



**AEGEE EaP
Newsletter**

**May
2012**

AEGEE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP PROJECT CIVIL SOCIETY CONTACTS BETWEEN PEOPLE

IN THIS ISSUE

Changing the world for better

By Alla Reshetyan [Project Manager of the AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project on the behalf of the Project Team]

Dear reader,

We are happy to present to you the latest edition of the AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project’s Newsletter.

One year ago we have decided to change the world, or at least to make Europe a better place for everyone. Depending on where you are coming from, you may face regional conflicts; suffer visa issues and mobility problems. Our goal is to break stereotypes, to ensure equality and provide more possibilities for youth all over Europe and beyond.

We can’t change the world alone; on this journey we are involving many partners and motivated individuals. AEGEE can be the leading and unifying force that brings a positive change in millions of lives.

You may have seen some of the events and projects we have already done, but it’s just the beginning, many more and new challenges await us. And for this,

we need you, your local and your motivation. Each person matter! Be part of the change! Join Eastern Partnership Project! Meet us at the Spring Agora!

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Enjoy the reading!

Starting your Erasmus Mundus Experience

24 FEBRUARY 2012 | Yerevan State University

Erasmus Mundus Association | AEGEE YEREVAN | Eastern Partnership Project

Promoting Study in Europe

In February AEGEE-Yerevan together with Erasmus Mundus Association and Yerevan State University in frames of Mobility Action Days of AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project organized “Starting your Erasmus Mundus Event”.

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Eastern Partnership AD Prague

The “Eastern Partnership Action Day” conference organized by the Institute for European Policy Europeum in cooperation with the European Student Forum AEGEE and the European Commission Representation in Czech Republic took place in Prague.

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EBM Izmir 2012

By Jana Pokorna, Clemens Adler, Daryna Skryl

In February the traditional AEGEE statutory meeting named EBM (the European Board Meeting) took place in Izmir, Turkey. According to the programme there was a panel discussion devoted to the topics of the Conflicts in the Caucasus region. Apart from this members of the AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project have successfully presented it at the AEGEE Fair. Another quite exceptional fact is that besides their membership in the Project Team members had quite a various roles during the EBM. For example, Jana Pokorna, the Coordinator of the Active Citizenship Pillar, was the EBM Content Coordinator. According to her, the new concept of EBM was way too much work for one Content Coordinator – but she really enjoyed it and was happy that they managed to contact and invite plenty of external speaker who willingly and even for their own expense came and contributed to the thematic part of the event. The panel sessions were very interesting, but they should be a bit longer next time. Workshops were all attended by members who actively participated and were interested in the topics. The AEGEE Fair and the Action Meetings were also a great success. People in



the back office were working hard and fully dedicated to the smooth organization of the EBM.

Our IT Manager, Clemens Adler, concluded that the EBM changed a lot, subjectively there were much more time in the workshops/action meetings than in the plenary. This helped to be more efficient in getting things done. The panel discussion about the Caucasus Triangle was especially valuable for us. Arzu Geybullayeva, the invited speaker, presented how the first steps of conflict resolution in the Nagorno-

Karabakh-Azerbaijan Conflict can be achieved. During the workshop devoted to the freedom of speech in Belarus, Pauline Gessant showed important actions to raise awareness about the "Belarusian Problem" and presented ideas about new actions.

MORE INFO:

<http://imaginedialogue.com/>

<http://imagineneutralzone.com/>

<http://caucasusedition.net/>



Youth vs. Conflicts or First Successful Grant Application of AEGEE EaP Team!

In September 2011, AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project Team made an open call for Youth in Action Project in Oviedo and by now we won the grant!

Peacebuilding in Europe

The Conflict Resolution Project of AEGEE-Oviedo and AEGEE EaP Team, at last, has been approved by the EU Commission! The emotions are really out of any description as firstly such type of the project is highly required by AEGEE network, as anyway, still in the European continent where are areas where our organizations' famous pillar (Peace and Stability) is not working and the antennas located in those regions are sometimes facing big obstacles. In addition to that, a group of AEGEE's locals once again proved to whole Network that is possible to make successful grant application in a very big and international group.

AEGEE-Oviedo will be the host of the event and AEGEE-Yerevan, AEGEE-Kyiv, AEGEE-Tbilisi, AEGEE-Athina, AEGEE-Budapest, AEGEE-Ankara and National Youth Council of Moldova will be the lucky promoters of the

upcoming event and about 40 lucky AEGEE members will participate in the event.

This project, which will take place in Oviedo, Spain on September 2-9, was mostly result of few things;

- 1) Strongest support of whole AEGEE EaP Team,
- 2) Great organizational abilities and skills of AEGEE-Oviedo's its President Alberto and AEGEE-Yerevan's President Armenak,
- 3) Strong commitment and belief of all partners in the final success of the initiative.

During the project participants from the abovementioned parties will have a unique possibility to communicate and work in truly European atmosphere, as well as will be able to set grounds for the further cooperation and big international projects.

PARTICIPANTS / ORGANISERS



<http://www.eap-csf.eu/>

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (CSF) held its first meeting in November 2009 with more than 200 Civil Society Organizations from the Partner countries and the EU Member States.

The mandate of the CSF is to influence EU institutions and national governments by presenting the recommendations of the CSF during their decision-making process.



<http://visegradfund.org/v4eap/>

Visegrad 4 Eastern Partnership Program (V4EaP) was initiated in 2011 by the governments of the Visegrad Group countries to enhance the cooperation between the Visegrad region and the countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) — Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

FAST FACTS

€1,456,800

The budget launched by V4EaP in 2012 under the four separate grant and mobility programmes

€596,800

Annual budget of scholarships for the Eastern Partnership scholars to pursue study or research stays at accredited public or private colleges or universities in the V4 countries.

[HTTP://WWW.AEGEE.ORG/EAP](http://www.aegEE.org/EAP)

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<http://fb.com/AEGEE.EaP>

http://twitter.com/AEGEE_EaP



The EAP Civil Society Forum took place in the historic building "Cherninsky Palace" of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czech Republic.

EaP Civil Society Forum meeting

On the 2nd of March 2012 the working meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Working Group 4 ("People-to-people contacts") took place in the Czech Republic and was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with support of the Association for International Affairs (AMO) and DEMAS, the Czech Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights.

The meeting has gathered approximately 40 members of the platform from the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU member states. On the behalf of AEGEE-Europe and the AEGEE Eastern Partnership project Shushan Kchachatryan (Project Content Manager) and Daryna Skryl (Project PR Manager) were present.

The recommendations from the meeting of the Forum's Working Group 4, which met as part of a conference, included the following:

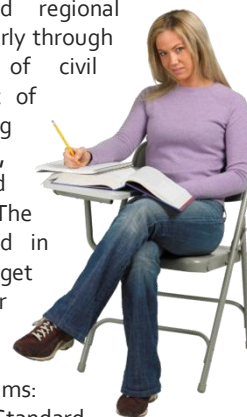
- Ensure open access for Eastern partners to the new generation programmes, especially programmes supporting Contacts between people, such as Erasmus for All and Creative Europe.
- The EU and member states should explore possibilities for researchers from the EU to visit the Partner countries, and vice-versa, through programmes such as Marie Curie Action.
- The European Commission and member states should continue to support the Jean Monnet Initiative, and to increase the number of scholarships available for students from Partner countries.
- Adult, non-formal and non-vocational education, as well as youth, must

remain separate autonomous chapters within the single new generation programmes.

Besides participation in the recommendations' drafting, the project team members succeeded in the networking with possible future partners, such as the Youth Eastern Partnership.

Also during the meeting a new initiative of the International Visegrad Fund was announced - V4EaP (<http://visegradfund.org/v4eap/>) offering quite a wide range of opportunities in Education and Civil Society development. The main aims are facilitating the unique knowhow of the Visegrad countries with the social and economic transformation, democratization and regional cooperation particularly through the development of civil society and support of cooperation among the local authorities, universities and individuals. The program is launched in 2012 with total budget of €1,456,800 under the following four separate grant and mobility programs: Flagship Projects, Standard Grants, Visegrad University Studies Grants, Visegrad Scholarships for EaP.

After the ending of formal part of the meeting, the participants had an opportunity to meet the councils of their native countries to introduce themselves and tell more about the outcomes of the meeting.



SkiWeek event with the taste of AEGEE projects

What is typically good about a cool AEGEE event? Nice international atmosphere from various parts of Europe, perfect winter weather, snowy slopes for skiing and snowing, cozy cottage in the middle white mountains and ... AEGEE atmosphere! Apart from crazy parties, funny ice-breakers, never-ending activities there is something, which makes all AEGEE events unique, these are thematic lectures. Besides traditional AEGEE introduction, a workshop on the Eastern Partnership Project was given to the participants of the SkiWeek event, organised by the team of AEGEE-Plzen. Despite the fact that the topic was not very clear and close to the participants from the EU member states, it did not leave them indifferent and laid the beginning for discussions.

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Nicholas Lagodigarda, AEGEE-Turku, participant

The presentation was very interesting and informative, especially as I am personally interested in the issue of EU enlargement and cooperation with the non-EU states. I did not know about this project/working group before, and I think the discussions also helped clarify viewpoints related to some delicate questions such as visas, mobility, equal opportunities, and the EU-expansion. Diverse opinions emerged and I think there was something to learn for everybody.

Petr Slunčík, AEGEE-Plzen, organizer

The workshop about the EaP project was extremely useful. Even though that I am in AEGEE more than 5 years it is so nice to hear various members' views in the same organization.

To tell the truth I did not know much about the Eastern Partnership project. I was really amazed how distinguished and important ideas this project has (as non visa travelling, open dialog between students in neighboring countries, etc.). And what's more? After the catchy lecture started 1.5 hour long discussion among participants! So proud to be part of this lecture!



Promoting Study in Europe

by Shushan Khachatryan

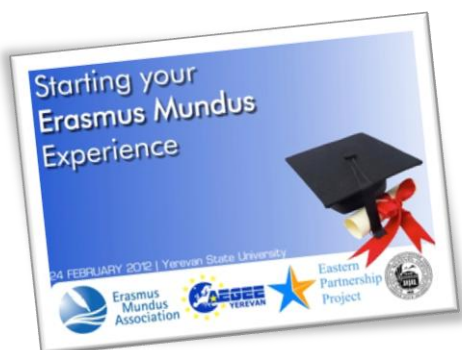
On February 24, 2012 AEGEE-Yerevan together with Erasmus Mundus Association and Yerevan State University in frames of Mobility Action Days of AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project organized "Starting your Erasmus Mundus Event".

The aim of the event was to spread information about Erasmus Mundus Programme around Armenian students and help them with the steps of applying to the programme. The opening ceremony took place in Yerevan State University with

around 150 participants in the event which shows the big interest of Armenian students towards the programme.

Specialists from British Council in Armenia, American Councils, ARMACAD association and Erasmus Mundus Association presented the structure of various exams students need to take for entering to the programme, useful websites to receive study abroad information as well as tips on how to write an essay. The programme coordinators presented the structure of Erasmus Mundus programme and in the end Erasmus Mundus Alumni students shared their practical experience.

Participants emphasized the importance of such an event mentioning that it gives an opportunity to receive practical information about all the aspects of the programme.



YOUTH MOBILITY ACTION DAYS

Youth Mobility Action Days are focused on providing sufficient knowledge on existing mobility and education programs to young people in Eastern Partnership countries. The format of the event depends on local's preferences whether organise one day event, round table discussions, presentation at the university or participation at the education fairs.

Apply:
<http://www.aegge.org/eap/activities/activities-open-call/>

Eastern Partnership AD Prague

By Daryna Skryl

On the 15th of March 2012 the “Eastern Partnership Action Day” conference organized by the Institute for European Policy European in cooperation with the European Student Forum AEGEE and the European Commission Representation in Czech Republic took place in Prague. The event has gathered NGOs representatives and active people for whom the Eastern Partnership policy is important.

After the organizer's welcome speech Jan Michal, the representative from the European Commission Representation in Czech Republic, has opened the conference with the introduction to the Eastern Partnership policy, its history, aims and current situation.

Marie Peřinová, the project coordinator from the Open Society Fund, had acquainted the participants with the project „East East: Partnership Beyond Borders“, offering quite a wide range of opportunities for cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries in the NGO sector.

After the break for coffee and networking Petra Nakládálová, the project coordinator from the Youth in Action EU programme, had a presentation about opportunities for financial support by EU institutions of the projects in cooperation with youth from the Eastern Partnership countries.

Next section of the conference was devoted to the development of civil society in the Eastern Partnership countries.

Daryna Skryl, PR Manager of the AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project, has shared the ideas and experience of activities for the young people within the framework of the project.

Jeff Lovitt, the director of PASOS, emphasized the importance of simplification

of the visa regime in order to increase the cooperation between the EU member states and the Eastern Partnership countries.

Janka Adameová, Manager of the International Academy for Diakonia and Social Activities, told the success stories of the projects with young people from the partner countries and admitted that presence of visa restrictions significantly influences on the future success of any project.

During the conference the survey about awareness and interest in cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries was hold. The results are the following:

- Most of respondents consider their knowledge on the Eastern Partnership policy sufficient.
- As for the partner countries with which the participants are interested most, the leading countries are Ukraine and Georgia.
- Approximately half of the respondents had already had experience in cooperation with the partner countries.
- Democracy and Youth are preferred topics for the mutual projects.

The results of the survey also showed that NGO workers are interested in the long-term cooperation (a year or more) and are looking for quite a big variety of the sources for financial support of the projects (EU programmes, International and private funds).

Generally it was agreed that the most important platform of cooperation is civil society and its development. Main obstacles in it are the visa regime, the lack of information about the existing opportunities, the unawareness and passive position of the people. To sum it up, the content of the conference helped the participants not only to get into course of the Eastern Partnership programme, but also helped them to find more sources for funding and interaction with the partner countries.

USEFUL INFORMATION



Youth in Action

Sub-Action 3.1 - Cooperation with the Neighbouring Countries of the European Union - This sub-Action supports projects with Neighbouring Partner Countries, namely Youth Exchanges and Training and Networking Projects in the youth field.



The East East

The East East: Partnership Beyond Borders Program supports collaborative initiatives of nongovernmental and civil society organizations in two or more countries. The program promotes the movement of ideas by convening people to create communities of interest and to engage in practical collaborative actions.



Links for more info:

<http://www.soros.org/initiatives/east>

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/action3_en.php

http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/index_en.htm

Olga Iatsyna: “Maybe very soon we will break Eastern borders...”



Starting from an ordinary member and passing through all rounds of “AEGEE carrier” Olga Iatsyna is now at the very serious step - candidate to the CD term 2012-2013. Olga told us about the realities of the network and her future plans.

You're the Network Commission Speaker and also responsible for the North-East region of AEGEE. Can you tell us something specific about it?

What can be more specific in this situation than the fact that 5 countries out of 6 I have locals in are EaP countries? I'm responsible for 23 locals in 6 different countries and every time I'm lucky to work with different mentalities of people living in cities from the cold North-Eastern Europe to hot Caucasus which is a big challenge and at the same time amazing experience.

Which approaches did you use while running this region?

My main approach as Netcom is always personal communication. Every local has its specific issues and in order to feel myself "in their shoes" from the very beginning we had long chats and calls talking not only about local itself, but about life of people there, their personal worries and etc.

In your opinion, which most important internal and external problems do AEGEE people from the Eastern Partnership countries face in their interaction?

One of the biggest internal problems is keeping the motivation of AEGEE members here, while your country provides only obstacles in your work as NGO – too much bureaucracy with registration, no support from government, and no funding, potential sponsors are too much focused here on their own problems instead of supporting youth NGOs and etc. Unfortunately, the list can be too long... As for the external problems – of course visas. Choosing between 5 days by train or 5 hours by plane is not even an option here, cause you may be surprised that the first option is even more expensive.

How is it possible to solve them?

We need to move. And we should never stop our movement despite of all obstacles – I always say to my locals "Try, search, fail... and again try!" and be eternally patient to internal problems in your country as there is always a solution. Only external problems unfortunately do not depend so much on us.

Which priorities do you set in case being selected to the CD and why?

I want to see us all a real Network. So far we are quite often a neighboring NGOs working under one name and sometimes not even knowing people from nearest antennae. But I really want to have more thematic events, European Schools, Agorae and NWMs all over AEGEE network. Network should feel itself as a family, closely connected all the time and working together for AEGEE ideals starting from organizing smaller events together and finishing with big events. Unified Europe, tolerant society, one community – this what we all should always keep in our minds working in AEGEE. And who knows, maybe very soon we will break Eastern borders and will have Agora in Baku?



The AEGEEans' Choice Awards'12

The AEGEEans' Choice Awards is the awards that strive to reward AEGEEans for contributing to making the Network something special every year. The AEGEEan is working on organising an award ceremony to take part of the AEGEE fair at Agora Enschede 2012 (May 2nd 2012). AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project is nominated in category the Best Project.

Join us: eap@aegee.org
<http://www.aegee.org/eap>

This issue was prepared by the AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project Team: Alla Resheten, Armenak Minasyants, Clemens Adler, Jana Pokorna, Shushan Khachatryan. Special thanks: Olga Iatsyna. Editor-in-chief: Daryna Skryl

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