

The year 1991 was an exciting period for AEGEE in Central and Eastern Europe. Budapest hosted AEGEE's first statutory meeting in the region. I remember how more than 400 participants gathered in the University of Economics in the Hungarian capital in November 1991. "It seemed to be an impossible mission. We hardly knew what AEGEE was about and had no experience in organising an event of this magnitude," said Vazul Tóth, at that time president of AEGEE-Budapest and the main Agora organiser. In fact, the preparations only commenced two months before the Agora took place. However, due to the overwhelming enthusiasm of the members all problems were overcome.

"I was very proud to see this Agora happening, because I helped to found AEGEE-Budapest just one year earlier," says Krisztina Németh. Hungarian herself, Krisztina, born in 1968, studied business administration in Leipzig in the late 80's. In autumn 1989, AEGEE-Bonn went to Leipzig on a mission in order to establish contacts. Together with Michael Merker and some other 30 people who attended the presentation in a seminar room at the university, Krisztina founded AEGEE-Leipzig and became its president. "It was not difficult to find interested students. The existing Western network was very helpful – especially the antennae in Berlin, Bonn and Freiburg".

One of their first activities was a meeting of the East-West Working Group, to which they also invited students from Budapest who were already studying in Leipzig. "Relaxing at the campus on a warm, summer afternoon we developed the idea to make an AEGEE presentation in Budapest," recalls Krisztina. In late 1990, AEGEE-Budapest was established. "It was an adventurous time, because the founding of the antenna happened at the time when the famous taxi blockade took place, which paralysed the city. So it was quite difficult to approach the university". AEGEE-Budapest started off at the medical university SOTE and moved afterwards to the University of Economics, known as Közgáz.

"I am very proud of the early years and achievements of AEGEE-Budapest. For a very long time it was one of the biggest antennae in the network and the first generation around Vazul Tóth, Éva Borka, Zsuzsa Kígyós, László Czinege and Mercédesz Szekeres-Révy did a lot of great activities," concludes Krisztina Németh. **Gunnar Erth**

Some event highlights of 1991

February	Groningen (NL): Presidents' Meeting
	Groningen (NL): Corporate Communication
March	Utrecht (NL): Moot Court Finals
	Perugia (I): Non EC Immigration in EC Countries
April	Ferrara (I): Love Education – Birth Control
	Poznan (PL): AIDS in Europe
	Amsterdam&Leiden (NL): EGEE VII – Energy & Europe
	Amsterdam (NL): Agora
May	Münster (D): First Environmental Congress
	All over Europe: Environmental Week
	Bonn (D): How to do Culture in Three Days?
June	Heidelberg (D): Scandinavian Congress
	Passau (D): Europe – it's Music
July	Madrid (E): European School
September	Oviedo (E): Erasmus Academy
October	Bordeaux (F): Presidents' Meeting
	Koblenz (D): Rhine & Dine
	Salzburg&Debrecen (A/H): East-West Relations Academy
November	Saarbrücken (D): Men & Women – Never-ending Story
	Geneve & Fribourg (CH): Erasmus Congress
	Köln (D): Modern Literature in Europe
	Budapest (H): Agora
December	Milano (I): Job-fair Team 91
	Hamburg (D): Poland and the EC



Ulla Bisgaard

The way Ulla Bisgaard joined AEGEE is typical for this type of energetic powerful woman: at a European students' fair in Brussels, she bumped into an AEGEE stand with a map of Europe that did not include Denmark and the rest of Scandinavia - and ended up joining AEGEE-Bruxelles on that very same day. Born in the border region of Denmark with Germany in 1970, Ulla Bisgaard studied International Relations and Sociology in Copenhagen and Aalborg, Denmark and in Liège, Belgium. This former Vice-President of AEGEE-Europe in 1992 - one of the most prominent AEGEE members in Scandinavia ever - joined the UN in New York and in Tanzania, focusing on issues such as gender and development, women's rights and health. Today she lives with her husband Ulrik and her little daughter Clara in Copenhagen. Julia Hoffmann had the chance to talk to her.

What are your main achievements in AEGEE?

I was the founding member and President of AEGEE-Aalborg, which organised the first Summer University in Scandinavia. On the European level, I joined the Erasmus Working Group, the Fund-Raising Working Group as well as the Members' Commission. At the Agora in Delft in 1992, I was elected to the Comité Directeur (CD) and chosen as vice president and director of external relations with the EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

What does AEGEE mean to you?

AEGEE simultaneously gave me knowledge about political systems, societies and realities in Europe, and it enabled me to develop skills I resort to in my professional life today, such as intercultural communication, experience with political lobbying, fundraising, policy making and alliance building among different players. Past and present AEGEE members are very active in shaping European society. Another example from Scandinavia with a high-powered career is Christina Thorsson, who was president of AEGEE-Europe in 1994/5 and now works at the National Bank of Sweden. These people now have children of their own, whom they will raise to become global citizens with a high sensitivity about other cultures, human rights and democracy.

1992 was a crazy year for AEGEE. What happened in that time?

That year was marked by several turbulent events in AEGEE that all had to do with the fast enlargement of the organisation. Many new antennae were created in Central and Eastern Europe, and the organisation was challenged with merging Western with Eastern European cultures and integrating traditions from different systems. At the Agora in Kos in Greece we struggled with an internal conflict, where Greek students refused to participate as long as there would be Turkish guest students speaking there. Turmoil broke out in the Agora hall with many Greek students crying, and the Turkish guests had to be escorted out. A long discussion followed about the issue of Greek-Turkish relations, and was not solved until the first Turkish antenna came into existence. I'm impressed that today, there are great Turkish-Greek projects in AEGEE. This shows how much we contributed to bridge the conflicts.

What do you remember most of your CD time?

1992/3 was also a turbulent year because many experienced members left the CD and many new ones came on board. The EU was small compared to our horizons, which gave us some challenges when dealing with European Institutions. One of our successes in 1993 was that AEGEE was elected to the Board of the NGO Forum of the Council of Europe and the EU Commission took us seriously in our struggle to recognise our Eastern and Central European representatives. Those were achievements that I am very proud of.

Is AEGEE still necessary in today's Europe?

AEGEE is as important as ever. When I joined in 1991, it seemed so amazing that AEGEE was already active in Eastern and Central Europe and meeting students from that part of Europe was so exciting. Later AEGEE showed courage by supporting the student demonstrations in Belgrade. We also held

some important conferences about the conflict on the Balkan. Today, AEGEE is very active in Turkey, the Ukraine and Cyprus - AEGEE is always two steps ahead of the political realities in Europe - and in the world at large.

What plans do you have for the future?

I am not running the big international career anymore, because I have a small child now. I finished working with UNICEF when my daughter was born. I am now working in Copenhagen at the National Institute of the Blind. I was just recently offered a job with the Red Cross in Senegal to work on HIV and AIDS, but I have decided to say: no thank you. My family comes first. In my spare time, I am engaged in a mentor programme for foreign women in Denmark. I want to keep working on issues that matter to society. That sounds naive, and that is what I intend to stay. An amazing professor, Rudolf Rizman, once said to me that I should stay idealistic also into my older years - I will.

AUTHOR

Julia Hoffmann, born in 1983, joined AEGEE-Mainz/Wiesbaden in June 2004. Within a few months this student of Communication Studies and Political Science organised several trips for Erasmus students in Mainz, for example to the European Parliament. She is now PR Director and Secretary of her branch.





AEGEE in Turkey

TSU Via Egnatia.

The history of AEGEE in Turkey began in 1992 when AEGEE-Istanbul joined the network as the first local in my country. This happened on the beautiful Greek island of Kos, where AEGEE-Athina organised its first of three Agoras. However, this expansion of the borders of AEGEE did not pass without dispute. The representatives of the Greek antennae left the plenary as a protest against the decision.

Actually, with this step, AEGEE did not accept branches of the whole of Turkey into the network; Istanbul was only accepted since one part of the metropolis was supposed to be in the geographical Europe. In 1994, a group of students from Ankara applied to AEGEE-Europe to become a new contact group in Ankara. At the Agora in Amsterdam in April 1995 it was decided that Turkey is a part of Europe and that any new application from Turkey would be accepted to the network. With this step, AEGEE moved itself from a "geographical Europe" to a "Europe of values".

For AEGEE in Turkey and the network as a whole, this step had a lot of benefits, due to the great positive input from the antennae in my country. These contributions can be summarised in three areas: Turkish-Greek civic dialogue, Turkish admission to the EU's education programmes Socrates, Leonardo and Youth for Europe. Finally, AEGEE in Turkey created new perspectives for the debate on a European identity.

The Turkish-Greek civic dialogue started with the great Traveling Summer University "Via Egnatia" in 1996 arranged by AEGEE-Skopje, AEGEE-Thessaloniki and AEGEE-Istanbul – the first cooperation between Turkish and Greek antennae. After this, AEGEE-Istanbul and AEGEE-Athina organised several exchanges, paving the road for even bigger events. In 1997, the AEGEE locals in Ankara, Athens and Istanbul presented the first Yearplan proposal ever by

the network, for an exciting project called "Peace Academy". Many other initiatives followed. The friendships created then helped to destroy prejudices among young people of Turkey and Greece. In particular, events like Kayafest helped a great deal in overcoming these obstacles.

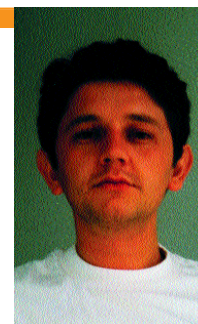
One of the most effective areas of action of AEGEE branches in Turkey has been our lobbying for the inclusion of Turkey in the programmes Socrates, Leonardo and Youth for Europe. Led by AEGEE-Ankara and AEGEE-Istanbul, this lobbying has been an ongoing process for more than four years, and has brought in many other NGOs and AEGEE-Europe as well. The Turkish antennae wrote a report on countries already in the Socrates programme and worked on the structure for a Socrates agency in Turkey. As a result, AEGEE was invited to a hearing at the European Parliament and Turkey was then included in the programmes.

The role of AEGEE antennae has been crucial to establishing the Turkish Youth Council. However, AEGEE's task is not yet finished. The areas in which AEGEE still needs to be more active are firstly in promoting Turkish accession to the EU, since public opinion about Turkey is negative and poorly informed in some countries; and secondly in closely monitoring the development of civil society in Turkey.

Refet Saban

AUTHOR

Refet Saban was one of the founders of AEGEE-Ankara. "My friend E. Metin Turan learned about AEGEE via the Internet, and we decided to start an antenna," he recalls. Apart from having been CD member, Refet considers his efforts to create a strong antenna in Ankara as his biggest achievement. He works as a social and environmental advisor in the biggest pipeline project in the world, the Baku-T'blisi-Ceyhan pipeline.



Europe of the Regions – A new structure for Europe

Leuven and München, 13th–15th of March and 1st–3rd of April 1992 - AEGEE goes East: That was the motto of the day in the early 1990s. At almost every Agora new antennae showed up from countries often just a few months old. These were fun times. Further west, something else started: regions began to claim their role in Europe and the regional decision makers discovered AEGEE's potential. It was the perfect time to start something new in our association: the Europe of the Regions Working Group.

Some event highlights of 1992

February	Tallinn (EE): Ecological Crisis
	Freiburg (D): The United States of Europe?
March	Perugia&Leiden (I/NL): Education and Quality I
	Krakow (PL): Presidents' Meeting
	Leuven (B): Europe of the Regions Academy
	Ljubljana (SI): Slovenia in Europe
April	Luxembourg (LUX): Moot Court Final
	München (D): Europe of the Regions Congress
	Sofia (BG): Integration on the Balkans & EC
	Kós/Athens (GR): Agora
	Riga (LV): Second Environmental Congress
	Erlangen/Nürnberg (D): Communication & New Media
	Amsterdam (NL): Africa: Now or Never
	All over Europe: Third Environmental Week
May	Perugia & Leiden (I/NL): Education and Quality II
	Leipzig (D): The Cultural Clash of Religions
June	Maastricht (NL): Food 93: Politics, Economics & Nutrition
July	Madrid (E): European School
August	Oviedo (E): Environmental Academy
October	Turku (FIN): Presidents' Meeting
	Milano (I): Africa in Europe – a Challenge
	Amsterdam (NL): AIDS
November	Praha (CZ): Quo Vadis Czechoslovakia?
	Budapest (H): Tempus Academy
	Delft (NL): Agora
December	Milano (I): Team 92

Our antennae AEGEE-Leuven and AEGEE-München were at the forefront of the movement, supported by branches in Barcelona, Rennes and Passau. The old lady Munich and the little baby Leuven used their contacts with their respective regional governments to set up an event which would bring together students, politicians ranging from separatists to regionalists and centralists, business leaders and bureaucrats to discuss the feasibility of Europe outside de Gaulle's "Europe des Nations". The preparatory work was done in Leuven, during a new type of event, a three-day academy, where a small group of AEGEE activists from some 20 antennae

came together to discuss the regional dimensions of politics, economics and culture in Europe. We addressed issues of separatism, federalism, cultural identity and languages, the economic divide and the perspective for enterprises.

The results were then brought to the attention of a larger public in Munich. It was so large that AEGEE-München was still trying to lodge unexpected participants as late as midnight. The speakers' bodyguards and protocol staff were another challenge, obliging us to quickly learn the rules of diplomacy. Speakers came from all backgrounds, including Luc van den Brande, prime minister of Flanders, Egon Schneweg from the European Commission, MEPs, diplomats, professors and representatives from Siemens, BMW and Daimler Benz: a happy crowd. But the stars of the event were the regions themselves, who all got a chance to present themselves in an exposition at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität. Some used the chance for tourism marketing – did you ever consider spending your Christmas holidays in Växjö? The host regions, Flanders and Bavaria, ensured that this twin-event would also be a culinary success.

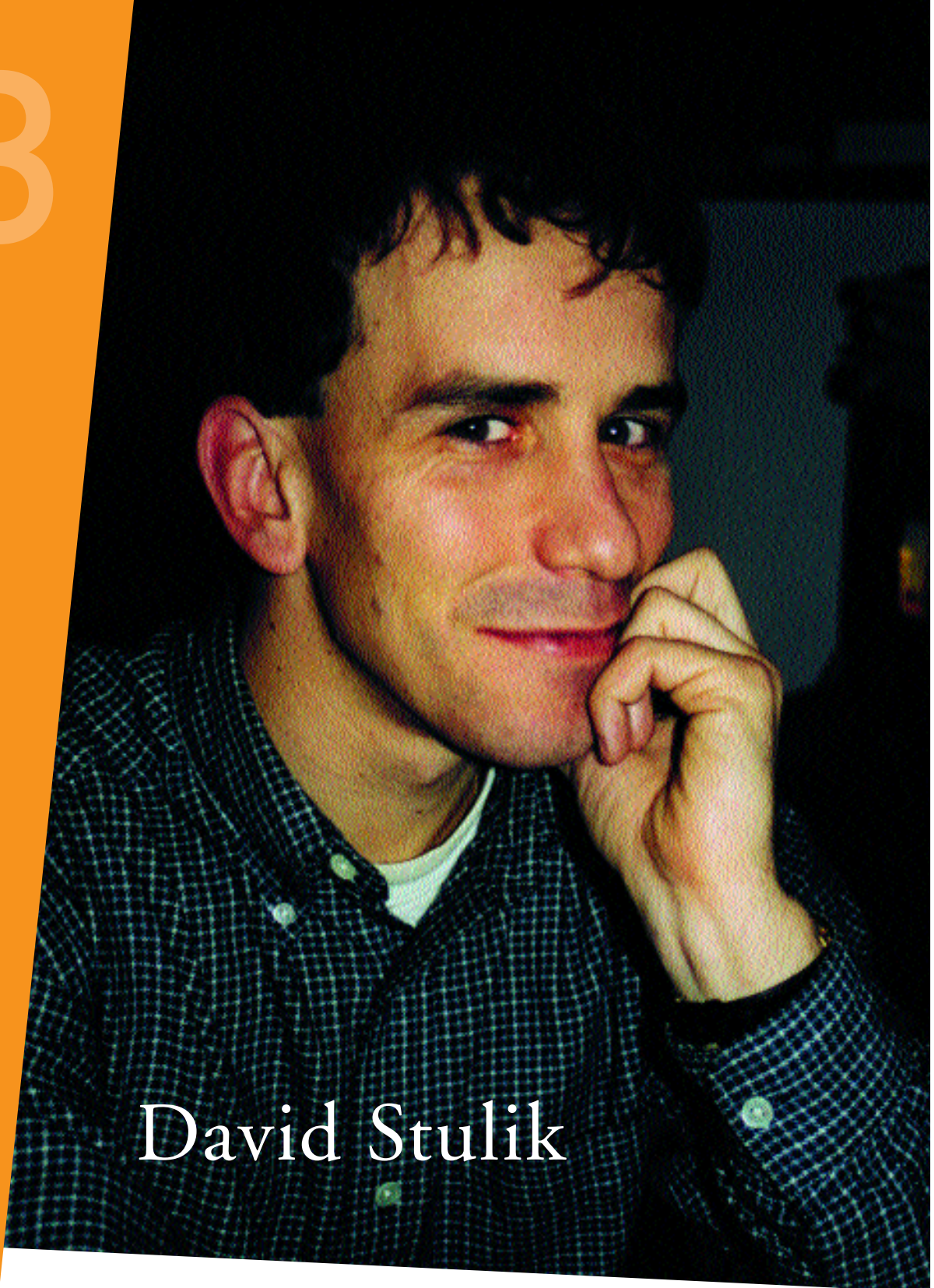
The Europe of the Regions Working Group organised many more events, such as congresses and study trips. Antennae grouped themselves regionally, and the Maastricht Summit decided to set up a Council of the Regions – to some extent we might even claim that it was our success. The single flaw: our working group does not exist anymore. Did we create a new model for Europe? Probably not, although some of us tried really hard. Was it worth it? Definitely!

Sandra Otte and Marco Kalbusch

AUTHOR

Sandra Otte, former president of AEGEE-München, was a founding member of the Europe of the Regions Working Group (EoRWG). **Marco Kalbusch**, CD member in 1990, founded AEGEE-Passau, was vice president of AEGEE-Leuven and speaker of the (EoRWG). Both were born in 1971. Sandra works for Vodafone in Düsseldorf, Marco for the United Nations in Kinshasa.





David Stulik

Watching a football match together on a pocket TV under the table during a CD meeting, skiing in the Slovak mountains, writing applications together for European projects until the early morning – these are just a few random memories that come to my mind when I think of David Stulik. The 32-year old Czech was one of the most popular AEGEE members of all times, thanks to his never-ending enthusiasm, creativity and friendly spirit. David Stulik is the person who developed several AEGEE projects and conducted them in the most professional way, but was never too tired to be the last one at the nightly AEGEE parties. David Stulik is a helpful motivator, creator and a former “Young European of the Year” – and still very modest at the same time.

David's life story made him a primary target for AEGEE. At the age of ten his parents moved from his hometown Prague to Warsaw for work reasons. Here, as a child in the Polish capital, David, who also has Slovak and Hungarian ancestors, attended the Russian School, learning Polish and Russian just perfectly. During his study at Warsaw School of Economics, one of the best universities in Central and Eastern Europe, he got in contact with AEGEE. "It was in 1991 when I was a member of another student NGO, when I was asked by my study colleagues from the same year if I could help them with an international students organisation which they had just founded", remembers David. "My first question was: Do you have any contacts in my hometown Prague? And since their answer was positive I decided to come to one of their first meetings".

The rest is history. David soon became Vice-President of AEGEE-Warszawa. "We made great events, such as the regional final of the business competition Champ in 1993. This event gave a great boost to AEGEE-Warszawa and we made it a huge success." Soon he became active on the European level: first as speaker of the East-West Working Group in 1993/4, then joining the board of AEGEE-Europe in 1995 as Vice-President, responsible for projects. In this function he was in charge of co-ordinating the project "Find Your Way", one of the biggest AEGEE projects ever, together with AEGEE-Szeged.

"My best period was definitively 1995/6," says David. In this time he coordinated the event that he considers his biggest single achievement - the Case Study Trip to Ukraine in September 1995. "All participants and people we met there were really exceptional". What he liked most about Case Study Trips was the way they combined travelling and doing some useful work, connecting the pleasure with some valuable contribution in the form of research, study papers, meetings with local young people, decision-makers and academics.

The Case Study Trip strengthened the very young Ukrainian AEGEE branches. He especially remembers one episode during his stay in Lviv. "I was beaten that time in one disco by some xenophobe idiots. But my injuries was the reason why some young Ukrainians in that place approached us. And they became the future AEGEE leading stars in Ukraine! I am happy to see that AEGEE in Ukraine is still visible and AEGEE-Kyiv supported the Orange Revolution in 2004".

His CD time was also one of his most invaluable experiences in AEGEE. "Though there were some complications, like the lack of a treasurer, it was one of the most stimulating times in my life. Later, I only cashed on this experience in my professional activities." However, David was never someone to cash on others' hard work. During all the years, he was much more interested in supporting others than taking care of his own interest. No surprise that the CD nominated him as their candidate for the competition "Young European of the Year", which was an initiative by the British

newspaper "The Independent", supported by the German government and the Schwarzkopf Foundation. David won the title easily. A few years later, Oana Mailatescu, former AEGEE-Europe president from Cluj-Napoca, was awarded the same title.

At the end of his active AEGEE time, David started his postgraduate studies in Sociology at the prestigious Central European University. Immediately he was elected student speaker. After getting his Masters he began a Ph.D., but never finished, because he wanted to start his working life. Typically, David did not choose a well-paid business job, but stayed in the non-profit sector. Today, he works for the Civil Society Development Foundation (NROS), which is in charge of the administration of the EU funds for Czech NGOs and civil society. "I am running a project which supports Czech NGOs in the EU. This task is so rewarding in terms of seeing direct effects of my work. I love to cooperate with enthusiastic people with higher values, who you find in NGOs". Also in this task, his work was so highly appreciated that David became Czech representative of the European Economic and Social Committee (Ecosoc), which is a consultative body to other EU institutions. "Here I get access to information and decision-making structures of the EU. You can find more and more people with an AEGEE background at the European institutions".

Despite having left AEGEE officially years ago, he is still in contact with the association, for example lecturing at regional meetings and training courses of the AEGEE-Academy. "It is a kind of virus. You cannot get rid of it, it is still in your head and blood. Like this, I can repay my debt back to AEGEE by giving my best knowledge to the new generation".

Gunnar Erth





Champ – the university managers

In 1993, AEGEE's management competition Champ was the largest and most ambitious management skills competition of its kind. Teams of four undergraduate students were to analyse topical management issues and be assessed by professionals on the commercial and practical solutions they proposed. In the London Business School, AEGEE had a strong partner in organising the competition and in Unilever a strong sponsor. The idea for Champ was created by a team of six former AEGEE members at London Business School in October 1991. The participants were students from all academic backgrounds and from 35 European countries. The format of the competition gave future managers an ideal opportunity to exchange ideas and to learn from each other. The competition began with a written round, followed by qualifying heats. In 1993 these events were held during March and April in seven geographical centres. I was coordinating the one in the Polish capital.

The winning teams from each centre converged on London in May 1993, where a combination of written case-studies, oral presentations and a computer simulated management game were used to decide the ultimate winner. AEGEE was responsible for promoting Champ and organising the qualifying heats. The London Business School provided the Unilever sponsorship, the concept of the competition and hosted the final round in the British capital.

We were extremely enthusiastic about Champ'93 in AEGEE-Warszawa. It was the second event of our antenna, after an East-West Working Group meeting in 1992. Organising a European management skills competition in Poland, a country which just had undergone the transition to democracy was a good opportunity to promote AEGEE further.

Our participants came from Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia. Each regional organiser was free to compose a jury. We decided to involve all major Warsaw universities and MBA schools, so our jury had at least one professor from each of them. Champ'93 was opened with a dinner banquet, attended by among others Jan Krzysztof Bielecki – who shortly after Champ became prime minister of Poland. When I nervously invited him for a welcoming speech, I mentioned that it will last 10 minutes - you are not supposed to do that with VIPs. Fortunately Mr Bielecki has a sense of humour. He said how honoured he was to be given so much time - and then he winked at me.

Champ'93 was a big success. It helped AEGEE to advertise itself in Poland, since such an event attracted major TV stations, newspapers and radio at that time. The regional qualification was won by our local team, who then participated in the final round in London.

Champ was partially continued in 1994 when AIESEC took over AEGEE's role. Unilever wanted to test the co-operation with another student association. Then Unilever withdrew its sponsorship and Champ was abandoned. I still regret this, because the idea of Champ itself was very good and it could have been carried on if more sponsors had been involved. However, this would also have required more continuous involvement from the AEGEE side.

Michał Trochimczuk

AUTHOR

Michał Trochimczuk, born on February 3rd 1971 in Warsaw, was a co-founder of AEGEE-Warszawa in 1991 and stayed as president until 1995. Among many others, he co-ordinated the Champ93 event and in 1994, the conference Central Europe Ltd, a joint event with AEGEE-Enschede. He also helped to organise events in Warsaw and other locals, and worked on the Members Commission. Michał now works as a consultant for Sollers in the Polish capital.



Renewable energy is the future



AEGEE engaged with environmental issues at the “Academy on Renewable Energy”, a congress organised in Sevilla from 9th till 13th November 1993. “Our goal was to inform European students about the achievements in renewable

energy, and inviting them to discuss the topic with specialists,” recalls David Pleguezuelo Pemudo, president of AEGEE-Sevilla. More than 200 participants discussed the emerging European legislation on the topic, the European Charter on Energy and the chance of establishing an eco-tax. Under the shadow of the global environmental disaster caused by wasteful and improper use of conventional resources, the advantages of photovoltaic, thermal, solar and wind power and bio-climatic architecture is strong.

“As one of the conclusions of the Academy, it is reckoned that in fifty years we will have used all our current fuel stocks, and that our planet is unable to absorb more polluting substances of any kind. This makes the energy problem a critical issue for our future,” David explains. The only viable solution seems to be the use of renewable energies, as well as encouraging saving and avoiding waste of energy. “It is obvious that, to achieve this, a world-wide promotion is needed to make people aware of the situation,” remarks David. Keeping in mind the opinion of the participants after their visit to the wind power plant in Tarifa, the biggest one in Europe, David summarises: “In a consumer society, we cannot postpone the practical use of alternative solutions any longer.”

Olivier Genkin

Some event highlights of 1993

February	Aachen (D): Presidents' Meeting
	Hamburg (D): “Die Hanse” in Northern Europe
	Nijmegen (NL): Crime in Europe
	Berlin (D): European School
March	Aalborg & Trondheim (DK/N):
	Erasmus Academy & Congress
	Cluj-Napoca (RO): European Health Care
April	Gorizia (I): Africa Today
	Konstanz (D): Traffic
	Praha (CZ): Agora
May	London (UK): CHAMP 93 Finals
	Fribourg (CH): Journee de l'Europe
	München (D): ECU
	Köln (D): Europe & Islamic Cultures
	Maastricht (NL): European Art United
June	Heidelberg (D): Anti-Semitism in Europe Today
September	Santander (E): Presidents' Meeting
October	Groningen (NL): Japanese Companies in Europe
	Gliwice (PL): Ecology
November	Utrecht (NL): Agora & European Communication
	Sevilla (E): Renewable Energy
	Barcelona (E): The Mediterranean Area
	Nijmegen (NL): Realising European Advertising
	Freiburg (D): Xenophobia! Are You a Racist?
December	Milano (I): Team 93
	Bratislava (SK): Post-revolutionary Eastern Europe

Striving for tolerance

Concerned by the growing tendency towards racism and xenophobia in society in the early 90's, AEGEE-Europe made this issue priority of the year in 1993. The Yearplan topic “Striving for Tolerance?!” consisted of a set of seminars and other activities, in which the association took a firm stand against all discrimination, whether based on religion, sex, cultural or social background. One of the best events, “Anti-Semitism in Europe Today”, took place in Heidelberg in June 1993. The most prominent speaker was Ignatz Bubis, chairman of the Central Board of Jews in Germany at that time. “Jews are still regarded as foreigners by many people, not as German citizens”, he claimed.

“Xenophobia! Are you a Racist?”, which took place in Freiburg in November 1993, was another remarkable event within the Yearplan. 240 students attended the conference. The participants and lecturers did not only examine historical, economical, socio-cultural and political aspects. Priority was given to individual confrontation of the question; to what extent each of us is unconsciously afraid of strangers. The search for solutions must continue with the help of AEGEE, the participants concluded.

John Stienen



The name John Stienen will forever be linked to his efforts to spread the AEGEE virus in Central and Eastern Europe and even more in the Balkans. He supported the development of, among others, AEGEE-Zagreb, AEGEE-Beograd and AEGEE-Novi Sad. Born in 1972 in Gilze-Rijen, the Netherlands, the co-founder of the Human Rights Working Group, former Members Commissioner and vice president of AEGEE-Eindhoven represents the spirit of his antenna in the 1990s at its best: being the critical conscience of the association, solving problems and fostering initiatives in an unconventional way. An interview by Gunnar Erth.

Why did you join AEGEE?

AEGEE-Eindhoven, which was two years old when I joined in 1991, appeared to me as an organisation with a wealth of possibilities. The European virus in AEGEE is contagious, with involvement following almost naturally.

What are your main achievements?

I am proud of my role as mediator or catalyst. I am happy to have a role in the development of the Eastern antennae who took the role they deserved and that students in the Balkans began to integrate into AEGEE. One of my earliest impressive memories is my first visit to Sarajevo. I went there in April 1996, when the wounds the war had inflicted were still fresh, yet it was spring and there was a strong sense of rebirth. Although the fighting had stopped, remnants of the war were all around us. Still, there was optimism among the students.

You are known as very critical. How would you describe yourself?

I would describe myself as committed. I feel committed to good causes. This commitment usually leads to positive things. However, if you strongly believe in something and start discussing with others, it may lead to disappointment in other people's behaviour. The fierce tone of those discussions can easily be perceived as critical or even cynical.

Which memories do you have of 1994 in AEGEE?

It was a symbolic year of sowing the seeds for the development of AEGEE in the second half of the 1990s. As the turning point of the emancipation of the Central and Eastern European antennae, I see the 1994 New Year skiing event organised by AEGEE-Bratislava in the Western Tatras. This meeting - together with the infamous PM in Eger in the same year - created unprecedented trust between people in East and West. This trust can be said to be the catalyst for the main events in 1996: the Find Your Way project, the SU Via Egnatia and the first Case Study Trip to former Yugoslavia. The end of 1994 was marked by the creation of the Human Rights Working Group. While I had been the AEGEE liaison for the French NGO "Etudiants pour Sarajevo" since 1993, the CD had supported the organisation of the conference "Europe against Discrimination" at the Council of Europe in 1994. The two initiatives joined forces to form the HRWG.

You helped to set up several AEGEE branches in the Balkans. Why there, in particular?

The most interesting thing about the Balkans is the fact the way there is a lot more the countries have in common, than what separates them. It is in the small things. Even customs, an upward nod of the head means "no", home objects such as the cezve, the Turkish coffeepot, and stuffed food like sarma and dolma can be found from the Danube to the Bosphorus and beyond. What I admire most though is the hospitality.

The integration into AEGEE of the countries that had formed Yugoslavia until 1991, was a rather complex process. The actual question was more if Europe was fit to accept them, than if they were fit to join Europe. In the case of the Serbian antennae this led to lengthy discussions, but in 1993 or 1994 attracting people to visit Zagreb was not easy either.

Why did you never join the CD?

I was asked to do so, several times. I think I never joined because I was afraid of the consequences, that I might never finish my studies, and that I would regret it for the rest of my life. Looking back, I am convinced my choice was right.

Where are you working now?

I am currently working for the Netherlands Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. My department is responsible for the realisation of the Dutch electronic government within the "different government" programme. The programme aims for a government that works more efficient and faster, notably by making better use of IT. This job gives me the possibility to combine several of my features - my study background in Information Systems, my commitment and my AEGEE background - in putting processes and networking to work.

What did you gain from AEGEE?

AEGEE experience helps. Real life is almost like AEGEE life, especially in the politics and policy context I work in. Not only the big European processes, but also the smaller things, the way a compromise is reached. The experience of seeing human interaction at work helps me to manage my expectations. I get a better view of people and working processes.

What do you do in your free time?

In my spare time I am one of the editors of the website ukraine.org, which provides Dutch language information on Ukraine. I also co-organised the "Day of Ukraine" in The Hague last October. I was responsible for a discussion forum on the upcoming elections. As a spin off, we even had our people join the OSCE mission to the rerun of the elections on 26th of December 2004.

What are your wishes to AEGEE's 20th Birthday?

I was recently at a meeting where a Dutch expert on terrorism explained that the life expectancy of a radical movement was approximately 25 years. I do hope AEGEE survives more than an extra five. We should try to stay ahead of European developments. For AEGEE, it took only two years to cope with the effects of 1989 and to incorporate Central and Eastern Europe. It took only five years more to bring in all of Turkey. Former Yugoslavia was integrated immediately after the fighting had stopped. AEGEE should stay like that.

IT in AEGEE

Over the last 20 years AEGEE has taken the lead not only in European integration, but also in the use of ICT. Until the early nineties, sending the AEGEE-Europe newsletter to all local antennae involved a regular fight with the fax machine. Therefore it was a logical step for the organisation to quickly endorse the use of e-mail and the World Wide Web.

The first attempts to use computer technology for communication date back to 1988, when AEGEE-Delft tried to establish a Bulletin Board System (BBS) for AEGEE. It was not a big success, however, because such technologies were not sufficiently widespread. After the Paris Agora in May 1990, antennae in Milan, Aachen, Bonn, Delft, Heidelberg, Karlsruhe and Rotterdam began to use the European Academic Research Network (EARN). This subnet of the still little-known Internet allowed AEGEE to start using e-mail.

In early 1992, AEGEE-Karlsruhe installed an FTP server, allowing for the public storage of files. In the meantime the EMUG (E-mail User Group) had been set up, later obtaining its formal working group status in 2000, under its current name: IT Working Group. It was Dinu Gherman who first thought of using a program to keep the list of e-mail users updated; and the first AEGEE list server was born. At that time its main purpose was to maintain a list of people who were reachable by e-mail. Today, lists.aegEE.org hosts over 450 mailing lists, with more than 40.000 individual subscriptions.

A new era of chatting opened in 1994, when John Stienen from AEGEE-Eindhoven introduced the association to the world of Internet Relay Chat (IRC). Some years later the headoffice even introduced a weekly online support hour, where locals could get in touch with the European secretariat. Nowadays IRC has been largely replaced by programmes such as MSN Messenger, which are widely used for European project team and working group meetings. In 1993, the year in which the first graphical web browser called Mosaic became available, Jens-Erik Weber from AEGEE-Konstanz built the first AEGEE-Europe homepage. By 1996 the network boasted more than 60 websites. Since 1997, most AEGEE-Europe online services have been made available through the aegEE.org domain. The introduction of the web and groupware system Lotus Notes in 1995/6, under the supervision of Philipp von Klitzing, once more put AEGEE ahead of other comparable organisations. A set of distributed databases allowed activists from all over Europe to share information both on- and offline. Among the most popular applications, still in use today, are the AEGEE Address Book and the Calendar of Events. This system still makes a welcome change from the messy paper archives of the Comité Directeur.



In recent years one of the most remarkable innovations was the launch of internet television. While the infamous AEGEE satellite link in 1986 almost ruined the association financially, contributing to the bankruptcy of AEGEE-Bruxelles, the technology is much cheaper and more easily available nowadays. At the 2002 Agora in Amsterdam, the newly-founded AEGEE TV team spent three days covering and reporting the news as it happened.

Over the years, IT systems have grown so big and complex that they tie up ever more human resources. That's why the ITWG recently decided to put more emphasis on IT training, with several IT European Schools and "Hacking Europe" meetings as a result. A good example of how IT can improve the efficiency of international bodies is the system of online elections for working group boards. The AEGEE-Academy was first to take the plunge, introducing email elections in spring 2002. Today a web-based online election system being under development. Another clear benefit of new technology is lower phone bills. Since 2004, the CD-house in Brussels has been using "Voice over IP" telephony via the internet. This greatly reduces the phone costs of the association. Many IT students have discovered Europe and its people because somebody "just quickly" needed their advice for a computer problem. Their work is highly appreciated: three out of ten honorary members of AEGEE-Europe were awarded this title mainly because of their contributions in the field of IT. **Stefan Hauk**

AUTHOR

Stefan Hauk, born in 1977, joined AEGEE-Passau due to his flatmates. The information science student entered the European board after just one year. Stefan was involved with several European projects, worked as a ES trainer and became one of AEGEE's biggest IT experts. In 2004, he married Malin Kaiser, also a former CD member. They live together with their son Rasmus in Helsinki, where Stefan works as a PC game programmer.





Sports gyms and cold showers Ltd.

In 1993, two young and very enthusiastic AEGEE-members joined the board of AEGEE-Enschede: Egens van Itersen Scholten and me. We shared an ambition: to renew the focus and role of the antenna. To make it work, we made sure that two congresses were organised in the same year: “Central Europe Ltd - Developing Business and its Consequences” and “Asia – a Changing World”. The idea to organise Central Europe Ltd. came from brainstorming somewhere in the Polish mountains to find ways for me and my good Polish friend Michal Trochimczuk to stay in touch. We realised we needed to start a joint project: two teams, one in Enschede and one in Warsaw would work together. The transition in Central Europe was a catchphrase in 1994. However, transition to what, and how? The idea took shape: for transition to succeed, the development of a market economy is crucial, which means to develop the private sector. Alas, we felt, this can only work if the society changes as well. What political changes are needed? It was funny to see the different priorities: the Dutch team was most interested in the social consequences. The Polish team saw the challenge of developing the private sector as the first priority. That was the beauty of this project: the two teams added to each other. We were able to realise a conference in October 1994 during which 150 students participated in two days that were filled with three lectures, two panel discussions and 13 workshops. It was a challenge to organise it, because in those days few

students had access to an e-mail account. I actually had to ask a friend to send my messages from a floppy-disk that I gave him. In the end everything was a joint product: from the shared design of promotional material, the budget of around 14.000 Euros from Dutch and Polish sources, to the program with contributions from speakers that were from both the Netherlands and Poland, among others former prime minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki. This project was a lesson in intercultural cooperation; we spent quite some time arguing about questions like whether or not we could offer our guests accommodation in a sports hall - in true Dutch student style - in Poland.

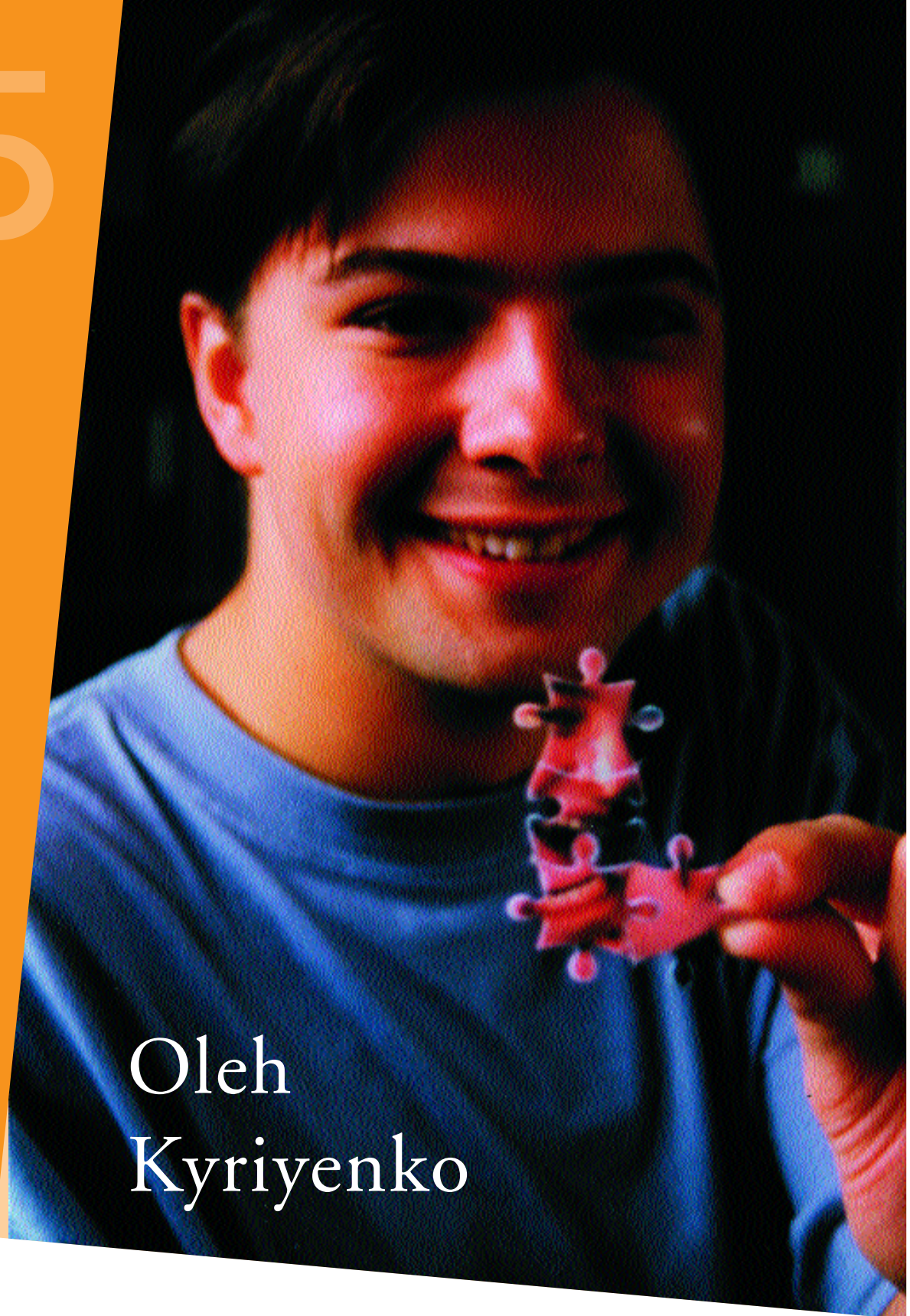
Heino van Houwelingen

Some event highlights of 1994	
January	Kraków (PL): New Europe – New Law
February	Budapest (H): Ethnic and National Minorities
March	Luxembourg (LUX): Moot Court
	Eger (H): President’ Meeting & Integration in the Province
	Hamburg (D): Mass Media in Europe
April	Istanbul (TR): The New World (Dis)Order
	München (D): Agora
	Delft (NL): Potential of Renewable Energy
May	Geneve (CH): Humanitarian Action – How?
	Cluj-Napoca (RO): Foreign Investment in Eastern Europe
	Mainz/Wiesbaden (D): Europe and Latin America
	London (UK): CHAMP European Finals
June	Rennes (F): European School
September	Helsinki (FIN): Presidents’ Meeting
October	Eindhoven (NL): Addiction and its Place in Society
	All over Europe: Europe Against Discrimination
	Tilburg (NL): Ex-Yugoslavia: Causes & Consequences
November	Montpellier (F): Agora
	Edinburgh (UK): Europe on the Brink
	Augsburg (D): Terrorising Advertising
	Bologna (I): EGEE X – Dimension in Education
December	Enschede (NL): Asia, a Changing World

AUTHOR

Heino van Houwelingen, was president of AEGEE-Enschede and later chairman of Agoras in 1995/6 – many people think the former Industrial Engineering student was the best chairman ever. He coorganised the Case Study Trip to Ex-Yugoslavia in 1996. Heino works for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.





Oleh Kyriyenko

Oleh Kyriyenko became an AEGEE member in 1995, in L'viv, western Ukraine. Currently he lives with his wife in Athens, Greece, when not taking part in orange or other revolutions elsewhere. Back in 1995, AEGEE's Ukrainian presence was restricted to L'viv and Kiev. Oleh's successful involvement in AEGEE-L'viv set an example for the creation of many other Ukrainian antennae to be created in the years after. He was interviewed by Markus Schönherr.

Oleh, we met for the first time in September 1995 during the Case Study Trip Ukraine, when we were in L'viv. How exactly did you join AEGEE back then?

Together with some friends from university I learnt about a strange phenomenon called AEGEE - we didn't know how to pronounce this word then. I personally saw my first AEGEE members at the disco where I was a DJ at that time - my after-class job and hobby. Slavko Mishchenko, who was President of AEGEE-L'viv back then, introduced my best friends and I to AEGEE. Later we became the hard core of AEGEE-L'viv in the following four years.

You were the first speaker of the AEGEE-Academy in 1999, part of the Network Commission in 1997/8, member of the CD in 1998/9 and you played a major role in strengthening AEGEE-L'viv. What was your biggest achievement?

The empowerment of AEGEE-L'viv, because any big international organisation depends on its small units. During my presidency AEGEE-L'viv grew from 12 to more than 120 members, many of them active at the European level. Also I think my active participation in shaping the internal education strategy and the creation of the AEGEE-Academy in 1999 was something that shaped the face of the organisation. 1999 was my best year in AEGEE - I also met my future wife at one of the AEGEE events that year.

How was AEGEE like in 1995 and the following years?

The atmosphere was simply great: eternal discussions about the future of AEGEE, between the idealists and hedonists, careerists and opportunists. We had the constant impression that things are going wrong, but almost always witnessed great outcomes regardless of the mess. We had a big crisis in the CD due to the resignation of Sergio Caredda as president for health reasons in 1998. We had big discussions about the admission of Northern Cypriots to the network, the creation of the Network Commission and the AEGEE-Academy. My active involvement in the organisation finished at the Agora in Poznan in November 1999. However, I still follow the life of the Academy closely.

You joined the CD in 1998. Why?

Being in the CD gave me a whole new experience: working with a team of people from different countries, with different temperaments and styles of work. I felt responsible for the whole huge network, since I was network director. CD membership also seemed to me a natural step of development.

Driving 12 hours from Vienna to your wedding in L'viv in summer 2004 was surely one of the more adventurous trips I made. What was your most adventurous trip?

It was probably our trip to the Presidents' Meeting in Adana in September 1999. 12 hours by train from L'viv to Odessa,

40 hours by boat from Odessa to Istanbul, and then more than 20 hours by bus from Istanbul to Adana. There were also unforgettable trips by minivan, such as to the Agora in Budapest in 1995, with minus 27 degrees outside and minus 10 within the van, when we had to wait all night in the mountains due to accidents on those icy roads. Also our crazy AEGEE-L'viv coach trips around Europe comes to my mind, for example a 60 hour one way trip from L'viv to Barcelona.

We were both active in fighting visa restrictions in Europe. As opposed to 1995, which was pre-Schengen, do you think that the situation has improved?

No, actually for Ukrainians it has deteriorated drastically. The ease of travel between 1995 and 1997 cannot be compared with the severity of visa measures that Ukrainians have to face today. The list of European countries that require visas from Ukrainians increased, including countries as Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland and many others.

Have your expectations of European integration from your first AEGEE years been fulfilled?

I am very happy that EU enlargement happened so quickly in 2004 - and now two other countries are knocking at the door. As for Ukraine - our development has been below any expectations due mostly to the corrupt and criminal authorities. With last year's developments connected with the presidential election, I am much more optimistic for the European future of Ukraine. I expect Ukraine to join the EU within 15 years.

What is your current job?

Currently I work in the PR and Communication sector, for a consulting company which is a contractor for the development aid projects of the EU. This work involves a lot of travel, meeting many people and a lot of work within Eastern Europe. It is very close to what I have been doing in AEGEE.

What will you always remember from your time in AEGEE?
Cheerful, open-minded, intelligent people from all over Europe. This is what stayed with me - my AEGEE friends are the best friends I ever made.

AUTHOR

Markus Schönherr joined AEGEE-Passau in 1992. The Business Studies graduate, who speaks eight languages, created the Visa Freedom Fighters to create awareness of visa issues in AEGEE. He was also a member of the first NetCom in 1997, organised a Case Study Trip to Moldavia, in addition to joining the CD. In May 2001 Markus became an Honorary Member of AEGEE-Europe. Currently he works in Vienna as Finance Manager at Westfalia Separator Austria.



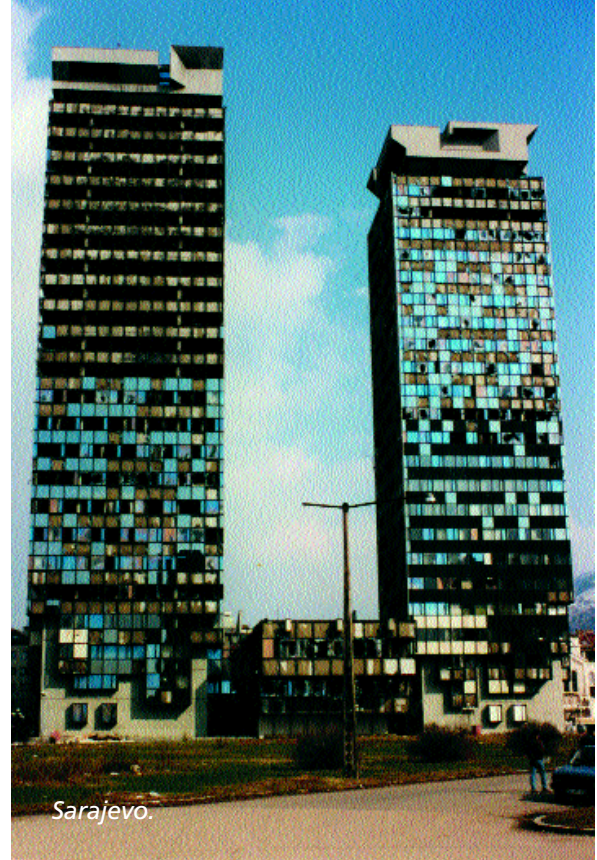
Efforts to foster understanding: AEGEE in Southeast Europe

AEGEE's activities and network development in the region should be seen in the general framework of the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The first AEGEE locals in the Balkan region, in Ljubljana and Zagreb, were founded in 1990 and 1991. According to a legend, a Western European AEGEE member who got stuck in Croatia on his way back from Greece during the first days of the conflict founded AEGEE-Zagreb in an air-raid shelter. In 1995, not only were the first branches in Serbia founded, but we also initiated contacts with students in Bosnia and a cooperation between branches of all parts of Former Yugoslavia.

It was the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina which focused the attention of the international community on the Balkans. A group of French students committed itself to helping the students in Sarajevo. They organised themselves into "Etudiants pour Sarajevo" (EpS) and organised various activities. It was at one of the lectures organised in Aachen in January 1994 that AEGEE came into contact with EpS. AEGEE-Europe decided to become a supporting association.

One of the main projects initiated by EpS was a pen pal project. The idea was adopted by AEGEE. Since a young American had started a bulletin board computer system in former Yugoslavia connecting Zagreb, Beograd, Ljubljana, Tuzla, Pristina and Sarajevo, it made perfect sense to combine the pen-pal idea with the possibilities of communication by e-mail. As a result, AEGEE was already in contact with students in Sarajevo before the end of the war.

Towards the end of 1994 AEGEE's activities helped to prepare the Strasbourg Conference "Vigilant for Democracy & Freedom" which fostered the creation of the AEGEE Human Rights Working Group (HRWG). In the meantime, the Amsterdam based NGO "Youth Solidarity with former Yugoslavia" (YSY) had been established. One of their projects focuses on Tuzla, Bosnia's second largest university town. AEGEE-Europe established contacts with YSY, leading to the first AEGEE visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina in September 1995 by Gunnar Erth and Egens van Itersen Scholten. During the visit, the idea to start AEGEE in Tuzla was put into practice. As soon as the war was over and it was safe to travel to Sarajevo,



vo, CD member Alex Ootes went to the Bosnian capital, followed by Gunnar Erth and later myself, to develop AEGEE there at the beginning of 1996.

In April 1996 the HRWG and AEGEE-Udine organised the conference "Former Yugoslavia: a better future?" – a conference attended by AEGEE members from Bosnia, Slovenia, Croatia and other European countries. For most of the Bosnians this was the first time to meet Europeans outside their own country. In the autumn of the same year, the HRWG initiated the "Case Study Trip to former Yugoslavia" (CST). However, Bosnian AEGEE students being unable to finance trips abroad. This, combined with the inability of the AEGEE network to financially support its less affluent members, led to a decline in the membership of our Bosnian locals.

The municipal elections in Serbia and Montenegro organised in autumn 1996 were the prelude to the next episode in the history of former Yugoslavia. Milosevic's refusal to accept the outcome of the elections, brought the students and other citizens of Beograd onto the streets. By November 1996 the organisers of the student protest were in contact with AEGEE. A delegation consisting of Linda Baan, Egens van Itersen Scholten, Heino van Houwelingen and Erwin de Bruin joined the students on the streets of Beograd.

The last chapter in the disintegration of Yugoslavia – until now – started with peaceful protests in Kosovo during the autumn of 1997. A conference organised by AEGEE-Novi Sad in March 1998 – though dealing with the situation of minorities in Vojvodina – was used as a discussion platform for AEGEE to define its position on the Kosovo issue. The discussion that followed Europe-wide was one of the starting points of the "Bridges to Kosov@" project.

The situation in Kosovo worsened. In October 1998 NATO threatened to intervene in order to stop the oppression of

Albanians. A huge discussion started about whether or not AEGEE should organise its Spring Presidents' Meeting (PM) as agreed in Novi Sad. While the discussion was continuing, the second CST to former Yugoslavia – this time organised by different AEGEE locals from the region – took place.

NATO started a bombing campaign on 24 March, after failing to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict between Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK). Novi Sad – which only two weeks before had hosted the PM – was one of the first towns to be attacked. The AEGEE network was shocked and reacted strongly. In August 1999 a round table was organised in Ljubljana with the aim of finding a role for AEGEE in the reconstruction of the region.

Co-operation between AEGEE antennae in Southeast Europe has been proven to be especially successful – for example, our branches in Skopje, Istanbul and Thessaloniki organised the Travelling Summer University “Via Egnatia” in 1996 and Beograd, Ljubljana, Skopje and Zagreb the “CST II” in February 1999. The efforts by different groups active in the Balkans – including AEGEE – helped to create an atmosphere of understanding that might break the circle of hatred and revenge.

John M. Stienen

Some event highlights of 1995	
January	Erlangen/Nürnberg (D): Disabled in Europe
February	Ljubljana (SI): Presidents' Meeting
	Szeged (H): Historical Changes in Central Europe
	Bratislava (SK): Love Academy
March	Passau (D): Europe – Past and Future
	Berlin (D): Spring University
	Maastricht (NL): Moot Court Finals
	Wien (A): Environment in Eastern & Central Europe
	Cluj-Napoca (RO): Mathematic on Practical Problems
	Salamanca (E): Manipulation and Mass Media
	Bonn (D): Drowned by Information
April	Amsterdam (NL): Agora
	Skopje (MK): Privatisation in CEEC
	Brussel (B): 10th Anniversary Reception
May	Timisoara (RO): Development Without Pollution?
June	Hamburg (D): African Cultures in Europe
July	Freiburg to Maastricht (D/NL): Tour d'Europe
August	Ankara (TR): 10th Anniversary Festival in Antalya
September	Barcelona (E): President's Meeting
	Lviv & Kyiv (UA): EWWG Case Study Trip Ukraine
	Aachen (D): North-South: Play Fair Europe!
October	Milano (I): Recycling Tour – Waste Management
November	Budapest (H): Agora
	Kobenhavn (DK): Education and Discrimination
	Grenoble (F): European Culture: Myth or Reality?
December	Groningen (NL): 10th Anniversary Final Conference

Creating a source of history

Dimitris Georgopoulos was responsible for the 10th anniversary book, in the CD 1994/5. This publication served as chronicle of the association. Dimitris, a graduate of the London Business School, joined AEGEE in 1991. The former president of AEGEE-Athina initiated the first cultural exchange between AEGEE-Athina and AEGEE-Istanbul. He currently heads the international expansion of Raxevisky, a women's fashion company. Maria Nomikou asked him about his memories of the anniversary year.

How did you get this task?

In November 1994 I was elected at the Agora in Montpellier to the Comité Directeur of AEGEE-Europe with just one task; to be the project manager for the 10th anniversary book. We had no budget, articles or writers, but we did have a deadline in April 1995 to present the book at the European Parliament. So, the whole concept was crazy, that's why only a crazy Greek would have been able to do it.

Didn't you have any fear of failure?

Definitely yes! On the other hand I felt such a huge enthusiasm because I was going to contribute to the organisation that I loved and will love for ever. In Montpellier, my friend and at that time president of AEGEE-Europe, Dorian Selz, personally explained to me how important the book was.

Did you have a lot of support?

The support of people present at the Agora was immense. I got the biggest support from an oldie that I really admired, Michael Merker. As soon as he joined, Dorian joined too. The three of us, with the help of Christina Thorsson, Dorian's successor as president of AEGEE-Europe, and Eva Tenborg, a design expert, the book was made real. People really liked it! We gave it to all the members of the European Parliament, to all our external contacts and used it as a PR tool.

What did you think when you heard that Panos Stamoulis and Matina Magkou, members of AEGEE-Athina, are the managers of the 20th Anniversary project?

Matina was my best student at the Athenian School, our local training course six years ago and Panos could not stop thinking of AEGEE even when he was doing his military service. I am very happy that my antennae still provides AEGEE-Europe with active members. I trust they will do a great job.

A black and white portrait of Zsuzsa König, a woman with dark hair, resting her chin on her hand and looking thoughtfully to the side. She is wearing a dark top and a patterned scarf. A small identification tag is visible on a lanyard around her neck.

Zsuzsa König

It was a big challenge and it came with no warning. AEGEE-Europe was looking for someone to coordinate “Find Your Way”, the biggest project for many years in the history of AEGEE, scheduled to take place in 1996. “I was talking with Szilvia Szabó, the CD member who drafted the project, when she suddenly asked me: ‘Is it ok if AEGEE-Szeged coordinates the project?’,” remembers Zsuzsa König, at that time president of the Hungarian antenna. “I answered: ‘Yes, why not?’ I had really no clue what we were in for, but jumped right into it”. Nevertheless, Zsuzsa managed this enormous task with a great dedication and skill.

She did even more: in the mid 90s, AEGEE-Szeged became one of the most popular antennae in the network, known for its friendly spirit, hard-working and creative members and funny party animals. However, without Zsuzsa König there would not have been any AEGEE-Szeged at all. “I first heard about the association in 1994, when I was a second-year biology student. There only was an AEGEE contact in Szeged at that time, and it had just fallen apart. So, together with two other biology stu-

dents, I took over and established a real antenna,” says Zsuzsa König. In 1994, the young team started from scratch. Soon, other enthusiastic people like Zsuzsi Bukta joined, and started to travel to events – and within months the word was spreading that in Szeged something big was developing. “We had not even signed the Convention d’Adhesion yet, when we were asked to coordinate the Find Your Way project”.

Within months, the antenna was growing. Zsuzsa was taking care that AEGEE-Szeged stayed enthusiastic, very popular and still down-to-earth. “I am quite a social person; therefore I very much enjoyed being in AEGEE. I like diversity and at the same time to find compromises among people,” says Zsuzsa König.

She was asked to join the European board in order to coordinate “Find Your Way” from there, but Zsuzsa did not want to move to Brussels. She felt she could do a better job for the project and for her antenna from Szeged. “I liked the challenge of coordinating people, events, managing an international budget and to overcome difficulties that, of course, arose in the most unexpected situations,” she summarises. “It was easy and difficult at the same time. Difficult, as we had big problems with liquidity – we got 110.000 euros from the European Commission for the project, but the money was always delayed and we had to pay for the nine events, travel costs and everything else from other sources”.

In these hard moments, she could count on help from friends in the network, especially from AEGEE-Eindhoven. “When we did not have any money, AEGEE-Eindhoven hitchhiked right across Europe with a lot of money in their pockets to help the project out.” Next to managing the project, she also found the time to shoot a film about it. “I worked as a journalist for the local TV station at the same time, so making the film about all nine events within the projects was a great challenge.” The preparations for the project started in late 1994, the last event was two years later and the final report to the European Commissions and other donors was sent in several months after that. In the end, Zsuzsa and her team were tired. “I had to deal with five different presidents of AEGEE-Europe in this time,” says Zsuzsa. “I had some bad experiences in the project, but it was also fun to work together with my cheerful friends, who endured a lot and helped each other. In the end, all of us enjoyed it”.



Hungary's President Árpád Göncz at the final conference of Find Your Way.

From this process, the biology student gained organisational and managerial skills. “It was a real learning period for me, how to manage people, how to do accounting in 15 different currencies and what you can do when there is a conference starting in a day hosting 60 participants, and you don’t have money for food or to pay their travel reimbursement. And of course, my knowledge of human behaviour has improved a lot. Who are your real friends, who can you trust even in extreme situations?” No wonder she concludes that AEGEE left a deep footprint on her life.

In 1997, Zsuzsa stopped her AEGEE activities when she finished her studies. She began working immediately. “I realised that I want to manage research activities, therefore I applied for a job in the Hungarian Research and Development Office.” From there, Zsuzsa was sent as a national expert to the European Commission’s Directorate General for Research in 2002. Today, at the age of 30, she is dealing with research projects for small and medium size enterprises in the fields of agriculture, health, environmental protection and aquaculture.

“I hope that AEGEE will remain as it is for a long time, and that lots of students will benefit from its international and friendly environment,” says Zsuzsa. “I also wish for AEGEE to organise more European projects like Find Your Way. AEGEE should keep its openness towards students, as it has its big advantages compared to other youth student associations, not being focused on any particular subject - everybody can join”.

Gunnar Erth

Find Your Way: Witnessing a milestone

Discussing European security issues in Moscow, intercultural stereotypes in Warsaw and nationalism in Presov, Eastern Slovakia: these were just some of the issues, which the project “Find Your Way To and Within an Open Society” (FYW) touched upon in 1996. This series of nine events

was one of the milestones, which changed the face of AEGEE. It not only gave 800 Central and Eastern European students the opportunity to investigate hot issues and to develop their democratic experience but it also initiated a so far unique co-operation between AEGEE members in Eastern and Western Europe.

The idea was simple: in Central and Eastern Europe, new democracies had come into existence. Organisations such as AEGEE could make young people aware of their responsibilities in these changing societies. “There was a growing need to fight against nationalistic tendencies. This could best be achieved by developing open-minded European citizens,” said FYW coordinator Zsuzsa König from AEGEE-Szeged, whose antenna was in charge of the entire project. In spring 1995, former CD member Szilvia Szabó from Debrecen developed the idea. All events were to take place in Central and East Europe (CEEC).

The Find Your Way project started in March 1996 with three training events. At the opening Training Course in Szeged, experts taught 60 students how to organise projects, via workshops and simulation games. It was followed by the Micro University in Prague, which struck a high note in terms of content. Participants gained a thorough knowledge of topics in the transition progress of CEECs - such as the media, nationalism, prejudices and human rights - a full day was dedicated to each of these topics. AEGEE-Praha managed to attract prominent speakers, such as the former Czech Prime Minister Petr Pithart and Martin Palous, former speaker of “Charta 77”.

The next stop was the Polish town of Gliwice. The annual European School, AEGEE’s main training event, was modified in order to meet the need of the 35 participants, most of

them organisers of the following FYW events. The European School provided knowledge of the inner workings of AEGEE and event organisation, public relations and fund-raising lessons. All these skills were practised in a complex simulation game. The experience of this European School revolutionised AEGEE’s training system. Even now in 2005, most training events are modelled on this one.

In the second phase of the project, topics such as nationalism, the media and students’ rights were discussed in detail during five seminars. The highlight among them was surely the seminar on security issues in Moscow. The project was concluded in December 1996, at the Final Conference in Budapest involving 300 participants. Árpád Göncz, at that time president of the Hungarian Republic, opened the event. Highlight: 12 Serbian students reported about the ongoing demonstrations against the election fraud committed by the Milosevic government. The following day, four conference participants went to Beograd for several days. Gerhard Krefß, then president of AEGEE-Europe: “The students in Serbia shows us that also in the Balkans there are young people, who are trying to find their way to an open society”.

Find Your Way was only possible due to a successful application to the European Commission, who granted AEGEE 112.000 Euro - nearly 80 percent of the total budget. Thanks to this, Find Your Way became one of the biggest projects ever in the history of AEGEE. It also had a long lasting effect on the network. More than 50 percent of the participants were not members of AEGEE. “Many of them joined their local branch in their university town or founded new antennae afterwards,” commented David Stulík, one of the main co-ordinators. Moreover, the successful experience of managing large-scale projects encouraged AEGEE-Europe to try other activities of this size – which have become a standard since then.

Gunnar Erth



Monika Tanglová,
Prague.

Stage 1: Training

5th-11th March	Training Course, Szeged (H)
27th March – 2nd April	Micro University, Prague (CZ)
30th June – 7th July	European School, Gliwice (PL)

Stage 2: Forums

19th-22nd September	Students' rights, Timisoara (RO)
26th-29th September	Nationalism, Presov (SK)
10th-13th October	Security in Europe, Moscow (RUS)
17th-20th October	Media and information society, Bratislava (SK)
24th-27th October	Intercultural prejudices & stereotypes, Warsaw (PL)

Stage 3: Conclusion

12th-15th December	Final Conference, Budapest (H)
--------------------	--------------------------------

CST: Research after the War

The CST researchers in Novi Sad.

In autumn 1996, the collapse of the old Yugoslavia and the war in Bosnia were still fresh in the minds of the inhabitants. For me, as a Dutch student, it was hard to understand how the young people in places between Ljubljana and Skopje felt about the future of themselves and their neighbours. That's why, together with 19 other young people from 11 European countries, we wanted to get first hand information from them - during a two week long Case Study Trip (CST), taking place from 17th to 30th October 1996. Apart from conducting research, the CST also wanted to create contacts among participants, AEGEE branches and other organisations.

As the main coordinating member of the Human Rights Working Group, I worked together with our organising teams in Maribor and Enschede, as well as all the cities visited on the trip. In the planning phase in winter 1995 we met a lot of

scepticism. But even more people were very enthusiastic, supporting us with advice, ideas and funds.

The CST started in Maribor, Slovenia. The idea was to conduct street interviews with young people - about 100 in each city. For this we prepared a questionnaire, dealing with the issues "everyday life of young people", "reaching social stability", "relations among the new states" and "view towards Europe". The AEGEE host antennae also organised meetings with NGOs, politicians and experts.

The next stop was Zagreb. We met a self-conscious city, which was proud to be Croat. Still, the war had not been far away. In Bosnia we visited Sarajevo and Tuzla. Sarajevo was the city which posed the biggest problems in terms of conducting the research. Everyone felt uncomfortable asking personal questions. I remember also too well the city square in Tuzla, where a lot of young people were killed during a shell attack - and hearing the story from eye witnesses.

Novi Sad, capital of the Serbian Vojvodina, was a pleasant surprise. While the media had created an image of war-hungry people, the days spent there shattered that perception completely. AEGEE-Novisad had spared no effort to make a great programme including a party in a pub with a MIG aircraft hanging from the ceiling. The last city visited was Skopje. Perhaps the fiercest discussions took place here, between representatives of the Macedonian and Albanian groups.

We published the results in a report which was well-received by several European institutions. I learned above all to communicate effectively. I remember sending a lot of faxes, and worrying about deadlines. And then I found out that everything was organised perfectly.

Erwin de Bruin

Some event highlights of 1996

January	London (UK): Twisted Mind or Product of Society?
February	Amsterdam (NL): Drug Policies in Europe
	Köln (D): Europe and the Middle Ages
March	Eindhoven (NL): Presidents' Meeting
	Delft&Ankara&Mainz (NL/TR/D): Understanding Europe
	Aalborg (DK): Intercultural Communication
	Cagliari (I): The Net and Associations
April	Valladolid (E): Agora
	Warszawa (PL): Direction Europe
May	Udine (I): Human Rights in Former Yugoslavia
	Maastricht (NL): A Step Towards Europe's Future
	Delft (NL): Transport - What are the Limits?
	Passau (D): Rebirth of a Continent
June	Hamburg (D): Entering the Maritime Millennium
September	Timisoara (RO): Presidents' Meeting
October	Innsbruck (A): Students - From Revolution to Stagnation
	Maribor to Skopje: Case Study Trip Ex-Yugoslavia
November	Utrecht (NL): Sound of Romance in Europe
	Athina (GR): Agora
	Enschede (NL): Think Europe - Working Group Congress
December	Mainz/Wiesbaden (D): Global Generation

AUTHOR

Erwin de Bruin joined AEGEE during his Civil Engineering and Management studies in Enschede, back in 1994. "Organising the CST was my main achievement, although personally the New Year's Eve in Poland in 1994 was even more important. Here I met my wife Ania." Erwin works as water management consultant.





Bart Neerscholten

He is the man who made hundreds of students familiar with the Euro currency: Bart Neerscholten became best known in AEGEE for successfully managing the project "Europe and Euro" in 1997. However, the former member from Rotterdam was also known for his critical and yet supportive spirit. Bart, born in 1974, is one of many alumni now living and working in Brussels. Gunnar Erth asked him about his life in AEGEE and beyond.

How did you join AEGEE?

In 1995, I had studied economics for two years and had just chosen European integration as my specialisation. I was looking for a related activity to combine with my studies. At a student fair, I found AEGEE and joined once a week for a drink in a bar. A new world opened up for me; I was especially fascinated by Central and Eastern Europe. Looking back, 1995 was the most memorable year for me in AEGEE. In particular, the Case Study Trip to Ukraine in autumn was truly extraordinary.

How did you become coordinator of the Europe and Euro project?

It was quite a surprise for me. Whilst doing an exchange in Lyon for six months, I got a call from Marijke Moed, Project Director in the CD at that time. She asked if I would like to become project manager. I decided to do it. I had finished my studies except for my thesis and could dedicate myself full time to the project. However, I had no clue what project management was about. It was all about learning as I did it. I never regretted doing it, as it was a super experience.

What were the best and worst moments in coordinating it?

The best moments were the pleasure of coordinating, the stimulating contacts, discussions and exchanges with organisers of an event as an example, an effective coordination meeting that gives everyone the feeling of team spirit or producing concrete results on a subject which makes you proud. And of course, all the memories that flood in afterwards. The worst moments were those of personal confrontations, stress, a lack of sleep, not being able to listen to your body, financial headaches and every so often discussions that seemed to be endless. However, in the end, Europe and Euro was a very successful project, it reached its objectives and informed a wide group of people about the Euro.

The Euro has a bad image. What should be done to correct it?

Patience and time seem to be the most obvious factors that the project needs. People seem to have no longer confidence in European undertakings. We can not compare with our former currencies anymore. Maybe there would have been economic crises without the Euro. Restaurants, bars and other such places have abused the changeover to increase prices. At least this is how the public generally perceived it. Is the Euro to blame for this or the greed of the entrepreneurs?

What else did you do in AEGEE except for Europe and Euro?

In AEGEE-Rotterdam I co-organised two conferences, was active in several local committees and travelled quite a bit around Europe, especially between 1995 and 1998. I was active in the East West Working Group (EWWG), involved in several Agora proposals and joined heated discussions on list servers or at the Agora plenary. I set up AEGEE-Lyon

and I launched the Foundation AEGEE Trust Fund (FATF) and still serve on its Advisory Board. This foundation aims to improve project management skills in AEGEE, serves as an internal loan scheme and attempts to provide a long term permanent income for AEGEE-Europe.

You also spent some time abroad, in Slovakia. What did you like about that country?

I went to Bratislava in the spring of 1996, to do economic research on Slovakia, regarding the efforts of EU membership for the National Bank of Slovakia. It was a period of fascinating rumours, allegations and stories around Meciar, the prime minister of Slovakia at that time. My tutor later became Minister of Finance in Slovakia.

Why did you never join the CD?

Maybe I would have done it, if I had not managed the Europe and Euro project, which felt in a way like being in the CD. I lived at the AEGEE-Europe head office for over a year. After the project had been completed, I wanted to finish my studies.

How would you describe yourself with three adjectives?

I suppose the words would be committed, open-minded with broad interests and critical.

Indeed you are known as a critical person, sometimes even stubborn. Do you mind that you gave people this opinion of yourself?

No, that's the way it really is. We all stereotype. I try to take into account how I communicate and try to be aware of it although I can't change myself. Being critical, independent and a bit stubborn are not necessarily negative characteristics. And I know I can work very well in a team. I have high standards because quality is something important to me, for example to start and finish something properly.

Where are you working now?

I am research and project manager at the European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS). This is a platform of academics, companies and other stakeholders working together on the issues surrounding business in society, such as corporate responsibility, business ethics and corporate governance. We deal with skills and competences for future managers who need to run a company in a sustainable way.

Do you like living and working in Brussels?

I like it a lot. It is relatively small but still a fairly large international city. Brussels has a great social and cultural agenda, the quality of life is high. Brussels is also bilingual between French and Dutch, as well as Flanders, Belgium and Europe's capital. Brussels is not a perfect place and has many anarchistic and melodramatic elements. So Brussels still surprises me every day after almost eight years of living here.

Europe and Euro – the work continues

The Euro currency is one of the most visible developments in Europe's history. However, if we look back to 1997, five years before the arrival of the new bills and coins, Europe's vision of this future was rather vague. In this year, AEGEE launched the project "Europe & Euro", comprising a series of conferences to spread expert information and promote an exchange of views on the European Monetary Union (EMU). Our aim was to offer young people an objective viewpoint.

Although funded by the European Commission, the project was not simply a pro-Euro campaign. A quote from the brochure sums up our approach: "Only with an open and honest campaign, providing information, stating the positive and negative aspects of such a change and promoting an open discussion, will it be possible to create awareness among the young generation".

The project had three main parts: an essay competition, five large conferences connected with five smaller intensive seminars and ten local events. A final conference and a results booklet concluded our efforts. "Europe & Euro" took place over 14 months, from October 1996 until December 1997, involving more than 600 AEGEE volunteers in total. I coordinated the project between July 1997 and October 1998, with the hard-working support of Wouter Slotema and Raoul Smit.

The 2000 participants heard from over 150 speakers in 11 countries, with wide coverage in a variety of media. We also distributed more than 20.000 posters across 2500 European universities and colleges, created an informative website, and received nearly 250 essays and over 1000 completed questionnaires on EMU. Based on the minutes taken during speeches and discussions at the events, we produced a results brochure, available online here: www.karl.aegEE.org/download/EMUre98.pdf.

One of our main findings was that a majority of young people felt their own government's information campaign was insufficient. I still believe, that if we want to make up our own minds on such a complex issue, we need a full range of neutral and informative information, including a historical perspective. This should really be done over a longer period of time, not starting just a year before one of the most far-reaching developments in modern economic history. We should not just focus on technical information about when the Euro is coming and what the coins look like, but rather on the reasons for taking this step – political, economic and idealistic.



Looking at the way the information campaigns were actually conducted in many Eurozone countries, they often implied that everything would simply be perfect, transporting us all to the Promised Land. In the real world, everyone knows that nothing is perfect, despite so-called objective information sometimes looking more like a television commercial. Of course it is far from easy to inform citizens about such a complex issue, but a greater effort could have been made.

For example, the cultural, social and even psychological effects of the changeover have been underestimated or simply ignored. Many people, if not most, still convert prices into their familiar national currency. People feel lost, without a reference price for products they used to compare with each other. Personally, I convert back into guilders on a daily basis for many things I buy. Has inflation gone up, with higher prices in cafés and restaurants? Probably there are a lot of dry statistics out there to prove this wrong – but people do not live through statistics.

These and many other relevant topics give AEGEE plenty of scope to keep debating, researching and informing young people on the issue. Especially with the possible entry to the Eurozone of the other three member states of the old EU-15 – and the interesting debates coming up on how and when the ten new member states will join the Eurozone.

Bart Neerscholten

Socrates Action Day: Attention to education

In 1997, AEGEE launched a new initiative to make the student mobility programme of the European Commission more visible: the Socrates Action Day (SAD). 54 branches all over Europe invited students, lecturers and university representatives to discuss and spread their knowledge of the Socrates programme. The date was set for 12th November, and the event was such a success that it was repeated in 1998, becoming a full Socrates Action Week in 1999.

As the new PR director of AEGEE-Europe, I wanted to create more visibility for AEGEE – and the Socrates Action Day was the perfect tool to do it. At that time we were making great events, but media and institutions did not see AEGEE as a

strong network. SAD was the solution. Unfortunately our CD at that time was rather conservative and they took some persuading that it was a good moment for SAD, since student mobility was now high on the EU's agenda.

The new Treaty of Amsterdam made the EU responsible for emphasising access to education. A key factor in this was to provide facilities for mobility schemes. AEGEE always saw the Socrates programme as one of the most precious gifts the EU gave us. Still, we felt it was our duty to improve it. In our local SAD events we wanted to reveal weaknesses in the programme, and point out possible solutions.

We explained the idea of the SAD on our mailing list AEGEE-L and during workshops at the Presidents' Meeting in Veszprém and the autumn 1997 Agora in Ankara. Choosing November as the best month for such an action, by chance we agreed on the 12th – my own birthday. The results of over 50 local SADs were very diverse. It turned out that in many parts of Europe, students were badly informed about Socrates. Knowledge stayed in small circles, depriving the majority of students of their chance to take part. Additionally, according to our findings, the programme was insufficiently funded. We were also concerned about the manner in which Socrates was extended to new countries in Central and Eastern Europe. This chance to strengthen the civil society in these countries was not well used.

The media were highly interested in our results. We were even invited for a meeting with Dominico Lenarduzzi, Director of DG XXII in the Commission, which finally started to listen to us. We decided to continue with SAD the following year. In 1998 we joined forces with other student organisations such as ESIB and ESN, and more of the network participated; twice as many antennae, bringing the total up to 100.

The success of Socrates Action Day set us an example for the future. A pan-European action with high visibility, an impact on the EU's public affairs and effective, sufficient fundraising paved the way for similar actions in the future. AEGEE's relations with the European Commission improved as well. It began to see us as an important partner in the field of education, appointing us official coordinator of the "Socrates on the Move" program in 2000, which aimed to create a strong regional campaign for Socrates. I achieved my personal aim of improving AEGEE's public position.

Dan Luca

Some event highlights of 1997	
February	London (UK): Britain's Voyage Towards Europe
March	Warszawa (PL): Presidents' Meeting Plus
April	s'Hertogenbosch (NL): Industrial Revolution & Tomorrow
	Enschede (NL): Agora Plus
	Praha (CZ): Neighbourhood in Europe – Training Course
	Lund (S): When Man Plays God – Medical Ethics
May	Rotterdam (NL): Europe and Euro – What do I Face
	L'viv (UA): Chernobyl – The Tragic Experience
	All over Europe: Day of Europe
	Delft (NL): MedTech – New Ways for Medicine
	Münster (D): International Security – A Role-Play
	Katowice (PL): Literature of Post-Communist Countries
	Passau (D): Meeting Islam
September	Iasi/Chisinau (RO/MD): Case Study Trip Moldavia
	Veszprém (H): Presidents' Meeting
	Debrecen (H): Neighbourhood in Europe – Stereotypes
October	Budapest (H): Migration Across Borders
	Innsbruck (A): Ecology and Progress – A Conflict?
	L'viv (UA): Unemployment of Youth
	Ankara (TR): Agora
November	Katowice (PL): National Minorities
	Ljubljana (SI): Foreign Direct Investment
December	Lyon (F): Europe and Euro – The Political Frame
	Poznan (PL): Role of Mass Media in CEEC and NIS
	Aix-en-Provence (F): The EU and the Mediterranean
	Eindhoven (NL): Europe and Euro: Final Conference

AUTHOR

Dan Luca, born in 1971, joined AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca in 1993 and soon became its President. He joined the CD as PR director in 1997 for two years. This made him the longest serving CD member since 1990. Dan is Senior PR Manager at the media agency EurActiv.com in Brussels, and Chairman of its Romanian partner.



A portrait of Bernhard Müller, a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark V-neck sweater over a black turtleneck. He is looking slightly to the right with a gentle smile. The background is dark, with a warm, glowing light source visible at the top center.

Bernhard Müller

To AEGEE people around Europe, Bernhard Müller is the cool strategist who founded the Network Commission and the AEGEE-Academy. To us, the active members of AEGEE-München, Bernhard is the busy husband of our Network Commissioner Marina and a highly professional consultant at Siemens, who, in the little free time he has, travels around the world. Bernhard is definitely a crucial player in AEGEE-Europe's history, someone who influenced the development of AEGEE in the 90's.

Although Bernhard left AEGEE in 2001, his passion for the association is still burning. However, to many people, it might sound unbelievable that it was only love at second sight for him. “I heard about AEGEE already in 1994, when I was a business administration student in Augsburg – but I didn’t join the association until one year later,” he says. Soon, he discovered what AEGEE stands for: European Integration – something which fitted in with his own values. 100 percent motivated, he went to his first Agora in Budapest, November 1995. At that time, there was a crucial debate going on. Some members were not happy that some Dutch antennae accepted sponsorship by Shell, whose involvement in Nigerian politics allegedly led to the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa. Should AEGEE express its political opinion? How could AEGEE represent the variety of opinions of its members coming from all around Europe, speaking different languages, thinking in different ways, studying every possible subject? “I found these questions fascinating and became interested in the big European picture of AEGEE,” remembers Bernhard.

In September 1996, Bernhard Müller attended the Presidents’ Meeting in Timisoara, where the main discussion concerned the efficiency of the work of the European board, after the head office had been moved to Brussels in the beginning of that year. The CD members did not live all over Europe, but in a central spot, leading to an increased distance between local and European level. “The creation of a Network Commission and network regions was suggested to solve this problem by helping and supporting antennae and to create new ones, but two third of the participants of the high-level workshop initially voted against this idea,” says Bernhard.

The CD regarded such a commission as a threat, but Bernhard thought: “Now, something must happen!” In the six weeks left until the following Agora, he and his team of fifteen people looked for a suitable solution for the Network Commission. They had to develop a regional structure and convince the opinion leaders and the antennae about the value of their concept. At the Agora in Athens, November 1996, he presented the proposal. “The opposition was powerful,” says Bernhard.

With an exquisite strategy, he succeeded in convincing the delegates and the modified proposal was accepted with 72 percent in favour. At the Agora in Enschede in April 1997, the Network Commission was elected for the first time – and became an immediate success.

Bernhard Müller continued to reform the structure of AEGEE, which had been largely unchanged since 1986 and needed to be adapted. In 1998, he influenced the reform of the Members Commission (MC), the disciplinary body of AEGEE.

This was not the end. 1999 was a year full of success for Bernhard. In April he went to the European School (ES) in Gießen. “These training events were successful, but the problem was the knowledge

transfer. From one year to another the content had to be invented all over again”. With the Agora in Barcelona just one month ahead, Bernhard developed, based on a draft by Oleh Kyriyenko, a three-step education concept for the network: local training, European School I for the local and European School II for the European level, to be supervised by a new working group, the AEGEE-Academy.

The CD was not in favour of this proposal. And again, Bernhard took action – took responsibility. “I had felt for a quite long time that AEGEE was morally and financially endangered, that’s why I decided to run for CD membership and to create my own team to get things right”. This was a fortunate moment, because many experienced members, who had just finished their studies, felt the same. “Our team got elected and the Academy was recognised.” In November, he left the CD and became Academy Speaker.

Today, Bernhard is a successful consultant and trainer at Siemens. “However, I would like to work some day in a European Institution, in a domain between European integration and economics”. Not only at professional but also at personal level, AEGEE changed Bernhard’s life: in December 2001, he took part in a training event in Istanbul, where he met Marina, who became his wife in 2003. Their relationship is something special, based on common values and interests and very passionate and tender love.

All these experiences spurred his personal development and made it clear how far someone can come when he is 100 percent sure of what he is doing. But why was he putting so much energy into it? “This network is a great laboratory for Europe, always one step ahead,” he stresses. In his opinion, the most serious problem for AEGEE is the lack of clear thinking about the way the association should deal with the future of a changed Europe. “Many dreams of the past have come true and are taken for granted. Is this Europe of today what we want or just a milestone to something much better? What kind of society are we living in, a community of common values or merely a sophisticated free trade zone? What is our ideal of a European state, if any? AEGEE has to take a stand regarding these new challenges, by discussing the future of Europe, taking bold and avant-garde positions and thereby adding value to Europe’s society”. Mariana Burghiu

AUTHOR

Mariana Burghiu is a Romanian living in Bavaria. She was born in 1978 and joined AEGEE-München in April 2002 and immediately became Vice-President. Also at present Mariana holds this position. At European level she has been Secretary of the Culture Working Group since November 2004. She studies European Ethnology, Intercultural Communication and Political Science.



Surviving the 21st century

The earth's population is growing exponentially. Global effects of environmental pollution are becoming increasingly visible, social disparity is increasing. How do we reach a sustainable society that balances our ecological, economic and social priorities? These were the questions of the conference "Surviving the 21st century", organised by AEGEE-Heidelberg in the frame of the project Building a Social Europe from 29th October to 1st November 1998. More than 300 students and experts came together to discuss the subject. Representatives in all important stakeholders of our society were present. "The solution lies in two developments that need to support each other: efficiency and sufficiency," stated Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker from the Wuppertal Institut. "The efficiency in using natural resources and energy can be quadrupled at least." The other lecturers gave an insight into topics such as how to improve the use of energy through circulating systems. In the workshops the participants were encouraged to evaluate their own progress towards a sustainable lifestyle. They also developed concepts of a sustainable city.

Sebastian Klüsener

Brainstorm: Smell decides our sympathies

What makes the mind work? The field of cognitive science was investigated in the congress "Brainstorm - Exploring the mind", organised in Vienna from 6th to 10th May 1998. "This event was world class. The best speakers of the world were invited - and they came", says AEGEE network commissioner Rolf Wienkötter. The brightest star among all these scientists was Humberto Maturana, one of the founding fathers of constructivism, who came all the way from Santiago de Chile. "He gave a breathtaking lecture on systems, ethics, and love", said main organiser Brigitte Römer. The vice-president of AEGEE-Wien fulfilled one of her dreams with this congress. "The best experts on cognitive science are spread all over the world. I am so glad that I could invite them to Wien." All the professors stayed until the last

moment of the congress, using every spare moment for discussions with students and lecturers.

Cognitive science takes an interdisciplinary approach to exploring the mind. It covers related questions that have been treated as separate issues by various fields of study, including philosophy, psychology, computer science, linguistics, and biology. Consequently, the congress covered a wide range of topics, starting at the level of neuroscience and analysed artificial neural networks up to the question of ethics. "The problems of perception, representation of knowledge, or – more philosophically – of the mind-body problem, are very much the focus of the field", explained Alexander Lumban Tobing, a congress participant from AEGEE-Berlin. As an example, in linguistics, languages are defined as collections of phonemes, morphemes and syntax. However, biologists refer to the dance of bees as a language, and claim to have taught apes to read. "In order to learn how language organs could have developed, computer scientists have little robots running around, learning to communicate with each other in their own code", explains Alexander.

The last day's topics were the smell of men and women as unconscious communication between the sexes, and cultural differences in communication, together with the application of cognitive science to the social sciences, and the implications of the information age.

Gunnar Erth

The borders are gone, but the problems remain

The borders have all but disappeared, but social problems are still an issue in Europe: in order to analyse aspects of society such as education, crime, unemployment or sustainable development, AEGEE initiated a series of conferences entitled “Building a Social Europe” (BASE) in 1998. “The 11 events of our project offered young people all over Europe the chance to get involved in the construction of our new European house – which should be built on social foundations,” summed up Vera Sanne Haaksma from AEGEE-Enschede, BASE co-ordinator.

“With BASE, AEGEE-Europe wanted to continue the line of very successful Yearplan projects after Find Your Way in 1996 and Europe and Euro in 1997,” says Sebastian Klüsener, projects director in the CD in 1999/2000. The project informed a total of 2000 participants about the social situation in their own countries and in others. They then discussed the various possibilities with experts and fellow students. During the interactive workshops and simulation games, the students were confronted with the real challenges of today.

The project dealt with five topics: “Education and Employment”, “Security and Criminality”, “Sustainable Development”, “The Individual in Europe” and “Equal Chances”, and took place in both the East and the West of Europe, in order to see the problems from both sides. Starting in April 1998 in Amsterdam, the first conference was entitled “Fortress Europe”, and dealt with security issues.

During a study visit to the multicultural Banat region of Romania, students had the chance to meet representatives of different ethnic groups with a variety of problems. “The concept of multiculturalism really exists – in our place, in Banat” says Monica Diaconu, vice president of the organising antenna, AEGEE-Timisoara. “However, a lot has changed during the communist times.” The six days in Romania were a time of revealing encounters with different cultures: the Romanian, Hungarian, Serb, Bulgarian, Slovak, Ukrainian, Roma and German realms. “We have talked with representatives of each minority and visited villages that still preserve their multicultural characteristics”, reports Monica. The project ended in July 1999 with a conference in Athens entitled “Unemployment and Lifelong Learning”. In addition, the event organisers improved their own skills during a training course in Eger, Hungary.

Gunnar Erth



Some event highlights of 1998

January	Warszawa (PL): Neighbourhood in Europe – Final Conf.
February	Aix-en-Provence (F): Presidents’ Meeting
March	Warwick (UK): EGEE XIV – Why the EU?
	Blagoevgrad (BG): Pressure on Media
	Novi Sad (YU): Minorities in Vojvodina
	Szeged (H): European Film Festival
April	Amsterdam (NL): BASE: How Safe is Fortress Europe?
	Maastricht (NL): Spring Agora
	Bratislava (SK): Quo Vadis Slovakia?
May	Lodz (PL): Step into Green
	Wien (A): Brainstorm – Exploring the Mind
	All over Europe : Journee de l’Europe / One European Night
	Karlsruhe (D): Genetically Engineered Food
	Kyiv (UA): Cloning
	Osnabrück & Münster (D): Peace Congress
	Enschede (NL): Towards a Knowledge Society
July	Transylvania (RO): Case Study Trip Transylvania
August	Treviso (I): Education and Employment
September	Cagliari (I): Presidents’ Meeting
	Augsburg (D): WASTEing Our Future
October	Amsterdam (NL): Sexuality in Europe
	Hamburg (D): Agora
	Heidelberg (D): Chances for a Sustainable Society
November	All over Europe: Socrates Action Day
	Ankara (TR): Universality of Human Rights
December	Ljubljana (SI): Tourism and Marketing

Faní Zarifopoúlou



Again a thousand and one engagements made it impossible for me to get from one place to another in time. I am late for my meeting with Faní Zarifopoúlou and start running until I dash into the restaurant, where I see her waiting, talking on her mobile phone. She smiles, nods towards me and continues her conversation, while I whisper an apology. The situation itself a déjà-vu of numerous similar ones, while we were together in the same European board of directors of AEGEE, she first as external relations responsible and then as president.

While talking with her, Faní radiates a certain sense of freedom, with her confident and almost theatrical, but still so natural nonchalance. Faní, who was born in November 1975 in Athens, has an independent style while standing firmly with both feet on the ground. This is a person who knows exactly what she wants.

Her very first European event was a conference in Edinburgh in November 1994. She already had some interest in environmental issues and wanted to travel to the United Kingdom. She did not expect to sleep in a freezing gym. "I was lucky to meet Rolf Wienkötter from Innsbruck. There couldn't be a better person to introduce me to AEGEE than him," she recalls. Somehow the event, revolving around environmental issues, managed to form an inescapable part of her image outside AEGEE. Her non-AEGEE friends continued to refer to her activities in the organisation as "saving the whales".

Soon she joined the board of AEGEE-Athina, becoming president in 1996. This was also the year that the autumn Agora took place in Athens, and Faní presided over the organising committee of 50 people. During the Agora she turned 21 and the whole plenary, filled with 500 people, sang Happy Birthday for her. "Organising the Agora was definitely the experience of a lifetime," she recalls. "Our team was fully committed to the idea of organising one of the best Agoras ever, not least because the previous Agora by our antenna, which took place on the island of Kos in 1992, had become an AEGEE legend."

Through organising this event, Faní learned a lot about the European level of the association, and decided to get more involved. Just five months later, in April 1997, she joined the very first Network Commission, as it was founded to bridge a growing gap between the European board and an ever rising network. Here too, people were soon asking her to take a lead – in 1998 Faní became speaker of the Network Commission.

When she finished studying law in Athens, she joined the Comité Directeur at the spring Agora in Barcelona in 1999, "to save the whales", as her friends continued to say. The previous CD had not fulfilled expectations and was almost entirely voted out. This allowed in a new team – one of the best ever. Faní's presentation was very clear in itself. She wanted the position of fund-raising responsible. She would take the challenge and give her best – knowing what she wanted, knowing herself and knowing how she could best support the association. Six months later, at the Agora in Poznan, she became president of AEGEE-Europe.

There lies the strength of her leadership qualities, joined with a certain instinct to approach people, all kinds of people, and make them feel free to be themselves, so they can give their best for what they believe in. She has such a natural skill to sense conflicts between people, such as those within her team, before they even erupt and to approach those con-

cerned in a very frank and direct, but trusting manner. It is these qualities which gave her the strength to be president of AEGEE, and based on which, others gave her their confidence and trusted her ability to captain the ship.

She does not like these compliments, waving them off with a loud and erratic "Kalla", meaning "Good" or rather "Enough" in Greek. It is theatrical, yet still natural. Faní has a different explanation for her success. "What was special about our CD is that it comprised many experienced members," she says. "We had a shared vision of the organisation, we knew what we wanted to achieve. We managed to put AEGEE on the right track and we had a great time doing so".

Asked for her biggest single achievement in AEGEE, she names her fundraising efforts for AEGEE-Europe. The need to ensure adequate funding for the activities of AEGEE especially at the European level had been a constant concern for the CD, especially since the EU grants can never be unlimited. "The decision to search for private funding was inevitable," says Faní. For that, AEGEE needed to turn more professional. "At the time, the concept of the AEGEE-Academy was being developed. We approached PriceWaterhouseCoopers with a proposal to become a partner of AEGEE-Europe. In this package, the idea of having professional trainers give lectures at a number of European Schools was included. The answer was positive," Faní recalls. "I believe that this initiative paved the way for a more professional approach to fundraising at the European level".

After leaving AEGEE in 2000, she decided to change direction, enrolling for postgraduate studies in Politics and Administration at the College of Europe in Bruges. "After all, I couldn't really bring myself to leave Belgium, so naturally I installed myself this year only an hour away from the head office of AEGEE-Europe". Today, she is back in Brussels, working at the European Parliament as an assistant to a Greek MEP.

"AEGEE most likely reflects the best part of my life," says Faní. AEGEE broadened her horizons and cultivated her mind. "Above all, and I speak now in my capacity as a Greek, AEGEE helped me to understand the Turkish point of view, adopt a more critical stance to the developments in my region and build upon great friendships I have made and kept".

Marcus Khoury

AUTHOR

Marcus Khoury, born in 1972, is half German and half Lebanese. He became a board member of AEGEE-Köln, was President of the Human Rights Working Group and joined the Comité Directeur in 1999, as its PR Director for one year. After finishing his Law degree in Munich, Marcus worked in Brussels and moved to Saudi Arabia in order to run his own legal firm in 2005.



Peace Academy: Giving hope

War is the norm; it is peace that is an exception: every minute countless wars are taking place on this planet. In August 2000, more than 150 AEGEE participants attended the two-week long Peace Summit in Kusadasi on the Turkish Aegean coast to discuss the issues of war and peace. This ambitious event was organised in collaboration with UNESCO and the European Youth Forum.

UNESCO even proclaimed the Peace Summit “Flagship Event of the International Year for the Culture of Peace”. It focused on conflicts in the Mediterranean region and in the Balkans, and on the impact these conflicts have on the stability of Europe. The organising team headed by AEGEE-Ankara worked on the structure and programme, while a team comprising various different AEGEE antennae collaborated on the preparation of case studies. Katerina Tsaligopoulou, at that time president of AEGEE-Athina and head of the Greek part of the organising team, remembers: “It was our aim for the Peace Summit to take place on a ship in the Aegean Sea, where democracy came from. A sea with no borders or walls.” Unfortunately that idea did not work out.

The Peace Summit started with a cocktail party at the ancient city of Ephesus, after which lectures on international relations and conflict management were held. Professor Burak Arikan from the Sabanci University in Istanbul discussed the increase of xenophobia, especially in Western Europe. “Xenophobia is not an individual fear, but one triggered across society by social and economic crises, such as the OPEC Oil Crisis in 1974,” he said. Case studies on eight different topics followed, before lectures and simulations about the techniques of conflict prevention and conflict resolution concluded the event. One of the highlights was the simulation of the conflict in Cyprus where the participants representing different parties discovered how tough it is to carry out fruitful negotiations.

The Peace Summit was the final event of AEGEE’s Year-plan project in 1999 entitled “Peace Academy”, aimed at creating a strong basis for a peaceful world tomorrow. Planning for the project began in spring 1998 at the local AEGEE branches in Athens, Ankara and Istanbul. It was coordinated by Basak Candemir and Dijan Albayrak from AEGEE-Ankara and became one of the largest projects in AEGEE history. 25 AEGEE antennae plus several working groups collaborated to analyse conflicts and consider ways of preventing them. “The 20th century has been the most dismal one throughout history, with all kinds of

conflicts: hot, cold, local, global, nuclear, primitive, ethnic, religious and ideological ones,” stated Dijan. Is there no way to prevent this strife? “Of course there are ways!”, confirms Dijan. “And our generation has an important role to play.”

The obvious need to make this project a reality created an unparalleled network of co-operation, resulting in 11 congresses, three Summer Universities, one film festival, one case study trip and several smaller seminars. The starting point was made by the Peace Concept congress, which took place in Turkey in February 1999, under the slogan “European Youth Gives Peace a Chance”. The events that followed in Berlin, Gdansk, Blagoevgrad, and many other cities did not just focus on particular aspects such as diplomacy, nationalism or the role of NGOs. They also addressed the specific situation of their own region. The series of seminars ended with a conference in Rotterdam and The Hague entitled “International Organisations Managing Armed Conflict”, dealing with the contribution of different organisations to international peace and thus approaching three different perspectives: international organisations, civil society and multinational corporations.

“We discovered that even we, as open-minded European students, have our own prejudices towards other cultures,” Dijan remembers. Also main actors in the supranational system do not have any clear plan for conflict prevention. “We should study this issue thoroughly and work at the grassroots level”, concludes Dijan. “The results of the Peace Academy clearly show that we need to be trained on the techniques of managing conflicts in our daily life.”

Olivier Genkin





Last steps on the bridge in Novi Sad

They were some of the last visitors before NATO started its air strikes against Yugoslavia: from 5th until 7th March 1999, AEGEE-Novı Sad hosted 250 participants for the spring Presidents' Meeting (PM). Less than two weeks later, many buildings which the participants had seen were destroyed, the most prominent one being the bridge over the Danube river. Nearly all the guests had crossed this river in order to walk up the castle hill. The political tension overshadowed the many topics and projects discussed, such as the Peace Academy project for 1999, and the Borderless Europe campaign for the year 2000. In addition, the AEGEE think tank "Task Force on Change" used the PM as a platform for discussions about the future scope and structure of the association.

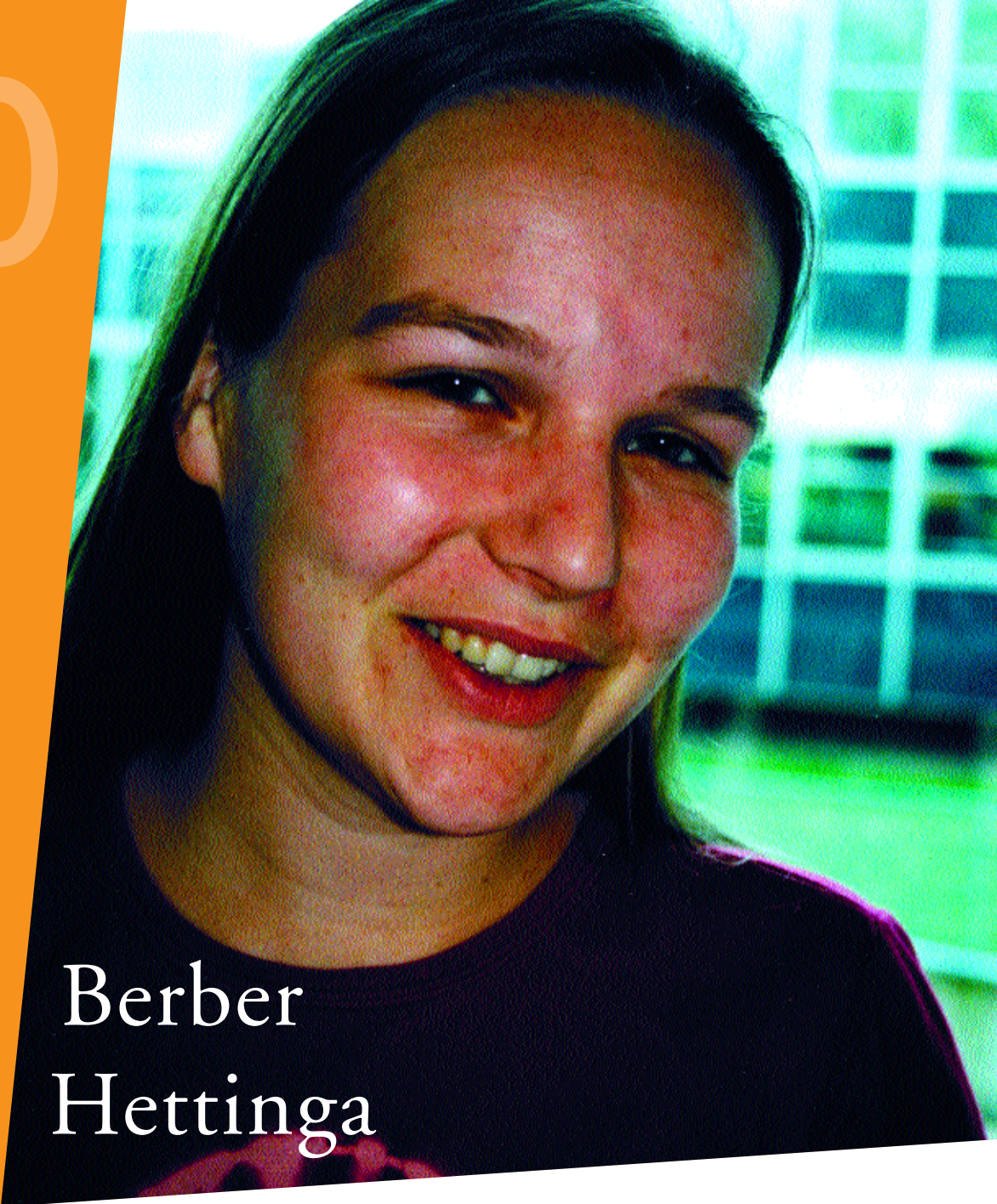
The friendliness and helpfulness of the organisers contributed to a positive spirit during the whole event. "It proved to us that we were right to make this PM here, after all", said CD member László Fésűs. Due to the imminent danger of war, many AEGEE members were afraid of going to Novi Sad, others even urged a change of the location to another city. "Our organising team also faced many problems. We had two tasks: fighting for support in the country and in the network," adds Jasna Bogdanovic, then president of AEGEE-Novı Sad. "From the beginning, we were aware that this organisation would be hard and full of upsets. We knew that we would have to confront a lot of questions, suspicions and doubts, but we also knew that we had enough resources and determination to resist the pressure". One of the most critical months was February, when in one moment it seemed that AEGEE-Novı Sad would have to cancel the event. "Finally our city authorities, in the very last moment after long negotiations, gave us full financial support, and, at the same time, the CD strongly supported our preparations," remembers Jasna.

The closing ceremony was a very special moment for the organising team. Jasna, Sasa, Pedja and all other people from AEGEE-Novı Sad stood on the stage realising that they had succeeded with one of the most controversial PMs ever. "Despite all the obstacles and difficulties we managed it. In a country where all normal human values had been discarded, where people were killing each other like animals, and where normal citizens did not have normal human rights, we had the opportunity to show Europe that there were still intelligent people who wanted progress and co-operation, no matter how and who is leading the country," Jasna concludes.

Gunnar Erth

Some event highlights of 1999

February	Delft (NL): Space-Tech Winterschool
	Groningen (NL): Immigration Policy
	Enschede (NL): Ancient Civilisations & Mysteries
	Timisoara (RO): Banat, a Model of Interculturality
March	Novı Sad (YU): Presidents' Meeting
	Brussel (B): Education for 2020
	Praha (CZ): European Student Mobility
April	Warszawa (PL): BASE Final Conference – Welfare State
	Gießen (D): European School
	Barcelona (E): Spring Agora
May	Amsterdam (NL): Sustainable Growth
	All over Europe: One European Night
	Groningen (NL): First Public Relations European School
September	All over Europe: Peace Action Day
	Adana (TR): Presidents' Meeting
October	Blagoevgrad (BG): Nationalism & Peace in the Balkans
	Valletta (M): Peace in the Mediterranean
November	Poznan (PL): Autumn Agora
	Beograd & Nis & Novı Sad (YU): War in Yugoslavia
	Leiden (NL): The Power of Diplomacy
	Heidelberg (D): France and Germany
	Treviso & Venezia (I): Renaissance and Modern Arts
	Timisoara (RO): Ten Years of Transition in Romania
December	Berlin & Gdansk (D/PL): Poland & Germany
In 1999, altogether 108 conferences, trainings, cultural and statutory meetings were organised, plus 90 Summer Universities.	

A close-up portrait of a young woman with long dark hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a dark-colored top. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a window with a grid pattern.

Berber Hettinga

"The first AEGEE person I met was Caroline Bruins, who in 1997 was Treasurer of AEGEE-Europe. She was walking around Utrecht promoting AEGEE, wearing the European flag as a dress and wonderful blue gloves. I was very impressed. I thought a cross-border organisation would be a good thing to join - and I never regretted it for a second!" In her own words, Berber Hettinga, graduate of International and European Law, explains how she discovered AEGEE. Her name is connected to one of the most innovative project in AEGEE: the Borderless Europe Rally, a road race of competing teams across Europe in summer 2000.

What things will you always remember from AEGEE?

Of course the Borderless Europe Rally was my main achievement. However, I enjoyed everything else I did, too: being president of AEGEE-Utrecht in 1999/2000, secretary and project responsible of the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG), board member of the Visa Freedom Fighters and delegate to the Members Commission. During all my travels to beautiful places I simply couldn't resist coming to the Balkans again and again. I simply love it here. Don't know why. One moment that I will never forget was when people from Cyprus joined the AEGEE network at the 1998 Agora in Hamburg - both Turkish and Greek Cypriots cooperating. Even though in the end it didn't work out as planned, with



active antennae on both sides of the island, I still consider it a very memorable and maybe even historic event.

What are your memories of the year 2000? What did you do and what were the hot issues in that time?

Well, 2000 was one of the busiest years in AEGEE for me. I was president of AEGEE-Utrecht, which was organising the spring Agora then, and there were some other projects going on too. Then of course there was the Borderless Europe Rally. I celebrated the Millennium New Year in Macedonia during the ski week of AEGEE-Skopje. It was my first time in the Balkans and was infected immediately with the Balkan virus - now I live here. I also participated in the Peace Summit, which had a great programme both socially and in contents.

The Borderless Europe project was truly outstanding. Can you tell more about it?

I was only part of the Borderless Europe Rally team. Sebastian Klüsener, at the time Project Responsible in the CD, presented me with the plan of the Borderless Europe Rally and he asked me if AEGEE-Utrecht was interested in organising it. We were already extremely busy, but it was an offer I couldn't refuse. The first draft proposal was quite an impossible route through practically all countries in

Europe, including a trip to North and South Cyprus. The idea was wonderful though, so we took it up. One of the aims of the project was to do some kind of concrete research into the borders of Europe. However, there was definitely not enough time to answer all the questions of the assignments in our short visits to all these places. It was, on the other hand, great to see that some borders are easily overcome or don't exist at all. However, if it would be repeated today, there would still be considerable problems for citizens from Turkey, Ukraine and some former Yugoslav countries, among others.

What does AEGEE mean to you? What did you gain from it personally as well as professionally?

AEGEE meant a lot to me during my years as a student. Even now it is still really important to me, and not just in memories. I met many great people who are still dear friends. We still keep in touch even though our AEGEE time is over. I gained friends, experiences, skills, strength, vision and many other things. Professionally I think it will help me a lot, considering the skills and variety of work experience. Maybe my network of people will also lead to something good. Who knows?

What are you doing at the moment?

At the moment I live and work in Sarajevo. I graduated in International Law in Utrecht in March 2004 and set off to travel around the Balkans, looking for a job. I found one here in Sarajevo as Executive Officer of the new NGO International Committee for Human Rights. It's a great organisation and I love being in Sarajevo. And, although I ended my membership of AEGEE more than a year ago, I'm a member again with the recently established AEGEE-Sarajevo. I'm not too much of an active member, because my time has passed, but it's nice to be able to help the people here and transfer my knowledge. I want to continue working in the field of human rights, preferably for a few more years in the Balkans and then maybe somewhere on another continent. Then later on maybe I can teach at a university. I would like to see even more of the world and hope to meet many more great people, like I did in AEGEE.

AUTHOR

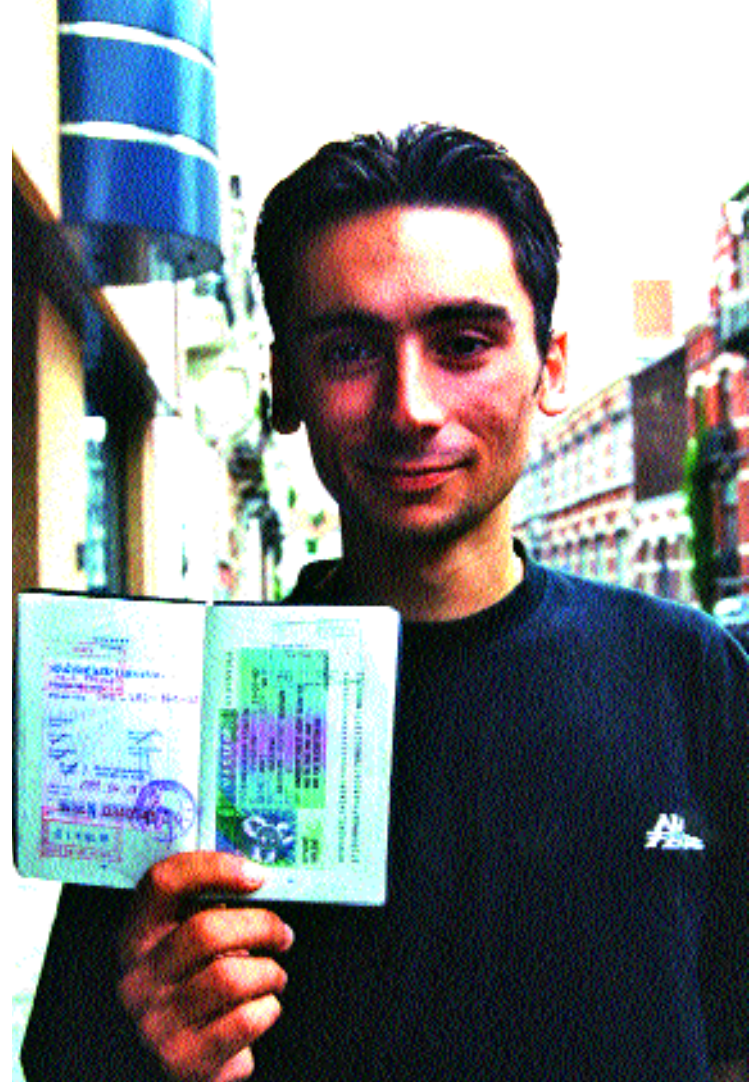
Urska Speh, born on 22nd April 1982, joined AEGEE-Ljubljana in April 2003. "I was looking for a chance to express myself with more than just drawing plans and designs," says the architecture student. So far she has organised one exchange, helped to create this publication, became a board member of her antenna and is organising AEGEE-Ljubljana's Summer University in 2005.



Rally against borders

What borders do we still need in Europe? This was the question that the 2000/01 Yearplan Project “Borderless Europe” tried to answer. Throughout the project, AEGEE gave young Europeans the chance to discover the roles offered to them by the concept of borderless Europe, both in their personal lives and the societies they live in. “Mobility is one of the key elements in building a true European identity,” stated Oana Mailatescu, president of AEGEE-Europe. “Only by traveling, living and working in foreign countries are we able to discover our common characteristics and the needs that we share.” However, the reality is far from that, regrets Sebastian Klüsener, CD member in charge of European projects. “While more and more barriers to free movement of goods, services and capital are being removed, those for humans often remain”.

The project was based upon five thematic pillars: “Concept of Physical Borders”, “Overcoming Mental Borders”, “Mobility of Students”, “Mobility of Labour” and “Mobility of European Citizens - Visa Requirements”. A total of 16 conferences and seminars were scheduled from May 2000 to May 2001, starting with the conference “Europe of 15+” held at the European Parliament in Brussels and finishing with the Final Conference in Cluj-Napoca in May 2001. The Borderless Europe Rally – highlight of the entire project – pushed young Europeans to their limits by putting mobility into practice, while an essay contest allowed AEGEE members to express their theories and reflections on the topic. Almost 3000 people were actively involved in the project. It was Markus Schönherr and Marcus Khoury who came up with the idea of a rally, as they crossed the Spanish-French border after the Agora in Barcelona, in May 1999. This border crossing is hardly noticeable to EU citizens, but can mark the end of a journey for non-EU citizens if their passports lack the right stamps. The rally finally took place between 20th July and 10th August 2000. Its concept was to send out teams of people across our continent to find out how easy it really is to be mobile in today’s Europe. Before the event, participants did not know the route they would have to take. In 20 days between Prague, Brussels and many other cities, the 27 rally participants of 11 different nationalities covered more than 8000 kilometres with a global Interrail ticket, and crossed a total of 20 borders. The rally consisted of 12 phases, each lasting two days. Initially it was done in the form of a “who



arrives first” competition, but then it was decided that group assignments should also play an important role. These assignments brought the participants in contact with the local inhabitants and their culture – for example, finding out the conditions for being able to study in that country. During the rally, the teams also did menial jobs to earn money to pay for bus tickets, in case they could not travel by train.

However, the organising team faced many problems. The original plan was for the whole group to travel together, to all the destinations, but in the end some people were unable to get the visas they needed. Thus, individual routes had to be created for some participants. Another major problem was the ongoing uncertainty concerning funds for the project. Just one month before the start of the Rally, it was still unclear if AEGEE would be able to finance it. “But in the end, thanks to help from the Management Centre Europe and the great team spirit of all the people involved, it worked after all,” remembers Berber Hettinga from AEGEE-Utrecht, who coordinated the rally together with Lieke Kraut. “There were great moments of fun and also tough moments. One thing that was clear was that Europe definitely isn’t borderless,” says Berber. “It was also quite tough to spend three weeks on a train going from one place to another and usually just staying one or two days in each place.” However, the organisers had created a slogan for their T-shirts to remind participants when things got tough: “We never said it would be easy!”

Read more about the rally on www.aegEE.org/rally.

Urska Speh

Education for Democracy

“Education for democracy must be education for dignity, and this requires both a readiness to struggle and freedom from hatred.” Nothing describes better the idea behind the project Education for Democracy than this quote by the Polish philosopher Leszek Kolokowski. As part of the UNESCO project Culture of Peace, AEGEE started Education for Democracy in 2000 to give young, skilled and politically and socially active students from Serbia and Kosovo the chance of a high-profile education, spending a year at a university in a country with an established democratic system.

The events that took place both in Kosovo and the other parts of Yugoslavia in the 90's and the current situation in that region had certain effects on the system of higher education. AEGEE saw the need and took the challenge. The University of Pristina had not been re-opened for Albanian students until after the war in 1999; students there and

elsewhere faced very poor study conditions. By enabling them to study abroad under normal circumstances and to personally experience a stable democratic environment, this continuing project hopes to encourage the participants to push for reforms in their respective countries.

The concept was developed in detail during the Agora in Barcelona in May 1999 and the Agora in Poznan in November of the same year, and saw the formation of a team that could work permanently on the project. They approached universities and foundations and established invaluable contacts with various organizations dealing with South-eastern Europe and higher education such as the Independent Students' Union of Serbia in Belgrade, the Pristina office of the World University Service and the European Rectors Conference. In January 2000, the call for applications was issued in Belgrade and Pristina. The response of the students was overwhelming.

The month before the students arrived in autumn 2000 was the busiest period for the coordination team: the selected students had to be assigned to and enrolled in the various host universities, and all the paperwork related to visa and residents' permits had to be finalised. Although most authorities turned out to be quite helpful, sponsors had yet to be contacted, since at that stage, the project was not fully financed. However, in September and October 2000, the project team was finally able to welcome the guests, and very soon they were at home in their new environment.

During the academic year 2000/1 a total of 14 students from Serbia and Kosovo went to study at Dutch and German universities. The students also met regularly for seminars on topics relevant to the present and future of South-eastern Europe. The main goal of these seminars was not only to provide a deeper insight into the topics presented, but also to provoke discussions and to establish a group which could become an anchor for future activities after the students' return to their home universities, enhancing dialogue among future decision makers of different ethnic backgrounds and also launching a European network including students from South-eastern Europe as well as young Europeans from other parts of the continent.

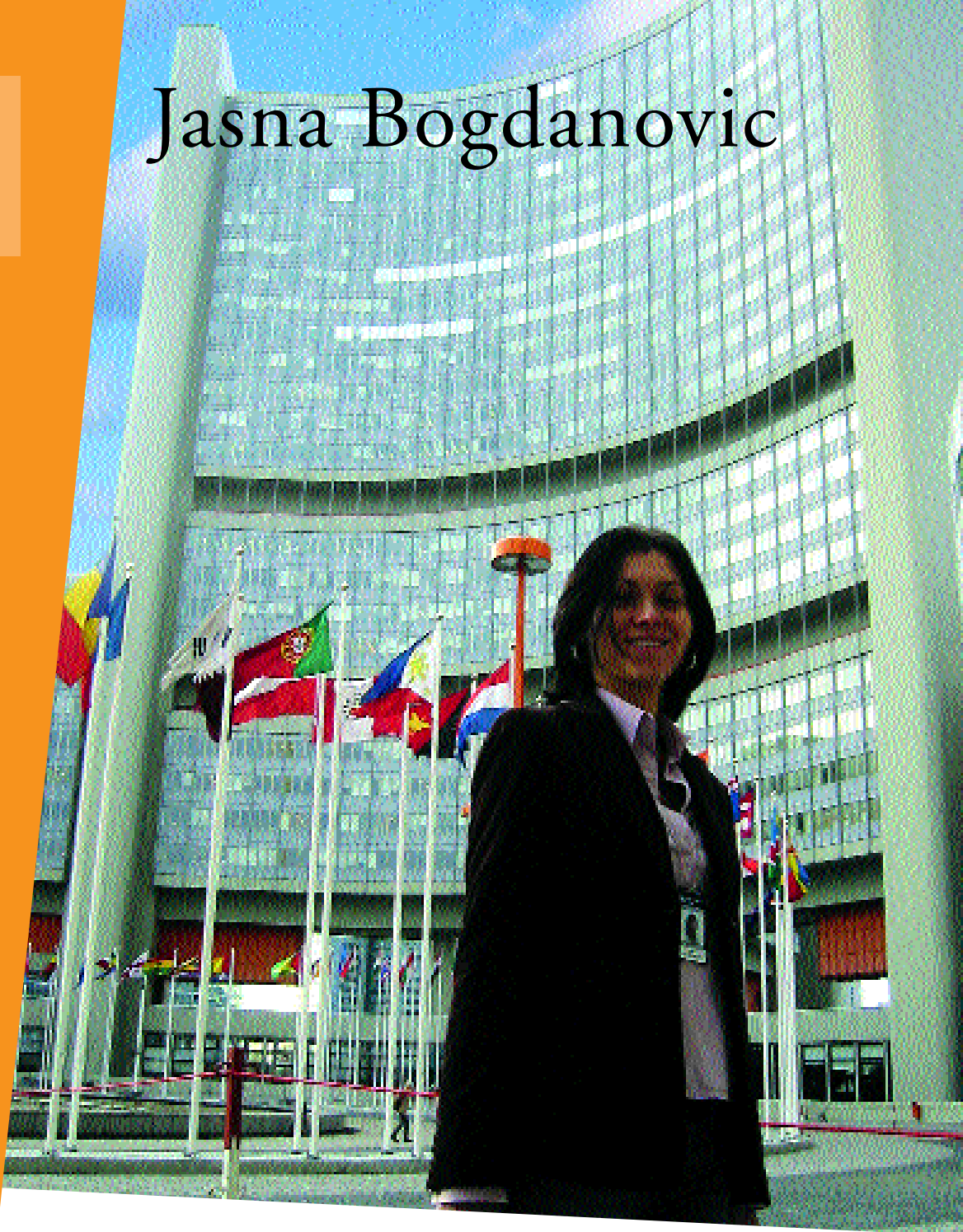
Despite the Serb revolution in October 2000, the need for this scholarship programme still exists. In 2005, AEGEE organises it for the fifth time. In the academic year 2001/2 Serb and Kosovar-Albanian students were joined by their peers from Macedonia and Montenegro and in 2004/5 by students from the Southern Caucasus. The programme continues to be entirely student-run. One year of practical experience can help much more than years of theoretical studies. After experiencing practical aspects of European integration, the participants should return home well equipped to contribute to democracy-building in their home countries.

Urska Speh

Some event highlights of 2000

February	Enschede (NL): Challenges of the Information Society
	London (UK): Britain in Europe?
März	Skopje (MK): Presidents' Meeting & Folklore
	Budapest (H): Bridges to Kosov
April	Bratislava (SK): Non-Europeans in Society
	Wroclaw (PL): Crime Story – Crime in Poland and Europe
	Napoli (I): Euro School
	Brescia (I): European School 1
May	Utrecht (NL): Jobfair and Spring Agora
	Kaiserslautern (D): Fast Food Society
June	Brussel (B): Mobility – The Europe of 15+
July/August	Praha to Brussel: Borderless Europe Rally
	Barcelona (E): European School 2
August	Kusadasi (TR): Peace Summit
September	Szeged (H): Presidents' Meeting
	Praha & Liblice (CZ): European School 1
	Alba Iulia (RO): No Visa: Dream or Reality to Come?
October	All over Europe: Socrates Action Week
November	Udine (I): Autumn Agora
	Valletta (M): Mobility in Education
	Barcelona (E): Media Revolution in Europe
	Karlsruhe (D): Web design for Everyone
December	Nice (F): European Citizenship – Europe of the People
In 2000, altogether 137 conferences, trainings, cultural events and statutory meetings were organised, plus 91 Summer Universities.	

Jasna Bogdanovic



“I am an engineer”. Whenever a situation looks desperate or an obstacle looms large, Jasna Bogdanovic puts on a smile and – with the above quote – gets to work. I can think of no better way to sum up the spirit of Jasna, born in Sremska Mitrovica in 1976, than this sentence. Her mixture of optimism, energy, dedicated hard work and a very human approach are characteristics that have shown clearly throughout her eight years in AEGEE.

Jasna, a graduate in oil-petrochemical engineering at the Faculty of Technology in Novi Sad, joined AEGEE-Novı Sad in 1995. Describing her first steps in AEGEE: “At a students’ conference in Maribor, I met Livija Jakovljevic, the contact person for AEGEE-Novı Sad. Shortly after, Livija invited me to participate in the co-ordination meeting for the Case Study Trip (CST) to Former Yugoslavia,” says Jasna. Helping to organise the CST, and especially meeting its Dutch coordinators Heino van Houwelingen and Erwin de Bruin inspired Jasna to become a more active member. In 1997 she was elected president of AEGEE Novı Sad, going on to organise the conference “National Minorities” in Vojvodina in March 1998 and the Spring Presidents’ Meeting (PM) in March 1999 – two weeks before the Nato airstrikes against her country began.

AEGEE in Serbia was quite critical towards the Milosevic government. "The period was difficult and challenging, but fortunately, AEGEE-Noví Sad had very devoted active members. We also had great support from our families and friends on the one side and the AEGEE network on the other", says Jasna. She and her team tried to strike a balance between minimum risk and maximum benefit. "When we organised the conference 'National Minorities in Vojvodina', the hottest spot in the country was Kosovo and the status of the Albanian minority there. A majority of participants wanted to discuss this issue. This was quite dangerous, so we organised closed workshops".

Problems with the government continued throughout the Milosevic government. During the first two years of AEGEE-Noví Sad's existence, between 1995 and 1997, the local authorities refused to register the organisation. "They told us we should be registered as a political party. We appealed to the supreme court, but our appeal was refused," remembers Jasna bitterly. And even worse – shortly before AEGEE-Noví Sad organised its Minorities conference, Jasna ended up in the local police station for interrogation. "I was accused of betraying the country and collaborating with Serbia's enemies; Albanians and internationals. Luckily this was just a provocation, with no real evidence, and the case was closed after I refused to give a statement and brought my lawyer to the police station".

This episode underlines two of Jasna's strongest characteristics: goal-orientation and persistence. However, after the successful Presidents' Meeting, Jasna felt she had to leave the country because the political atmosphere was getting steadily worse. When she got her visa to attend Agora-Barcelona in May 1999, she loved Catalunya so much that she decided to stay. Raul Daoussa, president of AEGEE-Barcelona, gave her shelter during her claim for political asylum – and over these months, love blossomed... they eventually married a year later.

In 2001 the new couple moved to Belgrade, where Jasna was soon involved in several environmental projects. "2001 was definitely the best year for me in AEGEE,"



says Jasna. "Finally I could see the results of my personal efforts, when other people continued running AEGEE-Noví Sad with the same enthusiasm and ideals as me. That year finished with the successful organisation of the fifth PR European School".

Despite all the obstacles, Jasna really enjoyed the positive Balkan spirit of AEGEE. This is clearly in evidence when AEGEE members from the five republics of ex-Yugoslavia meet. "When you grew up with the same language, the same movies, music and jokes there is no border or politics which can stop you, at least for a moment, from uniting again".

Despite being one of the best known and most experienced AEGEE members, Jasna never considered joining the CD. "I never felt ready for that," she explains. "It's a huge responsibility and I was just not sure that I would be able to satisfy all expectations. Also, it would have been financially difficult". Instead, Jasna took care of her own antenna, giving each active member their own personal training session. This allowed AEGEE-Noví Sad to grow steadily, without the ups and downs of other Balkan antennae in that period.

"Jasna was always a great example to the younger generation in AEGEE," says Pedja Popic, one of her best friends – and a successor as local president. "She is not only very precise, analytical, detailed and reliable, but also a perfect team-worker". Among her many positive characteristics, Pedja most appreciates Jasna's readiness to support her friends. "She is a very tolerant person, always full of understanding. She is sincere, yet fully tactful and trustful when needed. She's a friend who you can totally rely on".

Since 2003, Jasna, who studies German and Arabic in her free time, has worked in Vienna for UNEP GRID-Arendal. She is a consultant on the Environment and Security Initiative programme developed by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), OSCE, NATO and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). "In AEGEE I gained a lot of experience in project management, PR, team building and working in a international environment, which are essential in my present job. I hope that very soon I will have the opportunity to collaborate with the AEGEE network again, but this time through my job."

Jasna still has one big suggestion for AEGEE. "Our network should follow the trend of globalisation, considering that the goal of integration of Europe is almost reached. We should establish AEGEE-Africa, AEGEE-Asia or AEGEE-America, with the same structure as AEGEE-Europe. These continental AEGEEs could all meet on an annual basis," proposes Jasna. "The content of their activities would depend on the region – for example, human rights, the environment, energy, food, health and diseases." If more people in AEGEE develop Jasna's qualities of a true engineer, this target would be easily within reach.

Gunnar Erth

Quo Vadis Europe?

Last year, we were witnesses to the biggest enlargement of the EU, and an enlargement that is likely to continue. However, just a few years before the 1st May 2004, only 43 percent of the citizens of the Union supported the enlargement and the numbers in favour from candidate countries was dropping alarmingly. What were the reasons behind it? Was it lack of information on the possible benefits of enlargement, or other concerns? That is why in the spring of 2000, AEGEE decided that during its general assembly in Utrecht it should concentrate throughout the following year on the issue of EU enlargement.

The Yearplan project Quo Vadis Europe tried to analyse the consequences of the accession of the then 13 countries wanting to join the EU. This was done by an open debate on the four main pillars of the issue: the impact of enlargement on societies, the citizens' role in the EU, the cultural dimension of the enlargement and the macropolitical dimension. These were addressed through activities open to all students, not just to AEGEE members, and enjoyed support not just within the network but also from major actors in European politics such as the then Enlargement Commissioner Gunter Verheugen and Walter Schwimmer, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe.

The project was opened in April 2001 with a conference organised in Lund, Sweden, which, together with three other events that followed, provided the background for more specialised discussions. "In addition, formal debate competitions brought a new light on the enlargement issue and aided the development of communication and presentation abilities," as Andrei Popescu argued. He coordinated the debate competition "U&eUrope" by AEGEE-Bucuresti within the

project. Another activity that successfully involved a great number of participants was an essay contest, in which students and young professionals were asked to share their opinions on the future of Europe. The winner, Arianna Checci, who was not an AEGEE member, concluded: "To be part of the European society calls for the possession of a double identity: a national one based on ethno-cultural elements and a trans-national one based on a common background and common interests".

Nonetheless, the highlight of the project was probably "The Summit of the 28", a simulation of the decision making process in an enlarged EU, organised by the International Politics Working Group and the Comité Directeur of AEGEE-Europe. The event took place between the 1st and 4th of October 2001 in the European Parliament in Brussels and brought together more than 150 people. The participants assumed the roles of the parallel European Council, Council of Ministers of Finance and the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in a Union of 25 states. "It was simply great. The impressive location, the smart suits, the organisers, the participants that got so much from their roles, and the lobbying going on during the breaks and parties," says Catalin Nacu, a participant from Bucharest. "All these made it more than just a game".

During the final conference in Utrecht, the participants were divided into four working groups, each of them concentrating on one of the main pillars. In the closing assembly with more than 250 people the results were discussed. Afterwards, a forum which gathered prominent players from the European affairs scene proved to the participants that many of their opinions were shared by high officials.

Radu Racareanu



Socrates Promoters on the Move

“Socrates on the Move” was one of the most remarkable projects in 2000 and 2001. The concept was original and daring, complex and imaginative: a multinational group of Socrates Promoters was selected by a steering committee consisting of representatives from three of the main student organisations in Europe and from the European Commission. The main task of the Promoters was to present the Socrates programme to students and European universities, as well as other target groups, in order to teach them to identify available opportunities and to take the necessary steps to benefit from them.

For the very first time, AEGEE-Europe, the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) and the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) co-operated in a joint project. This initiative was of huge importance to the European Commission, DG Education and Culture. Next to the promo-

tion of the Socrates programme, the idea was also to inform about and to discuss issues such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the Diploma Supplement and Europass, and student mobility in general.

“The project very much fitted in with AEGEE’s philosophy,” says Sebastian Klüsener, at that time projects’ director of AEGEE-Europe. “Again, we got financial assistance to promote the Socrates Programme as we had done it in the regular Socrates Action Days from 1997 on. Apart from this it served as a very good opportunity to find and motivate members to join the European level of our association.”

As preparation, the promoters gathered for a training seminar in April 2000 where general information about Socrates was given, and participants were also trained in soft skills such as presentation techniques. Andrei Popescu from AEGEE-Bucuresti explains: “Socrates on the Move was a project with great qualities: an attractive name, a good plan and a noble aim. And, luckily enough, it also had great people to carry it out. They were the Socrates Promoters and I was proud to be one of them.”

One could say that Socrates on the Move was one of the most challenging projects AEGEE ever organized - with 50 people coming from 27 different countries, thus with very different expectations and cultural baggage. Moreover, with three student organisations as well as the European Commission, there were four organisations, and thus four organisational cultures and four visions, co-operating and sometimes conflicting.

However, at the final conference of the 2000/1 edition, where the results were put together and a possible continuation was discussed, the partners agreed to continue with the project. In the second year, 50 more Socrates Promoters were selected, again almost half of them coming from AEGEE. With at least five events per person, more than 500 activities were carried out in these two years, so that in total more than 10,000 students have been reached. The activities were very diverse, ranging from presentations to seminars and more original ideas. “I would dare to say that the AEGEE promoters were among the most enthusiastic about the project and promoted Erasmus in some of the most original ways, using jazz concerts as a PR tool and creating a sub-network of promoters,” reports Andrei, who was project officer in the second year and is currently working for the Socrates National Agency in Bucharest.

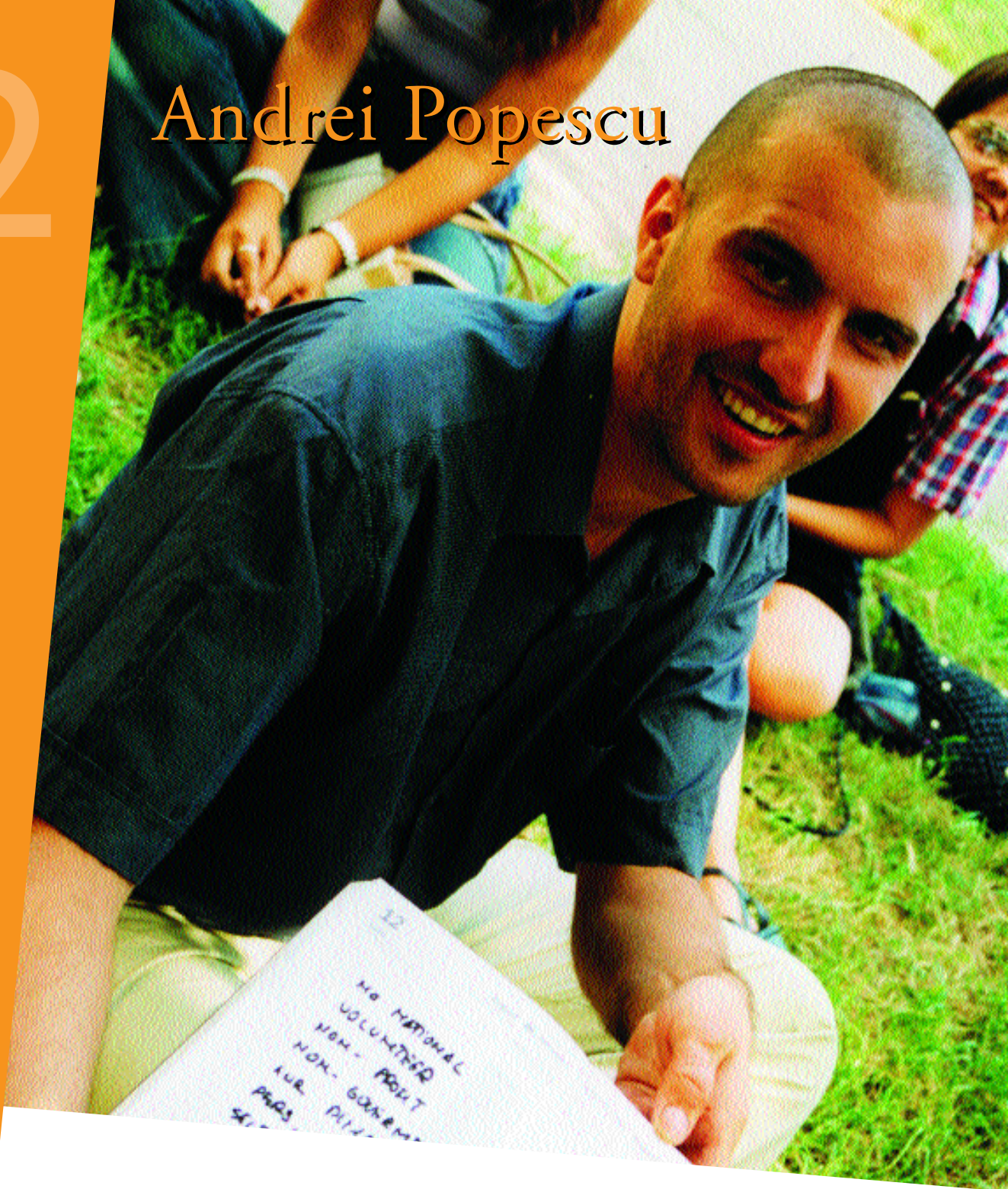
Sergio Maestri, member of the steering group of the first year on behalf of AEGEE states that, besides increasing the visibility of AEGEE at a large number of universities and training new active members, Socrates on the Move was a great opportunity for AEGEE to successfully lobby for Socrates in Turkey. In Andrei’s words: “The Move changed my life and the life of many others.”

Olivier Genkin

Some event highlights of 2001

February	Münster & Enschede (D/NL): Border Regions
	Istanbul (TR): The Future of Socrates
March	Katowice (PL): Presidents’ Meeting
	Blagoevgrad (BG): NGOs & EU Enlargement
	Berlin&Poznan (D/PL): Cyber Society
April	Lund (S): Quo Vadis Europe – Opening Conference
	Athina (GR): European School 1 & Orthodox Easter
	Wroclaw (PL): Let’s Play Green
	Cluj-Napoca (RO): Borderless Europe: Final Conference
May	Constanta (RO): Agora
	Passau (D): Judaism in Europe Today
July	Utrecht (NL): European School 2
August	Tirgu-Mures (RO): Bike Case Study Tisza River
September	Valletta (M): Planning Meeting
	All over Europe: European Day of Languages
	London (UK): Foot&Mouth and Rock&Roll
	Kirovohrad (UA): Fashion in Ukraine
October	Brussel (B): Parliament of 28 Simulation
	Ankara (TR): Agora/Euroscepticism/Politics in Cinema
November	All over Europe: Socrates Action Week
	Pécs (H): Globalisation & Sustainable Development
	Beograd & Istanbul (YU/TR): Youth for SEE Training
	Torino (I): Severe Human Rights Violations
December	Brussel (B): Quo Vadis Europe? – Final Conference
In 2001, altogether 112 conferences, trainings, cultural events and statutory meetings were organised – plus 85 Summer Universities.	

Andrei Popescu



Imagine a long seminar. After hours of tiring lectures and discussions, a new lecturer enters the room. With a winning smile, he looks at you and starts his presentation. It's catchy, full of practical examples, interactive, gripping – it makes you laugh, think, smile. That's the style of Andrei Popescu. The Romanian with the unbeatable charisma was officer of the project "Socrates on the Move" and also Speaker of the Network Commission and the Education Working Group. He also organised one of the most spectacular statutory meetings ever: the Agora in Constanta in May 2003.

"The funny thing is that I never officially joined AEGEE, but another organisation that later merged with AEGEE," says Andrei Popescu. In October 1996, Andrei took part in a seminar on Nationalism in Presov, Slovakia, but in the name of this other association. When Andrei became part of the very young AEGEE-Bucuresti, he took the chance to transform it into one of the most professional antennae in the entire network: an AEGEE branch with 200 members, organising several international events every year. "My reason for this strong involvement was definitely the fact that I realised that my first impression was so wrong," he says. "Secondly, I was there from the very beginning of AEGEE-Bucuresti, and I felt a

lot like it was my baby.” Another reason was that AEGEE-Bucuresti gave him the chance to discover and redefine himself, he adds. “However, the main reason for my strong love for AEGEE was the people. Nice, ugly, funny, cool, nasty, friendly, but most of the time very real people”.

Soon, Andrei discovered that being president of his antenna was not enough for him anymore. He became interested in European projects, especially in the field of education. “The field of non-formal education, aside from the curricula, fascinated me. There, things are more real, not done for the sake of a paper to be obtained at the end,” Andrei stresses. In 2000, he became one of about 50 Socrates promoters within the project “Socrates on the Move”, a co-operation of AEGEE, ESIB and ESN. The following year, he became co-ordinator of the second edition of the project. The same year, he was voted into the Network Commission, whose speaker he became the year after. “The academic year 2000/1 was without doubt my best time in AEGEE. Also, AEGEE-Bucuresti was booming and a lot of cool projects started then”.

The biggest adventure was still to come though, turning Andrei into a legend. “We had a fantastic team and wanted to take the challenge to organise an Agora for 1000 people in spring 2003. In Ceaucescu’s Palace of the People, the second-biggest building in the world”. Everything was arranged, until he received disastrous news two weeks before the start of the statutory meeting. “All public employees got a week off because of Easter and 1st of May. And without them, we could not get into the building,” relives Andrei this hard moment.

Within two weeks, a new location had to be found. “We couldn’t do it on the same in Bucharest on the same quality level. So we decided to transfer the whole Agora to Constanta on the coast of the Black Sea”. With help from the government, Andrei and his team managed to get their own train, reserved for the participants and organisers, waiting at the last platform of Bucharest’s central station. “The train trip was just like one big party - 650 people together on a sunny spring day,” says Andrei. “But it was the most ambivalent event ever, some sort of extreme sport of events. I loved it and hated it just as much”. Despite all the shortcomings of this improvised Agora, the participants simply loved the ability of Andrei’s team to improvise and to create a hospitable atmosphere. The proof: the organisers received standing ovations in the closing ceremony.

However, couldn’t this crisis have been avoided? “I know I’m not the smartest, the funniest, the best planner. I can also be an arrogant bastard that wants to prove he is always right,” he admits. “My strength is that I have a nose for people. And I was lucky to be surrounded by a lot of wonderful people”.

In the past couple of years, Andrei became a frequent trainer at European Schools. “The secret is to make the people behave naturally and be more talkative,”

he says. “You can, for example, just show up and bring beer. You get the same effect if you just let the people be, to express themselves. Another hint: every ten minutes, do something different in your workshop or lecture.”

Despite his popularity and success on European level in AEGEE, Andrei never seriously considered joining the CD. “It was a lack of courage and a lack of money. I also excused myself saying that I could do better from home”. Even today, Andrei has not yet fully left AEGEE. “I am almost retired. I just want to give it one more try with a new wonderful project called YnterACT, based on informal education of course”.

Today, Andrei works for the Socrates National Agency Romania, dealing with the Grundtvig Programme. He prefers to work for an institution rather than the private sector, despite the fact that he could earn much more there. “Earn more money you mean, but here my life is continuously a new experience. Maybe sometime, I will get into business, but then working for myself”. Until then, he enjoys the freedom that his employer gives him. Only the view from his office window is a bit disturbing – it faces Ceaucescu’s palace. “Not the nicest view, but one with special memories,” Andrei says with an ironic smile on his face.

Gunnar Erth



Eureca - European Education Campaign

Eureca... does that ring a bell? Probably your first association is not with an AEGEE project but with Aristoteles' famous exclamation, meaning "I got it". Well, what did we want to get from our project European Education Campaign (Eureca)? We aimed to make students more aware of ongoing developments in European higher education, such as the Bologna and Lisbon processes. We also analysed the different stakeholders in education, such as students, universities, governments, NGOs, companies and media. We wanted to be in the right place at the right time, taking part in the consultations for the next round of European education programmes due to start in 2007.

The last aim in particular motivated me to join the project team. As I had seen a number of projects set up just to offer a convenient frame for several conferences, without having any real aim, I was very happy to discover one that could actually make a difference. We had a clear goal to reach: drafting a proposal for a new line of action in a future EU education programme. Over the summer of 2001 – just after I left the Comité Directeur – our team designed the project structure for 2002. So I went straight from being president of AEGEE-Europe to managing this project, another new experience for me. I worked from my home in Passau with people in Brussels/Valladolid (Pedro Panizo), Cluj-Napoca (Diana Filip), Gdansk (Karolina Pomorska), Robin Eekhout (Delft) and many others. Virtual communications were indispensable to us, but even so, working together across thousands of kilometres is a huge challenge for a European project team. Another big challenge for us was fundraising. Going to the Education Commissioner's cabinet and asking bluntly for a million Euro was perhaps not the smartest approach, but at least we gave it a try. Unfortunately, we soon discovered that the idea didn't sell. In the end, we set up two other projects - UniDebate and Erasmus Action Week. For them it was easier to raise money, which enabled us also to cover costs for Eureca. Luckily, many locals supported us in organising the first event of the project: the Education Action Week in February 2002. From April to July five conferences in Enschede, Cluj-Napoca, Krakow, Barcelona and Tartu each dealt with different stakeholders in education. I particularly welcomed the idea of



rounding up the results in an Education Study Meeting. We presented concrete proposals to experts in a seminar in October 2002. Their feedback made clear that we needed to set up a pilot project, to check the feasibility of our ideas. So we abandoned the idea of a bombastic final conference, instead asking the European board to carry out a pilot on our behalf. Unfortunately, this part of the project was never completed. So the report of our findings to the European Commission could only contain broad, untested ideas. We recommended that in future, elements of the current programme should be regrouped according to the stages of life. We also suggested the inclusion of a form of blended learning, combining aspects of traditional classroom teaching, e-learning and correspondence courses to merge physical with virtual mobility. I have no regrets that I took on the challenge of managing Eureca. It enriched my knowledge about project management and gave me the chance to see AEGEE from a different angle, even at the price of occasional clashes with the CD, or dealing with disappointing attendance levels at some conferences. We learnt our lessons and that is what AEGEE is all about. **Karina Häuslmeier**

AUTHOR

Karina Häuslmeier joined AEGEE-Passau in 1998, and soon became its treasurer and president. In May 2000 she joined the CD as Treasurer, and six months later she was elected president of AEGEE-Europe. Karina is the first president since 1992 who served more than one six-month term. Karina has studied International Business and Culture in Passau, followed by a Masters in European Studies in Berlin. In 2005 she started a diplomatic career at the German Foreign Office.



Nomads in the job market

The European job market concerns every European student. AEGEE has spent a lot of energy on this topic over the past 20 years. This experience offered a solid foundation for the project Global Employee (GE) in 2002, which combined academic discussions on issues of labour mobility and European entrepreneurship with practical contacts between employers and students. The project consisted of five seminars, two job fairs, an essay contest, a European Survey and a final conference, all taking place between January and October 2002.

The following issues were discussed more intensively: international employee mobility, ICT and the European divide, loosening national identity and European entrepreneurship. During the seminars, the project provided selected participants and invited companies with the opportunity to meet with each other in private consultations.

Some event highlights of 2002

January	Maastricht (NL): United – 10 Years Maastricht Treaty
February	All over Europe : Eureka – Education Action Week
March	Helsinki (FIN): Planning Meeting
	Madrid (E): CINEmad – Cinema and Culture
	Targu-Mures (RO): Sustainable Development
April	Enschede (NL): Eureka – Opening Conference
	Barcelona (E): Global Employee – The New Nomad
	Eindhoven (NL): Media School
	Cluj-Napoca (RO): Impact of Enlargement on Education
	Utrecht (NL): Quo Vadis Europe? Final Conference
May	Amsterdam (NL): Agora
	Barcelona (E): Eureka – Institutions & Students' Future
	Passau (D): Express yourself – Nonverbal Communication
July	Tartu (EE): Non-formal Education: The role of NGOs
	Tuzla (BIH): Welcome to No Man's Land
	Aachen (D): European School 2
	Hamburg (D): EU & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
September	Cagliari (I): Planning Meeting
	Pécs (H): European School 1
October	Rotterdam (NL): Global Employee – Final Conference
	All over Europe: Erasmus Action Week
November	Konstanz (D): EU Simulation Europe 2005
	Athina (GR): Agora
In 2002, altogether 140 conferences, trainings, cultural and statutory events were organised – plus 89 Summer Universities.	

“International employee mobility” was the topic of a conference organised by AEGEE-Praha. One of the main conclusions was that perfect employee mobility will not come quickly. Scepticism was expressed regarding the length of transition periods for employees from the new accession countries of 2004. A survey among the participants in Prague showed that 43 percent would like to migrate temporarily, in most cases for educational purposes. Only 8 percent would like to migrate permanently. These figures suggest the media frenzy over an influx of cheap labour is exaggerated.

Will information technology encourage the emergence of a European job market? From the conference “ICT and the European divide”, organised by AEGEE-Berlin, it became very clear that ICT has advantages – but also limits – in this respect. For international corporations, there is an increasing trend to cut down on expatriates, since local employees are cheaper. Nevertheless, for upper management at least, international interaction is becoming ever more important.

Closely related issues were raised at the conference “Losing National Identity”, organised by AEGEE-Cagliari. What about the new nomads, what about their cultural issues? It concluded that there is a crucial difference between large inflows of unskilled foreign workers, and small numbers of modern nomads, such as consultants, investment bankers and other high-earning professionals. A diplomat who has lived abroad for 30 years or more can be thought of as a nomad, but he is not in any way considered a threat to his hosts. Professional nomads are not a problematic issue for society, but rather for the individuals themselves.

During the final conference in Rotterdam, the issue of European entrepreneurship was looked at in more depth. The EU wants to become the most competitive economy in the world by 2010. This goal is not out of reach, if enough commitment is shown, the participants felt. 85 percent of all the jobs created in the EU come from small entrepreneurial companies, not from multinationals. So we feel the focus of EU initiatives should be to encourage entrepreneurs to create jobs, without excessive bureaucracy. This is still far off, in part due to the powers still reserved for national governments.

In total 954 participants took part in the project. The largest group was the Dutch with 19.8% of the total, followed by the Italians with 15.2% and the Germans with 9.9%. After them came Polish, Czech and Romanian students. In addition to organising job fairs and seminars, the project also involved an essay contest. All 954 participants wrote an essay on one of five topics concerning various parts of the European job market. The Global Employee project was supported by, among others, the College of Europe, Erasmus University Rotterdam, London Business School and Sorbonne University. There was also considerable interest from EU Commission President Romano Prodi and the European Parliament. More info: www.globalemployee.org

Koen Berden

Burcu Becerman



The first time Burcu Becerman entered the office of AEGEE-Ankara, she sat down silently in an empty chair. This was just after the AEGEE branch had been accepted as organiser of the AEGEE-Europe Agora for autumn 2001, but Burcu had not knowingly joined a meeting of the organisation team. “I sat next to Refet Saban, one of the founders of AEGEE-Ankara. Suddenly he turned to me, greeted me with a warm smile and said: Welcome to the Agora Coordination Team!” At that moment the young Translation and Interpretation student had no idea that shortly afterwards she would become Secretary-General of the Agora team, manager of one of the biggest AEGEE projects ever and member of the AEGEE-Europe board.

The legend of Burcu Becerman began on 4th of January 1981. As a tiny, almost invisible girl she spent all her time singing, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. “I had a very happy childhood,” says Burcu. While studying in Ankara, she met a

guy in the Goethe Institute in summer 2000 who was a member of the AEGEE-Ankara board. "I curiously asked him what the acronym stood for, but he couldn't tell", smiles Burcu. She was a bit disappointed, but the guy did not give up and brought her some Key to Europes. "I was so amazed by the AEGEE yearbook that just one week later I went to the AEGEE-Ankara office."

The rest is history. "My biggest achievement in AEGEE is the Turkish-Greek Civic Dialogue Project, which I had the honour to manage between 2002 and 2004. It opened up youth organisations both in Greece and Turkey". Thanks to the experience she gained as manager of this project, Burcu was able to join the Comité Directeur of AEGEE-Europe in spring 2004, becoming responsible for European Institutions, grant applications and youth policies. What she likes most in the CD-house are the dinner time chats at the large kitchen table, singing in the house, the garden and the hammock in summer time. "It's hard to believe, but I even like writing grant applications for the Youth programme".

Burcu has many bittersweet memories from her past four years in AEGEE. The most remarkable event she ever attended was Kayafest, a part of the Turkish-Greek Civic Dialogue Project. "I will always feel so sad that I could not see any performances by the participants, because I was so busy". She will also never forget other precious moments in AEGEE, such as the enthusiasm of the participants of the ES2 in Rotterdam and the Planning Meeting in Helsinki with its sauna party, where she was running on the snow with bare feet, jumping from the hot sauna to the icy water.

Burcu's most mixed experience was the Planning Meeting in Magusa in 2003. "It was my first time in Cyprus. When I entered the country from the Turkish side, I had to sign a paper stating that I don't recognise this part of the island - otherwise I could not enter Greece with the same passport in the future". The harsh, sad discussions in the network, on whether it is wise to organise an event in Famagusta, or a pre-event in the buffer zone, will also stay with her forever.

Outside her AEGEE life, Burcu has been working as a translator and interpreter for the last three years. "I speak English and German fluently and am trying to improve my French - and I still want to learn Greek," she says. She is also music-addicted, still sings everywhere, enjoys playing guitar and almost worships Tori Amos. Reading is also a great passion for her, as are travelling and rock-climbing. What does she hate most? "Chewing gum that sticks to my shoes while walking on the street".

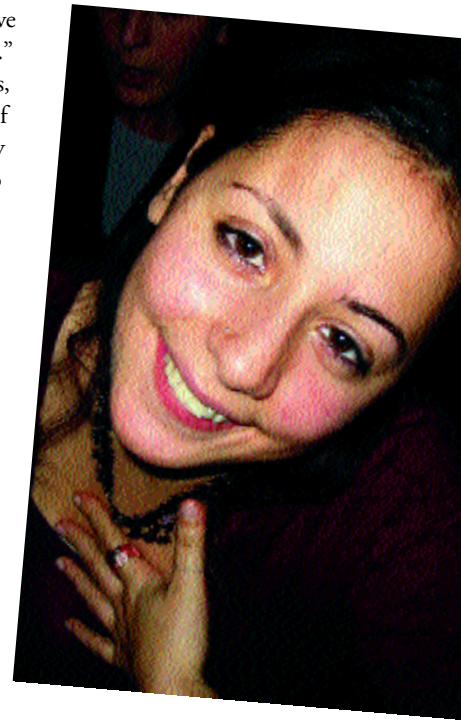
Burcu's thoughts about 2004 remain a little bit sensitive. "This year was a final countdown in my life. I graduated from the university, so my passionate dance with AEGEE is slowly coming to an end". The headlines, good and bad, in her mind from 2004 include al-Qaeda bombings, the Cyprus reunification referendum, the elections in Ukraine, the enlargement of

the EU on May 1st - and of course, the setting of a date for negotiations on Turkey's accession to the EU. "I am very happy that accession negotiations are going to start in October 2005. Turkey has made a huge effort to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria and millions of young people in Turkey aspire to live in a more democratic society." Burcu knows that it will be not easy for the current member states and Turkey to live in the same house. "We as AEGEE members have a lot to contribute with our activities." Turkey is a part of the Socrates, Leonardo and Youth programmes of the European Commission only thanks to AEGEE members who worked hard for it, she stresses.

Looking back, Burcu sees that she gained a lot of useful experience, both personally and professionally, from AEGEE. "I became an expert on grant management, project development, team building skills, networking and knowledge about institutions". When it comes to her personal development, she needs time to reflect. "Firstly, I learned to keep on pursuing the things I believe in, no matter how impossible they may seem. I learned to respect others ideas as well as my own ideas. Also, I became more systematic and more tolerant".

So what are her plans for the future? "My dream is to work as an interpreter in the European Commission". Her final destination, however, will be Istanbul - her favourite city in Europe. "My favourite way to relax is biking along the Princes Island in Istanbul and smelling the sea." No matter what the future brings, though, Burcu will never be totally gone from AEGEE. "My heart will be with it forever." Burcu will be waiting innocently for the people who will happen to sit next to her. Because she has a couple of words to tell them with a warm greeting and a smile.

Gökhan Bozkurt



AUTHOR

Gökhan Bozkurt joined AEGEE-Canakkale in 2003. This student of English Language Teaching helped to fully establish AEGEE-Canakkale, and coordinated one of the first Find Europe events - Troy Youth Festival. Gökhan is a board member of the Visa Freedom Fighters and is working to revive the Education Working Group.



A touch of spice: Turkish-Greek Civic Dialogue

The Turkish-Greek Civic Dialogue project has been one of the largest and longest-running projects of AEGEE, marking our field of action “Peace and Stability” for the last three years. Born out of the Peace Academy project of 1999/2000, it started in 2001 under the guidance of Burcu Becermen from AEGEE-Ankara. Its aim is to establish dialogue and encourage partnership projects between young people in Greece and Turkey. Contrary to other projects, in which AEGEE actions are often over-focused on our existing members, this project tried to involve as many youth organisations and other partners as possible – for example, the Foundation of Lausanne Treaty Emigrants. The organisers decided to focus on interactive and cultural events that would encourage future partnerships, using art and creative work as their primary tools. The first event was a conference held from 20th to 23rd March 2003 in Sakarya. 80 young people from Greece and Turkey gathered and participated in panels discussing NGOs, governments and media. There were also workshops looking deeper into topics such as the contribution of young people to Turkish-Greek dialogue, and the roles played by education and historical scholarship. The event overlapped

with the start of the American-led military operation in Iraq, and consequently the participants wrote a declaration of peace.

The hallmark event was the festival Kayafest, organised in Kayakoy-Levissi by AEGEE-Ankara between 27th July and 3rd August 2003. The host village, on the south coast of Turkey, was subjected to a forced exchange of population in 1922, with its Greek inhabitants driven out of Turkey and resettled in the town of Nea Makri in Greece. The village has great historical value, with its marvellous ancient Greek rock houses which were never used by Turks. After the expulsion of the Greek residents, it was often referred to as a ghost village. Three thousand young people from Greece and Turkey took part in the festival, joining together in cultural workshops on documentary making, dance, theatre, music, photography and psychology. They worked together for six days, creating magnificent works of art and performance. The festival also hosted an NGO fair where more than 65 NGOs from Turkey and Greece established partnerships.

Kayafest was followed by the symposium Compulsory Exchange of Population, which took place in Istanbul on 7th and 8th November 2003 to mark the 80th anniversary of the Lausanne Treaty. This was the first international conference ever held in Turkey dealing with the forced transfers of people in the 1920's. 250 academics, students and intellectuals participated in the symposium, as well as several prominent youth organisations from both countries. The project's Final Conference took place between 2nd and 4th April 2004 in Ankara. More than 80 participants from diverse Greek and Turkish youth organisations participated in interactive workshops on empathy and sympathy, peace education and role-playing as well as a “theater of the oppressed”. In the workshop (m)ASK yourself, they used dance as a means to express their hopes. The Final Conference also included a training course on project management by the European Commission and ended with a “road map” declaration, giving green light to future activities in the field.

In the course of the project, an online database of Turkish and Greek youth organisations was prepared, to provide contact and activity information for all the NGOs. “We have seen that cooperation in arts and culture can be powerful tools in eliminating prejudices,” commented Sophia Kompotiati from AEGEE-Athina. With such outstanding results, more than 5000 participants both from AEGEE and other Turkish and Greek youth organisations, the project has shown the power of young people combined with art and culture. Project participants still come together in Athens for “Kaya meetings” with their slides and memories, and those who cannot come still share their lives on mailing lists. The positive effects of this project will continue for many years into the future.

Gökhan Bozkurt



Youth& Globalisation

In 2002, AEGEE realised the need to highlight the concerns of young people on one of the most challenging issues of our time: globalisation. At the Agora in Athens that November, the concept of Youth&Globalisation was successfully proposed as the Yearplan project for 2003 – despite great scepticism about whether AEGEE could achieve our ambitious plans. As its coordinator, I am very proud to say that we did. Our concept was to create activities in five thematic pillars: politics, economics, culture, civil society and geo-communications. Y&G started with a 30-question survey to gather the main ideas about globalisation held by youths today. This was a great success, with almost 1000 completed surveys submitted. Then in summer 2003 a series of five intimate study meetings, each with around 20 participants, were organised in Bayreuth, Paris, Riga, Cluj-Napoca and Izmir.

Some event highlights of 2003

February	Sofia (BG): Minorities in Bulgaria and Romania
	Cambridge (UK): Model European Council
	Enschede (NL): Planning Meeting
April	Bologna (I): Higher Education, Global World
	Blagoevgrad (BG): SEE between EU & Iraq War
May	Bucuresti/Constanta (RO): Agora
	Chisinau (MD): Moldova in Five Days
	Bucuresti (RO): Diplomatic Seminar
	Berlin (D): European School 2
July	Paris (F): European Economics
	Kayakoy-Fethiye (TR): KayaFest
August	Kobenhavn (DK): EU & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
September	Magusa/Buffer Zone (CYP): Cyprus in Europe
	Magusa (CYP): Planning Meeting
October	Izmir (TR): Civil Society & Globalisation
	Ljubljana (SI): Europe's Torn Identity
	Madrid (E): Bridge to Latin America
	Zaragoza (E): Agora
November	All over Europe: European Day of Languages
	Athina (GR): Music Voyagers
	Passau (D): Human Resources & Import
	Komarno (SK): Project School
December	Brussels (B): World Youth Summit
In 2003, altogether 145 conferences, trainings, cultural and statutory events were organised – plus 87 Summer Universities.	

The recommendations and strategies gathered in this way were re-evaluated at the joint study meeting hosted by Udine and Trieste, so as to produce a working document for the World Youth Summit on Globalisation. This summit, taking place at the European Parliament in December 2003, was the culmination of the project. It was the very first time that AEGEE organised an event which gathered all the five corners of the world, with delegates from international youth organisations in countries from Azerbaijan to Zambia.

The three-day long summit encompassed thematic workshops and open dialogues on the effects of politics, economics, culture and civil society. The delegates could tackle major discussions with personalities from the World Bank, the European Commission and other institutions. The last day of the summit was filled with lengthy discussions which produced a bold final strategy paper on globalisation. Starting with a definition of globalisation as a “dynamic multi-dimensional and interconnected process that generates intertwined links affecting all aspects of contemporary life”, the delegates stressed the importance of adopting free and fair trade, which would in turn give developing countries more equal bargaining power. A global civil society to promote cultural diversity was endorsed. The concept of globalisation as an opportunity to become less prejudiced was roundly welcomed.

Despite the great results, Youth&Globalisation was hardly a bed of roses. The fundraising-responsible position changed hands three times in just a few months, and in the confusion, no applications for grants were made. Another major change took place in August when the original project manager went to the United States for his MBA and I took over as project manager. Despite these problems though, the team pulled together and got the job done. The hard work of our outstanding team members like Egita Aizsilniece, Ayan Ozuturk and Monica Zarna made everything possible.

The project could yet be a great loss if the results are not acted on. The year 2005 will see three distinct yet complementary activities. The new phase of the project started off with the Youth for Development training course for young people in Odessa. AEGEE-Madrid hosted the conference Youth for Peace and Stability in March 2005. Finally, this phase of the Y&G follow-up will culminate with the congress Youth on the Move: Let's go global, in Maastricht. And so the story continues for Youth&Globalisation.

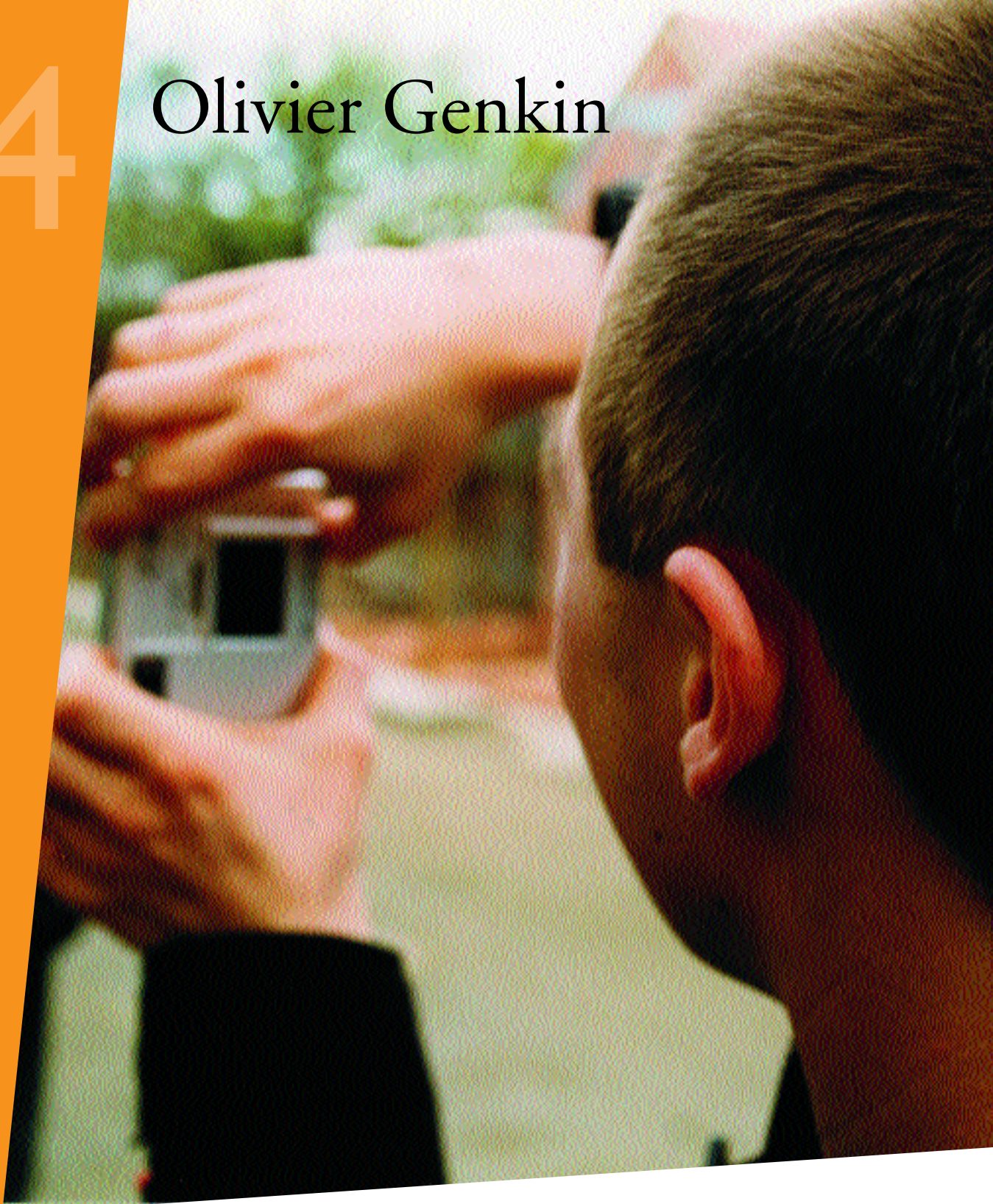
Alexianne Galea

AUTHOR

In 2001, Alexianne Galea received an email about an event on EU Enlargement to take place in Brussels – the AEGEE Summit of 28. She joined the board of AEGEE-Valletta and became Juridical Commissioner of AEGEE-Europe. After obtaining a double bachelor's degree in Law and International Relations, she is currently finishing her law degree.



Olivier Genkin



Olivier Genkin, born in 1978, is known for speaking English with a French accent when he's tired, in spite of having spent more than half of his life in Germany. Hardly any AEGEE member's origins are as difficult to explain culture-wise as Olivier Genkin's. His mother is from the French-Spanish-Basque border as well as from Paris. His father is German but was born in Norway, to German and Russian parents. So where does he feel he is from? "I am Basque from South-west France, from the beautiful city of Biarritz, but I am also European and French, mostly in that order". Asking him if he possesses a beret - a hat typical of the Basque country - is almost an insult. "I have two: one in red, one in black". He is the guy that people always approach with personal problems, he is the rational and efficient decision maker and driving force of many projects, he easily becomes and stays enthusiastic about almost anything, and he makes other people feel the

same way. These are only some of the many faces of Olivier Genkin, who has a German degree in economics, did his MBA at the prestigious ESSEC Business School in Paris and is currently working for the in-house consulting department of an investment bank in Wiesbaden.

So, is he just another one of many promising young professionals? Not at all. That Olivier is everything but average becomes evident when taking a closer look at his free time – because one then discovers that he does not have any. He has trouble remembering if he has taken any free weekends in the last six years – because back then he joined AEGEE. Unlike many members who finish their studies, Olivier stayed active. Listing all the things he achieved would take time, however, when asked for his main achievement the answer is clear: “I made the International Politics Working Group (IPWG) the most fruitful working group of AEGEE”.

He was first PR director of the IPWG before becoming its speaker in 2001. During his time in this working group, workaholic Olivier was deeply involved in the organisation of the “Summit of 28” in the year 2001, co-manager of the “Diplomatic Seminar”, a trademark of the IPWG, organised the event “Europe’s (Torn ?) Identity” in Ljubljana in 2003 and managed the Yearplan project of 2004: “EU & Europe”. Olivier passed through 12 students associations in his first university years. “I stayed in only two. One is a student consulting association, allowing me to run my own consultancy, the other one is AEGEE”. How did he join? “I signed up as a member in July 1999, the first time that I dropped into a meeting of AEGEE-Mannheim – which happened to be the local Agora where a friend of mine had dragged me. And somehow they elected me vice-president”.

With a boyish laugh Olivier admits that his knowledge about AEGEE was extremely limited when he joined. But he had been promised a unified Europe and was getting acquainted with new people. Have these expectations been fulfilled? “Fully,” claims Olivier. Most student organisations are organised at a local level only, some at a national level. “What made me passionate about AEGEE was the European dimension in addition to all the local activities. It allowed me to travel a lot, not as a simple tourist, but as a friend of many fellow AEGEE members. Thus, AEGEE was a perfect complement to the Junior Enterprise I was active in. AEGEE gave me the chance to experience many different projects. I learned a lot during those years without getting bored for a single day.”

He was soon to become the president of AEGEE-Mannheim, and during his masters in France one year later, Olivier founded AEGEE-Cergy. Furthermore, he became a Socrates promoter in 2001 and 2002 in the framework of the project “Socrates on the Move”. He was a member of AEGEE’s Address Book coordi-

nation team for four years, and since the year 2003, he has also been enriching the AEGEE-Academy, the trainers pool of AEGEE-Europe, with his experience.

Ever since he joined, he has been travelling around Europe, spending more than 365 days and nights with AEGEE in 33 countries, attending more than 115 AEGEE events, taking an estimated amount of 30,000 photos and collecting at least 45 AEGEE shirts. Many people have wondered how many more years he would stay speaker of the IPWG. The answer came in November 2004 at the Agora in Torino: Olivier stepped down after three years.

However, as the perfectionist is known for his care of continuity, one can be confident that despite Olivier quitting his speaker post, the IPWG will continue on its course of success. “And now, after six years, I have to think of leaving AEGEE, at least the active scene,” Olivier points out. “I have seen several old generations leaving AEGEE and several new generations joining AEGEE, now it is time to let them take the responsibility and to concentrate more on other priorities I have. One of the things I am still involved in is the Case Study Trip to the Caucasus where I took on the PR job. And I am sure that I will still be around in the next couple of years”.

Until he finally quits, Olivier would like to see that AEGEE focuses even more on large congresses and broad media coverage. And the goals that Olivier still has for his private life are improving his dancing and cooking skills. “And I want to learn more foreign languages,” Olivier concludes. “Naturally also Basque”.

Tine Bader





EU & Europe – more than just enlargement

One action week, seven conferences and 300 participants - the project EU & Europe, a part of European Identity - AEGEE's Yearplan topic for 2004 - made a remarkable impact. Realised by AEGEE's International Politics Working Group (IPWG), the project aimed to discuss questions of identity both for the EU and the countries that remain outside its new borders, as well as the political and cultural relations between these two halves of Europe.

The project kicked off with the conference "Europe's (Torn?) Identity", held in Ljubljana in October 2003. 42 participants from 20 nationalities reflected on their own identities - local, regional, national and finally European - and what makes us European. Six seminars followed, in Athens, Minsk, Moscow & Sankt Petersburg, Bucharest, Izmir and Sarajevo.

Hot on the heels of EU enlargement, AEGEE-Athina organised the conference "Future of Europe" in May 2004. The 30 participants debated on matters such as the EU accession process and the European Constitution. Then in June, 25 students attended the seminar "BY, Between and Beyond" in Minsk, which dealt with relations between the western Newly Independent States and the EU. The participants reflected on the division of Europe into EU insiders and outsiders, and the possibility of Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova playing a mediating role between the EU and Russia. It is very sad that shortly after this event the liberal University of Humanities in Minsk was closed by the government, yet we still proved that such drawbacks do not stop AEGEE.

From 2nd to 11th July, students, diplomats and international relations experts gathered in Moscow and Sankt Petersburg to discuss cultural and political ties between the EU and Russia.

Two notable ideas resulted: to create a committee of history experts from the Baltic states and Russia for harmonising history lessons in schools; and to promote better knowledge of Russian regions and ethnic groups by extending the daily news coverage in Russian mass media. "Romania, Bulgaria & the EU" attracted 25 students to Bucharest in September. As with most seminars, the young people took part in a simulation, giving them experience of the negotiations.

Two months before the European Council agreed to open accession negotiations with Turkey, 40 students gathered in Izmir for "TR: Key? - EU & Turkey", 21st - 24th October. The highlight of this conference was a simulation of the December meeting of the European Council.

In Sarajevo in November, 45 young people attended "EU & Western Balkans", discussing minority issues and the key aspects of managing multi-ethnic societies nowadays. In a round-table debate with participants from Transparency International, awareness was raised about corruption in higher education, something almost unimaginable for Slovenian students. After a workshop on conflict resolution, the participants made an excursion to Mostar. They were shocked to see the heavy damage to some parts of this once-beautiful city.

Olivier Genkin

Welcome, New Europe!

Within the project "EU & Europe" AEGEE members celebrated EU expansion all across the continent during the first week of May. From fairs and festivals to debates and demonstrations, from Brussels to Tblisi, the message was: Welcome, New Europe! Some highlights:

28 April - 2 May, Gdansk: Festival of Reunited Europe.

29 April - 2 May, Gorizia/Nova Gorica: Higher education in the enlarged EU.

30 April - 3 May, Dresden: AEGEE-Dresden and AEGEE-Wroclaw debating a common European foreign policy.

1 May, Brussels: AEGEE-Europe information tent at the European Parliament.

2 - 8 May, Valletta: Europe - Your Parliament, Your Vote. Series of events, including a European Village.

6 - 10 May, Groningen: Crossing Old Borders. Hitch-hiking contest.

Artists on the stage

Performance is the art of opening people's eyes, minds and hearts through direct human contact. What, then, could be more natural than an AEGEE performance event? Izabela Jurczik and myself resolved to realise it: the Performing Arts Summer School (PASS); three weeks in August and September 2004 with 35 people, creating one performance for the public. Everything about the work was designed to stretch the actors, dancers and musicians and turn them in new directions. We decided that the performance should use all the performers' native languages: nine, in total. This forced us to search for a language beyond language. In rehearsals, where many of the group had quite a limited grasp of English, the cry "translation please!" was heard less and less often. The strain of working from 9 am until 2 am or even later, was more than any of us were used to. But everyone laughed as well - and everyone grew. The final performance was our own version of Shakespeare's "The Tempest", performed in the castles of Gniew and Bytow, near Gdansk. 250 local people were delighted by the results of our three hours' work. **Rob Tesh**



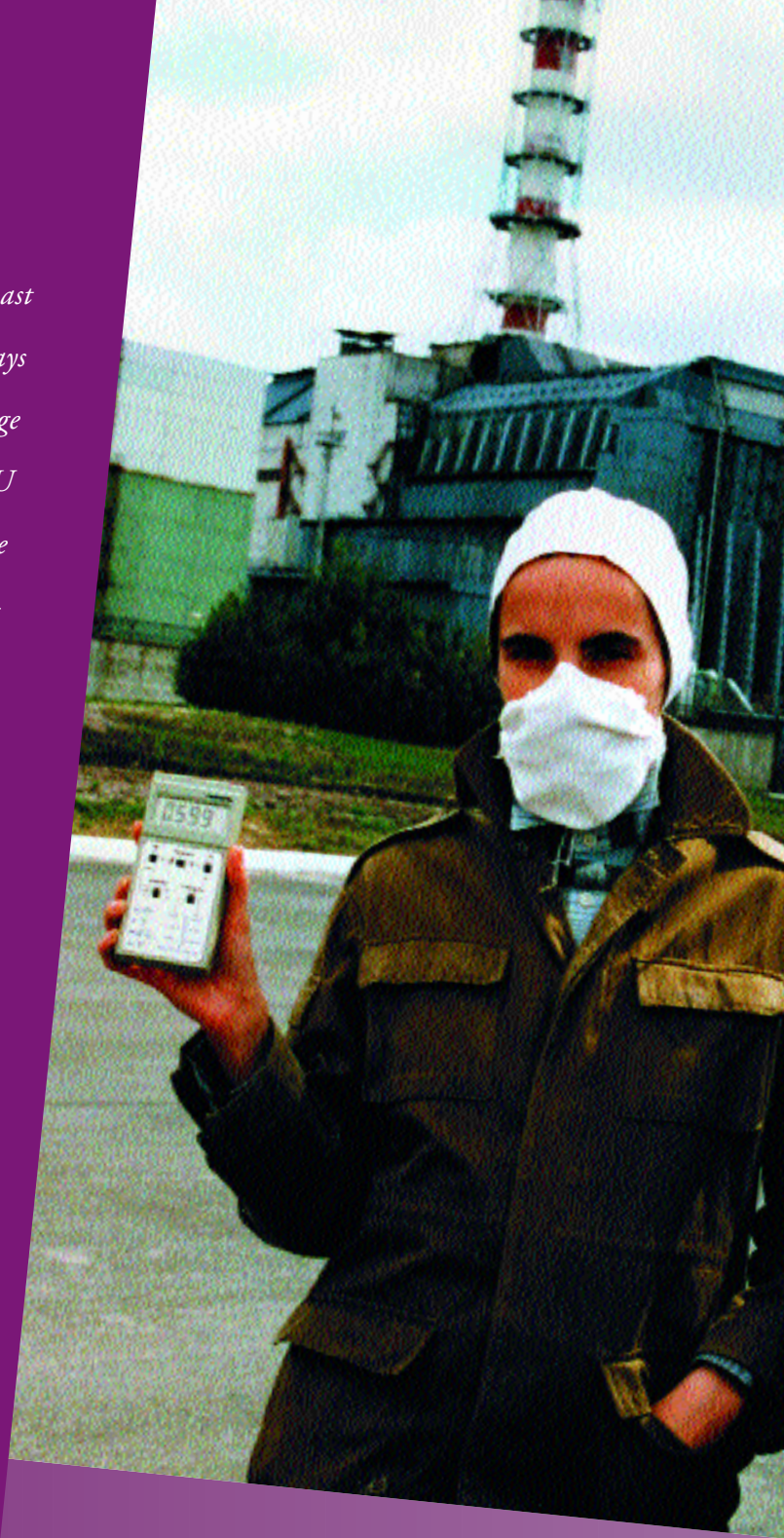
Some event highlights of 2004	
February	Cambridge (UK): Model European Council
March	Wroclaw (PL): Planning Meeting
	Valletta (M): Integration of Immigrants
	Helsinki (FIN): Gender Roles in Europe
April	Ankara (TR): Turkish-Greek Dialogue –Final Conference
	Utrecht (NL): Privacy & Security on the Internet
	Skopje (MK): Agora
May	All over Europe: Welcome New Europe
	Enschede (NL): Integration of Minorities
	Athina (GR): EU Enlargement & Constitution
	Sofia (BG): Ecology & Sustainable Development
	Maastricht (NL): Decision-making in Tomorrow's EU
June	Minsk (BY): Relation Belarus-Moldova-Ukraine-EU
August	Gdansk (PL): Performing Arts Summer School
September	Aachen (D): Planning Meeting
	Tbilisi (GEO): Georgia's Culture & Nature
October	Rotterdam (NL): European School 2
	Izmir (TR): Turkey & EU
November	Torino (I): Agora
	Sarajevo (BIH): EU & Western Balkans
	Salerno (I): Summer University Project School
December	Kyiv (UA): Let's Build the Ukrainian Democracy Together
In 2004, altogether 137 conferences, trainings, cultural and statutory events were organised – plus 99 Summer Universities.	

Building Ukrainian democracy

Tents on the main street of Kiev, thousands of people dressed in orange, gathering for mass demonstrations: in December 2004 the people of Ukraine successfully protested against the fraud of the presidential election, paving the way for a more democratic government. We didn't want to watch from afar, we wanted to take action – that's why we invited the AEGEE network to come and help monitor the repeated and finally democratic second round of the presidential elections from 23rd to 28th December. Our motto was "Let's build Ukrainian Democracy Together". We thought that if ten AEGEE people responded to our initiative, we should be happy. Who would sacrifice Christmas for Ukraine, we thought. We were wrong. In the end, 35 people from across Europe came to Bashtanka, Mykolaiv and Kyiv as volunteers, independent international observers and journalists from AEGEE. We feel proud to have made our small contribution to stopping the falsifications. AEGEE did an important thing – for the future of Ukrainian democracy and the future of this part of Europe.

Olga Baykalova, President AEGEE-Kyiv

AEGEE accomplished many goals over the past 20 years. However, new challenges always await. Globalisation, environmental damage and the integration of more and more EU member states are just a few of these tasks. The network is ready to face them - with enthusiasm, skills and unfailing energy.



AEGEE visit to Chernobyl in 1997.

AEGEE – facing the problems of the future



Moving Europe

In the words of Archimedes – Give me a lever long enough and a prop strong enough, and I can single-handedly move the world. Moving the world – with vision, wisdom and knowledge – is an objective worthy of dedication.

Europe is on the move. Thanks to vision, wisdom and knowledge. Thanks to people who recognise no limits, no borders and no prejudices.

As a founding member of AEGEE-Skopje, I would like to say that on its 20th anniversary, AEGEE can be proud of its contribution to moving Europe forward. Youth and knowledge, together with ideas and commitment have combined to create a phenomenon that links thousands of young people across the entire Old Continent. They step over the lines, they reach for the vision, they act – and they achieve. Their dedication keeps Europe on the move.

Today Europe is more than a Continent, more than a Community, more than a Union. It is a goal to be reached, a process to be sustained, an idea to be made real.

With my roots in Macedonia – long ago named catena mundi, or in Latin the “clasp of the worlds” – and my eyes on our common European home, I look at thousands of young people from all over Europe, such as my friends from AEGEE, and I say:

We are the lever, and Europe shall be moved.

Radmila Šekerinska

Deputy Prime Minister
Republic of Macedonia

AUTHOR

Radmila Šekerinska is a living example of how AEGEE can prepare students for a later career. Member at the start of AEGEE-Skopje in the early 90's, she later became active in politics. Hundreds of AEGEE members remember her moving speech at the opening of the Agora in Ohrid, spring 2004.



Monastery at Lake Ohrid.





The first NetCom team, 1997.

AEGEE as a role model for good governance

Throughout my time in AEGEE many people, including me, believed that much needed to improve in the governance structure of AEGEE-Europe. In particular, the organisation of the executive steering board (CD), as well as our strategy planning and knowledge management raised a lot of concern. Now, years later I regard AEGEE as a role model for good governance.

The really troubling fact was that the work of the CD was seen as inefficient and the working environment was demotivating for the CD members. We often complained how difficult it was to work and live in the same flat, and more than often one's limited financial resources made work and life in Brussels even more difficult than it could have been. This led to a situation where almost every CD member would quit the board after six months or a year's term. This high turnover caused a constant lack of experience and knowledge in the CD.

Secondly, the AEGEE network was unable to provide the organisation with quality content for its activities, as well as long-term planning. These worries started many long discussions about how to improve the organisation and direction of AEGEE. Even if we came up with some answers, they lacked enough perseverance to be brought to life.

All this was just a couple of years ago. You can imagine how positively surprised I was to learn that at the Agora in Torino, November 2004, there were more than 1000 applicants and

that the association is blooming. In a sense the fact that so much was being done to improve things at the CD house in Brussels led me to believe that AEGEE really is a self-healing organisation. I used to wonder why the statutes were being changed at almost each Agora. Later, I realised that this dynamism is intrinsic to the structure of the association.

AEGEE offers a very inclusive, open framework for activity, which allows everyone to put his or her ideas into life very easily. This is something I have come to miss in self-proclaimed serious organisations, later on in my professional life. In a way it illustrates the American Dream in a European environment – the equal chance for every member to rise through the hierarchy and carry out his or her own ideas.

One of the characteristics of which AEGEE members are most proud is the lack of a national level. Somehow the association has managed to move to the post-national era – long before this will become a reality in the European society or politics. What is important is that the “no national level” ideology proved to function in our association and its abolition has never been taken seriously. It makes me think positively of the future of Europe and Europeans.

The last notion about AEGEE's structure, which makes it truly exceptional, is the organisation's decentralisation. It has a very flat network structure, and accompanied by the dynamism of our organisational culture, this makes AEGEE a true role model of good governance.

Tomek Helbin

AUTHOR

The son of a diplomat, who grew up in several countries, Tomek Helbin joined AEGEE in 1999, during his International Relations and Psychology studies in Warsaw. In 2002, Tomek joined the CD as PR director and six months later he became president. Tomek now works for the European Commission.



New focus: poverty and globalisation

Sixteen years ago the world as we knew it fell apart. The long-closed barrier dividing Europe suddenly disappeared, and the 21st century truly began. Yet it took the horrible terrorist acts of 11th September 2001 to make everyone realise this is a new era.

What is the role of a large students' organisation like AEGEE in all of this? In the early nineties the AEGEE slogan was: "Building bridges across Europe", because there were real physical borders for us to overcome. Today the issue is more about creating an equitable world for all of us. In a recent international study presented at the World Economic Forum '05 in Davos, the top three concerns were: the fight against poverty, making globalisation fairer and dealing with global warming. Now this is a tall order for a students' body like AEGEE. Yet looking more closely at each of those three issues, avenues for us to make meaningful contributions start to emerge: education is an important pillar of any equitable society that offers all its citizens a chance to achieve. AEGEE can play an important part in formulating educational policies across Europe. The equation: good education equals less poverty, is proven to be correct many times over.

Another opportunity to contribute is in defining Europe's place in the world. The answer to this question starts at home: what does Europe stand for? What are the basic values we cherish? Knowing this would allow us to reach out to other parts in the world. The effort is well worth making: a fairer globalisation process will in turn also address the third area of concern – global warming. This is a longstanding topic of concern for AEGEE – for an example, look at the work of our Environmental Working Group.

AEGEE should participate positively in this process. The requirement is not to operate as a professional lobby outfit. The role of AEGEE should rather be to provide a platform for its members. It is you, the active members, who should be articulating and actively shaping the answers to the problems I have just raised. It is like a huge mosaic: The big picture is the full picture, but each of us can contribute a small and yet important part.

Dorian Selz

President of AEGEE-Europe 1994



International Bachelor Economics & Business Economics (IBEB) in Rotterdam

This 3-year programme offers students with an international mind a unique opportunity to acquire an academically strong and international foundation in Economics and Business Economics.

International bachelor & master degrees in 2 years

For students with a prior bachelor degree in Economics and/or Business we offer a special 2 year combination. You can obtain both your bachelor and master degrees in Economics & Business at the Erasmus School of Economics in The Netherlands.

Key features

- International staff and cosmopolitan atmosphere
- Integrated in the heart of the Rotterdam Mainport
- Full range of modern teaching methods
- Virtual classroom courses (with Australia, Ghana, USA and Poland)
- Balanced programme with a wide range of specialisations
- Acquire valuable analytical and practical skills
- International exchange programmes



First class at Erasmus University Rotterdam

Start of programme: September

For more information on courses, application and admission, grants, student life, housing and for general information on IBEB visit our website www.few.eur.nl/ibeb or send us an e-mail at ibeb@few.eur.nl
For the master programmes see www.few.eur.nl/master





Diversity - celebrating difference

From the beginning, AEGEE has aimed to address several levels when engaging students in Europe through networking activities: bringing people from different backgrounds together, making them value their diversity, and integrating a variety of inputs in order to achieve something better than each of the individual groups could have achieved alone. Diversity, with a capital “D”, follows a similar approach in the area of corporate management, human resources, leadership and organisational culture. In more and more places, AEGEE ideals are becoming a reality in the corporate world and beyond - by means of diversity.

The concept, developed first in the US, from equal opportunities and affirmative action, today comprises four different paradigms: phenomenon diversity – consciously acknowledging differences and similarities. Attitude open-mindedness – actively valuing people who are different from us, their perspectives and expertise. Behaviour inclusion – integrating others and providing space for everyone to perform to his or her best. Finally, managing diversity – embedding differences, open-mindedness and inclusion in all the things we or an organisation does.

In the light of internationalisation, fierce competition, changing values, ageing and other significant trends, diversity has become one of the focus areas of management. Corporate Europe is pro-actively leveraging the potential of differences since the mid 1990's. Companies are adopting policies, training their employees, organising events and launching communication campaigns, all to raise awareness of diversity. For many organisations, it is a challenge to overcome national thinking, stereotypes, prejudices, and reluctance to change. In brief: breaking up monocultures and broadening horizons.

The similarities to AEGEE are striking. AEGEE has always tackled stereotypes and prejudices. Through its innovative activities, the association has thoroughly developed the personalities and skills of its members, and those it reached out to externally. The impact of the AEGEE way won't be understood by many until years later, when they are actually faced with situations they recognise. In these situations, they can tell the difference of who has experienced the pan-European culture of AEGEE, who has acquired inter-disciplinary and trans-national working skills, and who has not had that opportunity. They will also understand the necessity of inclusive policies, of unity in diversity, and of open values that are based on mutual respect, dignity and freedom.

AEGEE wanted to be a role model for European politics. It has become more than that. Implementing diversity illustrates how powerful many principles that were already applied by AEGEE can be in other areas. More learning, more transfer and more application should take place. It would benefit companies, organisations, and the world of politics. They are all aware of the need to improve. Here are two great opportunities to seize: AEGEE and Diversity. **Michael Stuber**

AUTHOR

Michael Stuber was president of AEGEE-Karlsruhe in 1988/9 and served on two European boards as vice president and secretary general until May 1990. This industrial engineer became self-employed in 1997. His company specialises in helping organisations to pursue a strategic approach to implementing Diversity in Europe.



Ideals and the future of AEGEE

Since AEGEE was founded in Paris, now 20 years ago, the association has worked intensively for European integration. However, AEGEE has not always stood behind its missions perfectly and AEGEE itself has also changed over the past 20 years. Yet, AEGEE still has an important role to play, maybe even more important than ever before. Europe in 2005 is no longer the same place as in 1985. With European integration close to completion, what is left for AEGEE to fight for? Does the association still have a goal? The answer: Yes. There are three important reasons.



First of all, working towards an integrated Europe with more and more countries in the EU and moving closer together economically and culturally presents a greater, not a lesser challenge. It is harder to hold the Union together and integrate further when times get hard; for example to keep hold of the ground gained through so much effort and pain since 1957, despite what is happening in the world around us. This is something that AEGEE must fight for. Also, when it comes to Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia, also at a later stage Turkey's EU accession, we should be aware that European integration is not over yet. However, the question of whether these countries should join the EU needs to

be addressed carefully. Do the people of Europe have enough accurate information to decide fairly about the accession countries, with their different religions, cultures and customs - or is there a big information gap to be bridged? What is the role of education in promoting awareness, tolerance and understanding? Are people basing their decisions on prejudices and fears or on values, arguments and information? AEGEE has to fight for more and better information, and also to stand firm against prejudice and religious discrimination and make others want to do the same.

In the past few years, the contours of a new world order with new threats and opportunities have slowly become more visible. With the ideological battle between communism and capitalism won by the latter, the struggle seems to have shifted to the cultural and religious divisions in the world. European integration is not just based on political and economic motives. AEGEE believes in the fundamental values of toler-

ance, human rights, freedom of speech and religion and international understanding.

AEGEE has to fight for a larger and better integrated EU that upholds these basic values for all EU citizens and the citizens of the accession countries alike. With a Europe comprised of so many different cultures, AEGEE has to argue as strongly as possible against discrimination and simplistic populism. We must continue our efforts to bridge cultural and ethnic divisions, acting as an international example. Externally, AEGEE in today's world must focus on the fight against international terrorism, while standing firm if basic human rights are violated by any force. We should push the EU and others to do the same.

Our association can look back with pride on the results achieved for the benefit of Europe. However, the tasks are not nearly over. The future will demand students who are strong, stubborn and open-minded. AEGEE has changed and its role in Europe is changing, so it is important that students – the future leaders – set new goals that address the needs of our time.

Koen Berden

AUTHOR

Koen Berden joined AEGEE-Rotterdam in September 1996. He became chairman of the Agora, coordinated the project "Global Employee" and is now President of the Foundation AEGEE Trust Fund. Koen is a professor in International Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam, and Executive Director of the International Bachelor in Economics & Business Economics programme there.



EurActiv
congratulates
AEGEE-Europe
on its 20 years existence

Keep up-to-date on
European issues:
www.euractiv.com

Check our open positions:
www.euractiv.com/en/open_positions

TOYOTA



MANPOWER

Microsoft

SAGEM

UPPER

Honeywell



BP-LOCKHEED MARTIN-EUCOMED-PFIZER-CLIFC-US MISSION
KELLEN EUROPE-NIKE-GALLUP EUROPE-EXXONMOBIL-EDF

70 EurActors (mainly federations) 50 'content partners' (NGOs and Think tanks) 500 contributors



EU News, Policy Positions
& EU Actors online



.co.uk



.fr



.de



Network of EU policy portals
21 websites - 11 languages



Changes and continuity

AEGEE has not changed much since the CD moved to Brussels in 1996, after the initial French domination and the Dutch period. Some fundamental principles remain such as the absence of national structures and our desire to promote European integration. AEGEE is a precursor for the EU: organisation, enlargement and goals.

Organisation: there has been a shift in the classic efficiency versus democracy balance just, as there has at EU level. Due to the abolition of the list election for the CD in 1989, the Agora became more powerful. This was somewhat compensated for by the swift spread of the Internet. In this respect, AEGEE can even be a model for a future Network EU. Various AEGEE commissions also became stronger. However, the most striking difference between AEGEE of the past and the present is the increased female power. Back then, we had women at all levels of the organisation but not often in leadership positions.

Enlargement and cultures: in my view, the focus on EU candidate countries is overemphasised in AEGEE. Of course, I am very proud to hear that AEGEE members and alumni contribute to building democracy and peace on our continent, in Belgrade, Cyprus, Kiev and other places. This is great,

but it should not absorb all energy. Europe is also developing inside the EU. Fortunately, AEGEE keeps creating new innovative projects with an external impact.

Other practices have changed in AEGEE, such as the declining use of languages other than English. I regret this; it is not in line with AEGEE's statutes and with Europe's identity, especially given today's technologies. If a corporate sponsor or the EU is ready to support AEGEE going multilingual, I will gladly provide advice for free, based on the 11 languages of the policy portal EurActiv.

Goals: will AEGEE dissolve in a matter of time when there will be a European Union of 30+ member states, a fully developed common market and no national obstacles with regards to mobility and education? I don't believe so. Europe will always be under construction. More importantly, it is fun for students to meet people from other countries: this key motivation will remain.

My three key messages to AEGEE members of today are:

1. Be daring! Speak up about your generation's wishes.
2. Project Europe into the future! Don't think just of the students of today. Our dreams became reality, and so should yours.
3. Enjoy! There will be other joys later, such as family and career, but the AEGEE experience is something unique.

Christophe Leclercq

CD member 1986/7

Happy Birthday to AEGEE from our friends

Greetings from JEF

Turning 20 is a big thing for a young European, and for many of us, it's the start of our best years. And we know what we are talking about: most members in both AEGEE and JEF are actually in their 20's! AEGEE finally reaches the age of its members. But when current members get older in age, AEGEE will keep its youthful spirit! We know what we are talking about: JEF was created just after the Second World War! Who, seeing us, would believe that we are almost 60 years old? So, when AEGEE becomes 20, there's nothing else but to wish that you remain at that age forever! JEF and AEGEE regularly cooperate on projects for a better Europe. For the next 20 years and more, dear AEGEE, we invite you to further pursue together our youthful dreams of a united Europe. Happy birthday AEGEE, and may your European dream come true!

Marianne Bonnard

Former Secretary General of JEF-Europe

Greetings from JADE

Dear AEGEE, on behalf of JADE we would like to congratulate you on your 20th anniversary. A major role of any student network is to integrate students in an open platform, and AEGEE has done that and much more. AEGEE-Europe has taken an active leading position in the process of integrating Europe. It has promoted an open dialogue by offering relevant information, communicating and co-operating with European institutions and organisations, issuing statements and lobbying about particularly important issues. However, AEGEE's most exceptional achievements were on the level of individual students, with the hosting of forums for students from both sides of Cyprus, from Greece and Turkey and from Serbia and Kosovo. In its 20th year of existence AEGEE is still one of the role models for student organisations. We are very happy that AEGEE also makes the voices of young people heard. AEGEE and JADE, together with many other student organisations in Europe, contribute to an open dialogue. We are happy to have worked together on several occasions. JADE is looking forward to many more such activities. All the best for the next 20 years and beyond!

Monika Oswald
President JADE

Greetings from ELSA

AEGEE and ELSA, the European Law Students Association, have many common aspects at first glance. Both organisations are working hard for students in Europe, providing opportunities for our members to develop their personal skills. Through our important work, we improve the situation of students and encourage cultural exchange. When you look even closer, the common aspects remain. Both organisations have a special commitment to human rights, which is obvious in all areas of our activity. Although different in structure, both AEGEE and ELSA emphasize the importance of networking on a European level. Our organisations were started at a time when European co-operation was of paramount importance on our continent. Developments over the past 20-25 years have made great progress; nonetheless, European unity and co-operation remain highly relevant today. ELSA and AEGEE have co-operated in different activities throughout the years and it is a pleasure for us to congratulate you on your 20th anniversary. On behalf of the ELSA network we wish you a Happy Birthday and we are convinced your association will continue to prosper. ELSA is very much looking forward to co-operating with you in the future!

Maria Litzell
Vice President ELSA International

Greetings from AIESEC

I have always considered AEGEE to be a dynamic and progressive organisation. Very similar to AIESEC, AEGEE consists of incredibly motivated young people, who work for what they believe in. AEGEE's values, such as democracy, cross border cooperation and understanding make it a very relevant organisation in today's world.

With Europe going through such major upheavals, AEGEE gives young people the much-needed opportunity to make their opinions known and together have a huge influence on current and future European developments. Its fundamentally grass roots structure, ensures it can cut through bureaucracy and give young people a platform to influence decisions directly.

AEGEE's projects are very relevant and ensures a high amount of exposure for young people on European issues. Such an approach also facilitates the development of leaders who can take on influential roles, working for the future of Europe.

We at AIESEC send AEGEE our very best wishes for your 20th anniversary. We hope that you will continue to make a difference in the society like in the past.

Best regards

Rajiv Chandna

Global President of AIESEC



Greetings from ESIB

Dear AEGEE, happy birthday from your - somewhat older friends at ESIB, the National Unions of Students in Europe! 20 years is a wonderful age. As Europe-wide students' organisations, ESIB and AEGEE have a lot in common. A few weeks ago I was invited to your beautiful house in Brussels, filled with European community atmosphere, good working spirit, nice new board members - and at that very moment Spanish sangria, English chips and tasty Macedonian bread. At that point both our organisations were working hard to assist the students of Ukraine to ensure fair elections.

For the past few years we have worked together in various projects and actions to promote the Erasmus program, mobility of students in Europe and the future of Europe in general. We are sure that there will be plenty of new common projects for the next 20 years.

So from all of us to all of you: a very happy birthday!

Karin Bagge

Secretary General ESIB

Greetings from the European Youth Forum

20 years of work by AEGEE-Europe has contributed hugely towards promoting the ideals of all Europe's student associations. AEGEE-Europe has been a consistently dynamic participant in the process of youth integration, and has taken great pains to preserve the principles of co-operation, mobility, education and tolerance. AEGEE-Europe has made a genuine contribution to youth visibility, granting an effective voice to the students of Europe, while boosting mutual understanding.

EYF is well aware that we must ensure the full integration of young people into society - for it will soon be theirs to maintain and develop. I can assure you that the European Youth Forum will do everything it can to support the hopes and aspirations of young people, and I am delighted that we can continue to work alongside AEGEE-Europe.

I wish you continuing success in your valuable work.

Renaldas Vaisbrodas

President European Youth Forum

Whatever your Bachelor's degree,

...you're welcome at the Netherlands Business School! The Master of Science (MSc) in Management at Universiteit Nyenrode could well be the program for you.

In this intensive 16-month MSc-program, we offer you:

- a high-level, solid academic basis;
- a strong focus on the practical skills you need for applying theory in practice;
- an opportunity for groundbreaking personal development;
- the knowledge, experience and tools you'll need for excellent (international) career perspectives;
- a select group of motivated fellow students with highly diverse backgrounds;
- a beautiful campus where you'll live and study together with other Nyenrode students;
- and a large variety of extracurricular activities organized by and for students.

Are you results driven and do you have entrepreneurial spirit? Do you have a hands-on mentality and the ambition to exploit your full talent?

Are you looking for a challenging and exciting career in an international business environment?

Then your future starts at Universiteit Nyenrode, located at a beautiful estate in Breukelen, near Amsterdam.

Information sessions at Universiteit Nijmegen: 14 May, 25 June and 12 November 2005.

For more information: www.sixteenmonths.com or contact +31 (0) 346 291 291

Nyenrode MSc in Management.

Sixteen months that'll change your life.



Nyenrode for Masters

kijk op www.sixteenmonths.com
of bel 0346-291291

Nyenrode for Masters

kijk op www.sixteenmonths.com
of bel 0346-291291

Nyenrode for Master

kijk op www.sixteenmonths.com
of bel 0346-291291

Nyenrode for Master

kijk op www.sixteenmonths.co
of bel 0346-291291

Nyenrode for Masters

kijk op www.sixteenmonths.com
of bel 0346-291291

Nyenrode for Master

kijk op www.sixteenmonths.com
of bel 0346-291291

Nyenrode for Masters

kijk op www.sixteenmonths.co
of bel 0346-291291