



AEGEE Annual Review

Sketching
One
Europe

since 1985



KEY TO EUROPE
2013/2014

Statement of Principles

Dear reader,



We, the members of AEGEE,

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

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

We hereby declare these principles to be fundamental to us:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Approved at Autumn Agora Zaragoza 2013

The concept of Europe is a neverending work in progress, and AEGEE has an important role in sketching it. Look for example at the spreading of Euroscepticism and the related Nationalism of the past months, breaking the connections between European countries. Although fighting negativity from the outside, AEGEE still manages to stand united fighting for what we believe in: a borderless Europe, giving young Europeans the space to speak up and fight for their rights.

The changes that have been happening in the past months are life changing, but can have both a positive and negative impact, depending on how they are dealt with by the actors involved. To us, this is the most important factor of AEGEE: seeing changes to the daily surroundings, and turning them into something positive.

We want our main publication, this Key to Europe, to reflect back on the changes and at the same time highlight the importance of changes to our society. Without a change of plan, whether it's something small or something huge, we can't better ourselves, and therefore can't better our environment either. If we want to develop a united Europe, we have to keep learning, improving and listening to young people's needs and thoughts.

In the following pages you will witness in what ways AEGEE changed, and what was achieved because of that in the past year. AEGEE has found ways to do this successfully, shaping the future together with its members. In the past months, our members saw big changes happen to their surroundings, like the fight for freedom and democracy in Ukraine and the floods in the Balkans region. Although not all 13,000 members had to deal with these situations, everybody was involved and helping in any possible way they could. Borders of countries didn't matter anymore, because AEGEEans stood united. "No man's an island" said John Donne and all the cooperations our organisation has established and developed show the progresses that have been made in the external relations. The true engine of an organisation to grow and breathe are its members and their ideas. Projects and events therefore display what the Network is capable of.

The creation of this publication was a long, tiring, sometimes difficult, but yet more than exciting process, leading to a final result we are proud of. As Editors-in-Chief, we were lucky to work in a team full of enthusiasm, from journalists to proofreaders, passing by Editors-in-Large. But what impressed us the most was the members participation and their will to share their projects and events with everyone. Together with our team we believe that we created something that captures a vivid picture of what the Network looked like in 2013-2014, while also being a good read. We put all our efforts and passion into it, because we believed passion to be the main ingredient for everything. We hope therefore you will enjoy reading this Key to Europe at least as much as we enjoyed preparing it.

Erika Bettin, AEGEE-Venezia & **Svenja van der Tol**, AEGEE-Nijmegen

Editors-in-Chief

Dear reader,



2013-2014 has been a decisive year for Europe.

The recovery from the economic and financial crisis has slowly started, however its effects are far from being counterbalanced. The political and social consequences of the crisis are devastating, especially for young people.

The European Parliamentary elections 2014 have been an occasion to discuss these effects and the European project in general on a broad scale, opening the discussion to the general public and gathering input from the citizens. Parallely, unfortunately, we have seen a rise of populism and radical movements that have capitalised on the lack of trust that the citizens carry towards the European Unions today.

At the same time, the development in the European Union is complemented with movements in Ukraine and Turkey, where citizens demand more democracy. These movements have also challenged the EU to take a position and redefine its role in the East and its take on Neighbourhood Policy in General.

What role is AEGEE playing in this?

In the different events this year, the European Elections, the protests in Ukraine, the floods in the Balkans, we have seen how young people are ready to take action and to be responsible for what happens in their society.

AEGEE has channelled this energy for almost 30 years, transforming it into a positive change in society. We have empowered students all over the continent to become change-makers, transforming reality and taking ownership of the European dream.

This year, we have carried out energetic campaigns engaging young people in the European elections, enabling them to make an informed choice. Our Y Vote projects had ten conferences, two bus tours, one European Students' Agenda, one Voting Guide and many local events. The second edition of Europe on Track travelled through twenty-nine European cities, interviewing and informing young people. Both initiatives have provided a unique two-way communication channel, which values especially the opinions and inputs of young people themselves and brings their voices back to EU policy makers.

AEGEE has been strongly present in the developments of the crisis in Ukraine, both advocating in the EU institutions in Brussels, as well as being present in the EuroMaidan in Kyiv and other regions of the country. We also participated in the Election Observation Mission for the Presidential Elections in May 2014, in order to contribute to smooth and regular elections.

We have launched an exemplary campaign to support our Balkan neighbours affected by the floods, pushing on-line campaigns to help with donations. Our members have been helping instrumentally in the very field in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia.

Our efforts have again been recognized by several stakeholders such as the European Parliament, choosing our Maltese project for the European Charlemagne Youth Prize 2014 finals, as well as the Schwarzkopf Foundation with the Young European of the Year 2014.

We have launched our Erasmus Voting Assessment (EVA) initiative, bringing a strong added value to the social impact of the EU mobility programme and many more initiatives which you will find in this Key to Europe.

2014 has marked a milestone in the history of Europe. After the elections have concluded and with the status in Ukraine still being unsure, and with many other movements going on at the same time, we have to find alternative ways of participation, of engaging citizens, of economic and financial regulations, and of social models. We have to re-convince the citizens of Europe's value.

Europe has to wake up, and start building stronger dialogues and trust with its civil society and its citizens, if it wants to continue as a success story of peace and prosperity. The election of the new Commission President as it is stated in the Lisbon Treaty, the new leaderships in the European Commission, European Parliament and European Council, and how they engage relevant actors, like AEGEE, in its decisions and policies, will determine the roadmap of this continent.

Europe is experiencing a moment of change of processes, political leaders, and geographical definition. We will ensure a strong student and youth voice in this period and push for a transition from a Europe of Member States to a true Europe of Citizens, especially a Europe whose young people take full ownership and responsibility of it.

“Young people are no longer the future, they are the present and they are here to influence”

Kind regards,



Luis Alvarado Martínez
President
AEGEE-Europe / European Students' Forum

Dear reader,



For some years now, the term Europe for many citizens brings to mind crisis, austerity and unemployment. We are in a challenging time for the European Union, and citizens have voiced their dissatisfaction in the European Parliamentary Elections 2014. There is a risk that an entire generation of well-educated, but unemployed young people turns away from the EU.

I do not think we have ever had a challenge like this in our recent history. The future of our young generation, together with other big processes which the EU has tackled through the last year, like the happenings in Ukraine and the tension with our Russian partners, as well as the outcomes of the European Parliament elections with extreme nationalisms on the rise, make us realise and remember what values we stood for in the past, and how much they are necessary today, more than ever, to ensure the continuity of our European dream.

However, the institutions of the European Union cannot uphold these values alone. We need all the relevant actors, including a strong civil society sector, to help us to re-inspire the citizens with our values of tolerance, democracy, freedom and transparency, and get them on board of the European integration journey.

This is why I am extremely thankful to AEGEE-Europe/European Students' Forum, for their daily work in empowering students around the continent to take active stands in the European integration process, as well as for bringing their voices to us EU leaders in the decision making processes.

Now, more than ever, we need to engage the young generation in the building of a new Europe. Without them, this project lacks the spark, energy and continuity it needs to keep on improving the lives of more than 500 million citizens in this Union.

I wish you all the best and hope to see a lot more of your work in the future.

Kind regards,

Herman Van Rompuy
President of the European Council

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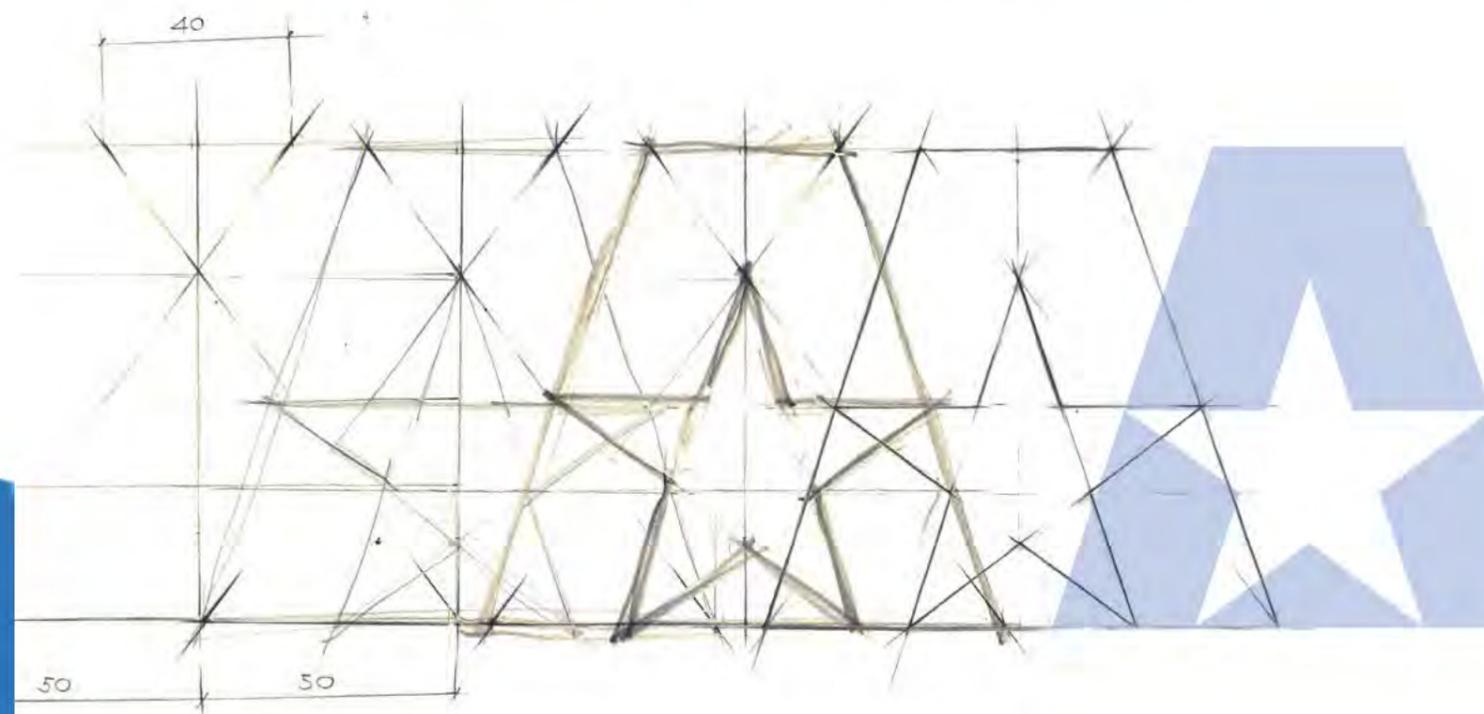
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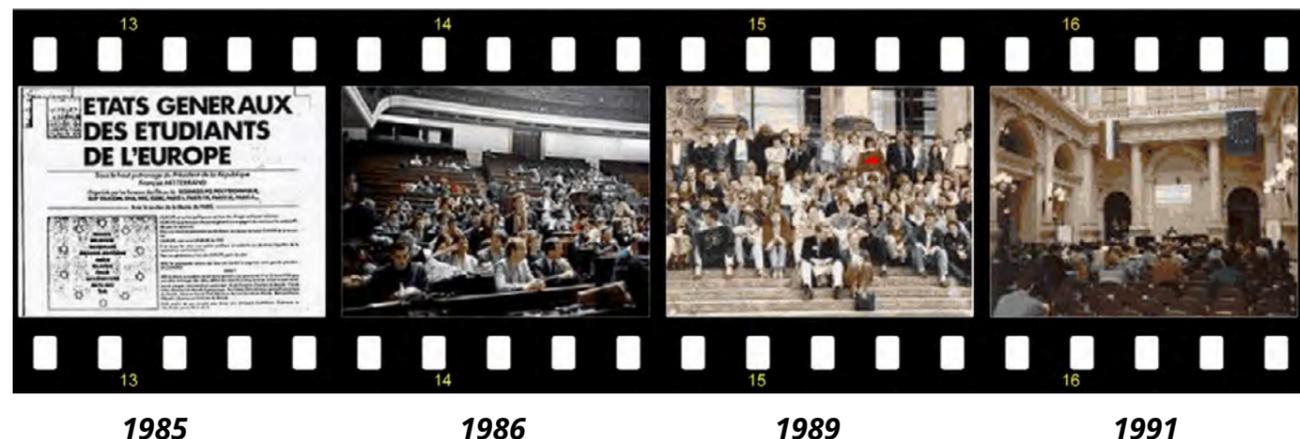
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About AEGEE



What is AEGEE?

Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe 2012 - 2014



1985

1986

1989

1991



AEGEE, the European Students' Forum, is one of Europe's biggest student organisations, with 13.000 members in 200 university cities across the continent, welcoming students of all disciplines. It was founded in 1985 in Paris, and has, ever since, conquered Europe with a Network now spanning across 40 countries, from Western Europe to the Caucasus and Russia. Throughout the years, the members have changed and many different activities have been developed, but AEGEE's vision has always been clear: a democratic, diverse and borderless Europe, which is socially, economically and politically integrated and values the participation of young people in its construction and development.

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

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

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

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

Intercultural Exchange

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



1991

2002

2010

2014

Thematic Projects

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

Advocacy and Policy

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

Forum for Discussion

AEGEE provides a space for young Europeans to discuss and exchange different points of view with a European perspective, in order to find a common ground. This exchange of ideas happens in all our activities but a special place for them is our Working groups, conferences and General Assemblies (EBM and Agora).

When looking at AEGEE's history of 29 years, one can easily conclude that one of its major achievements is the effective lobbying for the creation of the Erasmus programme in the 1980s. In cooperation with the European Commission, AEGEE played a major role in convincing the European Union Member States that mobility programmes are worth investing in. We have continued on this path ever since, promoting programmes, and advocating for them, such as Erasmus and Socrates, and the inclusion of more countries in the latter, such as Turkey. AEGEE is also known for its longest running project, the Summer University Project, that gathers thousands of young people each summer providing courses on a wide range of topics from language courses to seminars about political, cultural or environmental issues.

AEGEE has participatory status in the activities of the Council of Europe, consultative status at the United Nations, operational status at UNESCO, and is a full member of the European Youth Forum.

AEGEE's Timeline

1985: Creation of AEGEE by "Bureaux des élèves" from five Grandes Écoles in Paris, led by Frank Biancheri. EGEE 1 conference as focus of student support for European integration.

1986: Night of Seven Antennas (video Conference). First Agora in München.

1987: Congress Europe-Africa. Lobbying to implement the Erasmus programme with support of François Mitterand.

1988: Start of the Summer University Project. Name of the association changed to AEGEE.

1989: Conference Women in Europe. Congress on East-West relations in Berlin.

1990: Enlargement of the Network to the East.

1992: First antenna in Turkey. First Key to Europe published.

1993: Management competition Champ.

1994: First use of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) in AEGEE.

1990s

1991: First European Schools. First Agora in the East - Budapest. Quo Vadis Europe project, about the future of Europe.

1995: Decision taken to move the Comité Directeur from Delft to Brussels. Creation of Network Commission. Case study trip to Ex-Yugoslavia.

1996: Round table discussion on a single currency in Europe. Find Your Way event cycle.

1997: Europe and Euro project. Socrates Action Days.

1998: Building a Social Europe. Achieving consultative status at UNESCO and the United Nation's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Membership in the European Youth Forum.

1999: Peace Summit, the final conference of the Peace Academy project. Creation of AEGEE Academy.

1980s

2000: Borderless Europe Rally. Education for Democracy.

2001: Socrates Promoters on the Move.

2002: Eureka. European Education Campaign. Start of the Turkish-Greek Civic Dialogue project.

2003: Caucasus Case Study Trip. World Youth Summit on Globalisation.

2008: Start of the YOUrope needs YOU! project for highschool students. Sustaining our Future Flagship Project.

2010s

2004: First Election Observation Mission - Ukraine.

2007: Education Unlimited! project.

2009: YOUrope needs YOU! project wins the European Charlemagne Youth Prize. Launch of Y Vote 2009 Campaign to involve young people in the elections of the European Parliament.

2010: Case Study Trip to India in the framework of the Beyond Europe project.

2011: Launch of AEGEE's online magazine The AEGEEan. Europe End? project in Utrecht.

2012: New, thematic focus of the European Boards' Meeting. Final conference of Where Does Europe End? project in Utrecht.

2013: Europe on Track project wins the European Charlemagne Youth Prize.

2014: Second Edition of Europe on Track, Y Vote 2014 Campaign

2000s

Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe 2012-2014

AEGEE-Europe is member of the following platforms and advocacy bodies:



European Youth Forum/Youth Forum Jeunesse (YFJ)

The European Youth Forum is a platform of youth organisations in Europe, bringing together 99 youth organisations. It represents the common interests of millions of young people and advocates for youth rights in international institutions. AEGEE-Europe is currently represented in the Board of the European Youth Forum by Mirosław Krzanik, and in the Working Group for Education by Marko Grdošič.



European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL)

EUCIS-LLL gathers 33 European networks working in education and training, and is the main advocacy platform in the field of education policy towards the European Institutions. AEGEE-Europe is currently represented in the Steering Committee of EUCIS-LLL by Lucille Rieux.



Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe

The Advisory Council (AC) is made up of 30 representatives from youth NGOs and networks which provide opinions and input for all the youth sector activities of the Council of Europe. It co-manages and co-decides on policies, programme priorities, and budget allocation. AEGEE-Europe is currently represented in the Advisory Council by Luis Alvarado Martínez.



European Movement International (EMI)

EMI is an international organisation composed of 42 National Councils and 32 associated members whose objective is to contribute to the establishment of a united, federal Europe founded on the principles of peace, democracy, liberty, solidarity, and respect for basic human rights.

European Civic Forum (ECF)



The European Civic Forum is a transnational network that brings together over 100 associations and NGOs across 27 countries in Europe actively working to promote civic and popular ownership of Europe. AEGEE-Europe is currently represented in the Steering Committee of the European Civic Forum by Luis Alvarado Martínez.



Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

The EaP Civil Society Forum aims to strengthen civil society's role in the European Neighbourhood Policy. An active civil society and its cooperation with the EU ensures that reform objectives agreed with partner countries are a true reflection of their societies' concerns and aspirations, supports the promotion of reforms and holds governments accountable to their commitments.



League of Young Voters

The League of Young Voters in Europe is a politically neutral initiative that aims to amplify young people's concerns and expectations in the run-up to European elections.



Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism

The Civil Society platform on Multilingualism consults the European Commission on all issues of multilingualism and promotes multilingualism as one of the key elements to foster European Integration. AEGEE-Europe is currently represented in the Civil Society Platform by Nico Huurman.



Informal Forum of International Student Organisations (IFISO)

IFISO is a platform of 20 International Student Organisations, covering around 22 million students around the globe. It aims to support and improve international student organisations through networking, cooperation, and sharing knowledge and best practices.

Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe 2012-2014

AEGEE cooperates with the following organisations and institutions:

Board of European Students of Technology (BEST)



BEST is a student NGO which strives to help European students of technology to become more internationally-minded. BEST and AEGEE share knowledge and best practices on a daily basis, work together on training opportunities and exchange participants for their events.

Youth for Exchange and Understanding (YEU)



YEU is a network of young people from 30 countries working to promote peace, understanding and cooperation between the young people of the world, in a spirit of respect for human rights. YEU and AEGEE work together on numerous projects, one of them being the development of a certification of the qualifications of youth worker in NGOs.

Generation Europe Foundation (GEF)



GEF is a non-governmental organisation that aims to educate and empower young people to be better informed of their rights and responsibilities as European citizens in a fast-changing world. GEF is partner in the Erasmus Voting Assessment Project.

Erasmus Student Network (ESN)



ESN is a non-profit international student organisation with the mission of representing international students and providing opportunities for cultural understanding and self-development. ESN is partner in the Erasmus Voting Assessment Project.

Liquid Democracy e.V.



The Liquid Democracy Association works on innovative ideas and projects for democratic participation with the goal to establish a transparent democratic principle in both the political and social domain based on strengthening the citizens' participation. Liquid Democracy offers the Y Part Platform to AEGEE for online participation and discussion.

Democracy International



Democracy International helps people and groups that are working for more direct democracy, offering assistance to their campaigns, know-how about how to build a new organisation, and a platform for the exchange of information about direct democracy.

Debating Europe



Debating Europe is a platform which connects European citizens and politicians together in an online debate. It takes questions, comments and ideas of citizens directly to policy makers and

GovFaces



GovFaces is the first global web-based platform for easy and meaningful communication between citizens & elected representatives.

Media Partners:

EurActiv



EurActiv is an online media dedicated to EU news and policy debates, providing free in-depth information on EU affairs to more than 675.000 readers in 15 languages.

European Voice



Both through its weekly newspaper and website, which is updated daily, European Voice brings independent, authoritative and balanced coverage of the latest EU news and analysis.

Europe&Me



E&M is an online lifestyle magazine created by young Europeans for young Europeans. Its motto is to make Europe personal, because Europe is often only identified with politics and

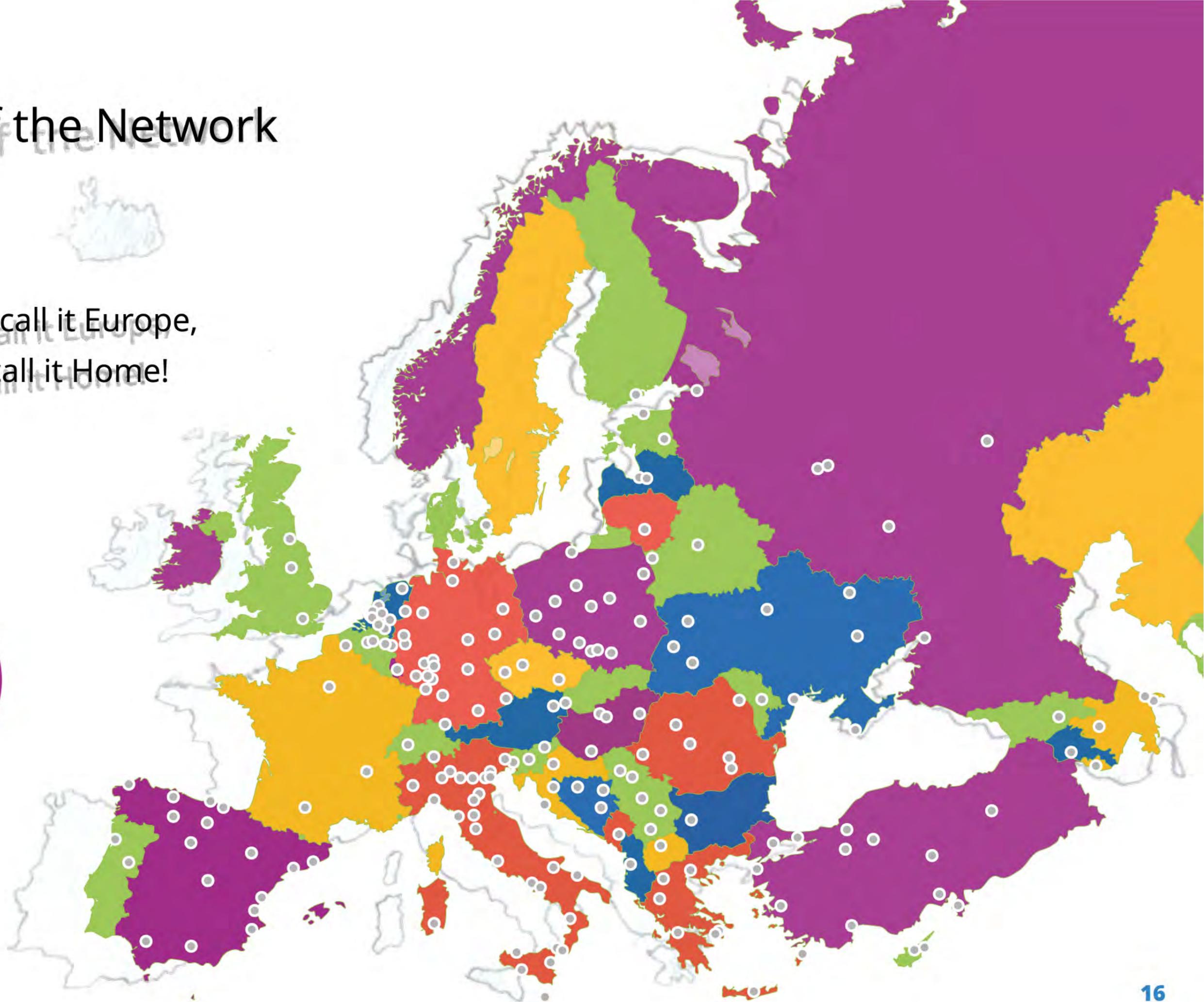
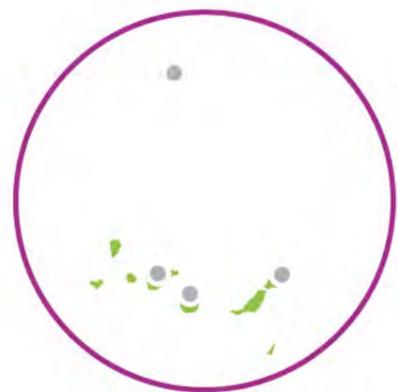
OneEurope



OneEurope publishes daily news articles, infographics, cartoons and videos from a European perspective. It is managed entirely by volunteers from all over Europe.

Map of the Network

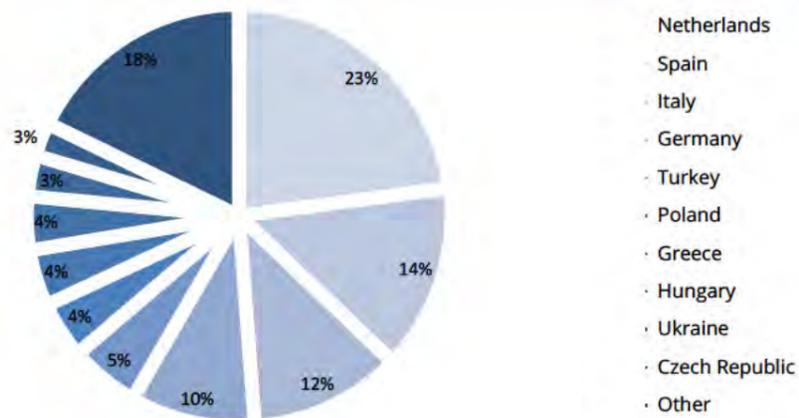
Some call it Europe,
we call it Home!



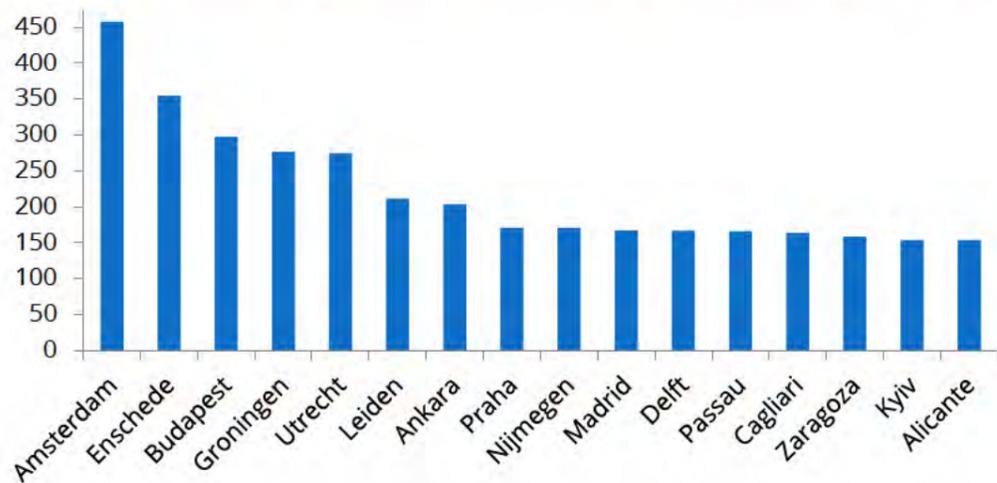
AEGEE'S Statistics

OUR NETWORK

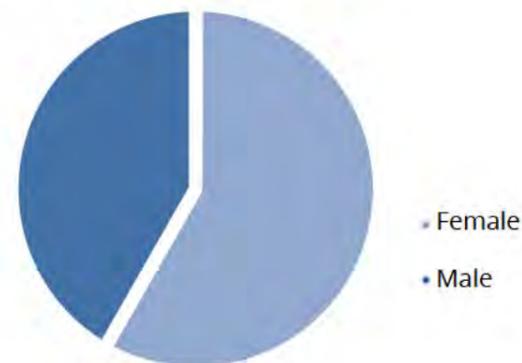
AEGEE Network Distribution



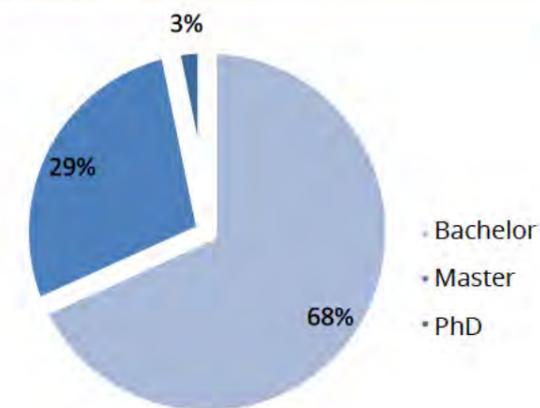
Locals with higher number of members



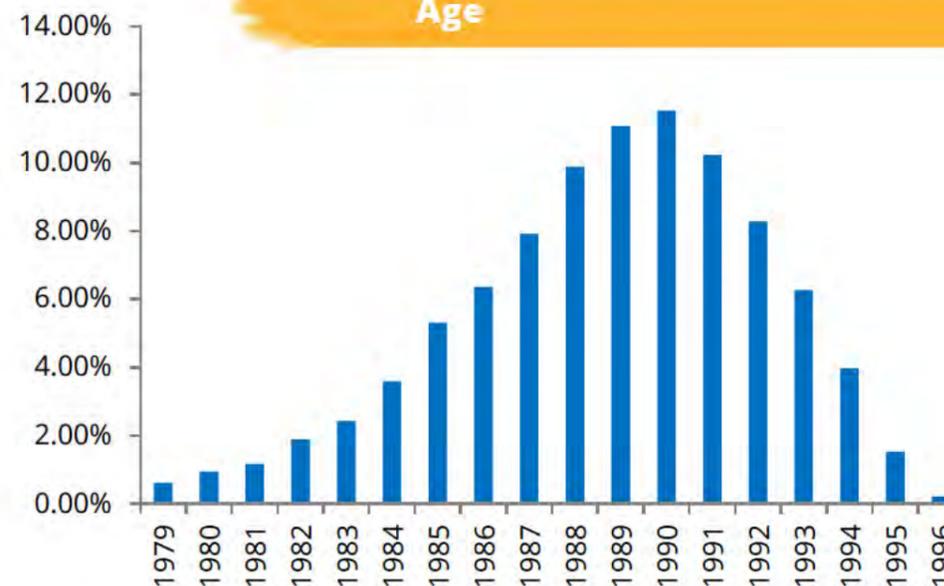
Gender



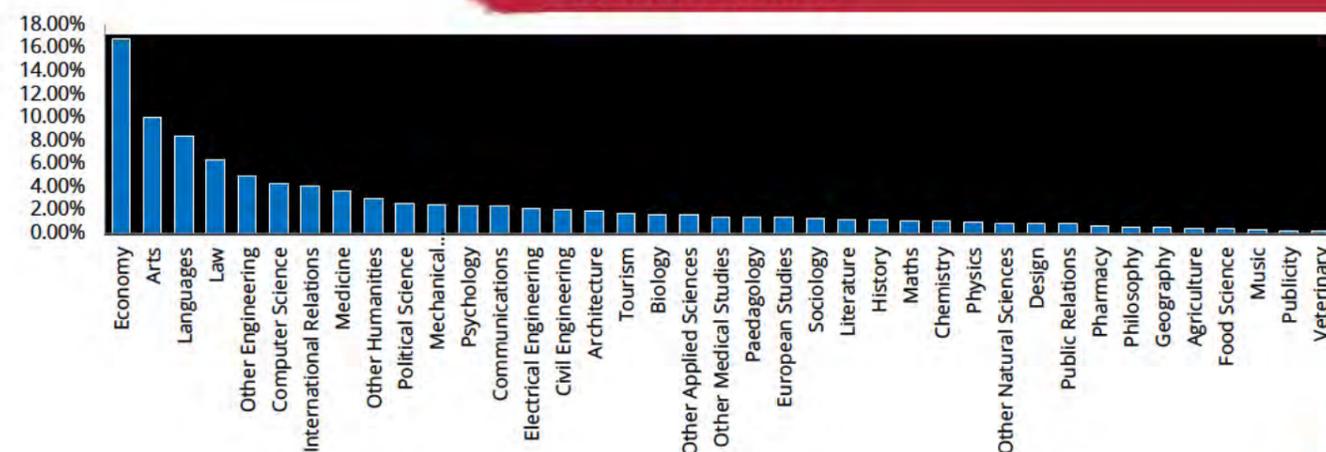
Level of Studies



Age



Field of Studies

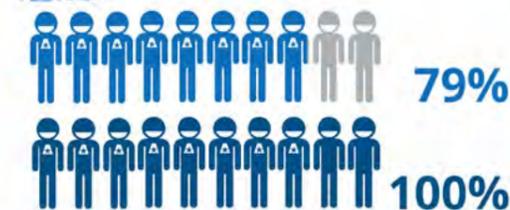


AEGEE'S INFLUENCE



AEGEE's impact

CITIZENSHIP

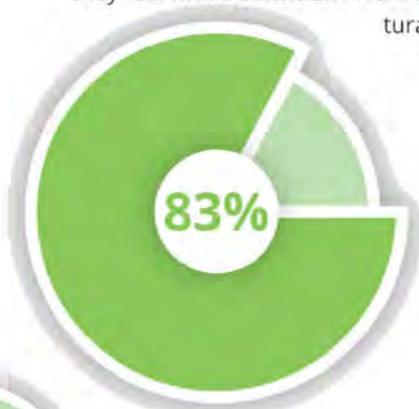


79% of AEGEEans consider themselves active citizens.

100% of AEGEEans consider themselves as Europeans, and 78% say that AEGEE has substantially contributed to this.

AEGEEANS AND OTHER CULTURES

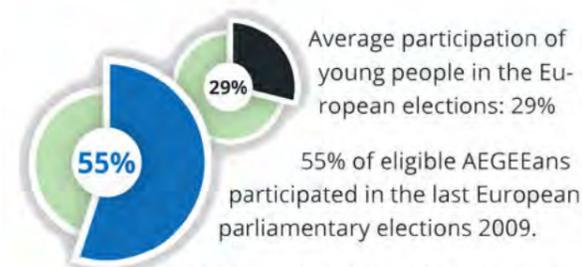
83% of AEGEEans say that because of AEGEE, they feel **more confident** working in intercultural environments



77% say that they feel **more respect** towards other nationalities, 74% say that because of AEGEE, they are **more aware** of stereotypes spread through the media.



AEGEEANS AND THE EU



Average participation of young people in the European elections: 29%

55% of eligible AEGEEans participated in the last European parliamentary elections 2009.

AEGEE has almost doubled the voting turnout for young Europeans among its members.

30% of the average European citizens say that they have a positive image of the European Union.

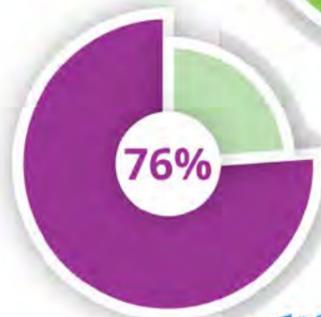
71% of AEGEEans say that their image of the European Union is positive, with 19% saying it is very positive.

AEGEE has more than doubled the support of the European Union among its members.



EMPLOYABILITY

76% say that AEGEE has encouraged them to imagine themselves **working in an international company, NGO or public body**



67% of AEGEEans **found a job within the first 3 months** after graduating.



OUR ALUMNI

And our Alumni...

- 95% say that AEGEE has **prepared** them for the job market, with 72% saying that it has had an **substantial influence**.
- 80% of our Alumni have said that AEGEE has **helped them** to get a job, with 51% saying it has **helped them substantially**.



- 31% are **in a managing position**, 46% are leading a team.
- 30% have **worked in a European Institution** or a body closely connected to it.

SKILLS DEVELOPED

The skills that AEGEEans develop most in AEGEE are



SOURCES

AEGEE Impact Study 2013
 Standard Eurobarometer Wave 78 2013 (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb78/eb78_first_en.pdf)
 Eurobarometer Post Electoral Report 2009 (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/28_07/EB71.3_post-electoral_final_report_EN.pdf)

Raluca Radu, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca



Y Vote 2014 wants to encourage voters and especially students to participate in the European Parliament elections and to give them all the information and competences in order to make a well informed choice. The project took place through conventions in nine cities from all over Europe, and, in addition, Bus Tours (one in the United Kingdom and the other one in Spain).



The purpose of **Europe in Exchange** is to inform students and young people about the existence and the advantage of mobility programs and the possibilities to travel, work and study abroad, to increase the bilateral agreements among universities.



The Summer University Project is one of the best way to promote the multiculturalism and European values among young people. It is AEGEE's biggest project involving every summer more than 2000 members: students from all over Europe spend average fifteen days together, get active, gain knowledge about different cultures, different food, different history, become good friends, gain unforgettable memories and discover the real AEGEE spirit by experience.



Youth UnEmployment helps the youngest, aged between 18 and 30, to increase their employability. Students involve their time in volunteering, but rarely this is recognized by the employers. The project wants to implement some activities in order to help youngsters improve their chances to get a job, and also their volunteering work to be recognized.



The Eastern Partnership project is the one linking all Europe, from East to West, promoting the youth participation and active citizenship. Knowing the important role that the youth participation is playing, it establishes trust and understanding between people from East and West Europe.



Higher Education Days represents the project whose aim is to encourage students to have a bigger influence on the decision making process in their education. They need to express their opinion, to know that there is a constructive dialogue between university, private sector and youth in order to develop their personal and professional skills.



Health4Youth shows AEGEE members how easy it is to stay healthy, giving students useful information about healthy lifestyle and the environmental influencing factors, and tries to motivate them to implement healthy lifestyle habits, so they will experience better eating routine and health.



EuroArab project wants to establish a cooperation and a peaceful connection between youngster from Europe and from Arab world, based on tolerance and understanding, to create a platform where youth from both parts can share experiences, values, reflections on human rights violations and intolerance, to develop cooperation between educational institutions in the Europe and Arabian world.

Raluca Radu, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca



The Culture Working Group aims at promoting all aspects of culture, making everyone aware of cultural variety and of its constant presence in our daily life, being experienced every day, in every way. One of its projects is the collaboration with Summer Universities.



The International Politics Working Group aims to inform students about the current political issues in the world, to let them understand the importance of politics and to help them expressing their opinions about politics through discussion platforms, local events, workshops.



The Educational Working Group is a support for students' mobility in Europe, promotes and evaluates European educational programs, strives for the recognition of non-formal education and promotes the importance of an higher level of education in Europe.



The Visa Freedom Working Group provides youngsters with information and help to apply for VISA, creates projects and activities on the VISA issue, supports the mobility of AEGEE members in Europe and neighboring countries.



The Environmental Working Group aims to protect and raise awareness of environmental issues. They promote and support events to spread information on the sustainability of Europe and discuss solutions that can be achieved in the near future.



The Sports Working Group wants to promote and to increase physical activity and sport disciplines in Europe, supporting a healthy lifestyle and the cooperation of people of all nationalities, in order to eradicate racism and to bring people together through the unifying power of sports.



The Human Rights Working Group wants to inform and raise awareness among youth about the human rights and the problems present in Europe today. Its bigger aim is to create a sustainable society in which human rights are not an exception.



The Language Working Group tries to encourage and raise awareness among AEGEE members about the importance of learning languages. The main project promoting the multilingualism is the European Day of Languages.

Branding AEGEE – an intermediate evaluation

Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe 2012-2014

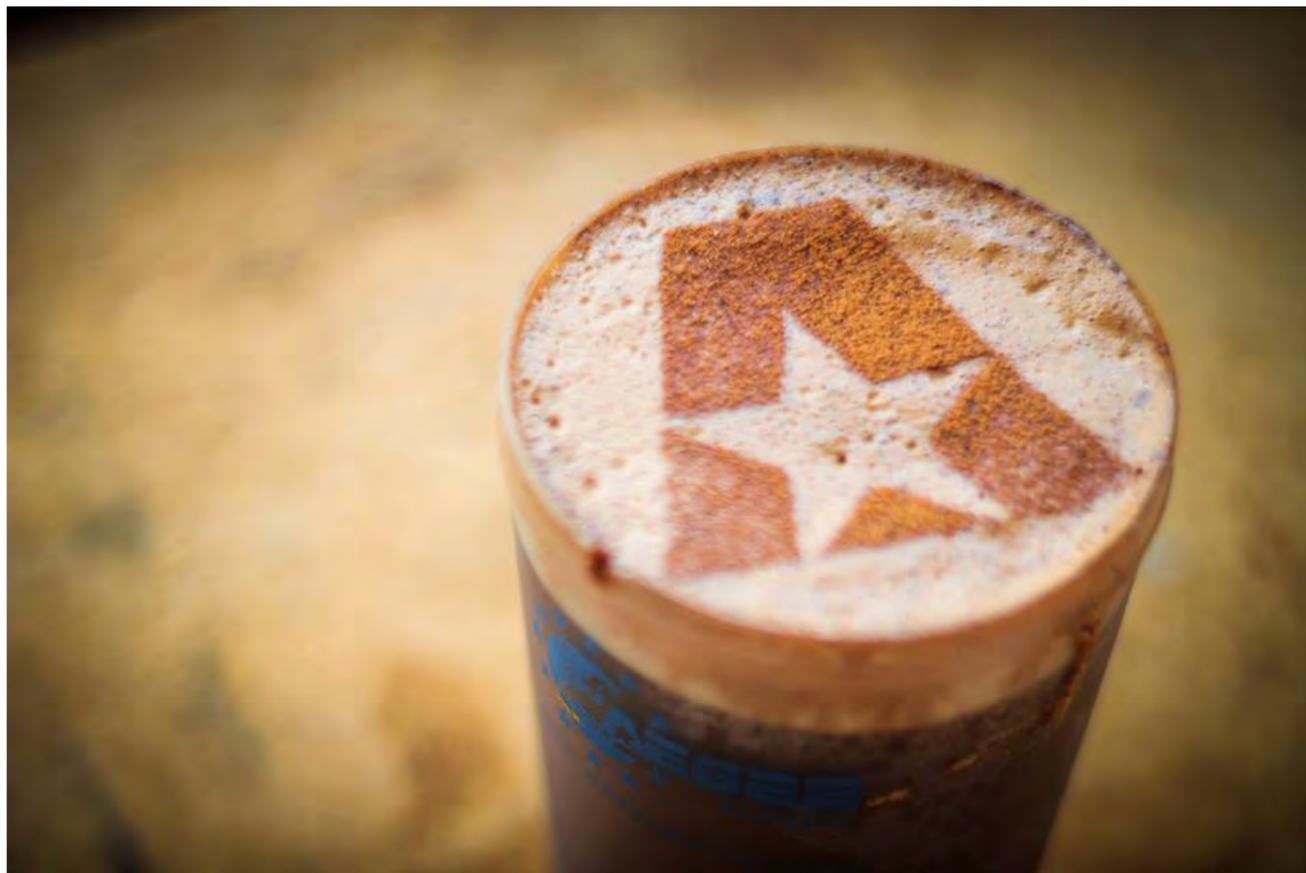
In 2012, an initiative was going through the AEGEE network in order to redefine the Identity of the organisation – its vision, mission, values, and the basic principles we work on. The idea was to create one common identity for the Network, which would help both fresh and experienced members to explain what AEGEE is and does, to understand its values, and to present it externally – both to prospective members, stakeholders in Brussels and possible sponsors and partners.

The process we went through was essentially branding – aligning AEGEE's Strategic Vision, the organisational culture, and the internal and external image of the organisation – or at least taking a first step towards that. The new Identity document – consisting of a clearly formulated vision, mission, means, and our statement of principles – was adopted by the Agora in Zaragoza.

Does this mean that suddenly we are a new organisation? Of course not (yet). First of all, the new Identity does not really bring anything new, but it collects the values and activities and ideas that were floating around for years in the Network and puts them in a new structure, which aims to make them more clearly understandable.

Second of all, just because we have a new document, it doesn't mean it is also implemented in the organisation. That is why this year the Identity Team started many smaller and bigger initiatives in order to make the new Identity usable for locals and members. Among them, there are official presentations that can be edited and translated as needed, the Identity Toolkit, which explains how to include the organisational values in the work of the local, PR materials which reflect the values that are established in the Identity, and much more.

However, the process of really anchoring the newly formulated vision and mission in our work will not simply take one or two years, but a longer time. We have noticed the first changes in the Network, but their continuity depends on the persistence of our generation – the one that has reshaped and redefined – and the next one, which was also part of the process – to share the words that we have created and adopted, and repeat them as much as possible, until every member in AEGEE knows our mission by heart: "We empower students and young people in Europe to take an active role in society. We create a space for dialogue and learning opportunities. We act as their representative towards decision-makers. We strengthen mutual understanding and bring Europe closer to young people."



Helping AEGEE to define our Strategic Plan for 2014-17

Miguel Gallardo Albajar, Projects Director of AEGEE-Europe 2012 - 2014

Every three years, AEGEE takes looks into the future and defines its priorities for the next three years. This process takes into account the input and contribution from both all AEGEE members and the Comité Directeur in Brussels. It is a very crucial moment, because the topics that are included in the Strategic Plan will shape our activities directly and indirectly, through the different Action Agendas of each year, but also through presentations in our meetings, the discussions in boards of the locals, and its impact on the topics that are discussed during Agorae and European Planning Meetings. Therefore, this has been one of the tasks that have required closer attention in our network this past year.

As Projects Director, I have felt this responsibility as a great honour. I was involved in the elaboration of the previous Strategic Plan and I have seen that, with the inherent limitations of a diverse and complex Network like the one we have in AEGEE, the focus areas decided in Poznań in 2011 (Bridging Europe, Youth Participation, and Inclusion of Minorities) have really been in the spotlight in the past three years, with initiatives that have had a big impact inside and outside AEGEE. Our organization owes a lot to all those people who were involved in the creation of the Strategic Plan 2011-14, which has guided the last three years of AEGEE's thematic work.

The Comité Directeur paid special attention to take advantage of the lessons learnt from these three years, and set up a Planning Team composed of motivated members to make sure the outcome at the end of the process is as good as AEGEE deserves. Through a comprehensive survey, the priorities of the Network were assessed, matching them with the topics which will be hot in Europe in the next three years. A first compilation of ideas was the raw material for the Planning Meeting in Genova, where a concrete proposal for the Agora in Zaragoza was drafted. The presentation and voting of the six Focus Areas in the plenary created great expectation. Global Challenges and Peace Building were left out of our priorities for the next three years. But Youth Employment, Youth Mobility, Civic Education and Spreading Eurooptimism are indeed huge topics to work, and will provide AEGEE-Europe with enough opportunities to improve Europe with our energy and youth. The first Action Agenda, drafted in Lublin and approved by the Agora in Patra, is ready to guide our Network in the first year. Make it happen!

Planning Meeting Genova 2013

The Planning Meeting 2013 took place in the Mediterranean city of Genova, in the Italian region of Liguria, in the first half of September. It was a very intense event, where ideas and opinions were the main raw materials for our work, and it had a mix of experienced and fresh members, to reflect the reality of our network and to build a Strategic Plan with solid roots in AEGEE's fields of expertise, but a great projection into the future.

Hosting thirty active AEGEEans who have as their only priority to work on flipcharts and abstract concepts and do not seem to be interested in visiting your amazing city and participating in any social activity can sometimes be a challenge for a local. In the end, we all work as volunteers, and as AEGEE members one of our rewards is to meet other AEGEEans and interacting with them. On the other side, experience has proved that, even if sometimes participants are focused on their work or too tired, and do not feel like doing a city tour, in the end these small mental breaks can be very healthy, allowing them to find the day after that solution to the complex problem that blocked the progress for half a day.

As Projects Director of AEGEE-Europe, I would like to thank again the whole team of AEGEE- Genova, and especially the main coordinator Antonio Carassiti, for their patience with us, for their gentle push to go out of our focused minds and enjoy that walk in the narrow streets of the city of Genova, that breath-taking sunset on the Mediterranean, that refreshing ice cream in the small fishermen's village nearby, and for all that great pizza we shared. And of course, all the participants need to be thanked for their never ending energy, for their ability to discuss with arguments, and for their will to make compromises to provide AEGEE with the best Strategic Plan proposal possible. At the end of 2017, when AEGEE evaluates the achievements of this Strategic Plan, they can all be proud of their contribution to it. Without your efforts and your energy, AEGEE cannot leap forward!



Looking ahead: towards a Secretariat for AEGEE?

Lucille Rieux, Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe 2012 - 2014

The Comité Directeur (CD) is the body which represents AEGEE in Brussels and coordinates the work of the Network. Under those few words are hiding an endless list of tasks and responsibilities, which are currently carried out by seven elected board members. However, in the past years, different CDs have come to realise that the presence of a Secretariat would be highly beneficial to the work of the Comité Directeur.

A Secretariat, opposite to the CD members, would consist of a paid staff employed for its competencies and capacity to carry out a certain number of tasks. Not only would a Secretariat benefit the organisation by supporting the CD members in some of their tasks - and by that giving them more time for strategic development - but it would also bring stability and professionalism to the organisation. The fact that one or two people would stay longer than a year would help the following CDs to find out in detail how the AEGEE office and the Brussels' world work. The Secretariat members would be working under the supervision of the board members and would therefore be able to bring a more technical and administrative support.

On suggestion of the Comité Directeur 2012-2014, Agora Patra has therefore approved a Secretariat Strategy which paves the way for the establishment of a Secretariat in AEGEE. Of course, this will not be possible without further funding allocation. Efforts will be put in trying to unlock money which will make this transition possible, but the direction in which we want to go as organisation is clear: a professional and competent Secretariat which gives room to CD members to focus on the development of the organisation.



Charter of Honorary Members of AEGEE-Europe

Luis Alvarado Martinez, President of AEGEE-Europe 2012-2014

'Article 7 of the Statutes of AEGEE-Europe

(3) Honorary Members:

1 Those persons having rendered noteworthy services to the association and who have been awarded this title by the Comité Directeur.'

Honorary Membership of AEGEE-Europe was first awarded in 1989, four years after the organization was founded. The list of Honorary Members contains the names of some of the leaders and biggest contributors which AEGEE has had through different generations. All of them have fulfilled different procedures rigorously maintained by the Comité Directeur over the years to be eligible to this award.

In 2014, with sixteen Honorary Member awards throughout our history, the Comité Directeur decided to develop the Charter of Honorary Members of AEGEE-Europe, to make sure that the Network would be able to understand what the award consists of. After having a good dialogue with the current Honorary Members, and the Network itself, the Comité Directeur 2012-2014 presented the final version at the Spring Agora Patra 2014, where the Network gave its final approval.

The Charter will be a very useful new tool, with the exact definition of what a Honorary Member is, who is eligible to receive this award and who are the different actors to propose this award, and what the role, the rights and especially responsibilities of such Honorary Members within the AEGEE Network.

Thanks to this Charter, we will be able to engage and involve the Honorary Members of AEGEE-Europe in the right way in the work of AEGEE, and, at the same time, ensure a real and strong dialogue between different generations of European idealists.

AEGEE's Patrons



Vivianne Reding
Vice President of the European Commission for EBM Lublin (2014)



Ban Ki Moon
Secretary General of the United Nations for AGORA Zaragoza (2013)



Hermann Van Rompuy
President of the European Council for AGORA Rhein Neckar (2013)

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



Gabriel Mato
(EPP)



Joachim Zeller
(EPP)



Iratxe Garcia
(S&D)



Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar
(S&D)



Martin Schulz
(S&D)



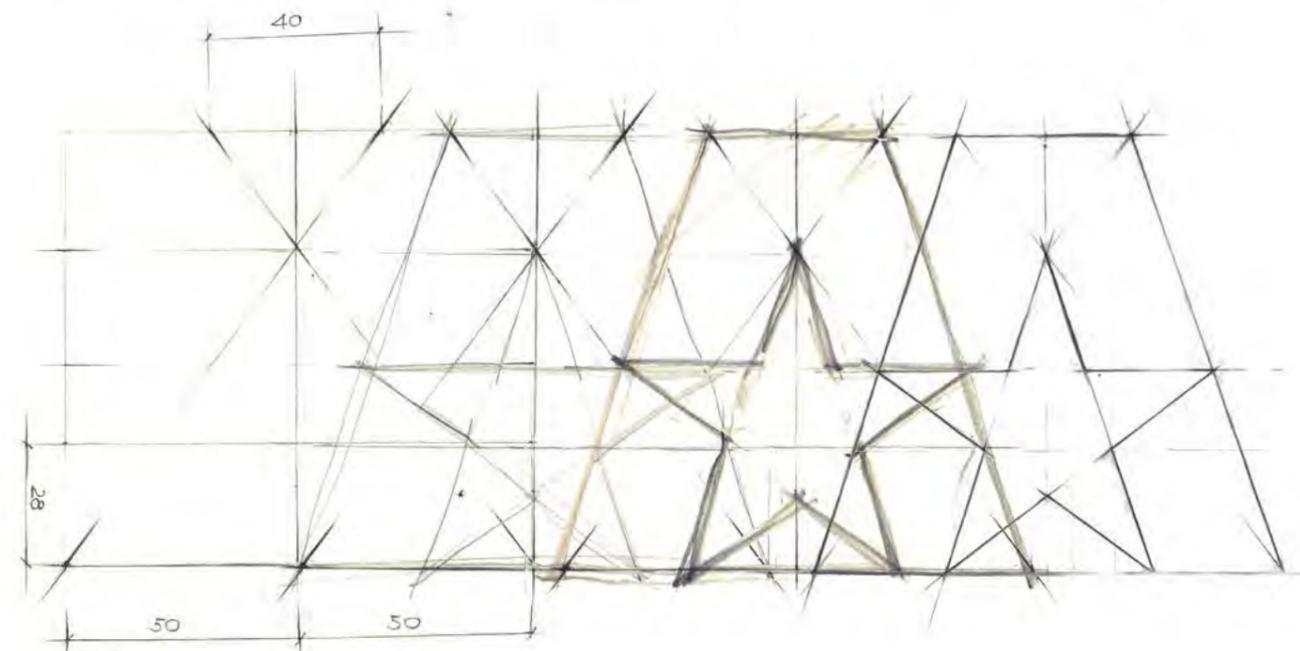
Eider Gardiazabal
(S&D and President of the Youth Inter-group)

AEGEE's Partners and Supporters



AEGEE Events

	Organizers	Title	Participants
04.09.2013 - 08.09.2013	AEGEE-Genova	Planning Meeting	60
10.25.2013	AEGEE-Groningen	Lustrum	50
27.10.2013 - 30.10.2013	AEGEE-Santander	Pre-event Agora: "Not another ESpanish event"	24
28.10.2013 - 30.10.2013	AEGEE-Madrid	Pre-event Agora: "Madrid km 0, where big things start!"	50
30.10.2013 - 04.11.2013	AEGEE-Zaragoza	Autumn Agora	772
24.11.2013 - 01.12.2013	AEGEE-Izmir	Summer University Project School	25
30.12.2013 - 02.01.2014	AEGEE-Oviedo	Lustrum: 25 times AEGEE, 25 years of AEGEE-Oviedo	45
08.02.2014 - 13.02.2014	AEGEE-Lviv	Pre-event EBM: "Whiteout!"	25
10.02.2014 - 13.02.2014	AEGEE-Warszawa	Pre-event EBM: "Never say NO to Warsaw"	30
13.02.2014 - 16.02.2014	AEGEE-Lublin	European Boards Meeting	323
25.04.2014 - 29.04.2014	AEGEE-Çanakkale	Olimpia AGORA	45
25.04.2014 - 29.04.2014	AEGEE-Thessaloniki	Pre-event Agora: "The Lord of Wine: The Return of Dionysus"	40
25.04.2014 - 29.04.2014	AEGEE-Skopje	Pre-event Agora: "haLALAlathy with AEGEE-Skopje"	25
26.04.2014 - 29.04.2014	AEGEE-Bari	Rocking the ferry?! AEGEE-Bari does it better!!	80
30.04.2014 - 05.05.2014	AEGEE-Patra	Spring Agora	819





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Faces of the Network



Bringing continuity - the conclusion of two years of office

Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe 2012 - 2014



I still remember it vividly: the countless meetings we had when we were discussing whether or not to run for a second year of office, the advantages and disadvantages, the personal factors for each one of the team members, and the moment when the last person decided to continue for another year. The morning when we all wrote our applications instead of taking a day off in Gozo, comparing and giving feedback to each other is still fresh in my memory.

For the first time in the history of AEGEE, a complete Comité Directeur (CD) ran for a second term. Our aim was to bring continuity to the organization, to build on the work of the first year and stabilize the organization, redefine its image and make sure it develops in a clear direction. After two years it is time to evaluate and draw conclusions: have we achieved our goals?

Looking across the organisation, we can see some developments: AEGEE has level of thematic activity like never before. Europe on Track and Y Vote 2014 have managed to engage many members in political discussions, taking the topics that are discussed on a European level out of the Brussels bubble. Both projects were received with great enthusiasm by the whole Network, creating a sense of common work and achievement, and bringing our members closer together.

Many other initiatives have been created and carried by our volunteers: The Election Observation Project, the great solidarity and activism that we saw from our members during the events in Ukraine and the Balkans and the vivid discussion around LGBT topics are just a few examples. In general, AEGEEans have become more aware of the role they play in society and their responsibility as young Europeans.

On a structural level, many ideas were taken up and brought to their logical conclusion: the Network has affirmed the will to establish a Secretariat in the future and quality and impact play an increasingly important role in our activities. We have become more professional in our approach to our work and established more coherency in the organization: a common identity and a common look - the Visual Identity. We are now a reliable and requested partner when applying for big grants and projects which require professional implementation. We are reevaluating the role of volunteers, the meaning of being a trainer, the relation between the Network and the leadership, and the role of the Network Commission. Many of these discussions are still ongoing, and it will take some time until they are concluded, but we are on the path towards improvement. AEGEEans are ready to question the status quo.



The position of AEGEE in Brussels and the European youth sector has been established as one of an important stakeholders that has to be taken into account when discussing issues of mobility, non-formal education and youth involvement in the Eastern Partnership process as well as youth participation in the democratic processes. We are represented on all of the major European platforms that are relevant for us, and have also started to profile ourselves in global contexts, such as the United Nations. On a local level, our members are becoming more aware, interested and prepared to participate in policy processes.

It is hard to say how much of this development is thanks to us, and how much is just part of a natural process of maturing as an organisation. Many of the mentioned aspects were only possible because of the preparation and work of the previous CDs and generations, and many projects were started by our talented and inspiring members themselves. But we are happy to be able to mention these projects as part of our two years in office. Their impact and long term improvement can only be evaluated in a few years, and it will depend on whether the next generation sees them as relevant and follows up.

And on a personal level?

The enthusiastic and energetic idealists from the first term have become realists when it comes to AEGEE and work. The throwing and developing of ideas has turned into strategic thinking and creation of long-term strategies. The second year was no less challenging and demanding than the first one, but the challenges and the motivation were of a different nature.

In our two years, we have probably experienced all the situations you can face as an international board. We have gone through successes and disappointments, through shared and personal challenges, through criticism and praise, through the feeling of intense synergy and strong individualism, through motivation and burnout, through compromise and confrontations, through all the highs and all the lows. We have all grown and aged and drawn our lessons from this intense and valuable experience, that we wouldn't have wanted to miss. What remains is a common feeling that it is time to close a chapter in our lives and move on, making room for a new and energetic generation of AEGEEans full of ideas. We are grateful for the many moments you have shared with us and your support throughout all of this time. We are looking forward to seeing what you are going to make out of our AEGEE.

Yours,

Comite Directeur 2012-2014

An exciting year ahead: looking forward to our term in the office

Antonija Parat, Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe 2014-2015-

As the beginning of our term approaches, our mailing lists are teeming with activity. There is a flood of questions, ideas, thoughts, and opinions. Certain emotions can be distinguished even through long-distance communication: anticipation, hope, motivation and perhaps most prominently - excitement. There is a genuine sense of excitement in the team about everything this year is bringing to AEGEE.

Indeed, there are many things instored for our organisation, starting with the 30th anniversary that we will celebrate in April 2015. The anniversary will provide the perfect opportunity for our members to learn about everything AEGEE has achieved, to reflect on those achievements, and use them as a guideline for the future. It will also enable us to increase our external visibility and to highlight our efforts, both past and current, to actively involve young people in decision-making processes in Europe. It is a special milestone for AEGEE, and there are plenty of things to be proud of. Throughout our existence, we have been a visionary force in Europe, empowering youth to tackle a variety of challenges through different projects, events, debates, and advocacy processes. Our members were never afraid to ask the hard questions and to think ahead of their times - from opening up to Eastern European countries to lobbying for the creation of the Erasmus programme.



Euro-skepticism is not the only challenge we are planning to tackle this year. Comité Directeur 2012-2014 was an extraordinary team, who gave us a much needed stability and continuity. They dedicated two years of their lives to this organization, guiding it in a more professional and coherent direction. Learning from them has been a privilege, and we will continue the implementation of the long-term processes they have started, such as defining and streamlining AEGEE's identity, impact measurement, and improvement of our statutory events.

We are striving for additional improvements of course. One of our top priorities is the members - we believe that it is very important to invest resources into educating and empowering them. Trainings play a crucial role in the education of our members, and we plan to further improve their scope and quality. In order to promote the empowerment of our members, we would like to find an adequate platform for discussion and direct participation, and turn members into actors in processes such as advocacy and policy-making.

Moreover, we hope this year we will be able to achieve other important goals we have set for ourselves, such as diversifying the funding of AEGEE, introducing a more coherent implementation of our Strategic Plan, improving communication between different bodies in our Network, and hopefully introducing some new projects and initiatives.

With all that said, we would like to repeat the sentiment from the beginning of the article - our team is genuinely excited about the upcoming year. We have spent years learning and growing in AEGEE and it has become a passion for all of us. We are thankful for the opportunity to work on improving our organization together with the entire Network, and we will work hard to justify the trust and support you have shown us.

Yours,

Comité Directeur 2014-2015



And it is precisely this critical, innovative thinking that Europe needs now. The recent results of the European Parliamentary elections show a rise in euro-skepticism and an increasing doubt in the validity of the European project. In AEGEE, one of our core ideals is creating a united, borderless Europe, and we believe that the European project, despite some failures, is still a cause worth fighting for. Therefore, the rise of euro-skepticism presents quite a challenge for us, but we believe AEGEE can and should face this challenge.

New Honorary Member of AEGEE-Europe: Christophe Leclercq

Luis Alvarado Martínez, President of AEGEE-Europe 2012 - 2014



During Spring Agora-Patra 2014, the Comité Directeur 2012-2014 of AEGEE-Europe proposed a nomination for a new Honorary Member to join the hall of fame of the biggest names of AEGEEans who have contributed in an exemplary manner to the development of our organisation.

This time, it was the time for Christophe Leclercq, originally from France, founder of AEGEE- Köln back in the 80s. Christophe has been in AEGEE since the very beginning, being part of the first Board of Directors with our Honorary founder, Franck Biancheri, and present at the legendary ERASMUS dinner with French President Francois Mitterrand in 1986, where AEGEE was able to advocate strongly for the approval of the ERASMUS programme of the European Commission when it was about to be deleted by the Member States.

After his active involvement in AEGEE, Christophe worked in several fields, including the European Commission itself, until he became part of another initiative very much inspired by his years in AEGEE.

Christophe was the founder of Euractiv, which today is the biggest EU media coverage in Brussels and many member states, covering the political agenda, decisions and life of the people involved in European institutions.

Since then, Christophe has been a key referent and figure for all the incoming Boards of Directors of AEGEE who arrive in Brussels, whom he has trained and introduced to the EU institutions, EU stakeholders and the functioning of the EU bubble. For so many years of dedication to the improvement, development and visibility of our organization, the Agora approved his Honorary Membership by standing ovation, placing him as one of the most valuable members AEGEE has ever had.

Thank you very much Mr. Leclercq. AEGEE-Europe, and especially the Comité Directeur 2012- 2014 will always be thankful to you.

Meet the Liaison Officers of AEGEE-Europe

Ermanno Napolitano, Liaison Officers towards OSCE and Erika Bettin, AEGEE-Venezia

Recently, AEGEE-Europe appointed a group of external representatives, also called Liaison Officers, to deal with the most important international organisations that operate globally in different sectors such as economics, health, safety, labor cooperation, and many more. Working as an external representative brings some great responsibilities, but at the same time offers tremendous opportunities too, both in terms of personal and professional growth.

In order to have a continuous collaboration and ensure a strong presence of the Network in important international organisations, the Liaison Officers represent AEGEE-Europe towards the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, the European Youth Forum, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Committee of Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.

The United Nations was founded in 1945 and it is undoubtedly the most important intergovernmental organisation worldwide, having 193 member states. The purpose of the UN is to promote the peaceful settlement of international disputes, to maintain peace and promote respect for human rights. The focus on cooperation derives from the Second World War, giving a reason to ensure respect for all human beings. Since its creation the UN has slowly developed into several sections that operate in different fields, from the protection of the world's artistic heritage to the environment, to economy, etcetera.

AEGEE's Liaison Officers are actively involved in several UN bodies. Alin-Florin Calin (AEGEE-Wien) is in charge of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UN Youth Delegates Programme and the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth. Andrew Bartolo (AEGEE-Valletta) takes care of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UN Education First. Laia Garcia Montufo (AEGEE-Tarragona) deals with UN Habitat, UN Volunteers Programme and UN Women, while Álvaro Espinosa (AEGEE-Santander) is in contact with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN and Civil Society and the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF). Last but not least, World Health Organization (WHO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are the responsibility of Sygri Andringa (AEGEE-Groningen).

OECD, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, is an international organisation that aims to ensure and stimulate the economic progress and the free market among the 34 member states of the United Nations. The amount of data analysed by the OECD and the comparison between the various economic policies allows the OECD to have a strategic advisory role within the framework of national and international economic policies. The Liaison Officer towards OECD is Fenia Magremi (AEGEE-Paris).

The World Bank was created in December 1945 under the name of International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and was created primarily to help Europe and Japan in their reconstruction process after the Second World War, but with the decolonization during the Sixties the amount of countries to finance increased. The World Bank consists of two international institutions, namely the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Agency for Development (AID or IDA), which sets the objective to fight against poverty and organise aid and funding to the states in difficulty. Bram Houterman (AEGEE-Amsterdam) is the Liaison Officer towards the World Bank.

With 57 participating states in North America, Europe and Asia, the OSCE is the largest regional security organisation in the world committed to peace, democracy and stability to more than a billion people. The list of OSCE agencies is impressive and goes from arms control border management and combating human trafficking and terrorism to education, gender equality activities, media freedom and so on. Our Liaison Officer towards OSCE is Ermanno Napolitano (AEGEE-Milano), who just recently brought good results in terms of cooperation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Nina Gustafsson (AEGEE-Maastricht) and Ante Sellis (AEGEE-Groningen) were committed to work closely together to initiate ties between AEGEE-Europe and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). So far, they monitored the events and developments of both organisations throughout the year. There is a lot of potential for future collaborations between AEGEE-Europe and the CoR and the EESC, since the CoR focuses on the local/regional level of the EU and the EESC on organised civil society. These issues are definitely part of AEGEE-Europe's character, meaning that the two organisations clearly link with the work of AEGEE. Liaison Officers are a strong and important tool that the Network uses, and should use, to enhance the contribution we can give to international organisation in order to develop even more stronger relationships with them.

Meet the Policy Officers of AEGEE-Europe

Pablo Hernández, Policy Officer on Youth Participation



AEGEE has for many years been a frame of reference in the field of European youth policy and advocacy. Recently the organisation has moved a step forward in this area by creating two new main bodies: Policy Officers and Liaison Officers. While holding different positions, both officers strive for the same goal, which is making the voice of members and, in a broader perspective, all European students, be heard by the leading institutions.

In this term as a Policy Officer, Pablo has been working in different fields, such as European Neighbourhood Policy, Sustainability and Youth Participation, all in close cooperation with the Comité Directeur and their strong policy work. All tasks have been accomplished by following different strategies, trying to determine which one was best for each task and topic.

Iris Hordijk (AEGEE-Utrecht), Policy Officer on Sustainability, specializes in green and sustainable development. In order to define what her working-plan was, she used the motto "Be the change" which describes perfectly the message she wanted to have transpire through all her actions. Among all her activities, Iris attended events such as Agorae and NWMs where she gave workshops with two main goals in mind, informing our members and collecting their opinions in order to use them when creating the Position Paper. Each year, the main task of a Policy Officer is to define the opinion of the network concerning a certain policy topic in a document called a Position Paper. In this case, they came to the realization that Sustainability is too broad a concept, so Iris, together with the Comité Directeur, decided to focus on what was called "Sustainable University".

This way AEGEE could give recommendations to all the relevant stakeholders for a change in the organization of Universities, so that they reduce their waste, think of ways to recycle and all in all work towards lowering their impact on the environment..

The Policy Officer on European Neighbourhood Policy was Armenak Minasyants (AEGEE-Yerevan). He is a very politically active member who has focused this year's efforts on representing and making clear the opinion of the Network on important topics such as the conflict in Ukraine and the EU Eastern Partnership Programme, recommending for example to boost Visa Liberation for Eastern Partnership countries.

Finally, concerning Youth Participation, we decided to work on Participation in Democratic Processes, taking advantage of the European Elections a few months ago. With a strong project as YVote 2014 taking place, we understood the need to have a statement of what we, a Network of 13.000 members, think, and we wanted to address some recommendations towards the main stakeholders.

The process of drafting the Position Paper was complex, since a clear and general opinion from members was needed. In order to collect opinions, Pablo Hernández, from AEGEE-Alicante, attended several NWMs and Spring Agora Patra 2014, leading workshops in all of them, trying to share information and get positive feedback. Later, a survey was also launched, allowing everybody to express themselves on this topic.

Policy Officers are one of the tools AEGEE uses in order to develop a coherent policy strategy and to advocate the ideas and visions of members.

Pool of Representatives in the World Forum for Democracy 2013

Nicola Guida AEGEE-Napoli

Ratified during Agora Zaragoza, a new body was introduced to AEGEE-Europe: the Pool of Representatives. This group of seventeen AEGEE members is allowed to act and speak on behalf of our organisation at specific conferences and meetings. Chosen on the basis of their experience, motivation and especially good knowledge about the association, these members participated in several important events, that could not be covered by the Comité Directeur. The idea behind it was not only to increase the presence of AEGEE in external events, but also to create more expertise outside the CD, and therefore, to empower all of the network.

One of the events attended was the World Forum for Democracy 2013, organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in November 2013. It was a high level event gathering members of civil society, elected officials, political leaders and journalists from all over the world to discuss the relationship between internet and democracy.



The event lasted for four days and it was divided in plenary sessions and laboratories, where various successful projects and initiatives were presented, mainly by active citizens and NGOs, but also by institutions and political actors. To mention just a couple of examples: the citizens of Lisbon, Portugal, could choose through an online survey the way some funds were going to be spent by the municipality, while people from Porto Alegre in Brasil effectively implemented the idea of the wikicity, allowing all the citizens to point out imminent issues that had to be solved.

Many ideas were exchanged, but mostly two contrasting positions emerged in every debate. Old school politicians expressed their concern that a total direct democracy without the filter of elected representatives would mean to put the "crown on the crowd" and allow the easily influenced masses to make hasty decisions. On the other side many, among whom the founder of the Pirate Party Mr. Jens Seipenbusch and members of NGOs, stressed the effectiveness of the direct decision making processes, through which citizens are able to directly address the problems, express their needs and make their voice heard.

The outcomes were quite predictable. Supporters of the two different opinions did not really change their mind, but this event gave the possibility to many participants from all around the world to meet, discuss and get to know effective ways to use the "internet" to make a change in society. Moreover, this was also a great opportunity for people living outside Europe to see with their own eyes what are the actual issues in the so-called "mature democracies". Often we just think about the European Union and its form of government as the only possible way and we usually don't confront ourselves with somebody living in a total different environment.

The main conclusion of this Forum was that internet as it is now does not necessarily favour democracy, but it is a tool that can be either positively or negatively used. It seems to be that democracy is a daily basis commitment, a dynamic process which everybody has to contribute to. When we will stop caring and acting, then I do not think we will be able to call that a democracy anymore.

Young European of the Year 2014: another award for an AEGEE member

Erika Bettin, AEGEE-Venezia



On the 5th of June 2014, the President of AEGEE-Europe 2012-2014, Luis Alvarado Martínez, was awarded with the prestigious title of Young European of the Year 2014 by Schwarzkopf-Stiftung Junges Europe. The prize, established in 1997, every year honors a young European, aged between 18 and 26, for his/her contribution to supporting the international understanding of what Europe is and its integration.



"I was very, very happy and thankful for such a recognition on a personal level, but also as a recognition of AEGEE's work building a better Europe through the young generations", says Luis Alvarado Martínez. Apart from being involved on the local level in AEGEE-Las Palmas, and holding several positions on the European Level of the organisation, Luis also acted as an ambassador of our mission and vision throughout the continent. In fact, one of the reasons he received the prize, as stated on the Schwarzkopf-Stiftung Junges Europe website, was for "being a true European by heart and by mind. He is profoundly convinced that his generation, the only true European-born, has to convince the elder about the need to continue striving for a better Europe."

A conviction that clashes with the feeling that youngsters struggle to find a proper space in the political scenery nowadays. In Luis' words politics "needs to open much more, but young people must take full ownership and responsibility of the processes. The fact that young people are the ones with the lowest turn-out in elections, because of lack of information, lack of knowledge, not feeling represented etc., results in political leaders not including proposals for youth in their agendas, but rather for the people who actually vote for them."

This wasn't the first year a member of AEGEE was awarded with this prestigious prize. The very first winner, back in 1997, was David Stulik, Honorary Member of AEGEE, followed by former President Daciana Oana Mailatescu in 2001, Anar Jahangirli in 2004, former President and Honorary Member Burcu Becermen in 2006 and Tamuna Kekenadze in 2008. Out of 16 awards, six were won by an AEGEE member proving how much AEGEE was, and still is involved in the political processes of building Europe and how the organisation can shape a generation of Europeans. "AEGEE is the ideal platform and space for everyone to develop personally into the best version of themselves, get inspired by others, and find the resources and people necessary to turn their ideas into real projects with impact in society", says Luis. "Most of our members are instrumental in many of the processes Europe is going through."

Foundation AEGEE Trust Fund up to new challenges

Anita Kalmene, AEGEE-Ogre



Almost every AEGEE member knows about such European level bodies as the AEGEE- Academy, Network Commission, Eastern Partnership Project and others. But how many of you know that there is also the Foundation AEGEE Trust Fund (FATF), which officially is another organisation with the sole aim to help AEGEE members? In March 2014, FATF changed its board and now it is ready for some more changes in order to offer more help to AEGEE.

FATF, founded by the Project Managers of Europe and the Euro back in 2003, was initially created to assist the successful start of projects and events through project management and liquidity support. This meant that FATF could lend money to AEGEE antennae, in case the respective antennae had already secured funding from another organization, but the secured money would not arrive in the bank account before the start of the project.

In the eleven years of its existence, the organization has provided financial and project management support for various European projects and events within AEGEE. Now it is time to take it further. As suggested by the last Comité Directeur (CD) and discussed in the last FATF board meeting, there is the possibility and interest for FATF to be also more involved in the AEGEE Social Responsibility Fund in two ways: administrating donations and selecting recipients. Once the CD will finish working on regulations, donations might go through the FATF bank account to ensure both transparency and the possibility for a donator to receive a tax deduction. Furthermore, the FATF board could also be involved in selecting people who will receive the funding to provide a more objective point of view, as FATF board members are not allowed to hold any other positions in AEGEE (except two appointed CD members who are also members of the board of AEGEE-Europe).

In 2013-2014 FATF has not only granted one request for a bridging loan (AEGEE-Chișinău for their Summer University), but also made plans to increase the recognition between AEGEE members. Presentations have been held both at Spring Agora-Patra 2014, as well as at the European School I Enschede, and plans have been made to include also other European events.

To make sure that the new members will have the best possible advice, FATF has updated its Commissions of Experts, a team which supports and helps project teams and event organizers in any way needed. FATF welcomes Agata Patecka, Alla Resheten, Ildikó Ferencsik, Marko Grdošić, Michael Makowiecki, Nadine Karbach and Réka Salamon.

Last, but not least this is an important year for FATF as the organization updated its logo, the new one being designed by Vincent Baas from AEGEE-Enschede. The original logo, designed back in 2003, did not correspond to the new AEGEE Visual Identity and was outdated, therefore the FATF board decided to organise a logo contest where Vincent's logo was chosen out of a total of fifteen potential logos.

To sum it all up FATF is the right body to be approached if any AEGEE local has an idea for realizing a project, needs valid support for writing grant applications, is looking for a loan or wants to get help with managing and reporting a project.

There is life after AEGEE

Jos Eikhout, Coordinator of Les Anciens

One day you will leave campus and you will be on the brink of your professional career. You will start your first job, setup a household and perhaps raise a family. You will face all challenges daily life throws at you and based on your experiences you are going to manage and will likely succeed even beyond your own expectations.

And that you will likely succeed, is not a surprise to those that went through the same experience. As one of our members, Peter Genser, said: "One year in the CD and particularly the time as President were much more relevant for my professional life than the other five years of my "formal education". It is certainly not easy to take a "year off" as some mates back at the normal university would call it, but it definitely pays off. And when I now meet people from that time in Les Anciens, it's like a deep bond that holds us together regardless of how life went on since then. I can only encourage you to take these learning opportunities - it's life-changing."



In my own active AEGEE times there was also the vibe of being together with so many people with different backgrounds, speaking different languages and then reaching the great conclusion that there are no real differences between us, that we are all Europeans. This feeling gave me a lifelong addiction to the AEGEE concept. AEGEE VI, May 1990, the exact moment I got my AEGEE-addiction, All Europeans dancing Spanish dances on a Canal boat on the Seine river

As AEGEE is no longer your focus of life, you still have fond memories of the great times and learning experiences you had. But, is it then all over? No! There is life after AEGEE!! About 25 years ago a group of former AEGEE members sought ways to continue that vibe, to continue to feed their addiction. Their answer was Les Anciens, the alumni club of AEGEE- Europe. There the vibe continues, with around four or five events per year all over Europe and occasionally even beyond, where we meet, discuss, explore and feast. This is a bit more tranquille perhaps, but vibrating nevertheless.



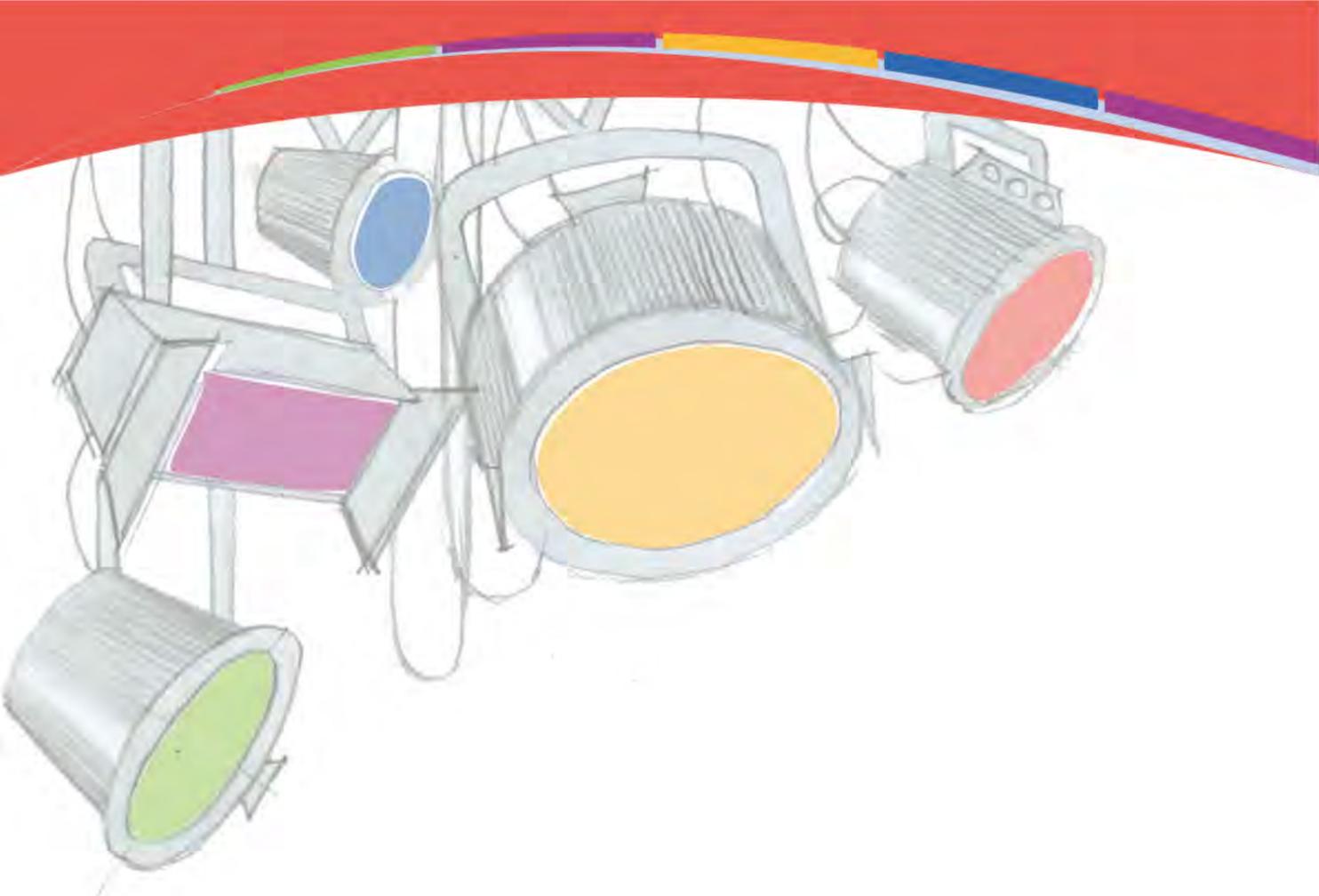
Les Anciens Meeting Cairo 2008, dancing in an underground nightclub, the same spirit, integrating and partying with locals.

Les Anciens of AEGEE-Europe is open for all (former) members of AEGEE and diversified, more thematic in the approach and it is a platform for any member wishing to organise events to do so. By doing so, Les Anciens continues to have all different age-groups and interests under one umbrella as the AEGEE alumni organisation.

This year we made happen that both general assemblies of Les Anciens and AEGEE coincided during the Agora in Patra. It was not only the occasion to sign our renewed partnership contract and have a great Les Anciens event, it also gave the unique opportunity for us oldies to experience how active AEGEEans are dealing with actual topics today.

As Peter said: "Being a guest to a part of your plenary, I kind of had a flashback: all the people in there - some vividly presenting, others relaxing from the night and a Chair trying to sort all this (I almost heard in my head my Chair calling me to order). Some known discussions "CIA amendments", "should we employ administrative staff or not" - and you handling them very professionally. Studying the way you are approaching your challenges, I'm very confident that you will find your answers and your way. That's exactly part of the fantastic learning experience you are in."

Agora



In the Spotlight

ZarAGORA: Youth got the power

Silvia Sierra Marín, AEGEE-Zaragoza

The Autumn Agora Zaragoza 2013 was an event marking the current and future generations of AEGEE-Zaragoza. From the 30th of October till the 3rd of November, about seventy active members of different Spanish antennae collaborated and worked very hard to make this event a reality. Thanks to all the previous months of working together, the team created the best emotional bonds: working side by side, making new and true friends, learning a lot of useful things, and much more. We shared emotions, experiences, fun, good and amazing moments, laughter and tears, but always together and without giving up under any circumstances, in spite of the difficulties we faced when organizing this major event for eight hundred people.



The most important thing when organizing ZarAGORA 2013 was that, despite the problems we might have had in some moments with participants' behaviour or with our own emotional condition because of the nerves we had for organizing such a big event, the team attained its goal and their hosting of the Agora was labelled as "the best in AEGEE's history". In addition, AEGEE-Zaragoza gained more experience, many more new and fantastic members who will be the future of the antenna, and gained lots of skills to organize good and successful events like this one.

Looking back on it now, AEGEE-Zaragoza and the whole Agora's dream team are very proud of this ZarAGORA 2013, our event, our biggest event, a great memory and one of the best experiences of our lives.



Agora Patra: Your Place to Choose

John Eikosidekas, AEGEE-Patra

The announcement of the hosting local being AEGEE-Patra was made a year before the Agora itself, at Spring Agora Rhein-Neckar. It filled us all with joy, from AEGEE-Patra, to all Greek speaking locals, and even the network as a whole because an Agora hadn't been organized in this region of Europe for already twelve years.



Our work began in April 2013. Many individuals of several Greek speaking locals joined the organizing team to help bring this task to its ultimate result. Numerous people joined the different organizing teams, Many individuals of several Greek speaking locals joined the different organizing teams, specializing in a particular sector of the Agora, while a few daredevils took part in no less than two different teams. Organizers were going at it full speed by September, contributing to their team as much as possible. This was it: the biggest event of AEGEE was coming to Patra, and the true colors of commitment toward AEGEE were shining bright. After January, the tide got higher; responsibilities were growing and the pressure was getting harder to cope with. Nonetheless, the idea of the major contribution the locals were making to our organization kept them alive, warm and smiling.

And then came the Agora, and participants were arriving in Patra. Every day that came flew by even faster, and once all the organisers had their pace, they were not to be stopped. Then the final day came, and we hadn't realized the event was already over and that AEGEE-Europe had held its statutory event with success. Of course the road towards organizing the Agora had many difficulties, but none of them were unmanageable. And what was the outcome of all this? Yes, There were many elections, there were many conversations and workshops on European matters. In addition though, this Agora brought us one step closer to our ultimate goal: little by little bringing the people of our continent a step closer to each other, making distances non-existent, and bonding young adults from all around Europe.

EBM Valletta at the finale of the Charlemagne Youth Prize

Anna Gumbau Martinez, AEGEE-Barcelona

For the seventh time, the ceremony of the European Charlemagne Youth Prize took place in the German city of Aachen last May 2014. This prize, which is awarded by the European Parliament, acknowledges the most outstanding youth projects related to the topic of European integration year after year. 28 representatives coming from the EU countries gathered in the City of Charlemagne for the award ceremony. And one of those finalists was an AEGEE representative!

AEGEE-Valletta was the national representative for Malta, which was nominated for the European Boards' Meeting (EBM) in the Maltese capital that took place in February 2013. The EBM gathered more than 200 AEGEE members under the motto Preserving our present, saving our future to discuss the future of Europe and to think of solutions that could be given to the current identity crisis that Europe is facing. Besides this thematic approach, the EBM Valletta was also meant to prepare the Action Agenda for the year 2013-14, which would highlight the priorities and thematic objectives for AEGEE locals during this term.

What was the recipe of success for AEGEE-Valletta's nomination? The EBM Valletta gathered dozens of young Europeans coming from all over Europe, dealing with one of the 'hot' topics on the European agenda, and gave a list of recommendations to stakeholders. These were the ingredients for success that resulted in AEGEE-Valletta gaining a place on the list of the 28 finalists.

Even though they did not make it to the 'Top 3', AEGEE-Valletta proudly surpassed other important Maltese organisations in the national selection. The Danish project Vores Europa ('Our Europe') took the biggest prize, taking the legacy of AEGEE-Europe's Europe on Track, winner of the European Charlemagne Youth Prize in 2013. The Netherlands and Cyprus were the other two semi-finalists, having youth employability and soft-skills improvement as their thematic approach.

However, the Charlemagne Youth Prize had a strong presence of AEGEEans in the final ceremony. Not only AEGEE-Valletta was there as Maltese national winners, but also Luis Alvarado Martínez, president of AEGEE-Europe, gave a very powerful speech in the Charlemagne Forum, which hosted guests such as the former President of the European Central Bank, Jean-Claude Trichet, and the Vice-President of the European Parliament, Anni Podimata. Moreover, many members of the local AEGEE branch in Aachen took part in the organisation, and some AEGEEans were present as journalists asking questions and taking an active part in the debate.

Initiatives such as the Charlemagne Youth Prize show that when young people are given the means for self-improvement, they empower themselves and take an active part in society. The EBM Valletta was just an example of an outstanding project that left its footprint in AEGEE's history.



AEGEEans running for European Parliament

Anita Kalmene, AEGEE-Ogre

It's not a secret that AEGEE inspires people to do a lot of things they wouldn't have thought of doing otherwise. Changing your job or career, moving and living abroad, becoming much more involved in your local society, and so on. Having been involved in politics before or not, this year four current and former AEGEE members decided - separately from each other - to run for the position of Member of the European Parliament (MEP) 2014.

AEGEE has played an important role in the life of these four candidates, including former President of AEGEE-Europe Manos Valasis who admits that "AEGEE taught me that politics is something beautiful. It starts with the phrase "I want to make the world a better place" - there cannot be any line more political than this one." Greens, Christian democrats, labour party and centre-left. Greece, Spain, the Netherlands and Poland. The parties and countries are different, but their ideals overlap - European values, individual rights and active citizenship are the things youth fight for in AEGEE and other student organisations, but this stretches even into the European Parliament. "I didn't get elected, but that was never my aim. My aim was to show young people that they should take politics seriously, they should engage with and participate in their local communities more," encourages Manos.

Out of the four AEGEEans, one got elected: Kati Piri, who was active on the local level of AEGEE-Groningen (European Events Responsible in the board of 2000-2001). In EP she will represent the Labour Party (PvdA) from the Netherlands. Other known candidates were the already mentioned Manos Valasis (President of AEGEE-Europe in 2010-2011), who was running for "Greens - Solidarity, Creation, Ecology" in Greece, Magdalena Pawłowska (Youth UnEmployment Project Manager in 2010), who was representing "Europa Plus - Your Movement (EPTR)" in Poland, and Gerard Vidal Pallarès (European Day of Languages Project Team and Planning Team in 2011), who was part of "Coalition for Europe" in Spain.

"During the last European Parliament mandate I had the opportunity of coordinating the team of MEP Salvador Sedó, as I was working in his Headoffice. Looking back to it, AEGEE was a positive impulse for running as a MEP and the AEGEE experience also helped me to get the job. By volunteering in AEGEE you grow not only personally, but also professionally," recalls Gerard Pallarès. Although he was active in politics already as a teenager and joined AEGEE much later during his studies, he doesn't deny that AEGEE was part of what pushed him the push to continue being an active citizen. Magdalena Pawłowska has even mentioned AEGEE in one of the three paragraphs on her website, explaining the importance of the Youth UnEmployment project to European youth.

There is no information about other former AEGEE members who have been elected who decided to run for a position in the European Parliament, but - as Kati says - "I can't imagine that I would be the first". One can meet AEGEEans also in local governments, including city representations and ministers in the government, not to mention the various clerks in European institutions such as the European Commission, so AEGEEans running for European Parliament comes as no surprise. Who knows, hopefully in the next elections even more members will take the step and become a candidate. "Politics is an expression of active citizenship. Active citizenship is one of the four AEGEE pillars," emphasizes Gerard Pallarès.



AEGEE supporting the Ukrainian choice with actions, not only words

Anna Pykhtina, AEGEE-Kyiv



There is a rule in journalism, saying that people are more interested in hearing and reading about themselves, than about their relatives, friends, their own city or country. The farther people are from the middle of the action described in the news, the less interest they show. However, AEGEE has proved in the past year that distance and a lack of knowledge of Ukrainian history and its political situation only stimulated its members to support and find a way to help Ukrainian locals.

Despite the fact that on the 30th of March 2012 the European Union (EU) and Ukraine signed an Association Agreement, on the 28th and 29th of November, while attending the EU summit in Vilnius, Ukrainian President Yanukovich didn't complete the final step. As an unexpected reaction, starting in Kyiv, Ukrainians went to the streets to show that they were fed up with the country's current situation. It all started with 10,000 people and during the following days the number of people mounted as people in other cities also began to support the movement. From the very first day it was only about Ukraine and the EU, therefore no other party symbols were used and it were only the national flags that could be seen everywhere.

But in one week everything changed. At 5 am on the first of December 2013 protesters, mostly students and old people, were beaten by a special police force called «Berkut». The government explained their actions by claiming that protesters were interfering with the preparations for decorating the square for the New Year's holidays, hoping that this statement would stop the riots. Fortunately, the next day it was Sunday and there were more than a million Ukrainians on the streets, no traffic in the centre and a new chapter of Ukrainian history had begun. The first of December was the day the reason for the protests turned from being only about Ukraine's relationship towards the EU, to being also about human rights, the rights of every Ukrainian, and against bribes, corruption and the permissiveness of the authorities that came in 2010 with Yanukovich. For more than half a year we experienced a rollercoaster of emotions, listened to an infinite number of speeches and saw so much violence and selfishness that it caused the majority to realize that there was no way back anymore.

Looking back after half a year of protests, I can say that Maidan united us and split us in two at the same time. We lost more than a hundred people who died during the protests or were kidnapped, tortured and killed. We lost Crimea peninsula and from what we understand from the majority of Eastern Ukrainian citizens we also lost in the informational war with Russia. As a result, a situation of emergency was announced by the newly elected president. Ukrainians have a lot to rebuild, reorganize and recreate. However, this is the way our country has to move forward and only after these losses did the nation, and in particular the youth, start to believe in themselves again. The young generation started to listen less to the older generation that is usually stuck in the imaginary world of the Soviet past, and they finally saw that their voices can be heard. «Together we are the power» was one of the slogans that could be heard near the courts, administrative buildings and Parliament and was written on Facebook. AEGEE-Europe proved that 'a Europe without borders' is not just a collection of words from the booklets, but something real that could result in actions.



I have received questions and hundreds of messages from close friends and AEGEEans I've never met and I was impressed to see that Europeans are not blindly following the media. They actually want to find out what the roots of the protests are and wonder what the Antennae think about the situation. With the help of social media it was easy to spread the latest information, adding the opinion of those who saw it all happen. Hundreds of AEGEEans all over Europe took part in flashmobs and changed profile pictures into the black picture with the Ukrainian flag turned down.

The AEGEEAN online magazine offered us the opportunity to write articles to break the stereotypes about the riots in Kyiv and other cities, and nominated Ukrainian locals as locals of the month. Gunnar Erth from Les Anciens, the Golden Times online magazine creator, took several interviews in which Ukrainians could explain that it is not dangerous to come to a Summer University in their country. Reka Salomon, project manager of «Europe on Track» promised to come to Kyiv to raise awareness among Europeans, and indeed a group of travellers went to Kyiv and Lviv. The Human Rights Working Group and Eastern Partnership Project organised Skype meetings where people from Ukrainian locals answered all questions AEGEEans from other locals had, and additionally there were special workshops and discussions about the reliability of the media and the importance of taking an active part in civil movements during EBM Lublin 2014 and Spring Agora Patra 2014.



The most important steps however were made by the Comité Directeur, from press releases with support of Ukrainian locals, to the sending of official statements with the President of AEGEE-Europe, Luis Alvarado Martínez, for his visit in April with a delegation of EU-commission representatives. Last but not least, 21 members coming from different areas of the network (AEGEE-Helsinki, AEGEE-Budapest, AEGEE-Venezia, AEGEE-Moscow and AEGEE-Ankara among others) came to Kyiv as members of the Election Observation Commission, supported by OSCE. AEGEE sent more members to Ukraine than the UN and we are grateful more than ever for all this huge support.



Ukraine is a young but very promising country with hard-working, open-minded, generous and creative people. We passed so many difficulties on our way, we have seen so much betrayal and lies that it makes us not want to live like this anymore. Active citizenship, one of the pillars of our Association is not just a theory for us anymore. It is real life, in which we learned to trust and rely on ourselves and on our nation. Having so many victims and understanding how much time the shaping of a new, more European society with Ukrainian soul will take, I want to believe that this was the only time in my life I saw a real war.



AEGEE coming together to support the Balkans

Inge Zlatkou, AEGEE-Ioannina

Despite the political and economic problems that Eastern Europe faced this year, a new natural disaster came to test once more the strength of its citizens. Between the 14th and the 18th of May 2014, catastrophic floods hit Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Romania and Slovakia, causing landslides and the death of at least eighty people. Scientists claim the amount of rain that fell during those days was the largest out of 120 years of recorded weather conditions. Cities flooded in such a short period of time that residents were caught by surprise and over one million of them had to abandon their homes.

The countries that were most affected were Serbia and Bosnia. Some of the recorded statistics show that in Serbia, an estimated 90% of the city of Obrenovac was flooded and in Bosnia, the town of Maglaj experienced an average rainfall of two months in less than two days. Croatia also suffered because of the floods, as around 15,000 people in the eastern parts of the country had no other option than to evacuate their homes, while in Romania nearly 20 km² of land was covered by water.

Throughout the affected countries many roads and industrial facilities were destroyed, leaving large areas without a supply of food and clothing. Additionally, citizens had to deal with a lack of electricity and drinking water. Destroyed houses, injured people and the fact that thousands of families had to start building their lives from scratch again is not the only problem though. According to the Serbian Minister of Health, there is also the threat of an influx of diseases, as contaminated water has covered homes, towns and fields, turning most of Serbia's highly fertile agricultural region into a poisonous stew of toxic chemicals, rotting carcasses and disease-carrying insects. In other words, as a result of the thousands of domestic animals that perished in the floods and the destroyed agriculture, the health risk was too high to allow people to return to their homes and start repairing the damages. of land was covered by water.

One would assume that such a big disaster would immediately be in the spotlight of all the European countries and that help would be sent as soon as possible. Instead, the news in most countries showed only little interest in this critical situation and the Red Cross needed immediate support in order to proceed with its actions. At that point AEGEE proved once more that a borderless Europe is not just a statement, it is a reality. AEGEE locals throughout the Network got involved in the situation immediately and the locals in the affected countries proposed ways in which they could help. AEGEE's youth managed to raise awareness of the Balkan floods across Europe and spread the message that this type of natural disaster could happen to all of us and we need to express our solidarity when this happens.



By organizing events to raise money and placing public containers in order to collect clothes, medicines, instant non perishable food and other items, like blankets and mattresses, AEGEEans succeeded in encouraging those around them to get involved actively as well. AEGEE members even found a way to collect money through the internet, making it easy for everyone to contribute financially. After the collection of money and goods, our volunteers delivered them to trustworthy organisations like the Red Cross. Last but not least, members who live in the regions struck by the floods joined the volunteer teams.

AEGEE showed through its actions that despite the differences that may exist between the different European countries, when it comes to situations of emergency, we are all human beings and we need to show our solidarity. After all, we believe in a Europe that is about supporting each other and sharing, making it obvious that the youth can really contribute in making this world a better place.



Nationalism in Europe – Gaining ground or losing its power?

Alexandra Belanova, AEGEE-Moskva

Nationalism is a phenomenon of the past few centuries that has many faces. It appeals to the deep-rooted grounds of the self-perception of a nation or its people, but most importantly it affects a single individual and sets a prism through which the members of this group will assess and define themselves and other human beings.

Nationalism is a powerful force which can be used in different ways. The Romantic nationalism, which emerged in the 19th century, transformed and paved the way for the Europe we know now. The changes brought about by this wave of nationalism gave the kick-start to the present-day nation-states. It also played an important role for countries like Germany and Italy which were united by appealing to the nationalist feeling and the idea of a united nation. Needless to say, it also incited other countries (e.g. Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria) to keep fighting for their independence and freedom under political oppression.

Despite the above mentioned positive outcomes of nationalism, we cannot neglect its powerful incentives of a different kind. Nationalism is not very clear and can be explained in many ways. It can evoke tainted public sentiments and parts of our unconscious under the veil of bringing reconciliation and order in countries facing problems such as a high unemployment rate, uncontrollable immigration or rising inequality. In effect, these political forces are mainly demagogues aiming at changing their status quo and gaining more power by using a rather negative rhetoric and labelling certain groups of people and minorities as the cause of a problem.

The European political landscape is also partly represented by the advocates of right-wing convictions and ideas. Nowadays, populist, Eurosceptic, nationalist parties and far-right movements see their consensus rising. After the announcement of the European Parliamentary Election results, it became clear that these right-wing parties gained ground in countries like Denmark, the UK, Greece, Austria and France.



It marked an important shift in the history of the European Union and raised concerns about its future. Right-wing parties mostly take an openly nation-centric stand and oppose themselves to the current state of affairs in the European Union, looking at it as a hegemony of the ineffective and bloated political institutions.

Instead of «united in diversity» values, they put the country- or nation- centric views on a pedestal hoping to gather even more votes. AEGEE is made up of representatives of more than forty countries from all corners of Europe. Therefore AEGEE stands for multiculturalism and freedom from any kind of stereotypes and negative perceptions and discrimination based on gender, race or nationality.

This is the reason that for the EBM, which took place from 13th to 16th February 2014 in Lublin, nationalism had been chosen as its key topic. The issue of nationalism and its nature were covered in several sessions and seminars on national identity, nationalism in European elections and the history of nationalism. The speakers of the event also paid attention to more specific topics, e.g. media feeding the public with a nationalist agenda and how (or if) exchange programmes (as Erasmus) can work against the embedded roots of nationalist prejudices.

Next to the EBM, as a contribution to the prejudice-free world a group of AEGEE members advanced a new Strategic Plan for 2014-2017 which includes the spreading of Eurooptimism, the future development of youth mobility and enhancement of youth employment, along with the improvement of civic education as part of the solution to the problem of nationalism.

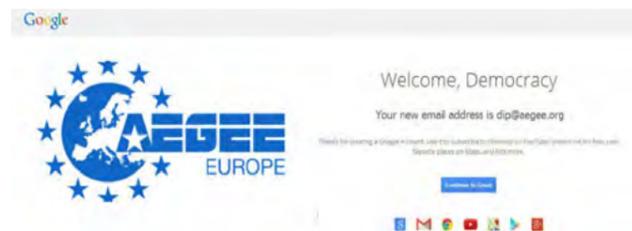
We as Europeans derive our origins from the cradle of democracy and innovation, why should we make it a hotbed of nationalism and destructive ideas? Focusing on these new fields of action of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, we can work on diminishing the negative effects of nationalism, giving us a blueprint for change.



Democracy can't be taken for granted

Anna Gumbau Martinez, AEGEE-Barcelona

What does democracy mean to us? It would be highly complicated to come up with a single definition that fits each one of our ideas, but we could refer to several core values that connect with it: freedom, equality, rule of law and the right to have a say in the political and social processes that concern the citizens of a country. However, when it comes to young peoples' concept of democracy, it might happen that we sometimes take it for granted and see it as a natural privilege, rather than as an earned right. Unfortunately, some of the latest happenings in several cities where AEGEE can be found have proven that the core values mentioned before are in danger of being taken away.



One year ago, in this publication we were reporting about the protests that were held in Turkey, which initially started on Istanbul's Taksim Square. One year later, Turkey's records on respecting democracy still are far from being spotless, as can be seen in a ban on the usage of Twitter (which was lifted by the Turkish constitutional court two weeks later), attacks against the protesters that gathered in Gezi Park this year, leaked phone conversations from Prime Minister Erdoğan with his son about where to hide money acquired through bribery, which sparked anti-corruption protests in several of Turkey's major cities, widespread vote fraud during the elections in late March and, last but not least, a complete lack of action of the government after the tragedy in the mines of Soma last May. These are just some examples of a turbulent year for Turkey and its inhabitants.

Turkey is the most clear but surely not the only example of a country where fundamental rights have been at threat. In Bulgaria, protests erupted along the year of 2013 with a demand for change. Being one of the poorest countries in the European Union, it has suffered from tough austerity measures, a high level of youth unemployment, a lack of transparency and excessive corruption. Even though all of the different protests in Bulgaria had its own purpose, they were all driven by the dissatisfaction of the citizens. Under the motto of #ostavka (Bulgarian word for 'resignation'), Bulgarians took to the streets of several major cities to protest against the appointment of several officials that they saw as only serving the interests of the oligarchs.

Also in Bosnia and Herzegovina there were waves of unrest, starting in February 2014. High unemployment and poverty rates, political corruption and nepotism were the main causes of protests that started in the northern city of Tuzla and soon spread out to other major cities in the country, provoking the resignation of the Prime Ministers of some of the country's cantons. For Bosnians, a "Bosnian spring" was for years the hope for a brighter future. "In these three days we can say that we have achieved a lot more than in the past twenty years", some members of AEGEE-Tuzla reported to The AEGEEan magazine. "A revolution has taken place in this country. People have raised their voice and the government had no choice but to listen to the people and meet their demands".

Several AEGEEans contributed to the cause by raising awareness in and outside of AEGEE, using Twitter and Facebook to share information about what was going on. As the examples of Turkey, Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina show, democracy cannot be taken for granted. These are only a few episodes in which we have seen its fragility is scattered all over Europe. However, the importance of active citizenship, and common values in order to have a better future are clear.

To EU or not to EU? Countries have the Key

Alexandra Belanova, AEGEE-Moskva

Since the enlargement of the eurozone is in full swing now, especially after Latvia joining in 2014, many EU citizens lift their hopes high, aiming at a future development and enlargement of the European Union and eurozone. Whereas there are some countries from outside of the EU longing for a tightening of the relationship with the member states, and for a successful and mutually beneficial collaboration, some of the current members are thinking about their probable withdrawal from the EU.

One of the most resolute Eurosceptics, already from the early days of the EU, is the UK. The country is famous for its all-time low trust rates concerning the development and enlargement of the EU. The UK even held a referendum in 1975, at which the electorate was asked to cast their ballots either in favour or against the secession from the erstwhile EEC (European Economic Community). The main British complaints refer to the rising costs of membership, a negative influence on domestic trade and business along with the erosion of democracy and loss of legislative power due to expanding power of the supra-national institutions. Having rest their dreams on the financial sector and being afraid of the changing distribution of power within Europe, they are almost ready to let their European dream slip aside and give in to their fears. The lack of a pro-European orientation is also proven by the fact that the AEGEE network in the UK, rich with 63 million inhabitants, cannot boast with a great number of antennas. There are just three antennas on the whole (AEGEE-London, AEGEE-Sheffield and AEGEE-Durham) that represent UK.

Unlike United Kingdom, Ukraine and Moldova as well as Georgia are standing on the threshold of a new era. The stern and dedicated perseverance of these nations and adherence to democratic principles as well as aspiration to new economic reforms and market opportunities lead these countries to the EU's Association Agreement which would be finally completed on June the 27th. The status of partner countries opens up a range of new possibilities, beginning with the concrete boost of the financial sector and new markets to the collaboration in cultural and political level. In the face of the European Union, the former Soviet Republics finally found a reliable and trustworthy partner.

The road to this agreement was not paved with gold for all of the above mentioned countries. The steadfastness of the Ukrainian nation and the final ousting of the president who wished to go for different cooperations let the newly formed government to complete this step after a long-lasting preparation and times of indecisiveness. Georgian and Moldovan roads to success were less difficult. As part of the Eastern Internship Programme Moldovan citizens are currently entitled to visa-free travels for a short period of stay due to a clever policy of their government.

Not only the officials of these countries put forth efforts and showed great interest towards European values and the European dream, but also its young citizens made their voices heard. AEGEE-Tbilisi, which was founded seven years ago, became the first antenna in the Caucasus region and in Georgia, a country with just 5 million inhabitants. AEGEE-Chişinău hit the road in 1996, giving the Moldovan youth the chance to experience lots of AEGEE treasures. Ukraine is currently represented by seven antennas (AEGEE-Kyiv, AEGEE-Lviv, AEGEE-Ivano-Frankivsk, AEGEE-Kharkiv, AEGEE-Dnipropetrovsk, AEGEE-Odessa and AEGEE-Sevastopol).

Without forgetting the importance of politics, the future of the EU ought to be defined by its citizens, and the current dilemma some countries face, whether to stay in the EU or to leave, should be a well thought-out matter, for leaving the EU impacts both the remaining member states and the leaving country itself.



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Youth Participation



AEGEE for the #EP2014

Diana Ondža, Communications Manager of the Y Vote 2014 Project

Yvote 2014

On the 3rd of June 2013 the European Parliament hosted the launch of AEGEE-Europe's project Y Vote 2014. Following the success of the first edition of the Y Vote Project, which was aimed at raising awareness of the European elections in 2009, Y Vote 2014 focused on the first-time voters and students, with the objective of turning them into important actors of in the European Parliament Elections 2014. This was done by providing them with clear and credible information regarding the election process, the institutions of the European Union, the decision-making processes in the EU and its more relevant policies. Through different activities, the Y Vote 2014 project tried to promote youth participation, political knowledge and democratic identification to encourage young people to take an active role in the European elections that were held across the 28 EU member states between 22 and 25 May 2014.

Within a year - from the launch of Y Vote 2014 and until the European elections - a series of activities were implemented within the project. One part of the Y Vote 2014 Project was the organisation of European Student Conventions - conferences gathering between 25 and 50 young people from all over Europe to discuss issues relevant to the youth with decision-makers from the local, national and European level. As a result of these conventions, a Students' Agenda for Europe was created. It is a manifesto which contains a set of recommendations drafted by participants of the conventions, based on their expectations and ideas for a better Europe. This document was further distributed to the newly elected Members of the European Parliament to communicate the needs of the European youth. In total, nine conventions took place, with topics ranging from youth participation and European citizenship to gender equality.

Y Vote 2014 also created a Voting Guide, an online tool made by young people for young voters. It was aimed at helping young voters to prepare for the elections - getting acquainted with the EU, the rules to be eligible to vote, the different voting procedures in each country, and an explanation of the European political groups and parties with a summary of their programme. The guide provided interviews with representatives of European political groups, so that voters could make a well-grounded and informed decision at the ballot box at the end of May.

The third part of the Y Vote 2014 Project was identified with a motto, "Y Vote 2014 on the Road!", and involved organised bus tours around the United Kingdom and Spain, to promote citizen participation in the European Parliamentary Elections. This campaign gathered more than 50 participants who travelled all over a country with increasing levels of euroscepticism - the UK, and a country severely affected by youth unemployment - Spain.



Apart from the activities aimed at young people, these bus tours facilitated meetings between different generations of Europeans, discussing and exchanging views on Europe. These meetings helped to re-establish a commitment towards an united Europe, as well as an encouragement them to participate in the European elections. During each bus tour, participants visited different cities every one or two days, where they organised street actions, participated in workshops, took part in debates with MEPs and candidates, and talked to as many potential voters as possible. At the end, participants admitted that the different attitudes of the people they met turned the event into a real challenge - not only because the society was largely disinterested in the EU-related themes, but because seeing the EU flag could even cause a negative reaction. However, those hardships were overcome with Eurooptimism, and the Y Vote 2014 Project left some impact on the minds of Spanish and English citizens.

In addition to all aforementioned activities organised directly by the Y Vote 2014 team, more than twenty AEGEE local groups organised their own local activities regarding the European elections. In May, the Y Vote 2014 project was present at the biggest youth festival "European Youth Event: Ideas for Better Europe" in Strasbourg, which gathered 10,000 young people from the entire continent. Hence, the Y Vote 2014 Project reached a significant number of young people within the AEGEE network and beyond.

Y Vote 2014 was the largest AEGEE project this term, given its scale, importance and our own expectations and ambitions. The project provided participants with lots of great moments, and also mistakes that were turned into learning opportunities. Regardless the outcome of the European Parliamentary Elections of 2015, we are proud of what we achieved, and we will continue this success story when #EP2019 arrives.



List of Y Vote 2014 conventions:

- “Ignite the Youth Spark!” in Valladolid (Spain), 18-22 September, 2013
- “Bridging the EU Democratic Gap” in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain), 9-13 October, 2013
- “Youth UnEmployment” in Agrigento (Italy), 10-15 November, 2013
- “Austerity vs. Solidarity – the Future of the Eurozone” in Berlin (Germany), 28 January - 2 February, 2014
- “Gender Equality” in Paris (France), 19-23 February, 2014
- “Education, Research and Mobility” in Kraków (Poland), 4-9 March, 2014
- “The Role of the EU in the World” in Vienna (Austria), 14-18 March, 2014
- “Pluralism of the Media” in Cluj-Napoca (Romania), 19-23 March, 2014
- “More Europe, but which Europe?” in Brussels (Belgium), 2-6 April, 2014

Bus Tours:



Participants' quotes:

“This convention prompted personal development of all of us [participants]. I am impressed how the Y Vote 2014 conference can change yourself! After the conference you feel more “complete”. If earlier your idea about your status as European citizen was quite unclear and confusing, after meeting new people you can learn how to add value to your opinion and what you can do to become and remain active.”

Mauro Bellani (AEGEE-Bergamo)

“These were the participants' ideas that made the Y Vote 2014 convention a memorable event for me. [...] Working in small groups and sharing points of view increased my interest in decision- making processes. I would like to congratulate the organizers on the outstanding presentations. I believe that many of us now understand the seriousness of the elections and know how to deal with it better than before.”

Emma Dumbravan (AEGEE-Cluj Napoca)

YPART, introducing new tools for discussions

Wieke van der Kroef, AEGEE-Amsterdam/Leuven

Over the years, AEGEE has made use of mailing lists, a forum and Liquid Feedback. Each tool has its pros and cons, but unfortunately none of them were really actively used. So there was a need for (new) tool which would facilitate stronger online discussions. The decision to try to use YPart came after the Comité Directeur's meeting in June 2013 in Brussels, where they had the chance to meet and discuss with the Liquid Democracy team for two days on how to implement an eParticipation tool for AEGEE-Europe. During this discussion our Board of Directors saw that YPart offers functions which can help to facilitate the online discussion process.

Ypart is an online eParticipation tool designed especially for young people and developed by Liquid Democracy e.v. It is based on the principle of Liquid Democracy, model which combines direct and representative democracy based on citizens wish. You can choose to which level you wish to participate in decision making process and to whom you wish to pass your vote depending the topic. Liquid democracy offers a variety of options to facilitate the participation process: from discussions on ideas to voting or collaborative writing. Pavel Zbornik, the CD member responsible for YPart said that he “would like to see the culture of online discussion in AEGEE. I personally think YPart is the right instrument for it.” He realises that the tool is not perfect, but it comes “closest to AEGEE's wishes”.

The strength of Ypart is that it gives users the possibility to participate in structured discussions in a variety of ways. They can write their opinion down and share it directly on social media, or they can choose to just agree/disagree with earlier comments and/or propose amendments to statements. Moreover, there is also an option for online voting.

YPart doesn't automatically make AEGEE stronger, because this is still up to the members, but it does offer them a place to discuss ideas, proposals and possibility save time during Agorae as new ideas, as well as changes in the internal rules, are more easily prepared in advance. The platform was tested prior to Spring Agora Patra 2014 and during the General Assembly a presentation by Liquid Democracy was made in one of the plenary sessions followed by a more practical workshop.

As Pavel says: “Now, the analysis of the test phase is done and in general people see the need to have a tool for online discussion.” He believes in YPart and the testing phase supported his believe, showing that YPart can be used in AEGEE. So now it is up to the members to start using this tool to communicate their ideas, wishes and create online discussions.



Structured Dialogue

Laia Garcia Montufo, AEGEE-Tarragona



The Structured Dialogue is an instrument which ensures that the opinion of young people is taken into account when defining youth related policies of the European Union (EU). In order to achieve this, the Structured Dialogue brings together young people and policy makers across the EU to discuss in close cooperation and contribute to youth policy at a national and European level.

The Structured Dialogue involves consultations with young people and youth organisations at all levels in the EU Member States, and at EU level during the EU Youth Conferences organised by each EU Presidency country. It's called "Structured Dialogue", because it takes place in a very concrete frame which has been set by the European Commission together with the European Youth Forum, aiming to link the Structured Dialogue with the cycles of the European Presidencies, which change every six months. The cycle of Structured Dialogue covers three cycles of European Presidencies of the European Union, which means that in total it covers a period of eighteen months.

The themes and topics for discussion are decided upon at European level by EU Youth Ministers, whereas a committee of the current trio of EU Presidency countries, the European Commission, and the European Youth Forum is responsible for coordinating the process and deciding upon sets of questions to be asked to young people across Europe twice a year. These questions are then used as the basis for national consultations in each EU country, which are organised by National Working Groups. In most cases these are led by Youth councils and include other youth organisations and stakeholders. Some international youth organisations like AEGEE conduct consultations with their members and give feedback on the questions as well.

So far, there have been three full cycles of the Structured Dialogue. The first cycle, conducted during the period of 1st Spain, Belgium and Hungary, and focused on Youth Employment. The second cycle, conducted during the period of 1st and had the topic of Youth participation in democratic life in Europe. The third cycle has just been concluded and was conducted during the period of 1st involved Ireland, Lithuania and Greece, and its overall theme was Social Inclusion. In addition to the global priority chosen by each trio of Presidencies, Member States assuming the Presidency also focus on a sub topic related to the defined global priority."

The last EU Youth Conference took place in Thessaloniki, Greece from 10th and chose to highlight the theme of Youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people. During those three days, Laia Garcia Montufo had the opportunity to be a delegate for the Spanish Youth Council (CJE) and advocated for the suggestions agreed on during the national consultations by the Spanish young people she was representing at the Conference. The thematic areas generated from the national consultations were: quality education, quality transition, quality jobs, dialogue and learning between generations, active inclusion, youth January 2010 - 30 June 2011, involved the Presidency countries of July 2011 - 31 December 2012, included Cyprus, Denmark and Poland, January 2013 - 30 June 2014. It -12th entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. Laia followed the workshop on dialogue and learning between generations and took part in drafting recommendations for the topic, which will serve as a basis for possible inclusion in policy documents and will also be progressed through the EU Council of Youth Ministers. That being said, it should be stated that many other active AEGEE members were also present at the conference as part of their national delegations, which means that they got to push for certain directions AEGEE also strives for, as well as analyse certain key issues while keeping a European perspective in mind.

EU Youth Conference in Thessaloniki

Kristóf Papp AEGEE-Budapest, Julia Fuss AEGEE-Mannheim

The EU Youth conference is a part of the well-known Structured Dialogue process that facilitates political dialogue between youth and politicians. After a survey on current topics, which is always distributed and promoted within AEGEE as well, every six months a Youth Conference is organised by the country that is at that time president of the Council of Ministers.

To have some consistency, three succeeding countries always choose a larger theme together. The Trio presidency consisting of Ireland, Lithuania and Greece chose 'Social Inclusion of Young People' and the last EU Youth conference had the more specific topic of 'Culture and Entrepreneurship'.

As this was the final conference of this Trio, the final accord on the 'joint recommendation' had to be created. This is a collection of all the ideas on how to make the EU more youth-friendly to be presented to the Council of the European Union. There were several AEGEEans present, including Julia Fuss (AEGEE-Mannheim, as German Youth delegate) and Kristóf Papp (AEGEE-Budapest, representing the National Structured Dialogue Working Group of Hungary).

In preparation both of them read the results of the survey and used this as well as their experiences gathered as a member of AEGEE to discuss and establish their final points of view as youth delegates. Kristóf was working on recommendations to ensure the creation of conditions for full inclusion of young people in society: „Of course as an AEGEE member I also had to take into account what is relevant for my organisation, so I had to merge my backgrounds to represent them all.”



At the end of the conference, youth representatives drafted a total of 21 recommendations regarding issues of social inclusion that were handed to the Hellenic presidency. Julia believes in the importance of taking part in the process "each youth representative added value in making the youth's voice of their country or NGO heard." Kristóf agrees and adds: "I could use my personal experience from home and from AEGEE, to develop useful, realistic solutions." Overall, the recommendations add value for youth in the policy making process and according to Julia "they encourage politicians to listen to the voice of the European youth when drafting new policies on topics like social inclusion".

Full recommendations can be found on the website of the Greek Presidency, but one goal is to establish better structures to allow youth to engage in political processes, like local or national youth councils. Other ideas are to establish counselling services for youth in every member state, so that young people will be informed about their rights in order to achieve their full potential.

According to Kristóf all national and international NGO's as well as national governments play a key role in ensuring the recommendations become reality: "After we finished the joint recommendations it goes to the Council of the EU, which decides on the implementation. We have to lobby for them and let youth know about these results, so they can also express their will."

Julia agrees that it is up to youth to continue lobbying for their rights and interests: „Only through close cooperation among Europe's youth can our collective voice be heard" and she believes that AEGEE plays an important role: "We not only have many members that can be consulted in the process of the structured dialogue, but furthermore our standpoints are already an aggregate of European youth from various member states, and not just one country."

Grasping the complex structure of the European Union

Benjamin Doll, AEGEE-Mainz-Wiesbaden



“The European Union is an undemocratic dictatorship.” This is one of the many slurs shouted by the right-wing member of the European Parliament, Marius Schlageter, at the Model European Union Mainz (MEUM) 2014. But Mr. Schlageter is not really a right-wing politician. He is actually a participant in a simulation and all of his anti-Semitic and anti-Arabic outbursts are just a play. But still, if you are in the model-parliament at Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz and hear and see Mr. Schlageters racial outbursts, you don't think that it is just a simulation. You will believe that this is the European Parliament, and that this is a real outburst from a right-wing politician. Playing a role this close to reality is a key concept of the Model European Union.

Model European Union Mainz is a simulation in which young Europeans embody a role as a Minister at the Council of the EU, a member of the European Parliament or a journalist. During the event, they will discuss two proposals which were submitted by the European Commission. To have a proper debate, they will get their designated role over one month beforehand and have to prepare themselves. They have to gather information about the position of their country or party on the topics. At the event, the participants will be playing their role nearly the whole day. Only in the evening, at the different social events, they have the chance to show their real character.

The key of the Model European Union concept is the role-playing itself. By playing, the participants will understand the structure of the EU, they will learn how to handle political situations and they will get motivated to be politically active in Europe themselves. The non-formal-learning concept of the simulation makes it possible for the participants to grasp the complex construction of the EU. Also, former participants stated that their rhetorical skills, use of English and ability to work in a team improved mostly due to MEUM.

MEUM 2014 was the fifth instalment of the Model European Union in Mainz. Since 2010, the event is a yearly repeated and recognised brand. In 2014, there were 110 participants from all over Europe, Asia, Africa and North America. This year, the event took place at Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz. First, the participants could enjoy rhetorical speaking workshops after which they had three full days of simulating the EU. Beside the main event, the participants could exchange with each other through a diverse social programme, which included a wine tasting, a pub crawl and, of course, a European Night.

Since MEUM has been such a success through the past five years, the organisers of AEGEE- Mainz-Wiesbaden, BETA e.V. (Bringing Europeans Together Association) and the Political Department of Johannes Gutenberg-University can't wait to repeat it in 2015.



Measuring the Impact of the ERASMUS Programme – The Erasmus Voting Assessment Project

Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe 2012 - 2014

The ERASMUS programme has always been one of the main concerns for AEGEE. Already in the beginning we played a key role in unlocking funding for the programme in France, and we stayed active throughout its further development. 25 years after the establishment of ERASMUS, three million students have had the opportunity to study abroad in a foreign university, gaining a truly European experience, developing language skills and social competences, contributing to their personal development and employability, while also creating a European identity in them. But while the academic aspects of the Erasmus Programme are evaluated regularly, the social impact has been explored very little.

For the occasion of the European Parliament Elections 2014, AEGEE-Europe joined forces with Generation Europe Foundation (GEF) and the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) to investigate the European social dimension of the ERASMUS programme. Funded under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) of the European Commission, an international research was carried out in order to study the influence of the ERASMUS programme on its participants, including the correlation between participating in the ERASMUS programme and participating in the European society by voting in the European Parliament Elections. The main question was: “Are students that have benefited in the ERASMUS programme more likely to participate in the European Parliament Elections? And if yes: Are they more likely to vote pro-Europe?”

The aim of the project was to prove that the ERASMUS programme has a direct positive impact on the identification of the European citizens and, especially, the young generation with the European Union and its values. Identifying the biggest European Educational programme as a success story by proving the effect it has on its beneficiaries will deliver a valuable argument to its investors to sustain and expand the programmes.

The LLP Project, the first one that AEGEE led as a manager, carried out two surveys, one before and one after the European elections, which asked ERASMUS and non-ERASMUS students questions related to their affiliation with the European Union. It found great support and interest among stakeholders in Brussels. Our conferences were under the Patronage of the Youth Intergroup of the European Parliament and Mrs Doris Pack MEP, a visionary and instrumental contributor in the field of the European Union mobility programmes, our final publication under the one of Mrs Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth. We also counted on the European Movement International (EMI) and the European Sociological Association (ESA) as members of our Quality Assurance Board.

The results will be evaluated and published in September 2014, accompanied with policy recommendations and ideas for follow-up.



Actions against Youth Unemployment

Florence I. J. Franks, Project Manager Youth (un)Employment



The last twelve months have been a very crucial year regarding policy developments in the area of youth employment in Europe. Being part of the Youth Employment Action Consortium since its establishment in 2010, the Youth (un)Employment project (YUE) of AEGEE-Europe remained an active stakeholder in Europe. Collaborating with the European Youth Forum, the European Commission and AEGEE-Europe, the project had the opportunity to be represented at relevant European level meetings.

One of the big topics this year was the implementation of the European Youth Guarantee Scheme. This is a measure meant to ensure that all young people under 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within four months after leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. To share our views on this, the YUE team memberstook part in the Youth Summit on Youth Guarantee, taking place in Paris in November 2013, as well as the European Commission's conference Youth Guarantee: Making it Happen, in Brussels in April 2014.

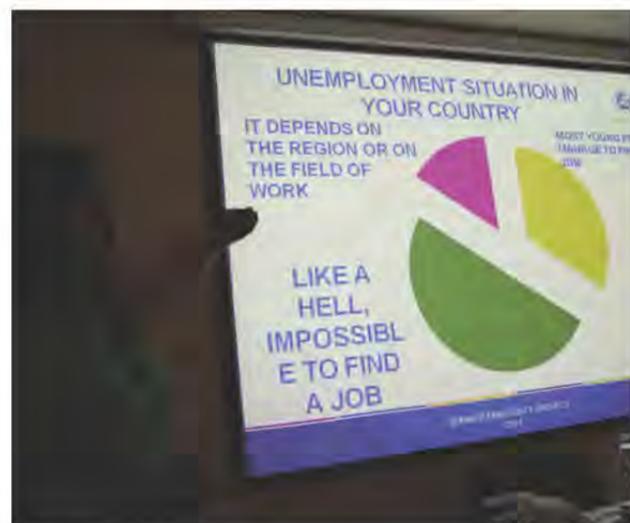
In the field of internships and apprenticeships, YUE was involved in the movement of Brussels' interns for better conditions of their learning period, while also participating in the development of a Quality Framework for Traineeships by the European Commission. These are all initiatives to improve the quality of learning experiences, which have become an obligatory step in the academic path of many young Europeans.

The team also managed to collaborate with two AEGEE antennae to organise local Employment Action Days. AEGEE-Athina focused on the topic of youth entrepreneurship, while AEGEE-Peiraias chose volunteering and mobility of young people as key elements that can boost youth employability.

A high value is given to the European dimension of the work, where the importance of creating high quality partnerships around Europe is felt. Therefore, YUE also attended a training course on the YouthPass process and Human Resources Development organised by INTER-ACCION in Spain.

The focus on the employment of young Europeans within AEGEE was reinforced at Agora Zaragoza, when Youth Employment was chosen as one of the Focus Areas of AEGEE's new Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

The project already started to work on this during the European Boards' Meeting in Lublin in February and recently launched the second cycle of the project with new team members and objectives was launched. Lastly, YUE is collaborating with AEGEE-Las Palmas and many other European partners for the organisation of AEGEE's third European School of Entrepreneurship in the summer of 2014.



Youth Participation Events

	Organizers	Title	Participants
Sept - Dec 2013	AEGEE-Brescia	European Talks	105
29.08.2013 - 02.09.2013	AEGEE-Cagliari	YEP: Youth European Participation	146
September 2013	AEGEE-Ryazan	Youth in Action: Acceptance of Homosexuality	10
18.09.2013 - 22.09.2013	AEGEE-Valladolid	Y Vote Kick off Convention: Ignite the Youth Spark!	36
05.10.2013 - 12.10.2013	AEGEE-Lyon & AEGEE-Torino	"Youth and Democracy"	
09.10.2013 - 13.10.2013	AEGEE-Las Palmas	Y Vote Convention: "Bridging the EU democratic gap"	
10.11.2013 - 15.11.2013	AEGEE-Agrigento	Y Vote Convention on Youth Unemployment	25
05.12.2013	AEGEE-Reggio Calabria	Seminar "The Future of Social Economy"	40
28.01.2014 - 02.02.2014	AEGEE-Berlin	Y Vote Convention: "Austerity vs. solidarity - the future of eurozone"	44
			40
19.02.2014 - 23.02.2014	AEGEE-Paris	Y Vote Convention on Gender Equality	
04.03.2014 - 09.03.2014	AEGEE-Kraków	Y Vote Convention on Education, Research and Mobility	32
14.03.2014 - 18.03.2014	AEGEE-Vienna	Y Vote Convention: "The role of the EU in the world"	
17.03.2014 - 18.03.2014	AEGEE-Foggia	Youth Mobility conference	
19.03.2014 - 23.03.2014	AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca	Y Vote Convention on Pluralism of the media	40
02.04.2014 - 06.04.2014	AEGEE-Bruxelles	Y Vote Convention: "More Europe, but which Europe?"	
May 2014	AEGEE-Osnabrück	Y Vote Discussion	
May 2014	AEGEE-Köln	Panel discussion with EP candidates	214
06.05.2014 - 14.05.2014	AEGEE-Udine	Be Europe - Yvote 2014	870
06.05.2014 - 09.05.2014	AEGEE-Leiden	Week of Europe	60
14.05.2014 - 15.05.2014	AEGEE-Heraklio	Y Vote Greece	
20.05.2014	AEGEE-Kastoria	Assistance Mission in Kefalonia	38
22.05.2014	AEGEE-Verona	Y Vote 2014 - ApEUnitivo	10
26.05.2014 - 29.05.2014	AEGEE-Aachen	International Charlemagne Prize - Karlspreisevent	45
02.07.2014 - 06.07.2014	AEGEE-Mainz-Wiesbaden	Model European Union	

AEGEE supporting the No Hate Speech Campaign of the Council of Europe

Luis Alvarado Martinez, President of AEGEE-Europe 2012-2014 and John Eikosidekas

Inclusion of Inclusion of Minorities



**NO HATE
SPEECH
MOVEMENT**

Among others, hate speech online has become a major form of human rights abuse, with very serious consequences for people, both online and offline. Young people are directly concerned as victims, targets, active and passive agents. But hate speech affects all of the society. As Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, said: "Hate speech, as defined by the Council of Europe, covers all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin."

The No Hate Speech project therefore is a tribute to youth participation and co-management. It was born from a proposal of the youth representatives of the Advisory Council on Youth and was endorsed by the Joint Council on Youth, which brings together the members of the Advisory Council on Youth and the governmental youth representatives of the European Steering Committee on Youth.

During Spring Agora Patra 2014, AEGEE-Europe's General Assembly endorsed and supported the No Hate Speech (NHS) Campaign, initiated by the Council of Europe, through a flashmob. The whole plenary showed how AEGEE members have embraced and supported the campaign by having a flash mob in the plenary, but also by wearing the campaigns' merchandising throughout the whole event. In this way, AEGEE-Europe showed that it stands together with the Council of Europe for the No Hate Speech Movement.

The sensitive topics of human rights and protection of minorities is one of the pillars of the Strategic Plan 2011-2014 and this isn't limited to the No Hate Speech campaign. Internally, AEGEE deals with this subject all year round with the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG). This WG, as understood from its name, has as its main theme Human rights. The HRWG promoted many events to its members, such as Refugee Day and European Action Week Against Racism and Discrimination.

Next to that, in the past year the HRWG has especially been lobbied for the rights of minorities, and in specific LGBT rights. During the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, there was a conference held in Budapest, which could be followed through live streaming. There were workshops and speeches covering many subjects about the LGBT rights. Also, during Spring Agora Patra 2014, the HRWG organised a workshop titled The Queer Side of Life, which had approximately fifteen participants. Taking these steps, the HRWG is managing to put its stone to build the wall to stop discrimination, not only within AEGEE, but also outside of the organisation.



LGBT rights, a wound still open

Anne Bakhuizen, AEGEE-Amsterdam

In the last few years the situation of a lot of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Europe and more specific within AEGEE has not improved at all. There are actually still people forced to live a secret life in fear or in a fake heterosexual relationship. Just feeling sad and angry for them is not enough: we, as a Network and people, have to do something about it. That's why it was and is extremely important that the situation of LGBT people in Europe becomes a topic of discussion in meetings of AEGEE-locals all throughout Europe.

This discussion has been already started last year, but that's just a start. The fact that the topic is on the table though is a huge and very meaningful difference. Talking about something is the first step on the long road to change, next to other changes happening in AEGEE in the past year. There was for example the approval of the position paper written by Eline de Graaf (AEGEE-Leiden), Policy Officer for Social Inclusion, during Autumn Agora Zaragoza 2013. The position paper was about combatting homophobia in Europe. Approving this position paper during the Agora meant the approval of the idea that AEGEE has to make a difference in the fight against homophobia. Sandrine Lafay from AEGEE-Leiden spoke meaningful words after the approval. She mentioned that the approval meant an actual change. But just approving a paper is not enough. We, as AEGEE, have to work for it and do things to make actual changes.



Within the Human Rights Working Group, a sub-group working on LGBT related issues within AEGEE was created thanks to a big amount of AEGEE members, from many different countries, who wanted to contribute to the battle for equal rights. However, only online meetings alone are not enough to work effectively, so a real life event was organised, which was the first AEGEE LGBT-event ever.

In March 2014 the "Let's Get Bright Together" event, organised by AEGEE-Amsterdam, took place. The main goal of this event was to come up with practical things every single person can do to make a small difference in this world. One of the important things they came up with was the invention of a "LGBT Cross the line toolkit" for every Summer University. Cross the line is a game where personal questions are asked and people have to walk over a line to make their opinion or experience visible.

During Spring Agora Patra 2014 there was also an introductory workshop on LGBT organised to inform other AEGEE-members about the topic and what is done about it within AEGEE.

Of course more needs to be done and we can still do more, but we should not forget that this is the start of something new. There are positive signs that more people within AEGEE are getting the feeling that they can and should do something. We just have to continue our journey to make sure that in a couple of years LGBT-people within AEGEE and within Europe will feel more respected and free.



Inclusion of Minorities Events

	Organizers	Title	Participants
17.02.2014 – 21.02.2014	AEGEE-Amsterdam	AEGEE-Meeting: "Sexperience ("Rock the boat")"	30
04.03.2014 – 07.03.2014	AEGEE-Amsterdam	AEGEE-Meeting: 'Let's Get Bright Together'	20
27.03.2014 – 30.03.2014	AEGEE-Padova	AEGEE-Meeting: "(A)Like U"	25
05.10.2014	AEGEE-Udine	Conference on Immigrants detention centers in Italy	391
June 2014	AEGEE-Osnabrück	LTC: Role of women in arabic countries	15
6.15.2014	AEGEE-Kastoria	Bike Ride against violence on women	100
03.07.2014 – 10.07.2014	AEGEE-Lille	Training Course: Europeoutai	20





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AEGEE
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Youth rights are still at stake!

Marko Grdosic, Liaison Officer towards European Youth Forum



When it comes to youth policies and youth rights in Europe and beyond, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) is their biggest defender and one of the largest stakeholders in the field. The Forum consists of 98 member organisations – national youth councils and international youth organisations. AEGEE has been a member of the Youth Forum since 1998 and, with a strong team supporting its work, ensures a good representation of the student's opinion in the Forum, through all the different levels of its structure.

In the past years, many important topics were on the agenda of the Forum, beginning with the important League of Young Voters. This project has followed the elections of the European Parliament and held a strong campaign to ensure that future MEPs are aware of youth and student issues. Already at that stage, Youth Forum's representatives have spoken with most of the candidates and ensured the signing of so-called pledges, where politicians gave their commitment to support youth in the following years. Although the final results of the elections were seen as negative by many, including the Youth Forum, the following months will be devoted to ensure that the prior commitments are being followed up and that youth issues, especially the current crisis concerning youth unemployment, stay high on the agenda of EU institutions.

Another very successful work of advocacy of the Youth Forum became visible when looking at the new funding programme Erasmus+. While the first proposal of the European Commission ignored the youth sector, especially youth organisations, bringing the existence of most of them at risk, many organisations have gathered within YFJ and created a strong advocacy campaign, in order to ensure that the youth civil society sector maintains its position inside the Commission's funding opportunities. Through many meetings, seminars and conferences, the final result turned out to be beneficial for both sides, and the youth organisations will continue to have its funding opportunities in the following seven years.

AEGEE's involvement within the YFJ keeps growing year by year. This was the second year as Board member of the Youth Forum for Miroslaw Krzanik, former CD member, who is working on topics such as education and mobility, Roma youth and EU funding programmes. As the elections for the new board are coming up this autumn, AEGEE will of course make sure to bring forward a highly qualified candidate and in this way contribute to the quality work of the Forum in the next board mandate. At the same time, Luis Alvarado Martinez has officially started the mandate in the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe, covering mostly the portfolio on education, as well as the one on cooperation with countries in Eastern Europe. Last but not least, Marko Grdosic is representing AEGEE in the Working Group on Education. Among others, this November the Working Group will host the Education Week in Brussels, for which AEGEE members will be invited.

In the following months, we will put our focus on developing the Youth Forum's Work Plan 2015-2017 and make sure that AEGEE's priorities are well covered. There are many topics that need further attention, and with a strong platform such as European Youth Forum, we are doing our best to bring youth rights to a higher level.



AEGEE and the European Movement International

Luis Alvarado Martínez, President of AEGEE-Europe 2012-2014

The origins of the European Movement date back to July 1947, a time when the cause of a United Europe was being championed by notables such as Winston Churchill and Duncan Sandys as the Anglo-French United European Movement.

From May 1948, 800 delegates from around Europe as well as observers from Canada and the United States gathered in The Hague, The Netherlands for the Congress of Europe. Organised by the International Committee of the Movements for European Unity and presided by Winston Churchill, it brought together representatives from across a broad political spectrum, providing them with the opportunity to discuss ideas about the development of a European Union. Important political figures such as Konrad Adenauer, Winston Churchill, Harold Macmillan, François Mitterrand, Paul-Henry Spaak, Albert Coppé and Altiero Spinielli took an active role in the congress and a call was launched for a political, economic and monetary Union of Europe. This landmark conference would have a profound influence on the shape of the European Movement, which was created soon afterwards.

The European Movement was formally created on the 25th International Committee for European Unity decided to change its name. The first major achievement of the European Movement was the creation of the Council of Europe in May 1949. The European Movement was also responsible for the creation of the "Collège d'Europe" in Bruges and the European Centre of Culture in Geneva.

Since 1948, the European Movement has played an essential role in the process of European integration by exercising its influence on European and national institutions. It fought in favour of the direct election of the European Parliament by all European citizens, in favour of the Treaty on the European Union and also fought for a European Constitution. of October 1948, when the Joint

AEGEE-Europe is a full member of the European Movement International (EMI) since 2011 and participates in EMI's Members Council, Federal Assemblies and Political Committees, trying to bring a student's perspective to the work of the platform. AEGEE's highlights with the European Movement International in the past year consider three main areas. The first one was the peacebuilding and conflict transformation in the Caucasus, between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. AEGEE organised training courses and spaces for neutral discussions. It drafted, also, recommendations on future milestones for political leaders of the region to start solving the frozen conflicts, while always bringing a youth perspective to the process.

The second highlight is the EMI Training Academy, which organises a training course every year for young students or graduates interested in getting further involved in the EU sphere, deepening their knowledge about the EU institutions, its stakeholders and its political processes. Every year, several AEGEE members take part in this training and complete it with a high level of satisfaction for having been able to meet EU stakeholders in person.

The third and most predominant of AEGEE's highlights with the European Movement International regards the crisis in Ukraine. AEGEE-Europe's President, Luis Alvarado Martínez was selected to participate in the official delegation of the EMI, led by its President, and Member of European Parliament, Mr. Jo Leinen, to meet social actors from all sectors (from universities, to youth NGOs, government, political parties, business stakeholders and many other civil society actors) as a way of getting real answers to the situation in Ukraine which started at the "EuroMaidan" square. But most importantly, the aim was to meet and coordinate all society actors wanting to boost the European integration process by establishing the European Movement Ukraine platform, spreading European values through the civil society, and supporting the newly elected government in its transition.



European
Movement
International

Reaching Sri Lanka for the World Conference on Youth 2014

Laia Garcia Montufo, AEGEE-Tarragona



Currently, there are over 1.2 billion young people in the world – the largest generation of youth ever seen. In his opening message, Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon indicated that this is a “time of both unprecedented opportunity and uncertainty, with high unemployment, changing workplaces, and evolving social, political and economic challenges.” He noted that expectations are “rightly high”, and they can only be met by working together for a broadly shared prosperity and a life of dignity for all. He encouraged participants to continue to raise their voices loud and clear so that they are heard not just at the conference, but also in their communities around the world.

From the 5th together young people from over 170 countries, taking place close to the Indian Ocean in the ‘Wonder of Asia’: Sri Lanka. The event carried the tagline of ‘Mainstreaming Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda’ and served as one of the principal methods of hearing young people’s voices about the next development agenda, moving beyond Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which are expiring next year. Ministers of Youth from around the world, high-level officials from the United Nations and other civil society organisations, the private sector and the academia joined young people in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, to discuss and adopt the Colombo Declaration on Youth, which was the outcome document of the World Conference on Youth 2014 (WCY 2014).

During the one week conference, youth delegates discussed how the world’s inequalities could be reduced in relation to seven key foundations and seven thematic areas. The foundations were broad, cross-cutting issues, while the thematic areas were more specific. On the one hand, the main foundations of the conference were: achieving good governance and accountability, inclusive youth participation at all levels, youth rights, globalization/ inclusive youth-led development, ending systematic inequalities, gender equality, and empowering marginalized youth including young people that are subject to most risks. On the other hand, the thematic areas were: realizing equal access to quality education, full employment and entrepreneurship, poverty eradication and food security, promoting healthy lives and access to health, environmental protection, emergency preparedness and youth centred urbanization, realizing peace, reconciliation and ending violence, and ensuring inclusive recreation, sports and culture. until the 10th of May 2014, the biggest youth conference in the world brought

AEGEE was present in the WCY 2014 with the participation of our Liaison Officer towards the European Youth Forum, Marko Grdosic (as International Youth Delegate on behalf of AEGEE) and our Liaison Officer towards the United Nations, Laia Garcia Montufo (as National Youth Delegate on behalf of the Spanish Youth Council – CJE). During the WCY 2014 they had the chance to review the progress of the MDG’s, share ideas, experiences and innovative approaches for effectively contributing to the post MDG framework and its implementation, considering that this conference was the final push to mainstream youth in the Post 2015 Development Agenda, before Member States of the United Nations meet at the General Assembly in September 2014.

In conclusion, the Colombo Declaration on Youth was a success in the sense that the youth did have a say and was invited to the negotiation table. However, this declaration does not entirely reflect the youth’s concerns and views, especially on the issue of gender equality, for governments avoid the issue of gender diversity. Only thirty governments took part in the negotiations out of which none was from Europe, which also raises questions about the representativeness of the declaration. Therefore, the participants also worked together on an annex to the declaration that reflects the wishes of today’s youth for the next fifteen years better. The youth was definitely given an opportunity to discuss their goals for a Post-2015 Development Agenda, but we must always go beyond discussion and ask our leaders: ‘Now what?’ Our work continues.



European Civic Forum and the European Year of Citizens Alliance 2013

Luis Alvarado Martínez, President of AEGEE-Europe 2012-2014



The European Civic Forum (ECF) is a transnational network bringing together over a hundred associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) across 27 countries in Europe and actively working to promote civic and popular ownership of Europe. Facing a growing civic disaffection across Europe, it is more critical than ever to foster citizens’ engagement with a collective project, and the need of a European public space where the role and influence of civil society is fully recognized, through the setting up of a genuine European civil dialogue.

AEGEE-Europe participates in the initiatives and conferences which the European Civic Forum organises around Europe. It was a founding member of the Forum and now is a board member; in fact, AEGEE-Europe has been in the board of the ECF several terms, always represented by the President of AEGEE-Europe. One of the key initiatives taken in the last year by the European Civic Forum, has been to manage the European Year of Citizens Alliance 2013. In 2013, AEGEE was one of the founding NGOs that together composed the European Year of Citizens Alliance 2013 (EYCA 2013) for the EU year of Citizens.

Besides its role in the ECF, AEGEE-Europe is also a member of the European Year of Citizens Alliance, which is a coalition of European networks and organisations that are concerned about the topic of citizenship. The objective of the European Year of Citizens Alliance has been to put European Citizenship on the political agenda, and push European institutions to address citizenship not only in its legal dimension (citizens’ rights), but in its full dimension of political, democratic and social citizenship. This will also create the opportunity to discuss European Citizenship, at a time when the European Union is experiencing a wave of criticism.

During the whole year, a lot of activities have been organised by the Alliance, but also by the commissions and all the organisations of the civil society who felt the need to address the issue of citizenship. A set of political recommendations, mainly for the European Commission, has been developed throughout the whole year, and was handed over at the final conference in Vilnius to the Vice-President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding. Here too, AEGEE-Europe participated, bringing a strong student’s voice to the whole process.

The contribution of AEGEE to the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning

Alexandra Belanova, AEGEE-Moskva



AEGEE has always been interested in programmes aiming at empowering and facilitating youth in any point of life. Taking part in AEGEE activities can’t only be a fun way to find alternative extracurricular activities but it can be an asset and a competitive edge for your future career and professional development too.

A few years ago, AEGEE made the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal education and learning one of its top priorities. Therefore, on behalf of its members, AEGEE-Europe contributed to the initiatives of the European pass and the Youth pass, which are certificates confirming knowledge, work experience and a set of skills acquired through voluntary work, contribution to non-governmental organisations, social work etc., by maintaining and gathering a European database on youth organisations and its workers. However, in order to ensure success, it is important to keep the ball rolling.

The European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning is an umbrella organisation which unites 33 European networks engaged in fields of education and training, embracing the realms of formal and informal learning. It was initially designed to be a platform for dialogue between European institutions, citizens and all organisations with an interest in education and learning. The platform arose as a response to the Europe 2020 strategy, which geared to implement a new European policy in education and training. EUCIS-LLL aims to enable bottom-up policy-making to bolster up the process of a successful and beneficial contribution to the society of lifelong learning.

Next to this, the organisation is involved in a number of very important initiatives. As a member of the Civil Society Contact Group, EUCIS-LLL joined forces and took part in monitoring the allocation of budget of future EU programmes and funds, and contributed to a better distribution of them. Most especially, they ensured a 40% budget increase for the updated version of Erasmus +, and this is just the beginning.

One of the founding organizations of EUCIS-LLL in 2005, AEGEE-Europe, became a part of the Steering Committee, where they were represented by Lucille Rieux, member of the Comité Directeur 2012-2014. It brought greater opportunities to represent and give a voice to the needs and challenges youth is facing. Being a member of this governing body implies the possibility of exerting more influence on the decision making process and gives the ability to put forward a greater amount of contribution and ideas.

AEGEE in the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe

Luis Alvarado Martínez, President of AEGEE-Europe 2012-2014

In the COMEM (Council of Members) of the European Youth Forum (YFJ), which took place last spring in Brussels, AEGEE-Europe was elected to represent the Member Organisations of the European Youth Forum (YFJ) inside the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe (CoE) for the next two years.

The Advisory Council on Youth (AC) is a body representing International Youth Organisations and National Youth Councils, which has co-decision power on all the policies and initiatives dealing with youth inside the Council of Europe. The AC is composed of 30 organisations, 20 of which are elected by the European Youth Forum, and 10 appointed directly by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.



The main role of the Advisory Council on Youth is to make youth policy mainstream and spread it to all the corners and organs of the Council of Europe, which is based in Strasbourg, and it works for Democracy, Human Rights and Rule of Law, encompassing the 47 countries of the geographical Europe. Until now AEGEE has been represented by the President of AEGEE-Europe in different international conferences, promoting the benefits of the co-management system. The co-management system is a system that empowers young people, making them see that their voices are as important as the ones of the governments, and allowing them to develop a feeling of ownership and responsibility of the policies implemented.

AEGEE has also been present in many different inter-governmental meetings, for example when the Joint Council on Youth (composed by the 30 Advisory Council Members and the 47 government representatives) decided to make funds from the European Youth Foundation available, dedicating them to the youth civil society in Ukraine, which needs a lot of support after its crisis. Additionally, AEGEE assisted in advising different governments and bodies of the CoE about what the exact needs of young people are and what tools are needed to ensure them full access to their fundamental rights.

AEGEE-Europe among the official UNEP stakeholders

Andrew Bartolo, Liaison Officer towards United Nations

The cooperation between AEGEE and the United Nations (UN) is a very important one, because not only does an organisation as important and widespread as the UN present various opportunities for our network, it also gives AEGEE, as an influential European youth organisation, the possibility to speak up about the policies of the UN.

With the Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki Moon, currently paying particular attention to the needs and the voice of young people around the world, now more than ever would be a good time for AEGEE to continue its involvement with the various bodies of the United Nations. In March 2013, AEGEE submitted a lengthy application for accreditation to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and in March 2014 the confirmation that AEGEE had been officially accredited to UNEP was given.

Now renamed to the United Nations Environment Assembly, this governing body is where representatives from all UN's nations, as well as several key stakeholders, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and representatives from the Major Groups of the UN meet to discuss issues of an environmental nature (for example climate change, water security, pollution and so on). As of 2014, AEGEE will be invited to all public meetings organised by the United Nations Environment Assembly and will be given observer status to all its sessions taking place.



It goes without saying that such an official bridge between our organisations will allow for a productive exchange of information and opportunities for our network, additionally providing us with the chance to make a key contribution to the decisions taken during these assemblies. The Liaison Officers towards the United Nations' various bodies are now working to receive accreditation of this kind also within the various other organs, all to further strengthen this partnership.

Making the choice for education institutions easier with U-multirank

Svenja van der Tol, AEGEE-Nijmegen



In May 2014 a new online tool to rank universities got published, under the name U-multirank. With seed funding from the European Union, a consortium headed by Dr. Frans van Vught of the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) and Dr. Frank Ziegele of the Centre for Higher Education (CHE) developed a tool that covers more than 850 higher education institutions, 1200 faculties and 5000 study programmes from 70 countries around the world. To obtain the relevant information, different sources were used: information supplied by the institutions, data from publicly available sources such as patent databases in the area of research, and knowledge transfer and surveys of more than 60,000 students at participating universities (this being one of the largest samples in the world).

AEGEE contributed to the development of this innovative tool by being part of the Advisory Board and contributing with feedback in different phases, paying special attention to the needs of mobile students. The tool is currently still in its first phase, but AEGEE will stay part of the team in the period during which the next steps will be taken. Although the information gathering for the tool remains the responsibility of the universities, there are probably ways for AEGEE to partner with the universities to help them with this task.

For AEGEE members, and students in general, U-multirank is a very useful tool to help plan where to study. You can find which university matches your needs best, and then apply for a master there or go on Erasmus. To find the perfect institution, you can enter different variables such as the subject of studies you want to follow, the characteristics your ideal university should have (size, specialties, focus subjects, etc.) and of course the country you would like to study in. Based on your answers, the tool provides you with a shortlist of all universities that suit your wishes. Once you have picked your number one, the tool also provides you with the option to fully explore the university, taking a look at different aspects like graduation rates, employment, research publications and many more.

Besides finding the perfect university, the tool also allows everyone to elaborate their own comparison of different universities using different indicators to find what suits their needs best, leading to the best personal choice of education amongst different institutions. The tool also pays attention to indicators that are often ignored or forgotten, such as the opinion of students and the focus on internationalization. If you want to see which universities are considered the best, you can also take a look at the provided ready-made rankings of institutions for different subjects. New rankings will be released in March 2015.

Travelling across the continent, seeking for "One Europe"

Réka Salamon, Project Manager Europe on Track 2

14112 kms, 30 days, 6 travellers and one project. The second edition of the project Europe on Track was launched on the 9th May in Brussels, sending six ambassadors on a one-month journey to ask young people about their vision of Europe.

AEGEE is present in 40 countries, over 200 university cities and connects over 10000 young Europeans fostering one common idea - one united Europe. Now imagine you get the chance to visit one city after another and meet all your fellow AEGEEans, be shown around in their beautiful cities, get to know their stories and spend quality time with them while getting a clearer idea of the Europe they imagined. Is it the same as yours?



Change for the better can only occur if the European institutions give the citizens the legitimacy of the tools they should own back while constructing the future of Europe: their freedom of expression without the fear or being censored by the media, their freedom of gathering without facing brutal crowd-controlling measures by the police, their right to choose their representatives without the overshadowing corrupt closed-door deals. And even more important: giving the citizens back their trust in the European project.

The younger generation is ever-so-passionate about enforcing these values and will continue putting pressure on the key players in decision-making. It is up to us to change the functioning and the perception of Europe for the better, when we are the ones whose future will be the most affected by the decisions being made nowadays. We not only want to have a say on how things should be done in the present; we want to have a say in shaping our future - and a project like Europe on Track is the perfect tool in our hands.



Imagine you get to learn a little more about the history of each country, you get to have a taste of the local culture and cuisine and while talking to the local people, both your fellow AEGEEans, members of other organisations or ordinary citizens not involved in voluntary work, you get to know their side of the European story. What are their perceptions concerning the present state and the future of Europe? What are the things they would change, the things they are aspiring to? The answers gathered by the six ambassadors show that there are significant differences between countries and regions concerning the idea of Europe and how people see the project of an united Europe itself. Depending on the generation and historic-cultural background, one cannot talk about one shared vision for Europe for everyone. The ambassadors were unable to identify one clear direction we all want Europe to move towards, because we are different in our needs based on living standards, future prospects, economical and social development. The average citizen still has a firm belief that they have little or no control over what is happening on the higher levels.



Bridging Europe

Observing how Democracy is shaped

Alin-Florin Calin, AEGEE-Wien and Thomas Leszke, AEGEE-Köln

„AEGEE strives for a democratic, diverse and borderless Europe“ is written in Article 2 of our Statute. But what does „strive“ mean? What contribution can we make as young people who only have the power of our hands, our own minds and our own voice?

Election observation is an important task. A government that knows international experts are in the country to observe their elections and report any irregularities to the public immediately afterwards, is more likely to make sure that these elections are organised as pro-fessionally as possible. Therefore, election observation is one of the most important safe-guards for democracy in Europe. And since it is carried out by volunteers, this is the ideal task for AEGEE members.

The idea of an election observation carried out by AEGEEans was born when a delegation of AEGEE members participated in the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in Warsaw, Poland, in October 2013. Election observation is one of the main tasks of ODIHR, and the delegation had the chance to speak to various officials who encouraged them to get involved. After Agora Zaragoza in November 2013, a team was created that set to work immediately with two main goals.

The first one is setting up a structure for election observation in AEGEE – to get experience in the field, but also with the aim of enhancing our own credibility as an association that takes democracy seriously. This objective was achieved, as an election observation was successfully carried out at Agora Patra in April 2014. It proved to be a rewarding experience, because although the elections were fair, various insufficiencies in the procedure were found, which were reported for future improvement.



The second one is sending AEGEE observers on international missions - the main purpose of the project. This turned out to be successful beyond hopes. As soon as the early presidential elections in Ukraine were announced, we decided to go for it. With the great help of Ukrainian AEGEE members, we managed to get the accreditation from the Ukrainian government - AEGEE-Europe as an official organization for election observation – and deploy twenty-one observers to L'viv, Kyiv and even Kharkiv in the east. This is actually more than NATO or the European Parliament managed to send. All our observers used the professional and very detailed observation forms provided by ODIHR. Because of the short time available, the observers had to be prepared online, which certainly was not a fully adequate method. But they took the challenge with admirable energy and material sacrifice, as no institutions were willing to give financial support. They wrote a detailed report afterwards, which was greatly appreciated by ODIHR.

And what are the plans for the future? Of course we hope to organize further observation missions, for example to the general elections taking place in Spain, Turkey and the UK in 2015. In the long run, it is our aim to create a permanent capacity for election observation in AEGEE with a pool of well-trained observers. The next step, therefore, is to organise a training for interested members, which is due to take place by January 2015.

Our special thanks go to Alla Resheten, Ermano Napolitano, AEGEE-L'viv, AEGEE-Kyiv, AEGEE-Kharkiv, the Comité Directeur, the Chair Team, the Juridical Commission, all our observers and team members for their great work and support.



The Eastern Partnership Project - We lead the way

Adrian Browarczyk, Project Manager of Eastern Partnership 2

Since 2009 the European Neighborhood Policy has changed significantly. With the Eastern Partnership's creation, the EU's scope of community differed geographically, politically and culturally. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have been offered an opportunity to join the European project under the condition of spreading the values we Europeans base our identity on. AEGEE-Europe did not miss the chance of contributing to the EU's policy, and the Eastern Partnership Project (EaP) has developed into an immense platform for youth discussion on topics that Europe struggles with: low participation in democratic processes, violation of human rights and visa restrictions.

Although, the first edition of the project has been summarised at Autumn Agora Zaragoza 2013 by former Project Manager Alla Resheten from AEGEE-Kyiv, the feeling that such endeavor calls for continuity remained alive. It came about as an important motivating point for a new generation of AEGEEans, who are truly interested in the development in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus.

This resulted in a second phase of the project becoming reality a few months after the Agora. At the beginning of the year 2014 a team of almost twenty highly skilled students, equipped with rich expertise on the Eastern Partnership itself, started the AEGEE-Europe mission of increasing the youth power and generating positive changes that aim at contributing to the establishment of a strong civil society in the region.



The project bases its values on the belief that such initiative is an important element of AEGEE's mission of bridging Europe. Consequently, in order to create links between the youth from the eastern and the western part of our continent, we came to the conclusion that promoting the ideas of active citizenship and youth participation in democratic processes in the EaP perspective must be at the top of our priorities. Within the project's framework we therefore would like to advocate to respective stakeholders and governments for the recognition of the role that youth participation has in the processes that shape society. Building mutual understanding and trust between people from the Eastern Partnership countries and the rest of Europe by strengthening partnerships and sharing practices with youth organisations is understood as a project's milestone that we will be aiming at throughout the upcoming two years.



The Eastern Partnership Project managed to accomplish quite a lot in terms of constructing a widespread tool for AEGEE, a tool that advocates for a united Europe from Lisbon to Baki. Our members actively participated in a series of events where they delivered speeches and issued many thematic workshops (the Eastern Partnership Youth Forum Kaunas 2013 or the EaP Youth Leaders Forum Brussels 2013). At the international level we plunged ourselves in the world of politics by deepening the cooperation with the European institutions and non-formal organizations. These activities prove that we aim high and that AEGEE-Europe can successfully bridge the gaps that have been created in Europe in the past years.

EuroArab goes to Tunisia

Mariem Ben Ltaifa, EuroArab Project

At the EuroArab Project meeting in the AEGEE Headoffice in 2013, Stephanie Müller (Editor-in-Chief of Key to Europe 2011-2012 and Financial Manager of the project) came up with the idea to go beyond Europe for the first time, organizing a project in Tunisia: EuroArab Goes to Tunisia. The idea was to set up a mixed project between a study visit, especially after the revolution, and a youth exchange between Tunisians and AEGEE members from all over Europe.

From 11th till 18th of May, a group of AEGEE members went to Tunis where they attended different workshops aiming to create a better mutual understanding between the participants. They also visited youth organisations, where the Europeans participants could get an overview of the youth work in the Arab region from a different perspective and in its different fields, such as women empowerment, entrepreneurship, citizenship and democracy.

In fact, it was the first time for most of the European participants to travel beyond Europe. What made participants apply for the project, was their willingness to change the stereotypes they have, or at least check if the prejudices they have were true. The discovery of new cultures and civilizations and experiencing different traditions and life styles have enlightened participants minds about how rich our lives could be if we could open up to and learn from each other.



In the case of many Arab countries that have been through the revolutions, this project would be very fruitful and constructive to create a peaceful and tolerant environment using intercultural dialogue, that teaches us to accept our differences and use them to make a step forward in order to build a better future. In fact, what is really important in the EuroArabproject is to increase youth participation in order to create an impact on the society. The exchange of good practices, that happen during this event, leads to the strengthening of competencies and skills of the European and Arab youth workers. That leads to the will to create a change in their environments and organize more projects that aim to develop the democracy and the citizenship in their countries, to increase the participation in the public sphere, to raise the awareness about human and civil rights, such as the participation in the election process in order to get involved in the decision making.

In conclusion, all these different symbols that identify our societies are actually complementary if we ignore any efforts to split us and if we work hard to prove that we are all one, ideal nation, regardless of our differences.



Visa free-travel for citizens of Moldova

Alexandra Belanova, AEGEE-Moskva



In accordance with the amendment of Council Regulation 539/2001, made by EU institutions and signed on the 3rd and the Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Dimitris Kourkoulas, the Republic of Moldova was transferred to the list of third countries whose nationals were granted a visa-free travel. This ruling came into force on the 28th Republic Moldova to cross the Union's border-free Schengen zone if they hold a biometric passport and comply with the rules of staying for a period not exceeding 90 days in a 180-day period.

Starting from 2010 the country with 3,5 million inhabitants sought tighter ties with the European Union and participated in the Eastern Partnership initiative. In June 2010 Moldova launched a drive of Visa Dialogue aiming at exemption of visas in the foreseeable future and it attained this goal within four subsequent years. It has however been a long way towards the visa-exempt travel. As a first step, a Visa Facilitation Agreement with the EU was developed on January 1st 2008 (its upgraded version entered into force on July 1st 2013), which waived visas for certain groups of citizens, simplified and also accelerated visa-related procedures and set a lower visa fee for all Moldovan visa applicants.

Many Moldovans already took advantage of the border-free travel, as reportedly 400,00 Moldovans have obtained Romanian passports due to the generosity in conferring its citizenship to Romanian-speaking Moldovans.

At the same time the number of short-stay Schengen visa applications from citizens of the Republic of Moldova has remained constant over the past four years (fluctuating between 50,000 and 55,000) with decreasing refusal rate for visa applications of 4,8% in 2013 (compared to 11,4% in 2010). of April 2014 by the European Parliament's President Martin Schulz of April 2014, enabling the citizens of the former Soviet

The efforts made by the Moldovan authorities both on the national and international level were conspicuous and therefore paid off. The successful Border Police modernization and determined implementation plans concerning the Law on Ensuring Equality and the National Human Rights Action Plan prove the perseverance and decisiveness of a country in working closely with the European Union.

Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström, considered this event as «an excellent example» for other countries of the region (implying Ukraine and Georgia), «demonstrating that a strong political commitment and the effective implementation of reforms bring tangible results». AEGEE always stands for a visa-free and hassle-free movement and travel within Europe and welcomes Moldova in a family of nations no longer divided by borders but the self-imposed limitations.

AEGEE's Peace-Building Caucasus Training at the University on Youth

Luis Alvarado Martínez, President of AEGEE-Europe 2012-2014



In September 2013, the 14th edition of the University on Youth and Development took place in Molina, Malaga (Spain). As every year, the University was co-organised by the North-South Center of the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, the Spanish Government (INJUVE), the Spanish Youth Council (CJE) and the Latin American Youth Forum, bringing together young people from all over the world, in different events, creating a magical atmosphere and bringing all the key stakeholders of the youth sector together in the same place.

For this 14th edition, and for the first time in its history, AEGEE-Europe/European Students' Forum became one of the core partners of the University, bringing its own event to Molina in the form of a peace-building training for young leaders from the Caucasus region.

We brought together twenty participants from the Caucasus countries of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, as well as leaders from other European countries, to a neutral space where they were able to focus on dialogue, tolerance, and breaking stereotypes, while working under the motto of United in Diversity and fostering core values like respect and solidarity between nations.

This was the first of many initiatives that AEGEE Europe will start, in order to empower young leaders from the Caucasus to go back to their countries, start micro projects and have an impact in the way their neighboring countries are perceived by the young generation, slowly shifting the perception and active involvement of a new generation in the conflict resolution movement in the region. We are looking forward to the new initiatives.

Bridging Europe Events

	Organizers	Title	Participants
15.06.2013	AEGEE-Delft & AEGEE-Passau	Exchange	
27.10.2013 - 30.10.2013	AEGEE-Kastoria, AEGEE-Thessaloniki, AEGEE-Tenerife	Exchange	
30.11.2013 - 01.12.2013	AEGEE-Delft & AEGEE-Köln	Exchange	10
15.11.2013 - 17.11.2013	AEGEE-Nijmegen & AEGEE-Leipzig	Exchange	8
26.12.2013 - 04.01.2014	AEGEE-Ogre	Meet your Rights	20
03.02.2014 - 09.02.2014	AEGEE-Leuven	School of Social Entrepreneurship	40
March 2014	AEGEE-Valletta	EuroArab Project	30
27.03.2014 - 31.03.2014	AEGEE-Nijmegen & AEGEE-Riga	Exchange	2
13.04.2014	AEGEE-Mannheim	Europe on Track 2 - Workshop: Spreading Eurooptimism	
04.04.2014 - 06.04.2014	AEGEE-München	Intercultural AEGEE Exchange: Lost in the mountains? Call the Superaege(h)eros	30
16.04.2014	AEGEE-Bergamo	Europe on Track 2	20
19.04.2014 - 13.07.2014	AEGEE-Bergamo	Bergamo is Europe	270
19.04.2014	AEGEE-Udine	Europe on Track 2	10
22.04.2014 - 27.04.2014	AEGEE-Nijmegen & AEGEE-Bucaresti	Exchange	7
May 2014	AEGEE-Heidelberg & AEGEE-Napoli	Exchange	6
14.05.2014	AEGEE-Nijmegen	Conference on the situation in Ukraine	70
20.05.2014	AEGEE-Verona	Erasmus+ Conference	43
30.05.2014 - 01.06.2014	AEGEE-Genova	Interregional Meeting	
June 2014	AEGEE-Aachen & AEGEE-Warszawa	Exchange	
June 2014	AEGEE-Aachen & AEGEE-Lviv	Exchange	
04.06.2014	AEGEE-Udine	Associations of Udine for Bosnia	120
19.06.2014 - 23.06.2014	AEGEE-Budapest & AEGEE-Siena	Exchange	11
28.07.2014 - 06.08.2014	AEGEE-Cosenza	Training Course: 'Get Active In Calabria'	50

Bringing the University back to the Summer Universities

Anna Pykhtina, SUCT PR Responsible



During 25 years of the Summer University (SU), the oldest and most popular AEGEE project, many things have changed. The project started in 1988, with only sixteen organizing antennae, receiving 2500 applications in the second year. Over the years, the project grew into the life changing experience for participants and organizers that it is now. Looking back to its development, many changes made by the Summer University Coordination Team (SUCT) can be seen, leading to more awareness of the importance of focusing not only on exploring the beauty of the country, but also on topics like Spreading Eurooptimism, Youth Mobility, Youth Unemployment and other topics mentioned in AEGEE-Europe's Action Plan.

The Summer University project has proved that it is the most wonderful, exciting, and for sure one of the cheapest possibilities to travel to countries one might never have thought to visit, to meet participants from other countries all over Europe and to spend an amazing time. The aim of the Summer Universities didn't change that much. Every year, thousands of volunteers start their work in the early winter to offer participants a new way of intercultural communication, to provide them with unique experiences and new knowledge, and to support the idea of a Europe without borders, including countries outside political Europe too. Thousands of participants with different nationalities, age, gender, traditions, habits and interests are living for two weeks in a small society where they can learn to adapt to, and respect each others' preferences.

Indeed, friendship and travelling, the possibility to be more familiar with other countries' way of living and traditions are the most obvious benefits of being a part of any Summer University, but we can look at the Summer University Project from another perspective too, seeing it as an opportunity for non-formal education. Communication and leadership, public speaking, conflict resolution, flexibility and even stress-resistance are only a few of the skills you can develop during all types of Summer University. Taking into consideration the fact that a SU is such a powerful platform, the Summer University Coordination Team took several steps to improve the serious side of the project.

For many AEGEEans the Summer University is the first event they attended and usually it is the place where they created their opinion about AEGEE itself and its' goals and means. Therefore it is the task of every SUCT to find the best way to show not only the fun side of the project, but also to make participants understand how many possibilities for creativity they can have if they continue to be active in AEGEE. To make the programme more diverse and to fulfill the conditions of the SU type (Summer University, Summer Course or Travelling Summer University) organizers are offered help from almost all existing Working Groups and other Projects (this year even the Chair Team offered their cooperation to help participants understand the mechanism of AEGEE).

However, the feeling existed that this wasn't yet enough, therefore the SUCT, with the help of the Action Agenda Committee (ACT), made another step and included Compulsory Sessions to every SU's programme. Each organizers team had to choose two of them and could download special materials, prepared by the ACT and Comité Directeur. This year's topics are Spreading Eurooptimism, Youth Unemployment, Youth Mobility, Nationalism, Intercultural Dialogue and Civil Education.

The Summer University project is also the place where everyone can learn more - participants are able to practice their English, break existing stereotypes about countries, and experience other countries' traditions through communication and the famous European Night. Organisers, at the same time, are gaining experience in project management and leadership, conflict management and teambuilding. From its side, SUCT's members get a unique experience in working in a multicultural team throughout the whole year, while supporting all organisers and helping participants. In the end, joining a Summer University gives us so much knowledge that one realizes how suiting the name of the project really is.



Personal Development

Health4Youth: two years of changing lifestyles

Matthijs Overhaal, Health4Youth Public Relation Officer



Almost two years ago, we stood on the stage at Agora Budapest and back then, we also had our difficulties. A difficult-to-implement website and creating meaningful content were among the main ones. We are happy to pass the wisdom we gained from this to the next cycle, along with everything that we consider best practices. Two years later, we've got to know each other very well and have been able to host a considerable number of events. The learning curve for all of us and our audience is what we consider our biggest achievement.

There are still a final few things that are on our agenda for which we are very excited, as we have been waiting for them for quite some time. We are preparing the launch of our intercultural cookbook, with recipes from all over Europe that many AEGEE-members sent to us. Next to that, we still want to organize Health Action Days, in which locals can organize a fun, healthy and interactive events with our assistance. These Action Days can be organizing a 5 km run for your university, organize a movie evening with educative movies about health or a free give-away of fruits and vegetables in a crowded place.

All in all, it has been quite a ride in those two years. But just like roller coasters, you have to enjoy and embrace the experience.



Ever since november 2012, the Health4Youth project has advocated the making of healthy choices for students all over Europe. The project will come to an end in Cagliari 2014, but there are fresh, motivated and above all, innovative people ready to take up Health4Youth2. But before that, the question is: what has been done in the past two years?

The database of workshops and the list of attended or (co)-organized events is something that Health4Youth can be very proud of. From Alicante to Tartu and from Skopje to Groningen, students have been informed and turned into health machines. The fact that AEGEE-Alicante and Health4Youth were awarded the "Best Thematic Event" by the AEGEEan Choice Awards is a sign that shows how even after two years with the same people in the team, we are still capable of producing a great event. The Health4Youth project has taught us a lot. In two years, everyone grows as a person, makes healthier and better choices and tries to radiate this knowledge to others by sharing information and showing them how easy a healthy lifestyle can really be.

Being active in a European project also teaches you so many other things, such as leading workshops, event preparation and above all, clear cross-cultural communication. That is also the biggest learning point and lesson we'd like to give to all others and especially to our successors: communicate with each other about your daily life. More often, you are behind a screen and don't really know what others are doing so you don't know what to expect either. It is a great experience and all of us can only be grateful for having been a part of it up till now.

Maintaining the AEGEE spirit through trainings

John Eikosidekas, Secretary of The Academy



To make sure that AEGEEans get offered a great range of non-formal education, the Academy got founded. What is the Academy? It's the back-bone of AEGEE, the pool of trainers that give sessions to AEGEEans, at times even to externals that wish to learn. The Academy (ACA) hit fifteenyears of existence in May 2014 and has been a huge success over the years, creating events where young adults and participants can learn about a specific theme. The ACA's events are called European Schools (ES) and there are different types, such as the following that took place this past year.

In April 2014, there was a Training For Trainers (T4T), held in f Budapest. Participants got a chance to learn how to become a trainer and what it takes to be one, during an intensive full week of training. The trainers of the event created an unforgettable non-formal learning experience for all. At the end of the week the participants had a chance to deliver their own training at the University of Budapest. This new generation is already quite active, having delivered most of the workshops at Spring Agora Patra, with many AEGEEans attending.

In May 2014, AEGEE-Enschede hosted ES1, which is a European School targeted for AEGEEans that have little or no AEGEE European experience. The goal of ES1 is for participants to gain experience on how to run an AEGEE local, or even how to be project managers in AEGEE. Trainings were given on matters such as Public Speaking, Fundraising, Event Management, but there was also a workshop on Improvisation. In between trainings, participants would wind down with a taste of culture, like a visit to a Dutch brewery. The event produced a new highly active generation of AEGEEans ready to make a change.

So what does the ACA have in store for the future when it comes to events? Even more motivating events of course! From the 27th will have the chance to take part in FRES (Fundraising ES) hosted by AEGEE-Barcelona. They can seize the opportunity to learn all it takes to do FR with high-level trainings on subjects such as Persuasive Communication, Corporate Fundraising and Grant Applications.

There is more to come in November 2014 from AEGEE-Poznan, which will be hosting the PRES (Public Relations ES) with intensive sessions for participants to learn all about PR and to go back home with the proper tools to reach their personal and antenna's goals. Last but not least, after a huge success in Izmir, where it was last hosted in March 2014, now it will be in the city of Cluj Napoca where AEGEEans will learn how to organize a SU (Summer University), which is the most popular AEGEE event. SUPS (SU Project School) will take place in December 2014.

In a nutshell, it is a life-changing experience to join an European School. Through non-formal education techniques, an ES can highly stimulate the self-development process of participants. It will surely motivate AEGEEans to become more active as well. An ES also provides each participant with a certificate which can alter their professional and personal life. Combining fun and learning, an ES can be an unforgettable experience for every AEGEEan, or at least according to each participant that has attended one. It's an experience that every AEGEEan should have.



Who do you dare to be? AEGEE and a new generation of young leaders

Erika Bettin, AEGEE-Venezia

"It will be engaging, exhausting and challenging". These words were written in the acceptance mail that 18 AEGEEans received late in November 2013, sent by Kathrin Renner on behalf of the Comité Directeur. From the 7th to the 12th of January 2014, those 18 AEGEEans headed to Bruxelles to attend the first Leadership training organised and trained by the Comité Directeur 2012-2014. Participants were welcomed with the question: 'Who do you dare to be?' this was the fil rouge that linked all sessions together for five days.

A leader leads a team by definition and (s)he needs to be able to deal with different kinds of personalities. Ego, communication, self defense mechanisms, needs and choices were among the topics of the sessions participants attended, but great importance was also given to the participants themselves. Through non-formal education participants unveiled their strengths and embraced their weaknesses in order to be more aware of their potential (and sometimes in order to unlock it) and perform better in their field of action. A night that was certainly worth remembering was the Power night, where participants were demanded to push themselves beyond their physical and mental limits. The Power night allowed them to lift layer by layer all the boundaries and obstacles that normally keep human beings from reaching their goals.

Participants didn't just get a chance at self reflection, they also received a good dose of AEGEE spirit in the process. During the AEGEE Museum, President of AEGEE-Europe Luis Alvarado Martínez challenged participants with a quiz to reconstruct the AEGEE timeline with the main happenings of almost 30 years of history.



It was a walk through memories that highlighted the importance of knowing the past of our organisation. A good knowledge of AEGEE came along with the awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the Network. That is why several sessions were dedicated to the structure and the functioning of our association. In addition, participants had the privilege to speak with one of the founder members of AEGEE, Christoph Leclerq, about the vision they had in creating the association and about the direction AEGEE is headed towards right now.

Most of the participants were already actively involved in the European Level of AEGEE, having leadership roles like Sandra Oborska (AEGEE-Kraków), Content manager of the EuroArab project, Pauline Létard (AEGEE-Toulouse) former member of the Network Commission, Erika Bettin (AEGEE-Venezia) Co-Editor-in-Chief of Key to Europe and Editor of The AEGEEan, Olga Nevmerzhit-skaya (AEGEE-Sankt-Petersburg), member of the Audit Commission, Adrian Browarczyk (AEGEE-Poznań) and Roland Papp (AEGEE-Budapest) respectively Project and Content manager of Eastern Partnership project, Francesca Russo (AEGEE-Padova) Project Manager of the Summer University Coordination Team, Iris Hordijk (AEGEE-Utrecht) Policy Officer on Sustainability and Laia Garcia Montufo (AEGEE-Tarragona), Liaison Officer towards the United Nations.

Among others, like Réka Salamon (AEGEE-Debrechen/Aachen, Project manager of Europe on Track and Speaker of the Public Relation Committee) and Léa Charlet (AEGEE-Paris, project manager of Yvote 2014) took the stage during Spring Agora Patra 2014 running for President of AEGEE-Europe and Matthijs Overhaal (AEGEE-Tartu, PR responsible of Health4Youth) running for Secretary General. They were not alone in running for European Level positions, since Maria Arends (AEGEE-Groningen/Tarragona, Secretary of Health4Youth project), Ana Potočnik (AEGEE-Ljubljana) and Balázs Kovács (AEGEE-Debrechen) also took the stage and were elected as member of the Network Commission. Danae Matakou (AEGEE-Athina, board member of several Working Groups) was elected Secretary of the Agora/EBM and Mayri Tiido (AEGEE-Tartu, project manager of Health4Youth) and Aleksandra Kluczka (AEGEE-Kraków, Content Manager of Yvote 2014 Project) were elected member of the Comité Directeur 2014. The first ever Leadership Training Course proved to have a huge impact of participants' lives and future projects, inspiring some of them to run for important positions within our organisation.

Quality in AEGEE: bring it on!

Lucille Rieux, Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe 2012 - 2014



Ensuring quality in the AEGEE events and in the Non Formal Education that AEGEE is providing, has become a priority within the Network in the last months. This can be noticed with the change of the former Events Committee into the Events Quality Assurance Committee, an internal body which aims at supporting locals and organisers of events in the preparation of so-called quality events, namely of events which respect a certain set of quality criteria. What are the differences with the former Events Committee? The six members of the QAC are not only evaluating the European events proposed by the locals, but are also there to support and give advice to the events' organisers, and to explain why the quality criteria which have been defined are so important.

These criteria have been selected based on the framework proposed by the European Youth Forum. Through their initiative on Quality Assurance in Non Formal Education, the European Youth Forum developed eleven general indicators that should be taken into account for any Non Formal Education activity organised by a youth organisation. These indicators need to be adapted to the reality of each organisation. It is exactly what the QAC has done, by creating a Quality event toolkit which sets eleven criteria to be taken into account when organising a quality event. These elements consider both the logistic and the content aspects.

From now on, organisers of events need to make sure, for instance, that the objectives of their event actually fit the aim of the organisation, that the methodology used is in line with the target group, and that the event makes a sustainable use of the available resources. These demands might require an extra effort from the events' organisers at the beginning, since they have to take elements into account that they were not necessarily considering, but it surely paves the way for a positive impact in terms of quality for the events proposed in AEGEE.

Besides the internal improvements and the goal of a job well done, there is another big advantage to a functional quality system in a youth organisation: ensuring external reliability and recognition of the educational work and the impact of our organisation. Indeed, one of the big challenges of the external recognition of Non Formal Education is the difficulty to assess the quality of the education proposed, as it is a voluntary-based education. Hence, the establishment by the European Youth Forum of common indicators which can be used by all European and local youth organisations, is an attempt to strive for recognition of Non Formal Education as an alternative yet reliable form of education. By contributing to the process, AEGEE makes a step forward both internally, by introducing the concept of quality in our work, and externally, by appearing as a reliable NFE Education provider.

The power of Informal Education

Lucille Rieux, Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe 2012 - 2014

AEGEE, by providing a space for learning and personal development at all levels, is one of the biggest Non-Formal and Informal Education (NFIL) providers in Europe. Enabling young people to gain new knowledge, skills and attitudes is not something which happens by chance. A wide range of members are developing their competencies by taking up responsibilities in the organisation and by attending training courses or workshops prepared by other young people. However, if we want our organisation to keep on providing excellent learning opportunities, we need to make sure that members and learning providers know what NFIL's impact is, in order to improve its structure and quality.

Let's clarify some concepts first. We have already mentioned Non Formal Education (NFE) and Informal Learning (IL). What is the difference between those two, and how are they different from Formal Education?



Formal Education corresponds to the education framework which is proposed to all individuals, ranging from schools to universities. On the other hand, Non-Formal Education refers to a learning process which happens when people participate in activities voluntarily, enabling them to develop their values, skills and competencies. Non-Formal Education is also the name used for the methodology where the central focus is on the learners' need, giving them the opportunity to discover and learn through a pro-active attitude. Informal Learning, contrary to NFE, refers to knowledge and competencies that people gain in a non-structured context. It can happen everywhere and anytime, but within youth organisations informal learning happens even more often, due to the high interaction among members.

Why then, an internal strategy on the recognition of Non Formal and Informal learning? Externally, AEGEE-Europe is advocating for a better recognition of NFIL toward stakeholders, such as national and European public institutions, universities, and society in general. If we are asking for a better recognition of NFIL externally, it is also crucial that AEGEE starts an internal process in order to strengthen and identify our role as NFIL provider, giving more legitimacy to our voice for recognition of different learning pathways. Hence, the strategy which has been adopted at Spring Agora Patra 2014 covers several aspects.

First of all, it clarifies the concepts and identifies them within an AEGEE context. It also describes the way AEGEE acts regarding the four dimensions of NFIL recognition (social, political, personal and formal). Last but not least, the strategy defines a series of steps that the organisation will have to take in order to increase the awareness of its members regarding NFIL and the quality and capacities of the learning providers in AEGEE. It also paves the way for an internal system of validation of the members' competencies.

This way, AEGEE is pushing forward for a greater internal recognition of Non Formal and Informal learning, and at times when the youth employability rate is still low, will get more legitimacy to call on public institutions and private stakeholders to enhance the recognition and validation of competencies acquired by young people in Non-Formal and Informal settings.



Build your Future: projecting Europe in Cagliari

Mattia Abis, AEGEE-Cagliari



The project "Costruisci il tuo Futuro: il traguardo è l'Europa" (Build your Future: your goal is Europe) consisted of four stages, all linked together: ten local laboratories, Eureka course, Projecting Europe course and the final conference YEP - Youth European Participation. The whole event was supported by Sardinia Autonomous Region and organised by AEGEE-Cagliari in collaboration with ELSA-Cagliari (European Law Students Association-Cagliari) and ANCI- Sardegna (The National Association of Italian Municipalities - Sardinia).

AEGEE-Cagliari expected young people to be able to take an active role, to be present and responsible inside the society, acquiring skills of consultation, understanding the value of dialogue with institutions, and to give them the possibility to integrate with political actors through the realization of project proposals. The aim of our project was to encourage the dialogue about local, regional, national and European topics, the respect of institutions and their roles by giving participants key skills on project management, teamwork and consultation.

After five months of planning, we switched to the first project stage, formed by ten territorial laboratories which took place in seven different provinces of our region, discussing topics like associations, mobility, politics and active citizenship. Each laboratory was structured in two days: the first one was set to handle associations, mobility, politics and multiculturalism. The method of work adopted required a wide use of Non-Formal Education tools, with the development of working groups which allowed us to establish a dialogue with participants. The second day was more specific and focused on gaining transversal skills useful in different fields of application. It combined lectures with practical activities, performed in small groups, with the aim of a quick and better learning, while involving every participant in the discussions.

Immediately after these laboratories, the next step was to open up the candidatures for the Eureka and Projecting Europe advanced courses, selecting the participants and publishing their names on our project website.

From April the 22nd Cagliari. During those five days the participants, continuously supported by AEGEE-Cagliari, YOUSARDINIA and ELSA tutors, discussed about the following topics: human resources management, team building, general management, development and execution of a project, FR and PR, business plan, start-up of youth associations and business activities. The lectures focused on the activities done during previous laboratories, using a more specific and technical language as a result of skills gained during the laboratories. Every day there was an alternation between frontal lectures and workshops, carrying on activities such as team building and business games. Meanwhile, ten other participants were selected for Projecting Europe. They would be the protagonist of a European project design course, taught by industry experts in Bruxelles, and visit European Institutions.

Finally, during the YEP final conference, a mix of participants coming from previous activities and the AEGEE network, gained theoretical and technical skills to organize European activities, staying for five days in Cagliari.

Since Sardinia is an island, we gave participants all the skills to tear down geographical and cultural barriers, to project them in a multicultural and European environmental through living and working with people coming from the different parts of the continent. We involved several till the 27th, twenty-six Eureka participants stayed at Hostel Marina in associations and twenty municipalities in the project. A total of 625 participants were involved, for free, in the project, of which 443 people during laboratories and 146 for the YEP final conference. As a result, participants decided to establish three new associations. AEGEE-Cagliari supported them by donating a laptop and a printer to start their work and invest in our territory.

The project confirmed how Sardinian institutions share and support the mission and the vision of AEGEE-Europe and it is a recognition of all the work AEGEE-Cagliari did. Moreover it showed one more time the importance of youth participation in the political and decisional processes. That's what in AEGEE we call Structure Dialogue.

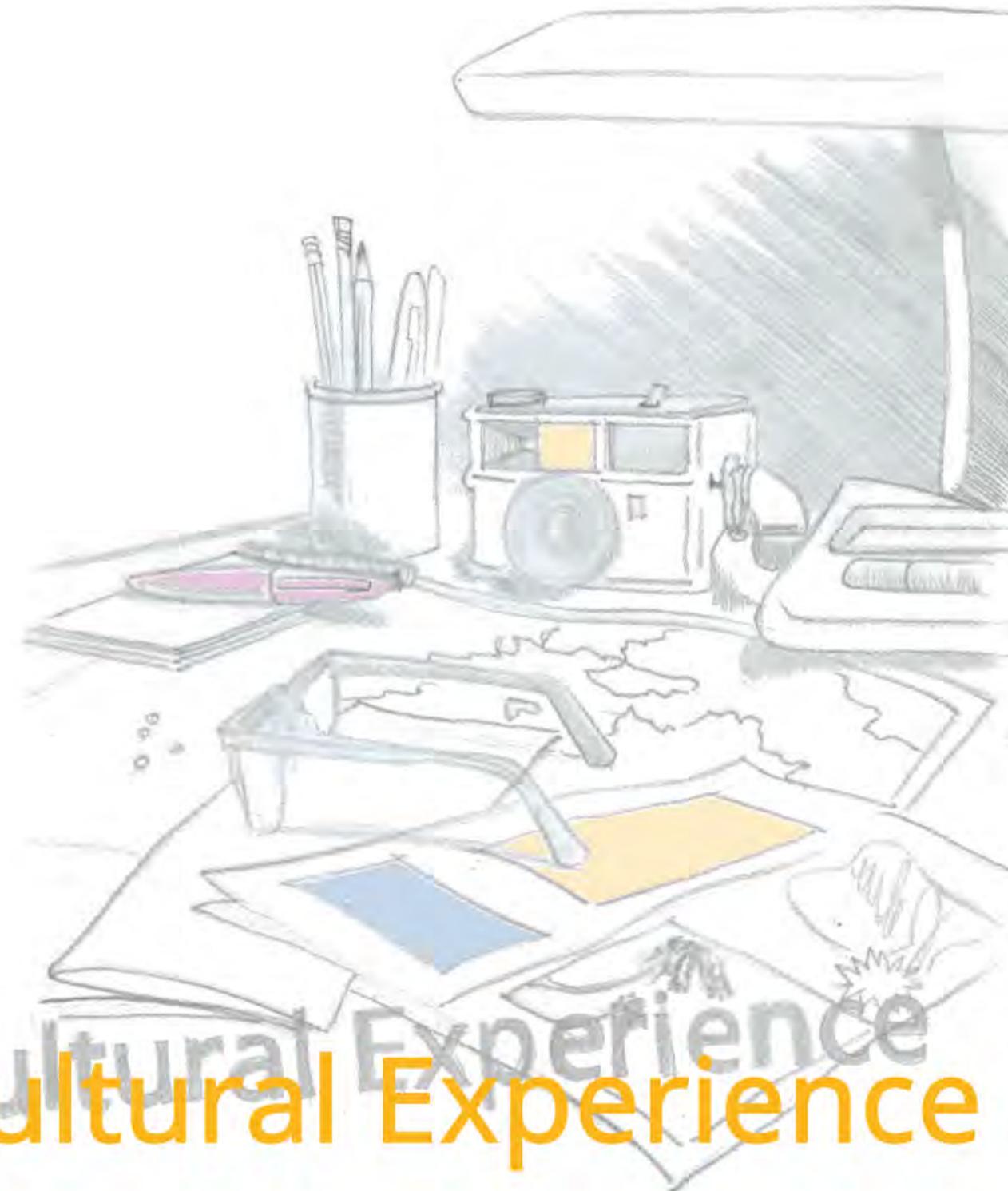


Impossible

Personal Development Events

	Organizers	Title	Participants
06.07.2014 - 07.07.2014	AEGEE-Sofia	LTC	30
September 2013	AEGEE-Ryazan	LTC: AEGEE-Europe	15
10.09.2013 - 15.09.2013	AEGEE-Çanakkale	AEGEE-Meeting "Back to the Childhood"	30
October 2013	AEGEE-Agrigento	LTC	20
October 2013	AEGEE-Padova	LTC	
October 2013	AEGEE-Torino	LTC	
03.10.2013 - 06.10.2013	AEGEE-Thessaloniki	NWM: Living, Loving & Learning the Greek Way	20
10.10.2013 - 13.10.2013	AEGEE-Foggia	NWM: Faraway, so close!	30
19.10.2013 - 20.10.2013	AEGEE-Cagliari	LTC	32
November 2013	AEGEE-Kastoria	LTC	15
23.11.2013 - 24.11.2013	AEGEE-Pisa	LTC	30
11.12.2013	AEGEE-Nijmegen	LTC: Active Membership	25
22.11.2013 - 24.11.2013	AEGEE-Santander	NWM: (B)RainStorm in the Cantabrian Sea	51
22.11.2013 - 25.11.201	AEGEE-Tartu	NWM: Discover the coolness of North	25
28.11.2013 - 01.12.2013	AEGEE-Poznań	NWM: Share your secret. AEGEE know-how	200
28.11.2013 - 01.12.2013	AEGEE-Eskisehir	NWM: Dive into AEGEE!	35
29.11.2013 - 01.12.2013	AEGEE-Vienna	NWM: ADVENTure in Vienna	45
29.11.2013 - 01.12.2013	AEGEE-Rostov-na-Donu	NWM: Find your inSPIRiTation	40
11.30.2013	AEGEE-Tarragona & AEGEE-Barcelona	RTC: What is AEGEE?	20
05.12.2013 - 08.12.2013	AEGEE-Udine & AEGEE-Treviso	RTC: formAzione - Make the Difference	60
13.12.2013 - 16.12.2013	AEGEE-Utrecht	NWM: Key to your AEGEE future!	40
13.12.2013 - 15.12.2013	AEGEE-Gdansk	LTC	
18.01.2014 - 19.01.2014	AEGEE-Tarragona	LTC	7
1.28.2014	AEGEE-Nijmegen	LTC: Job Interviews	20
22 March 2014	AEGEE-Mannheim	LTC	15
March 2014	AEGEE-Düsseldorf	LTC	20
03.01.2014	AEGEE-Bergamo	LTC	10
13.03.2014 - 15.03.2014	AEGEE-Cagliari	Conference "Formazione Lavoro ed Europa 2014"	277
14.03.2014 - 17.03.2014	AEGEE-Tbilisi	NWM: Spring Network Meeting Tbilisi	35
20.03.2014 - 23.03.2014	AEGEE-Copenhagen	NWM: Become a Nordic star of the europhoric	25
21.03.2014 - 23.03.2014	AEGEE-León	RTC: Know your AEGEE body	
3.25.2014	AEGEE-Nijmegen	LTC: Active Membership	20
28.03.2014 - 16.04.2014	AEGEE-Udine	EVS Tour	60
28.03.2014 - 30.03.2014	AEGEE-Alicante	NWM: Spring Network Meeting Alicante	64
29.03.2014 - 30.03.2014	AEGEE-Cagliari	LTC	35
3.30.2014	AEGEE-Brescia	LTC: Vision and Mission	20
30.03.2014 - 06.04.2014	AEGEE-Budapest	Training for Trainers (T4T)	20
10.04.2014 - 13.04.2014	AEGEE-Mannheim	RTC	
03.04.2014 - 06.04.2014	AEGEE-Gliwice & AEGEE-Katowice	NWM Silesia: Dream! It works!	130
04.04.2014 - 07.04.2014	AEGEE-Leiden	NWM: Participate, activate and create!	40
04.06.2014	AEGEE-Kastoria	Conference "Science of Happiness"	500
10.04.2014 - 13.04.2014	AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca	NWM: Discover, Imagine, Create	40
10.04.2014 - 13.04.2014	AEGEE-Salerno	NWM: United over the Rainbow	40
26.04.2014 - 27.04.2014	AEGEE-Udine	LTC	25
May 2014	AEGEE-Heidelberg	LTC	
May 2014	AEGEE-Valladolid	LTC: AEGEE-Europe	19
14.05.2014 - 15.05.2014	AEGEE-Cagliari	Conference "Giornalismo da zero a 2.0"	60
15.05.2014 - 18.05.2014	AEGEE-Bamberg	NWM: Cooperate, develop, act	40
16.05.2014 - 18.05.2014	AEGEE-Lviv	NWM: LAMP	25
17.05.2014 - 25.05.2014	AEGEE-Enschede	European School	26
24.05.2014 - 25.05.2014	AEGEE-Bari	LTC	11
5.26.2014	AEGEE-Brescia	LTC: Year Planning	10

Cultural Experience



Uniting Europe through Language

Adrián López Ferreiro, AEGEE-A Coruña



The Language Working Group (LWG) was created as a spin-off from one of the oldest AEGEE projects, the European Day of Languages (EDL), to raise awareness about the value of multilingualism, to encourage and help AEGEEans to learn more foreign languages, and to discuss issues related to language policies, minority languages and language diversity. During this year the Language Working Group worked on three different projects: the European Day of Languages, the Lingua Project and the idea of having a pre-event focused on language development before Agorae.

By celebrating the European Day of Languages, AEGEE promotes the rich cultural heritage of Europe and the linguistic diversity among Europeans. The project aims at motivating the European youth to learn different languages by organizing simultaneous language courses and different types of language related events with broad media coverage all over Europe. In fact, such events are a way of making people more aware of the linguistic stereotypes, and consequently the cultural ones, in order to break them and make people more tolerant towards each other.

This year, events were organized by seventeen different antennae throughout the network. In this edition more than twenty-two languages were presented, including three non-European languages, and more than 700 participants from 26 nationalities joined. Basic language presentations were carried out by AEGEE-Beograd, AEGEE-Voronezh and others; movies in their original language were screened by AEGEE-Padova and AEGEE-Moskva; AEGEE-Bergamo's dedicated their weekly social meeting, the APERasmus, to languages; language and cultural stereotype quizzes were held by AEGEE-Roma and AEGEE-Milano; the possibility to try typical food and drinks from each country in linguistic tandems were organized by AEGEE-Las Palmas and AEGEE-A Coruña; "Learn 6 languages in 90 minutes" was the activity of AEGEE-Kaiserlautern; AEGEE-Torino decided to sing in different languages, and finally AEGEE-Kraków organized a city game with native speakers.

Moreover, recently LWG started a new project aimed at providing high-quality translations and proofreading of materials for the whole network. The new project is called "Lingua", and is a way of taking care of the external image of the association. In the same way that other teams have helped to show the world what AEGEE is by designing logos, websites, or taking more professional pictures, Lingua can help reach a higher quality in our documents, as far as language is concerned. AEGEE is a volunteer's association, but the professionalism of its members, who are working hard in order to move the association forward, is and should be deduced from every aspect. Documents, web pages, articles, e-books, powerpoint presentations, brochures and so on, are the main materials that reach the rest of the world, so these should reflect our competence, professionalism and expertise.

Despite the fact that, in average, a member of AEGEE is able to speak fluently three languages, there is a lot of work to be done in this field. It is not a secret that a lot of people prefer not to take the stage at the Agora or European Planning Meeting because of their 'lack of English vocabulary', and some presentations or proposals are not properly understood before the voting because of language barriers.



In this regard, LWG thinks that there is a need to have a high level of English knowledge, and a new and basic idea was developed to contribute to increasing the self-confidence of our members. To increase the level of English of the participants for the upcoming Agorae in Cagliari and Oviedo, LWG is planning to organize a pre-event with this topic, especially for new members, making it easier for them to participate in the discussions of the General Assembly. Hopefully it will become a tradition from now on in every European statutory event. In a Network so wide spread like ours, communication is the key factor. That's why, Language Working Group started all these projects: to have members more familiar with languages and not to be scared by them.

Shiny happy people learning new skills

Miljana Vulevic, AEGEE-Beograd



In AEGEE, there are 13.000 members, but unfortunately not all of us are really active. In fact, one of the most common issues many antennae come across is motivating their members to get involved in the work of the local. AEGEE-Beograd was struggling with the same problem when the idea of forming a local working group appeared. The idea behind establishing this local working group was the encouragement of members to take initiative and participate in some local activities and projects, or even start something new in their antenna. Since the majority of members are students of the Faculty of Philology at Belgrade's University, languages were chosen as the topic for the working group. By the end of 2013, AEGEE-Beograd had its own local Language Working Group and not long after they started working on their first project - LanguAEGEE.

LanguAEGEE is a project that consisted of nine week long beginner language courses for students, given by students. The best part was that they were absolutely free. There were seven languages (Spanish, German, Dutch, Greek, Turkish, Arabic and Hungarian), 150 participants and more than 2500 applications. The most popular languages were German and Spanish with more than 600 applications each. Local LWG members (all off them philology students) volunteered as teachers and the city allowed use of some of their offices for free.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Republic of Serbia, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Embassy of Mexico recognized LanguAEGEE as a great initiative and endorsed it. Also AEGEE-Europe's LWG supported the project. The working group was able to pull off a project this big with so little resources primarily thanks to motivated young people who worked as teachers during the course of the project. Sofija, Miljana, Marko, Sara, Sonja, Jovana, Ana, Mina and Milica poured their hearts and souls into LanguAEGEE and fully participated in shaping and implementing the project every step of the way.

The main goal was to make LanguAEGEE a learning opportunity for everyone involved. It was envisioned as a project meant to make an impact primarily in the local community. At the moment, not many internships are being offered in Serbia and 99% of them aren't paid, so getting involved in the project was sort of an unorthodox way of gaining study-related experience for our members who were holding courses. Also people who wanted to take classes but couldn't afford it or hesitated because of the money, got to do it despite their circumstances.

The result of the project? Happy people, freshly forged lifelong friendships and interested future sponsors. Oh yes, and one telenovela. One of the spanish groups made an amateur short film "Una Boda y un Funeral", a parody of telenovelas which were extremely popular in Serbia during the nineties .

LanguAEGEE's success predicts a bright future, introducing more languages and including more participants. We wanted to inspire young people and deliver a message that creating opportunities for yourself and developing yourself are worthy things that enrich life and let us grow. And by the number of people interested in the next cycle of LanguAEGEE, we believe we achieved that.

And remember, Quot linguas calles, tot homines vales.

LANGUAEGEE
DODITE DA ZAJEDNO OSVOJIMO SVET.

GRČKI
Arapski
ŠPANSKI
Nemački
HOLANDSKI
Türski
MADARSKI

PRIJAVE OTVORENE DO 10. MARTA
facebook.com/LanguAEGEE

Exploring European cultural diversities with the Summer University Project

Raluca Radu, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca



EXPLORING EUROPEAN CULTURAL DIVERSITY SINCE 1988

Summer Universities - it all began in 1988, when AEGEE had the intention to promote European integration. The project aimed at promoting cultural exchange, exploring the diversity of cultures in Europe, fighting for tolerance and guiding the youth in order to become open-minded citizens.

Every year, more than 2000 young Europeans take part in AEGEE Summer Universities all over Europe, organized by more than 100 antennas. The project can be different from antenna to antenna. It can be a Summer Course, where the participants attend courses about specific topics like language, environment, politics for about fourteen hours per week or a Summer Course Plus, a similar project to the Summer Course except for the increased amount of hours to about twenty hours per week. Last but not least there is the option of the Travelling Summer University, the one that draws in a lot of young Europeans. This project is more like a cultural trip in different parts of Europe, combining different activities, from visiting places, to cultural discoveries, to workshops and courses.

Each Summer University follows a theme that can be related to education, culture, personal development, European integration, active citizenship, international politics and many more. The project itself is one of the best ways to promote multiculturalism in Europe. Every year, in fact, hundreds of young people join AEGEE just because of Summer Universities. They enjoy the idea of spending two or more weeks somewhere they have never been before, with people they meet for the first time, coming from different countries and bringing different perspectives and new ideas. The cultural exchange means a lot for young people these days, especially because it is what helps them to be open-minded and to develop every single day.

When people apply for a Summer University, they first think of what they want to do and where they want to go. This is important, but the place itself is not the most crucial aspect. East, west, north, south - Europe is surrounded by beauty, and no matter where you end up, you will most probably have a great time, meeting people with a lot of energy, ready to have a wonderful summer, just like you.

In summer 2014, 80 SUs were organized by 112 locals, a little bit more than 2013, when there were 78 SU. Most of them were Summer Courses, but an important number were Travel Summer Universities. The number of applicants in 2014 has decreased since 2013 by more than 700. In 2013 the SU with the most applicants, Scandinavian Dream, organized by AEGEE-Helsinki and AEGEE-Kobenhavn had 242 applicants. In 2014 the most wanted SU was La vita è bella: Mediterranean coast to coast, organized by AEGEE-Cagliari and AEGEE-Napoli with 184 applicants. Even though less people decided to join a SU in 2014, this did not mean that organizers were discouraged from offering an excellent experience to their participants.

The well known AEGEE spirit can be discovered also in a Summer University. You become more active, you sleep less, you learn about different cultures, food, history, languages, you have a great time with people you didn't know at first, and after a few days you end up calling them friends. At the end of the two weeks, you will realize that you met great people, great friends, and you made some of your best memories with them.



Summer University Statistics



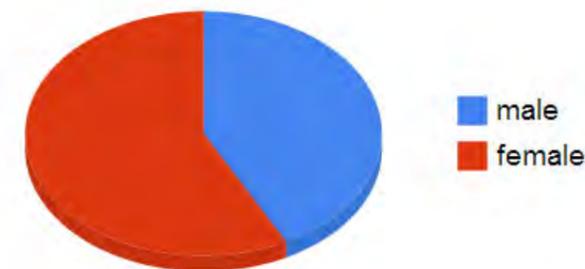
Number of Summer Universities: 80

Number of organizing locals: 112

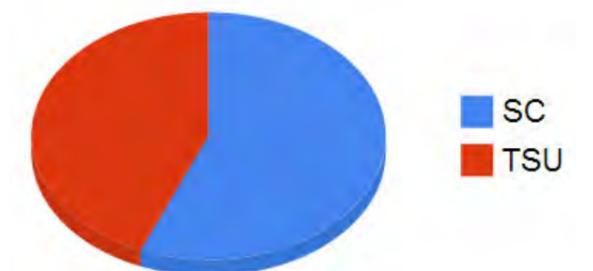
Total number of places: 2269

SU's ready for disabled participants: 8

Applications by gender



SU by type



AEGEE-Cagliari's successful seminar - the second edition of "Journalism from Zero to 2.0"

Alessandra Caddeu, AEGEE-Cagliari



AEGEE-Cagliari, in partnership with two other youth associations located in Cagliari, Yourope Sardinia and the Rotaract Club, organized the second edition of the seminar Journalism from zero to 2.0 in April 2014, about the evolution of the journalistic profession. This seminar was one of the most important events of the antenna.

The idea behind the seminar was simple: journalism is no longer the preferred profession among young people. Stressed, precarious and underpaid, the figure of the journalist has been in an identity crisis for a few years now. The influence of economic policy, the need to "sell" the information from the title, the approval of the content and sources have started an international debate about the credibility of information, from traditional to social media. The rising popularity of the internet, the spread of blogs and the invasion of tweets have profoundly changed the way to work in the business, opening the way to many non-professionals.



While this gap has led to a lowering of costs, it didn't lead to more investments nor to a greater quality of information. Instead, it has created an overlap between traditional and participatory journalism, which sees roles of the journalist and the public as intertwining, leading the latter to be both user and producer of media content. Thus the idea of holding a workshop to broaden the perspectives of young people was born. The aim was to let them know the real possibilities offered by the journalistic profession, through the active involvement of professionals in the sector, who could offer an overview of the current situation and changes in recent years.

Given the complexity of the topic, the workshop was structured in two days in order to have a comprehensive view on the evolution of the figure of the journalist, from origin to recent trends. The first day was fully focused on the figure of the journalist. The morning was dedicated to the professional ethic code, the operation of a news room and how the role of news agencies has changed in the past few years. The afternoon was used to introduce the changes brought about by the web, from online newspapers to the start of citizen journalism.

The second day had a more practical approach, with a balance between formal and non-formal education. The morning included talks about the evolution of the language and techniques of journalistic communication, while the afternoon offered three different workshops: political and international journalism, language and communication and journalism and information.

For AEGEE-Cagliari it was a very successful event, because it gave us visibility and it helped our new members to stay in contact with professionals. Therefore, we noticed that journalism is very important in the volunteering and in the associationism sector.

Cultural Experience Events

	Organizers	Title	Participants
10.19.2013	AEGEE-Ogre	European Movie Days	15
17.09.2013 - 25.09.2013	AEGEE-Valletta	AEGEE-Meeting: "Spirit of Malta"	25
November 2013	AEGEE-Cagliari	European Day of Languages	67
November 2013	AEGEE-Milano	European Day of Languages	
November 2013	AEGEE-Padova	European Day of Languages	
19.11.2013	AEGEE-Roma	European Day of Languages	
21.11.2013 - 24.11.2013	AEGEE-Leipzig	AEGEE-Meeting: "musicaLeipzig"	20
December 2013	AEGEE-Kyiv	European Day of Languages	
27.12.2013 - 02.01.2014	AEGEE-Riga	Winter University: "Sp(ICE) Matters: White winter. Black balsam."	30
27.12.2013 - 02.01.2014	AEGEE-Napoli	Winter University: The curious case of AEGEE-Napoli ... vol.2!	30
27.12.2013 - 02.01.2014	AEGEE-Catania	Winter University: The VOLCANIC Island: The New Year's Eve	25
28.12.2013 - 02.01.2014	AEGEE-Leiden	New Year's Event	20
28.12.2013 - 04.01.2014	AEGEE-Maribor	New Year's Event: 7 sins of AEGEE-Maribor	90
28.12.2013 - 03.01.2014	AEGEE-Belgrado	New Year's Event: Follow the White Rabbit	45
28.12.2013 - 04.01.2014	AEGEE-Moskva	New Year's Event: Noviy god po-russki (Russian new year)	25
29.12.2013 - 02.01.2014	AEGEE-Utrecht	New Year's Event: Young in yoUTHRECHT	20
30.12.2013 - 01.01.2014	AEGEE-Gdansk	New Year's Event: 007 REPORTING FOR DUTY	100
05.01.2014 - 09.01.2014	AEGEE-Kastoria	AEGEE-Meeting: "Ragkoutsaria: The crossroad of Greek and Balkan culture"	35
22.01.2014 - 26.01.2014	AEGEE-Plzen	AEGEE-Meeting: "Beer congress 2014"	25
24.01.2014 - 02.02.2014	AEGEE-Saint-Petersburg	AEGEE-Meeting: "Russian Winterventure"	22
15.03.2014 - 20.03.2014	AEGEE-Valencia	AEGEE-Meeting: "FireIn and Fallereta in Fallas 2014"	20
May 2014	AEGEE-Osnabrück	European Day of Languages	
27.05.2014 - 05.06.2014	AEGEE-Cagliari	Cineforum in original languages	68
18.06.2014 - 22.06.2014	AEGEE-Passau	AEGEE-Meeting: "Music Moving People"	25
27.06.2014 - 02.07.2014	AEGEE-Minsk	Cultural Exchange: "Discover Belarus"	16
08.07.2014 - 17.07.2014	AEGEE-Novi Sad	Training Course: "Global Adventure Meeting"	25
27.07.2014 - 01.08.2014	AEGEE-Roma	AEGEE-Meeting: "The Summer ROMance"	20
30.07.2014 - 09.08.2014	AEGEE-Palermo	Training Course: "Taste SICILY like a mother tongue (S)ummer (E)vent"	40

Environment & Sustainability



Want to help the world? Use a bike!

Pablo Laboreo, AEGEE-Santander



Trying to provide an answer to the commonly asked question what people can do to contribute to saving the planet, the Environmental Working Group (EnWG) organised the Bike Week in June 2014 to point out one of the main environmental issues in cities all over Europe, air pollution due to urban mobility, and to show how AEGEEans can be involved by making a little change.

The Bike Week is part of the larger GO GREEN! initiative, which chooses a different environmental topic (e.g. climate change, energy, etc.) every two months. The main topic for May and June 2014 was green transportation. The Bike Week was a two weeks long campaign, taking place from the 16th were encouraged to choose bikes for their transportation and to organise group meetings to ride around and promote AEGEE, as well as the use of a bike in the city.

Urban mobility is usually the main cause of air pollution, but it also affects energy consumption, social interaction and often shapes our cities, influencing almost all of our daily activities. Yet, many people are not aware of the consequences small daily choices can have, and sometimes do not even consider all the possibilities of transport there are. What about a cheap, non-pollutant, noiseless, healthy and flexible transport choice like a bicycle? You can still maintain a conversation with a friend, enjoy fresh air and notice daily changes in your surroundings, like a new shop or the pass from one season to another.

In some parts of Europe bikes have a very strong position in the culture and lifestyle of its inhabitants, while in other countries you'll barely see anyone riding a bike. However, more and more European cities are developing a better cycling infrastructure, while trying to reduce the presence of cars (e.g. higher taxes, parking costs, car-free zones) and offering more efficient and comfortable public transportation options. to the 30th June 2014, where members and their locals

But something more could be done, because none of this measures will be successful without the personal commitment of all of us: the citizens. If your city has cycle paths: you should use them. If it's not the case, make it clear that you want them. Be among the first to use a bike in your town until you become a majority. If you can't cycle to your destination, there are still other options than going by car. Have you checked all the public transportation choices available? Public transport allows you to interact with other people. You may even run into a friend, make new ones or find a new love.

If you're not in the mood for chatting, you can always read a good book or finish your assignment last minute. Besides, bikes are an efficient mean of transportation. If all the citizens would use public transport, traffic jams would be dramatically reduced. Trams, metros and electric buses do not directly produce CO2 emissions, and a lot less noise pollution.

So think smart instead of selfish! Sustainability has a lot to do with collaboration, group thinking and respect towards the others and the environment. For a better future to be achieved, we all have to commit to some changes, starting with our everyday choices. Let's get out and spread the word - and take your bike with you.



Ending unnecessary travelling of the European Parliament

Wieke van der Kroef, AEGEE-Amsterdam/Leuven



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Most means of transport emit CO2 in relatively large quantities, which means travelling mostly isn't very sustainable. There are, of course, means of transport that are more sustainable, like cycling or walking, but those aren't always viable options. There are of course trains and busses, which are better than cars (especially if there is only one person in the car), but besides comparing means of transport we should also look at the actual need for transport.

If it is to get from your home to your school or workplace, travelling is necessary. However, this isn't the case when it comes to the European parliament. The Parliament and all its employees, trainees, interns, lobbyist, media and documents travel unnecessarily between Brussels and Strasbourg at least once per month.

The European Parliament works in Brussels, but at the same time has an official seat in Strasbourg too, where they have to meet twelve times per year according to the Convention. The seat in Strasbourg has some historic meaning, but, in a position paper that was officially accepted at the Spring Agora Patra 2014, AEGEE has stated that the historic value is no longer in comparison to the environmental and financial costs of moving the parliament between two cities every month.

With this, AEGEE shares the concerns of many European citizens considering the high costs of forcing the European Parliament to maintain its two seats. We also believe the Parliament itself should decide, taking into account both practical issues as well as historical ones. We therefore urge the Commission to initiate the procedure for a Treaty change, giving the European Parliament the right to determine its own seat. Although AEGEE does not favour any city to hold the parliament's seat, it does believe there needs to be only one place where the parliament works and it should be the parliament who decides where this is.

Environment & Sustainability Events

Organizers	Title	Participants	
26.10.2013 – 30.10.2013	Health4Youth & AEGEE-Alicante	Training Course on healthy lifestyle	16
30.12.2013 – 08.01.2014	AEGEE-Samara	AEGEE-Meeting: In love with sport	15
January 2014	AEGEE-Napoli	#STOPKILLINGNAPOLI	
31.01.2014 – 07.02.2014	AEGEE-Tbilisi	AEGEE-Meeting: "Game of snows"	25
28.02.2014 – 08.03.2014	AEGEE-Plzen	AEGEE-Meeting: "Skiweek Nr. 5 – Winter Fairytale"	25
12.03.2014 – 16.03.2014	AEGEE-Groningen	AEGEE-Meeting: "Energy of Tomorrow – It's not easy being green!"	50
5.18.2014	AEGEE-Cagliari	European Day of Environment	60

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Other AEGEE-Bodies:

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Visa Freedom Working Group
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Thank you!

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European Students' Forum

