

ASSEMBLY OF EUROPEAN REGIONS  
ACTIVITY REPORT



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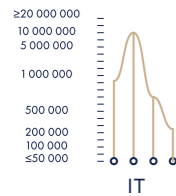
☰ SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

This year's theme is the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the Member States of the United Nations by resolution A/RES/70/1 of the General Assembly of 25 September 2015.

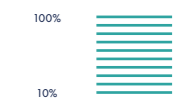


☰ COVER DATA VISUALIZATION

The theme is visible throughout this activity report by visual representations of the SDG Index Score in Europe and beyond.



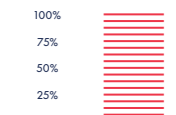
Region Population by country



SDG Index Score from the EU Sustainable Development Report for European Countries and Global Report for Countries Outside European Union



Sustainable Development Goals in the European Union



SDG Index Score from EU Sustainable Development Report for the European Union

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AUTUMN COMMITTEE PLENARIES PODCETRTEK  
24 / 09 / 2019



ECONOMY 4.0  
04 / 12 / 2019



REGIONERATING EUROPE  
08 / 10 / 2019



AUTUMN BUREAU BRUSSELS  
05 / 12 / 2019





**MAGNUS BERTSSON**  
AER President

## PRESIDENT'S VISION

Europe is no stranger to challenges. During the last couple of years, the continent has faced financial and migration challenges and now with COVID-19, we are facing a global pandemic. Despite their differences they all share a common denominator in that it is only through solidarity and cooperation that we can solve this challenge. Erecting borders and imposing tariffs are not the right path to deal with this immense challenge thrust upon us. This becomes especially important when dealing with an invisible foe, who shows no respect for administrative borders. In moments like this, European countries and regions need to stand firm and build on the solidarity upon which the European Union was founded.

This activity report marks my third year as President of AER. During this time, I have set out a vision to strengthen AER both internally, but also externally. This has been done

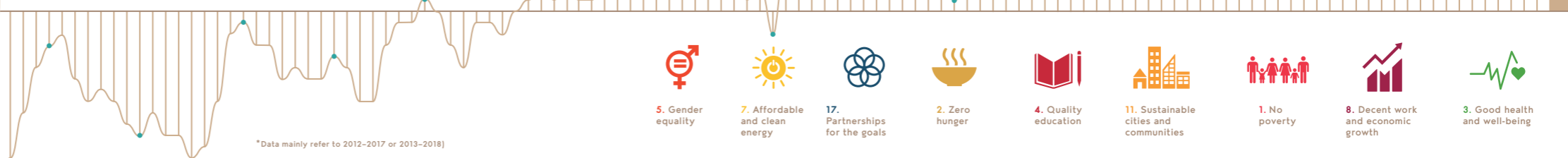
Overview of EU-28 progress towards the SDGs over the past 5 years, 2019\*



Goals for which trends cannot be calculated\*\*



\*\* Due to lack of time series for more than 25 % of the indicators



\*Data mainly refer to 2012-2017 or 2013-2018)

in close cooperation with the Executive Board, the Bureau and the Committees. Together we have strengthened the foundation and narrative of AER and solidified it as one of the premier voices of regions in Europe.

As of last year, we have a new European Parliament and a new European Commission. We see this as an opportunity to reaffirm our positive relations with the key institutions of the European Union. AER prides itself on having had good institutional relations throughout the years. AER has sat down with several of the European Commissioners whose portfolios are of relevance to European regions. Our message to them has been clear and coherent: regions need to be listened to and included in the decision-making process.

Looking ahead, what will be central for AER in the years to come is to align and increase its work connected to the 2030 Agenda. Time is a limited resource; five years have already passed since the establishment of the Agenda 2030. Entering the year 2020 does not only signal a new decade, but also time for us, as a society, to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Europe has already positioned itself as a champion of sustainability. With the Green New Deal, Europe finds itself on a new green trajectory with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals at its heart. The same goes for AER. We will incorporate the SDGs both internally, in our structure, but also externally through our communication and cooperation with others. We have already started this journey, but a lot more work lies ahead.

The local and regional level plays a crucial role in the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals. A clear majority of the targets underlying the 17 SDGs will not be reached without proper engagement and coordination of local and regional governments. As one of the largest independent regional networks in wider Europe, AER plays

an important role in mobilising and facilitating this process. We build bridges where others fail, we find cooperation where others face impasse due to contentious issues. Be it through advocacy in the AER Bureau, knowledge sharing in the AER Committees or project initiatives in the AER Project Unit – each of these pillars play an important role in this process.

The SDGs provide an opportunity to align priorities cutting across local, regional, national and international levels. They provide us with a common language for the momentous societal challenges facing us: simplifying cooperation across borders.

I remain convinced that the success of the European project goes hand in hand with delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Agenda 2030 and its call for ecological, economic and social sustainability is in line with the goals and values upon which the European Union was founded. It can only be achieved through multi-level cooperation and the inclusion of the local and regional level - the level closest to the citizens.



**MATHIEU MORI**  
AER Secretary General

## SECRETARY GENERAL'S FOREWORD

### Agenda 2030: Transforming Regions, changing the world.

The sustainability revolution is spreading. Neither fast nor far enough but it is spreading and AER is leading the way on behalf of European regions.

According to the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Report 2019, the 2030 Agenda could still be reached if fundamental and urgent changes in the relationship between people and nature as well as a significant reduction in social and gender inequalities between and inside countries took place.

Thanks to the work of our SDG taskforce, the 2020-2025 AER political priorities have largely been inspired by the sustainability agenda. Our organisation is more equipped

than ever to incorporate the SDGs in all aspects of our work and to contribute to the global fight towards a better Europe and world.

Throughout our work, we promote the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the role of regions in implementing them.

AER is now a leading voice as we take on this challenge. Our ambition to launch at the European Parliament the Regions of Europe Action Plan on Sustainability, had to be postponed because of the COVID-19. Postponed, not canceled, we will be back with a revised calendar and even stronger ambitions.

### Examples of new initiatives in 2019-2020 for improving regional cooperation



Normandy World Peace Forum

Intercultural Regions Network

European College of Cluny

### AER 2030: Perfecting itself, improving regional cooperation.

Among the new initiatives which have flourished this year, I would like to highlight the following on education, peace and intercultural regions:

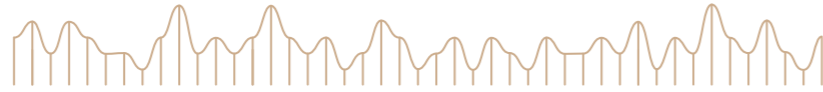
- Our training offer has gained a new tool: the European College of Cluny where AER offers, each last week of August, a lifelong learning seminar on the role of cities and regions as actors of change in Europe. This adds up to the existing Summer Academy and the committee 3 initiative on the civil servant exchange programme.
- AER has developed a relationship with the Normandy World Peace Forum, where it presented the role subnational governments play in democracy and peace keeping.
- We are proud to announce that the set up of an Intercultural Regions Network has progressed with dozens of pilot regions involved and a constructive partnership with the Council of Europe. Stay tuned for activities to come.

These examples of new activities show the wealth of topics that AER works on at the demand of its members and the diversity of formats and means of involvement offered to European regions.

Finally, as an organisation, we aim at building more bridges between our advocacy and mutual learning, and our European projects activities. A good example of this is the work which started with the adoption by the Bureau in June 2019 of the AER position on an Intercultural Europe. This political leadership led to the creation of an Intercultural Regions Network as well as AER winning the Includ-EU European project to spread mutual learning for enhanced social cohesion.

European regions and AER have a history of continuously challenging themselves. No doubt that the COVID-19 crisis we live under when this activity report is being finalised, will lead to further changes in our personal and institutional lives. International cooperation will be needed more than ever and AER will aim to bring you the best information and cooperation services.

# POLITICAL PRIORITIES



Adopted by the Bureau in Brussels (BE) on 5 December 2019

Firmly committed to sustainable development in its economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions, AER and regions shall promote cooperation and partnership and actively contribute to a better and more sustainable future for all.

## Promoting democracy and good governance

Human rights are at the very core of European values.

AER believes that citizens' interests must be at the centre of all decisions. They must be involved in clear ways in decision-making and must have access to all public information which will help them keep track and contribute to public authorities' work.

Decisions must be made according to the will of the many while the rights and interests of minorities and excluded groups must be respected.

Government and public authorities must continuously seek new innovative solutions to foster greater involvement of citizens and more efficient governance.

Decentralisation and subsidiarity must be promoted as a means to achieve this.

AER recognises the importance of culture for social cohesion and future economy. With respect for rich cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue needs to be strengthened.

## Nurturing territorial cohesion and fostering cooperation

A balanced and comprehensive development should be further promoted. One that capitalises on the strengths of each territory and leads to a reduction of disparities in development between and within European regions. Cohesion policy is the cornerstone to make this happen.

It is important to counteract the depopulation of rural areas and to build structures to strengthen rural areas.

AER will ensure an enhanced cooperation and a continued dialogue between regions, and with other networks of regions.

This requires sufficient funding for all regions, especially for cross-border cooperation, which provides a special added value.



SMART CITY EXPO WORLD CONGRESS  
19 / 11 / 2019

## Ensuring a liveable future for citizens

The year 2020 will mark the fifth anniversary of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

AER and regions are committed to making climate action stronger and to delivering on the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and localising its goals.

AER will work with international networks and institutions to deliver on this priority.



## Fostering a Europe of equality

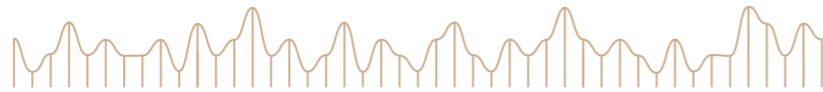
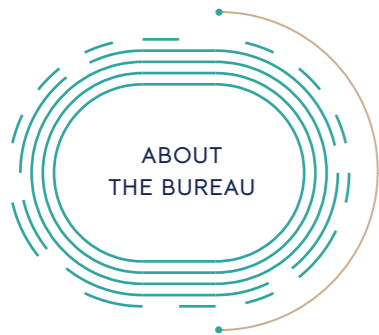
Protect citizens from injustice and continue striving for equal opportunities.

Promote a redistributive and fairer Europe where means are put at the disposal of those who need it most.

Foster a society where all people, irrespective of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other beliefs, disabilities, sexual orientation and age, including migrants, are given equal access to basic services such as education, decent housing, health and social care.

AER will work to ensure citizens and business take full advantage of the opportunities digitalisation can offer to address societal challenges, while also bearing in mind the risks of digitalisation for equality.

# AER BUREAU



The Bureau is the primary political voice of AER.

It engages AER members in political debates and policy discussions of a pan-European and global nature and defines the overall political priorities of the network, setting the strategic direction of its advocacy work.

## Institutional Relations and Advocacy Updates

The Assembly of European Regions' advocacy work this year has mainly been focused on strengthening cooperation with the new Members of the European Parliament and the new European Commission, shaping the future Cohesion Policy, as well as reinforcing the regions' mandate and commitment to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

With the purpose of strengthening AER's cooperation with European institutions and to ensure that AER political priorities are in line with the institutions, a Taskforce on Political Priorities was established, which outlined the main AER priorities for the upcoming five years (2020-2025). These were subsequently adopted at the Autumn Bureau Meeting in Brussels (BE) in December 2019. The six AER Political Priorities are as follows:

- **Ensuring good governance.**
- **Promoting decentralisation and subsidiarity.**
- **Respecting and protecting social cohesion and cultural diversity, as well as strengthening intercultural dialogue.**
- **Advocating for a stronger cohesion policy that ensures enhanced interregional cooperation.**
- **Reaffirming regional commitment towards reaching the pre-established goals in the Agenda 2030.**
- **Fostering a society that is based on the promotion and protection of equality.**



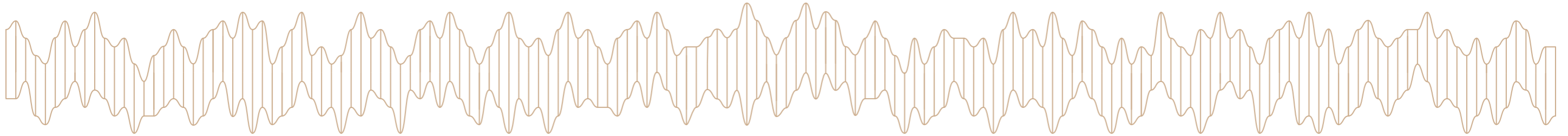
In line with the European elections and the start of the new Commission and Parliamentary terms, AER organised a workshop within the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities 2019. The event, entitled "REGIONerating Europe", focused on the role regions should play in the future of Europe, and gathered representatives from regions, institutions, and civil society organisations to exchange views and perspectives on this matter.

With the main focus on advocating for stronger cooperation with the recently elected European Parliament on 22-24 October 2019, during the Plenary Session in Strasbourg, a delegation led by the Executive Board met with the recently elected Members of Parliament from the Regional Development (REGI) Committee and the Chairs of other parliamentary committees relevant to the Bureau's political priorities. During this advocacy mission, members of the Executive Board were able to express to the Members of Parliament the urgency of safeguarding Cohesion Policy funds within the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027.

In this regard, over the last year, AER has strengthened its cooperation and partnership with the #CohesionAlliance initiative led by the European Committee of the Regions and supported by other regional organisations. AER

President, Magnus Berntsson, spoke on 10 July 2019 at a Conference organised by the Alliance, in which he stressed the relevance of strengthening the partnership principle for shaping any future cohesion policy. Magnus Berntsson, together with other presidents, signed a letter from #CohesionAlliance that was sent to the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and the Permanent Representatives and national governments, in order to highlight the urgency of this matter. On 9 January 2020, the AER President joined other regional organisations for a meeting with the new Commissioner on Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa Ferreira; once again, AER had the chance to express its commitment towards ensuring a fair and just Cohesion Policy in the next MFF. AER, along with its Taskforce on Cohesion Policy, shed light on this matter and adopted at the Spring Bureau Meeting in Larnaca (CY) a position on the "Annex D on Investment Guidance on Cohesion Policy Funding 2021-2027".

Since the European Commission took office in January 2020, AER has ensured to establish meetings with key Commissioners and their Cabinets, in order to introduce the advocacy work carried out by the AER Bureau, and to put forward our member regions' needs and interests. Establishing partnerships with other international organisations and institutions outside the European sector



has also been a priority for AER, and in this regard, AER has been involved in key events and platforms that go in line with its advocacy work. AER attended the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Madrid (COP 25) for the first time as an observer organisation in December 2019, as well as has been participating in all the Plenary Sessions of the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Committee of the Regions, the Regional Development Policy Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and is in constant contact and collaboration with several departments of the Council of Europe.

Concerning the reinforcement of AER’s commitment towards the achievement and localisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, AER is co-organising along with key partners and stakeholders the regional conference “Agenda 2030: Transforming Regions, Changing the World” at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Its main goal is to show that regions play a key role, alongside cities, to facilitate the transformation needed to successfully implement and reach the goals in the UN Agenda. Due to COVID-19, the event has been postponed but the work in the Taskforce continues.

In line with the process towards achieving the goals outlined in the Agenda 2030, AER Taskforces and Bureau members approved a position paper on Food Security at the Autumn

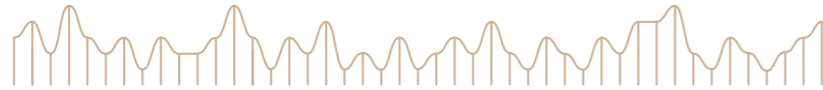
Bureau Meeting last December 2019 in Brussels. AER will present the position paper to the Commissioner on Food Security, as well as to the AGRI Committee of the European Parliament and other key stakeholders. Moreover, during the Spring Bureau Meeting, AER Bureau members adopted a position paper on integration of migrants entitled “Towards an Intercultural Europe”, the region of Catalonia, as Chair of the Taskforce, laid out a plan for convening a Network of Intercultural Regions. The initiative was presented by AER, the Council of Europe and the Government of Catalonia on 5 November to a gathering of interested regions and network partners including representatives from European regions, the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions. Currently, the Intercultural Regions Network is outlining its activities and looking for interested regions to join it.

Concerning the development of the work from AER Taskforces, the Taskforces on Digitalisation and SDGs held two debates during the Autumn Bureau Meeting, and are currently working on the drafting of a position paper which should be adopted at the next Bureau Meeting. Moreover, two Taskforces were established in December. The new Taskforces will focus on two of the main AER Political Priorities and will work on Democracy and on Sustainable Mobility and Connectivity. The chairs of the new Taskforces will present their activities in a roundtable during a forthcoming Bureau meeting.





## AER COMMITTEES



Mutual learning is at the core of AER's work.

It has inspired countless events, initiatives and projects, continuously aiming to improve regional policymaking in Europe. The Committees are a trusted space where policymakers interact with peers from all over wider Europe. They are the place where knowledge and experience exchange happens and where new forms of collaboration are shaped.

The Committees are a lab for innovation in that they encourage collaboration and allow for experimentation. Whenever the need arises for focused cooperation on a topic, projects are set-up to ensure the exchange of experiences is sustainable and receives external financial support.



AUTUMN COMMITTEE PLENARIES PODCETRTEK  
24 / 09 / 2019

## COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMY & REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Main Achievements

- Connected members with the European Commission to develop activities under the TAIEX-EIR programme for peer-to-peer learning between environmental authorities. As a result, Gelderland (NL) hosted a workshop on "Maintaining and Enhancing Ecosystem Services in Urban Regions";
- Facilitated experience exchange on the protection of forests and ecosystems at 2019 autumn plenaries;
- Pursued exchanges with experts on life cycle approach for sustainable regional development;
- Organised a debate on "Cohesion & Contrasted Regional Realities" during the 2019 autumn plenaries;
- Co-organised the 2nd Regional Business Summit together with Vojvodina (RS);
- Facilitated knowledge and experience exchange on connectivity and sustainability;
- Shared good practices on electric cars and infrastructure both at AER meetings and in events of the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities (EIP-SCC), where Östergötland (SE) is representing AER;
- Contributed to a debate on "Sustainable Mobility: Active and Micro-mobility to Achieve Low-carbon Cities" at Smart City Expo World Congress, where Western Slovenia (SI) took the stage. Organised an AER delegation at the event;
- Strengthened collaboration with the European Network for Rural Development and other rural development organisations in Europe;
- Facilitated mutual learning on Territorial Approaches to Regional Development with a special focus on remote areas within regions and the ways in which regions bridge urban-rural divides.

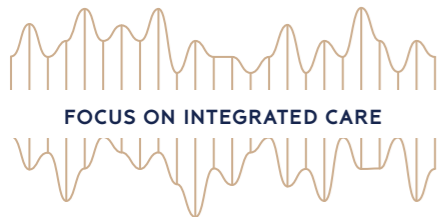


In December 2019, Brussels-Capital (BE) and Catalonia (ES) co-organised a mutual learning event on the Economy 4.0. The event brought together politicians, civil servants, entrepreneurs, academics and stakeholder groups to discuss the impact of artificial intelligence, robotisation and the Internet of Things in areas such as the future of work, innovation, public services & administrations, and sustainability. Attendees shared experiences and stories to understand each other's challenges and to identify fields for action.

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL POLICY & PUBLIC HEALTH

Main Achievements

- Organised a Breakfast seminar on innovation in healthcare design with Scotland (GB) and Värmland (SE);
- Developed new perspectives for the former AER e-health network, now named "Digital Health Network", in particular with regards to cooperation with other European stakeholders at 2019 autumn plenaries;
- Facilitated a discussion on the topic of mutual learning & international cooperation for the deployment of integrated care systems in Europe at Smart City Expo World Congress;
- Continued knowledge and experience flow on digital health between the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing and AER members;
- Focused on changing role of public services, in particular healthcare, at "Economy 4.0" event;
- Facilitated mutual learning online on Smart specialisation strategies in rural areas, inclusion & wellbeing in Spring 2020;
- Facilitated policy learning on the results of the AMiD project on the access to services for migrants with disabilities;
- Co-developed the Includ-EU project on migration together with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). AER is leading on the facilitation of regional exchanges to improve integration policy and practice, via 5 webinars and 5 workshops which will be developed in close collaboration with the AER Intercultural Regions Network.



AER is providing support to 9 regions in the SCIROCCO Exchange project led by Scotland (GB), to develop a personalised knowledge transfer programme for the implementation and scaling-up of integrated care systems. The SCIROCCO Exchange self-assessment tool was already tested in 60 regions and organisations in Europe and beyond. The tools and resources developed in the project are available to all regions.

COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, EDUCATION & YOUTH

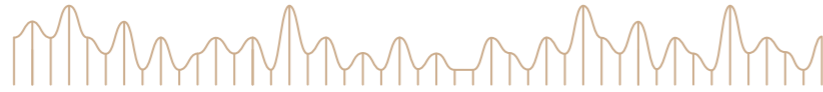
Main Achievements

- Collaborated with Eurodissey Steering Committee for the definition of the exchange and capacity building programme for civil servants;
- Launched pilot phase of AER civil servants exchange programme with AER training seminar at European College of Cluny (FR) "Cities and Regions: New Actors of Change in Europe";
- Explored different funding models for AER civil servants exchange and capacity building programme;
- Organised workshop on youth participation at 2019 autumn plenaries;
- Organised a workshop on rural touring at 2019 autumn plenaries;
- Shared good practices on fostering welcoming, accessible and dynamic rural areas, with a particular focus on culture;
- Developed a concept for a yearly interregional event for folk ensembles and intangible cultural heritage in Varaždin (HR);
- Focused on how to build a workforce fit for purpose in a radically changing environment & foster "expensive" skills in the cyber arena, at "Economy 4.0" event;
- Facilitated mutual learning on territorial approaches to combat brain drain.



The AER civil servant exchange programme was tested and further specified in the pilot phase launched in 2019. Experts from the AER Observatory on regionalisation contributed to the training seminar at the European College of Cluny (FR), one of the building blocks of the programme. The initiative, which is led by Varaždin (HR) will increase capacities in regional administrations and facilitate innovation in order to provide high-quality services to citizens.

## PROJECTS & FUNDING



The AER members' priorities drive the work of the AER Project Unit.

Based on the members' wishes the unit disseminates knowledge on funding opportunities (for EU and non-EU members), facilitates the building of consortia and makes sure AER and its members get the most of projects opportunities.



AMiD PROJECT  
05 / 11 / 2019

## SERVICES

### FOR MEMBERS ONLY, WE PROVIDE



FUNDING RESEARCH  
TAILORED  
FOR SPECIFIC TOPICS



SUPPORT  
FOR CONSORTIUM  
BUILDING



SUPPORT  
ON PARTNER  
ACQUISITION



SUPPORT FOR PROJECT  
WRITING, SUBMISSION  
AND REPORTING



ASSISTANCE  
ON ACTIVITIES  
FOR PROJECT DELIVERY

### FOR EVERYONE, WE PROVIDE



FILTERED INFORMATION  
ON OPEN CALLS FOR  
REGIONS IN EUROPEAN  
PROGRAMMES



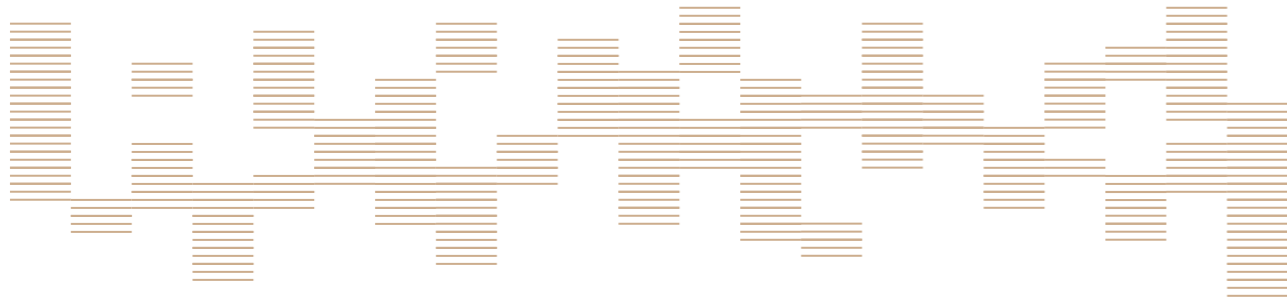
INFORMATION  
ON PARTNER  
RESEARCH



REGULAR UPDATES  
ON KEY EVENTS



A NEWS UPDATE  
ON FUNDING  
OPPORTUNITIES



## PROJECTS 2019 - 2020

2019 - 2020 was an important year for the AER Project Unit, dedicated to work on new projects applications, implementation of funded projects as well as strengthening partnerships with key actors in specific fields and working closely with member regions keen to be involved in EU projects as a way to intensify interregional cooperation.

The intense work done in drafting project applications paid off with the funding and implementation of eight projects relevant both to AER - reflecting the political priorities - and to the EU Agenda: migration, cohesion policy, health, future of Europe, youth, culture. For the Project Unit, this has meant a need to dedicate time and effort to the implementation of projects, where AER is the leading partner in one of them and is taking the responsibility of coordinating work packages and specific activities in others.

Most of the ongoing projects can count on the active participation of AER member regions as full partner and/or beneficiary and they also foresee the possibility for members not already in the consortium to be involved in different ways in the major project activities.

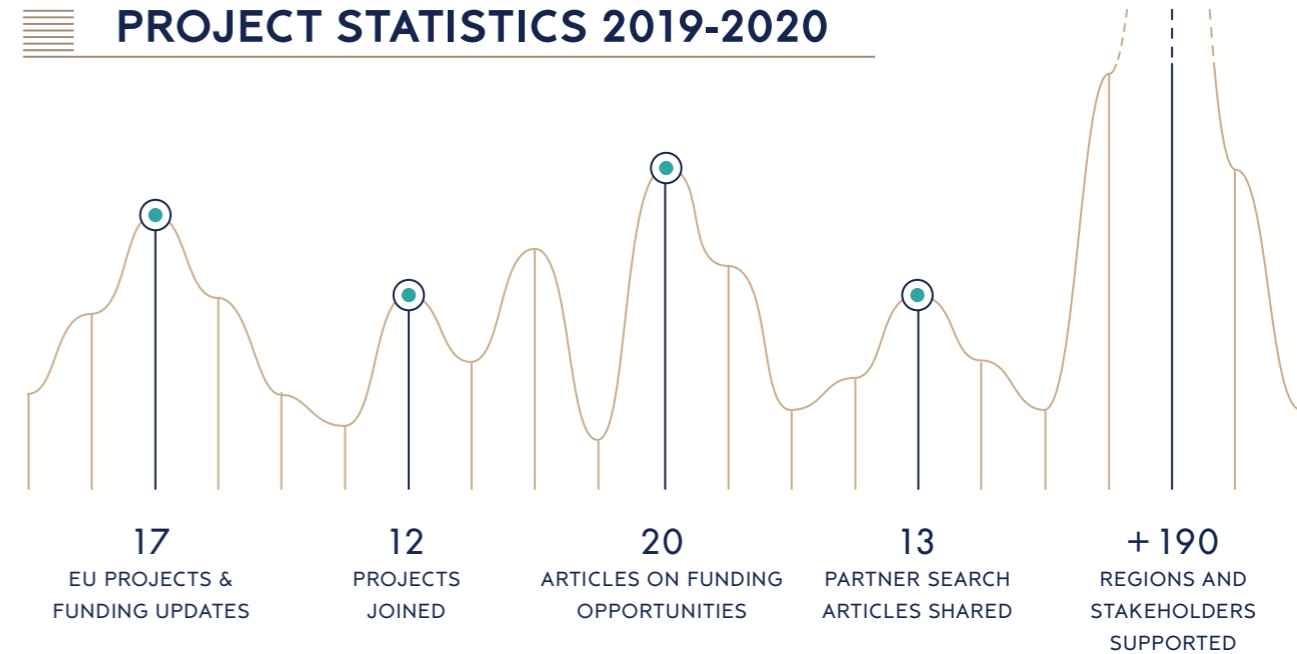
Through European projects, AER has brought new experiences to member regions - an example of this being the launch event of the Together4Cohesion campaign that took place on the occasion of the AER General Assembly and Bureau Meeting in Larnaca (CY) on 5 June 2019. Another example included the Summer Academy 2019 in Novi Sad, Vojvodina (RS) with a dedicated workshop on migrants with disabilities in the context of the AMiD project.

AER has been identified by consortia as the leading partner for the knowledge-transfer activities, having unique expertise in this specific field applicable to local and regional authorities and beyond, due to its multi-actor approach and the ability to replicate these experiences across disciplines.

In terms of finances, European projects brought new resources to co-finance already existing and new activities within AER, making possible the creation of vigorous synergies among different sources of funding and activities.

European projects also facilitated strong relations with leading thematic partners, such as the Young European Federalists (JEF Europe) and the International Organisation on Migration (IOM), the UN Agency on Migration.

## PROJECT STATISTICS 2019-2020



ROAD TO THE FUTURE  
20 / 01 / 2020



## AMiD

### ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS WITH DISABILITIES

**Topic** ● Migrants and disability

**Role** ● Partner

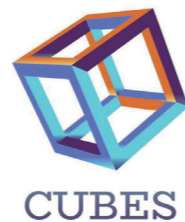
**Partner member regions** ● Valencia (ES), Värmland (SE), Timis (RO) members of the Community Advisory Board

**Programme** ● AMIF - Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

**Outcome** ● Assessment tool and training to NGOs and local personnel to evaluate and consider disabilities while assessing migrants in need of first help.

**Budget for AER** ● € 128.907,88 (90% EU grant)

**Website** ● [www.amidproject.eu](http://www.amidproject.eu)



## CUBES

### CULTURAL ADMINISTRATION BOOSTING WITH THE ENGAGEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

**Topic** ● Governance of culture in a sustainable way

**Role** ● Partner

**Programme** ● Erasmus+

**Outcome** ● On-line training programme in a dedicated platform open and accessible to all, in order to create and disseminate know-how regarding the sustainable administration of tangible and intangible cultural resources.

**Budget for AER** ● € 25.495,00 (100% EU grant)

**Website** ● [www.cubesproject.eu](http://www.cubesproject.eu)



## European Youth Together

### ROAD TO THE FUTURE

**Topic** ● Youth and the Future of Europe (European Election 2019)

**Role** ● Partner

**Partner member regions** ● YRN represented by its President, Gloria Vitaly, is in the Advisory Board

**Programme** ● Erasmus+

**Outcome** ● I Choose Europe campaign, aimed to encourage the debate on the future of Europe among young people and increase their voter turnout as well as to foster their interest in developing strategy and advocacy actions on the implementation of the New Narrative for Europe.

**Budget for AER** ● € 31.920,00 (80% EU grant)

**Website** ● [www.ichooseeurope.eu](http://www.ichooseeurope.eu)



## Includ-EU

### REGIONAL AND LOCAL EXPERTISE, EXCHANGE AND ENGAGEMENT FOR ENHANCED SOCIAL COHESION IN EUROPE

**Topic** ● Integration of Migrants

**Role** ● Partner

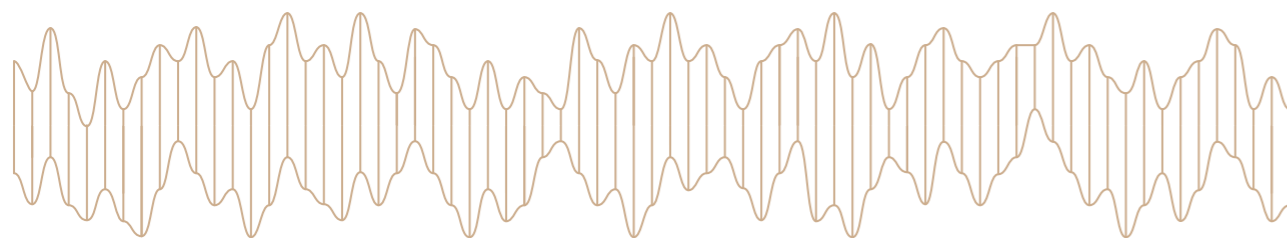
**Partner member regions** ● Catalonia

**Programme** ● AMIF - Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

**Outcome** ● Mapping of existing integration practices at local and regional level in 6 European countries (Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Romania, The Netherlands) systematised in thematic briefings and followed by 6 trainings based on their needs assessment as well as up to 10 study visits; implementation and assessment of 5 pilots integration projects; regional exchanges on integration policy and practice through 5 workshops and 5 webinars aimed at fostering a more coherent approach to integration on EU scale.

**Budget for AER** ● € 249.442,25 (90% EU grant)

**Website** ● under construction





## SCIROCCO Exchange

PERSONALISED KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND ACCESS TO TAILORED EVIDENCE-BASED ASSETS ON INTEGRATED CARE

**Topic** ● Integrated Care

**Role** ● Partner

**Partner member regions** ● Scottish Government (Lead Partner)

**Programme** ● EU Health Programme  
Capacity-building support provided to 9 national and regional healthcare authorities across Europe with diverse maturity and organisation

**Outcome** ● of integrated care; Knowledge Management Hub being a web tool to act as an integrator and facilitator for accessing personalized learning and support for integrated care.

**Budget for AER** ● € 163.068,00 (60% EU grant)

**Website** ● [www.sciroccoexchange.eu](http://www.sciroccoexchange.eu)



## Together for Cohesion

LET'S REUNITE!

**Topic** ● Cohesion Policy

**Role** ● Lead Partner

**Partner member regions** ● Alba and Timis County (RO), Csongrad (HU), Catalunya (ES), Trentino (IT), Varazdin (HR)

**Programme** ● DG Regio

Launch and implementation of the integrated campaign "Together for Cohesion: let's rEUnite!" centred on the stories of citizens and stakeholders in the regions of each of the five selected countries – Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Italy and Spain).

**Budget for AER** ● € 158.565,32 (80% EU grant)

**Website** ● [www.together4cohesion.eu](http://www.together4cohesion.eu)



## Y-FED

EUROPE IS WHAT WE MAKE OF IT

**Topic** ● European Youth Goals within the new EU Institutions

**Role** ● Partner

**Programme** ● Erasmus+

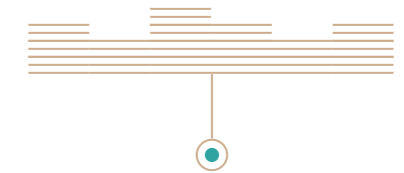
Development and testing of a model for a reformed EU closer to its citizens that allows an effective implementation of the European Youth Goals through hackathons and a youth simulation event; advocacy trainings and advocacy actions at regional and local levels for the implementation of the reformed EU institutional model.

**Budget for AER** ● € 73.568,00 (80% EU grant)

**Website** ● under construction



AER joined the Erasmus+ project led by Lower Austria aimed to co-finance the organisation of the Europa-Forum Wachau 2019, which took place in Stift Göttweig (Austria) on 13-15 June 2019. This event aims to promote the topic of Europe and to communicate it to the citizens. The 2019 edition focused on youth, innovation and megatrends in Europe like connectivity, health and the new work environment.



# PROGRAMMES

## EURODYSSEY

*"NEW HORIZONS IN THE RUN UP TO THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY"*

A fruitful 2019 brought many relevant achievements for the programme. The new cycle kicked-off with the Website & Communications Training hosted by Catalonia (ES) in February 2019. In this context, the Eurodyssey correspondents discovered the main features and contributed to the design process to adapt the website to their management needs. In addition, a new communication strategy, co-created between the AER Secretariat and the member regions, was put in place aimed to improve the visibility of the programme and the testimonials of the participants. A collaborative voluntary working process followed to wrap-up the website project through a working group and bilateral exchanges over the course of the year.

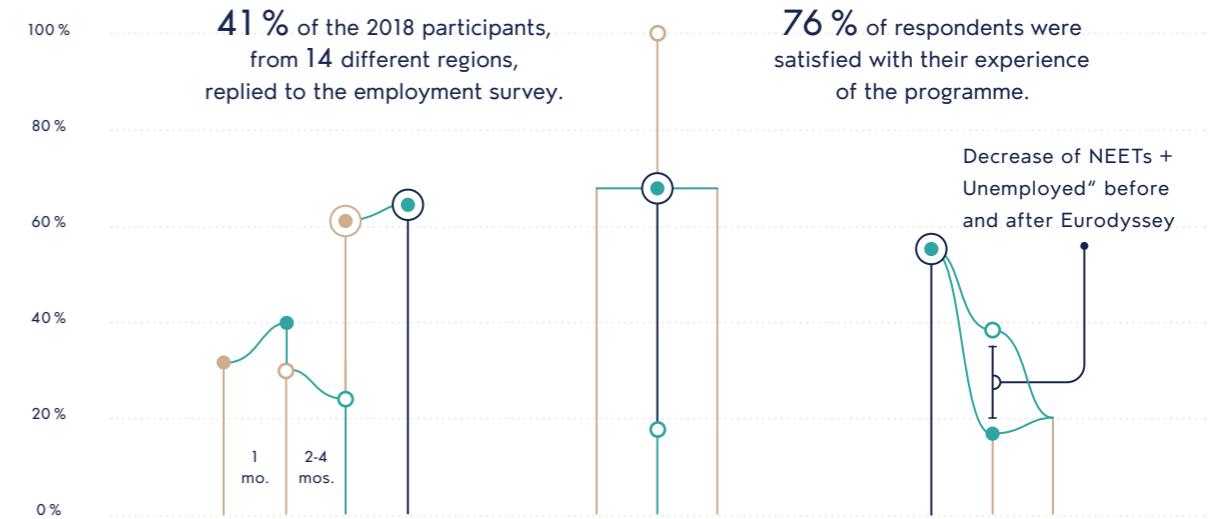


The recently-joined member region, Sardinia (IT), hosted the Eurodyssey Forum and the elections of the Eurodyssey Steering Committee in October 2019. Most of the incumbent members renewed their mandate and the regions of Sardinia (IT) and Valle d'Aosta (IT) were added by consensus to Eurodyssey's Executive Board. Furthermore, the 2019 Forum laid the groundwork for the celebrations of the 35 years since the inception of Europe's oldest mobility scheme; an anniversary that will be marked by the launch of the new outreach strategy and the new website in 2020.



EURODYSSEY FORUM SARDINIA  
23 / 10 / 2019

This time around, the AER Secretariat launched a new employment survey to the 2018 participants with the aim of assessing the impact of Eurodyssey on their employability more accurately.



64%  
EMPLOYMENT RATE\*

70%  
DECISIVE IN FINDING JOB

56%  
EMPLOYMENT RATE\*  
"NEETS\*\* + UNEMPLOYED"

- Employed within month 1\*\*\*
- Employed within months 2-4
- 17% Decisive thanks to the language training
- 39% "NEETs + Unemployed" before Eurodyssey
- 30% No impact in finding job
- 17% "NEETs + Unemployed" after Eurodyssey
- 22% Decrease (before & after Eurodyssey)

254  
Total participants 2018  
Rate of successful applications 61%

16% growth  
(total participants between 2018 and 2019)

303  
Total participants 2019  
Rate of successful applications 54%

\* within 4 months

\*\* Not in Education, Employment, or Training

\*\*\* Comprising participants "hired by the same/other organization during the traineeship" and those who "Found work within month 1"

## YOUTH REGIONAL NETWORK

*"NEW PARTNERS FOR NEW VISIONS  
ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT"*

Another successful year of activities and discussions to raise awareness on youth inclusion at the European regional level has been led by the Youth Regional Network (YRN). The Presidium has been an active partner in steering the Road to the Future project through the contribution of Gloria Vitaly (YRN President) to its Advisory Board from January 2019 onwards. Furthermore, the YRN remains fully committed to upholding the role of youth in bringing about sustainable change at high-level multilateral platforms, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Regional Forum in March 2019, the ECOSOC Youth Forum in April 2019 or the High-Level Political Forum in July 2019.

As for its Statutory meetings, the YRN held its 2019 General Assembly and Spring Plenary Meeting in Lower-Silesia (PO) where YRN President, Gloria Vitaly, renewed her mandate and a new presidium was elected for the up-coming two years. For the Autumn Plenary, AER & YRN partnered with the Council of Europe North-South Center's University on Youth & Development (UYD) that took place in Mollina, Málaga (ES) in September 2019. AER-YRN brought together 23 young participants from 13 different countries who benefited from non-formal education capacity building activities themed around the UYD's annual focus on Youth, Justice and Strong Institutions related to SDG-16.

## SUMMER ACADEMY

*"A 2019 SUMMER ACADEMY ENVISIONING  
THE FUTURE OF EUROPE"*

The 2019 edition, which took place from 1-5 July, hosted by A.P. Vojvodina (RS) under the motto "Youth is Future, Youth is Europe" was a complete success with over 100 participants from 32 different regions and 19 countries from all over Europe. Coinciding with Novi Sad holding the title of 2019 European Youth Capital, the youth delegates and regional officials participated in plenary sessions, seminars, workshops and other activities that allowed them to have their say and exchange their perspectives as regards the #FutureofEurope.

The Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, AEGEE-Europe, the YRN Presidium and the AER Subcommittee on Youth were among the participants who joined the discussions to show the potential of young people in bringing about social transformation and rethinking the way Europe can meet the challenges of the future. Additionally, the Summer Academy hosted a workshop in the context of the AMID project that raised awareness on the emerging need to promote diversity and social inclusion policies that ensure that no-one is left behind in the process of reshaping the European project.

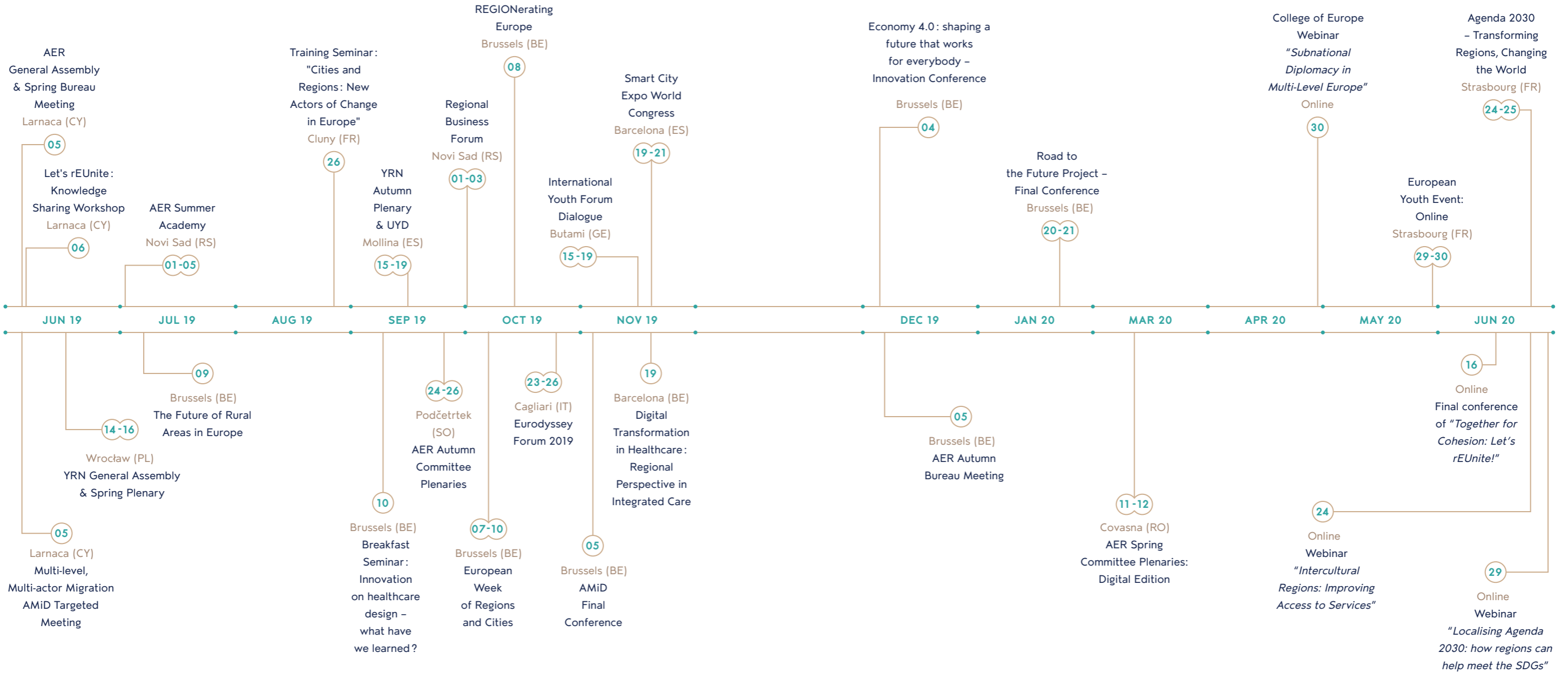
The Summer Academy Organising Committee (SAOC) members and its chair, Rune FREDRIKSEN (Viken, NO) played a key role in the organisation of the workshops and in the general event planning holding regular meetings with the AER Secretariat over the year. The SAOC members have continued updating the Statutes in view of opening up the programme to those external AER regions who might be interested in hosting future editions of the Summer Academy.



SUMMER ACADEMY VOJVODINA  
01 / 07 / 2019



# EVENTS



# FACTS & FIGURES

## SOCIAL STATS AS OF MARCH 2020

14% GROWTH



6224

FOLLOWERS  
FACEBOOK  
AER + YRN

24% GROWTH



4050

FOLLOWERS  
TWITTER  
AER + YRN

84% GROWTH



369

FOLLOWERS  
INSTAGRAM  
AER & EURODISSEY

30% GROWTH

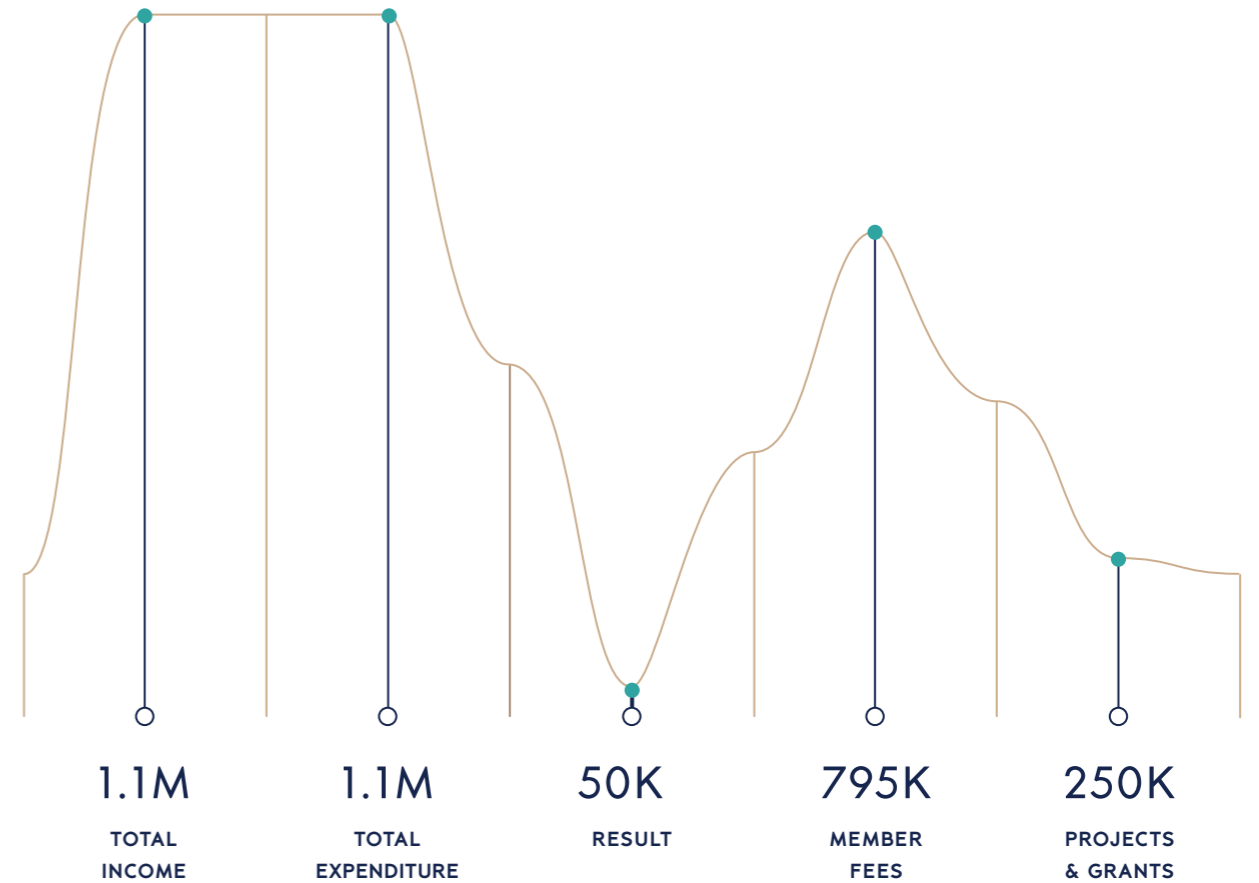


120

CUSTOM  
EMAIL  
CAMPAIGNS  
BETWEEN 06/2019  
& END 03/2020

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

PROVISIONAL FIGURES FOR THE PERIOD 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019: awaiting auditors' report to be presented at the 2020 AER General Assembly





GA BUREAU LARNACA CYPRUS  
05 / 06 / 2019



CLUNY SEMINAR  
26 / 08 / 2019



SUMMER ACADEMY VOJVODINA  
01 / 07 / 2019



UYD MOLLINA  
15 / 09 / 2019



## ABOUT US

**The Assembly of European Regions (AER) is the largest independent network of regions in wider Europe, gathering regions from 30 countries. AER is present everywhere on the European continent, inside and outside the European Union.**

### Making our diversity your strength

AER is the place to be for regional stakeholders across the European continent: politicians, officers, experts, advisors... We stand strong to promote a Europe that embraces its diversity to thrive in a global world.

With member regions from 30 countries, AER is the voice of regional authorities since 1985 and has played a pivotal role in recognising regions as key players in the European construction.

We believe that a prosperous, multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual Europe goes hand in hand with prosperous regions. We support our members to improve their policies by exchanging experiences, sharing practices and providing capacity building. We pride ourselves in our bottom-up approach and strive to always be concrete in our activities and actions to make a difference.



### Built on members

AER member regions are the cornerstone of the organisation. We rely on the involvement of our members, through their politicians and civil servants, to keep the network active and relevant. A lot of our time and resources are spent on understanding the diversity of our members, their needs and ensuring that we provide quality services to their benefit. We have the capacity to bring visibility to individual members and politicians and to promote their work, actions and activities. We measure our success as a network in connecting regions to one another, being their liaison and bridge to interregional cooperation.

### Measuring added-value

We strive daily to meet the needs of our member regions, improving the quality of our services, our efficiency and cutting back on red-tap and administration for more flexibility. We offer a wide range of products and services and are aware of the need for regions to justify their membership in networks like ours.

### An open and transparent membership model

Membership and Partnership is open to a wide range of geographic and non-geographic entities in the spirit of embracing the cooperation potential in Europe and beyond.

## MEMBERSHIP

- Berat (AL)
- Dibër (AL)
- Durrës (AL)
- Elbasan (AL)
- Fier (AL)
- Gjirokaster (AL)
- Korçë (AL)
- Kukës (AL)
- Lezhë (AL)
- Shkodër (AL)
- Vlorë (AL)
- Tiranë (AL)
- Lori (AM)
- Tavush (AM)
- Burgenland (AT)
- Lower Austria (AT)
- Upper Austria (AT)
- Tirol (AT)
- Vienna (AT)
- Brussels-Capital Region (BE)
- German Speaking Community (BE)
- Wallonia (BE)
- Bosna-Podrinje Goražde (BA)
- Brcko District (BA)
- Republika Srpska (BA)
- Sarajevo (BA)
- Zenica-Doboj (BA)
- Brod-Posavina (HR)
- Istria (HR)
- Krapina-Zagorje (HR)
- Osijek-Baranja (HR)
- Primorje-Gorski Kotar (HR)
- Šibenik-Knin (HR)
- Sisak-Moslavina (HR)
- Split-Dalmatia (HR)
- Varaždin (HR)
- Zagreb County (HR)
- Union of Cyprus Municipalities (CY)
- Central Ostrobothnia (FI)
- Satakunta (FI)
- Southern Ostrobothnia (FI)
- Bourgogne-Franche-Comté (FR)
- Corse (FR)
- Grand Est (FR)
- Guadeloupe (FR)
- Guyane (FR)
- Martinique (FR)
- Adjara (GE)
- Imereti (GE)
- Csongrad (HU)
- Donegal (IE)
- Udaras Na Gaeltachta (IE)
- Abruzzo (IT)
- Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT)
- Sardinia (IT)
- Molise (IT)
- Trentino-Alto Adige (IT)
- Umbria (IT)
- Valle d'Aosta (IT)
- Municipality of Budva (ME)
- Flevoland (NL)
- Gelderland (NL)
- Innlandet (NO)
- Nordland (NO)
- Viken (NO)
- Açores (PT)
- Madeira (PT)
- Alba (RO)
- Arad (RO)
- Arges (RO)
- Bihor (RO)
- Bistrita-Nasaud (RO)
- Brasov (RO)
- Buzau (RO)
- Calarasi (RO)
- Caras-Severin (RO)
- Cluj (RO)
- Covasna (RO)
- Dambovita (RO)
- Dolj (RO)
- Galati (RO)
- Gorj (RO)
- Harghita (RO)
- Hunedoara (RO)
- Iasi (RO)
- Ilfov (RO)
- Maramures (RO)
- Mehedinti (RO)
- Mures (RO)
- Neamt (RO)
- Olt (RO)
- Prahova (RO)
- Salaj (RO)
- Satu Mare (RO)
- Sibiu (RO)
- Timiş (RO)
- Tulcea (RO)
- Vaslui (RO)
- Vrancea (RO)
- Republic of Mordovia (RU)
- Tatarstan (RU)
- Sumadija i Pomoravlje (RS)
- Vojvodina (RS)
- Kosice Self-Governing Region (SK)
- Eastern Slovenia (SI)
- Western Slovenia (SI)
- Catalunya (ES)
- Murcia (ES)
- Valencia (ES)
- Gävleborg (SE)
- Jönköping (SE)
- Norrbotten (SE)
- Örebro (SE)
- Östergötland (SE)
- Uppsala (SE)
- Värmland (SE)
- Västerbotten (SE)
- Västernorrland (SE)
- Västra Götaland (SE)
- Basel-Stadt (CH)
- Fribourg (CH)
- Jura (CH)
- Ticino (CH)
- Zürich (CH)
- Adana (TR)
- Antalya (TR)
- Denizli (TR)
- Edirne (TR)
- Erzurum (TR)
- Gaziantep (TR)
- Istanbul (TR)
- Izmir (TR)
- Kirsehir (TR)
- Mus (TR)
- Sakarya (TR)
- Kryvyi Rih (UA)
- Odessa (UA)
- Pavlohrad (UA)
- Hampshire (GB)
- NHS NSS (GB)

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

### New Executive, New Portfolios...

The Executive Board manages the coordination of all AER activities and charges the Secretary General to implement its decisions. Between assemblies, it is the highest authority of AER.

Following the 2019 General Assembly, the Presidency saw a need to further develop and define the portfolios of the AER Vice Presidents to better align with the priorities of the EU in order for the network to increase its advocacy potential. To achieve this, the Presidency developed portfolios and wrote personal missions letters to all Vice-Presidents. The mission letters clearly set out the mandate and goals of each Vice-Presidency portfolio.

This also saw the development of new portfolios such as sustainability and employment & skills. Two areas that are

highly important not only to the European Commission but also the regions of Europe. As for the internal structure of AER, there was a need to increase the communication and work between the different bodies of the network, which is why a VP is now in charge of cooperation and strategic partnerships.

The notion of cooperation remains key at AER. Within their mission letters, all Vice-Presidents are informed of key cooperation partners that they should contact and nurture relationships with. This, in turn, serves to reiterate that AER is a network that believes cooperation is beneficial to all involved.

All the Vice Presidents mission letters can be found on the executive board webpage (AER website).



AUTUMN BUREAU MEETING  
06 / 12 / 2019



### MAGNUS BERTSSON

AER President

*Membership of AER provides my region with many possibilities, be it sharing best practices, advocacy towards EU institutions or joining an EU-project. Seeing that Region Västra Götaland currently holds the presidency our engagement mainly focuses on strategic issues. We also engage in topics that are of relevance to our region, such as cohesion policy, climate and environment issues but also the Sustainable Development Goals. The flexibility of the network allows regions to decide themselves what they want to work on - this is something we value highly. Furthermore, we see AER as one of our premier platforms to meet key stakeholders in the EU such as Commission representatives, Members of the European Parliament etc.*



### CHRISTIAN DEBÈVE

Vice President – Treasurer  
Grand Est (FR)

*The Grand Est Region has been a long time member of the Assembly of European Regions. As a network comprising regions both within and outside the European Union, it provides the bridge between the regional and local authorities to the European Institutions and other international organisations such as the Council of Europe and the United Nations.*

*The importance of a strengthened, renewed Cohesion Policy has been a topic that we have stressed within our organisation for the past several years. It is only through this instrument that we can ensure the prosperous, fair, future of Europe. Last year, through the facilitation of AER, representatives including myself met with some of the newly elected MEPs of the REGI committee in Strasbourg to stress the importance and need of Cohesion Policy and that this must be an integral part of the MFF 2021-2027. AER is able to provide a platform to have these exchanges to ensure that the voice of regions in Europe is heard.*



### ANDREW GIBSON

Vice-President for Inclusion,  
Diversity & Equal Opportunities  
Hampshire (UK)

Hampshire County Council has been very supportive of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) for many years and believes in co-operation, communication, sharing of information and learning from neighbouring European countries.

For the 2019-2020 financial year, Hampshire County Council has been actively involved with the AER events in a number of European locations, with Councillor Andrew Joy and Councillor Andrew Gibson attending Executive Board Meetings, in their respective roles. Hampshire County Council remains engaged and supportive of AER's goals and objectives especially EU co-operation, Diversity, Equality and the protection of Human Rights.

Clearly with Brexit, there are issues still to be resolved between the UK and the EU, although the impact of Coronavirus may mean that there is greater urgency for a mutually beneficial solution. Hampshire County Council has benefited from EU grants and participation in Interreg projects over the years and views the AER membership both as a vehicle to assist Hampshire's participation in funded projects and a voice for key messages.

In summary Hampshire County Council applauds the AER objectives to continue to leverage its excellent relationship with the EU, and its continued intention to raise its profile in Brussels and Internationally, in areas such as Human Rights, Equality and Digitalisation.



### NINA BJÖRBY

Vice President  
for Democracy  
Västerbotten (SE)

Västerbotten, one of the most northern members of AER, chose to become a member for several reasons.

It enables our politicians as well as our professionals to have valuable contacts with peers all over Europe. The fact that AER is not limited to the European Union only but is working all over wider Europe offers a great advantage. Especially as our view on the importance of citizen's participation and multi-cultural perspectives lays the foundation for democratic development.

AER gives access to European institutions and contacts with important decision-makers. The AER and its network also open doors to cooperation outside EU, in wider Europe.

Our membership also gives us access to exchange of experience of best practise and good access to relevant partners in projects. This is basic for the development of our own operations, whether it concerns social and health care issues, regional development in general or cultural, educational and youth issues.

All in all, the AER membership provides us with an effective channel for expressing our views on regional development issues - while at the same time providing us with input and the opinions of others from across Europe.



### ALBERT CASTELLANOS MADUELL

Vice President for Sustainability  
Catalonia (ES)

During the spring Bureau Meeting that took place in Larnaca in June 2019, we adopted the position paper Towards and Intercultural

Europe. During this year, we have been working hard to keep fostering interculturality in Europe.

Thanks to the alliances that were established with the Assembly of European Regions and the Council of Europe, we launched the Intercultural Regions Network (IRN) in November 2019. During the first meeting, interested regions discussed and approved the principles and objectives of this network, as well as a working plan for the following months. Ever since, ten regions have decided to join the IRN, and start working to include the intercultural scope in their policy agendas.

Unfortunately, the meeting foreseen for March 16th, couldn't take place due to the SARS-CoV2 outbreak. Nonetheless, partners of the network organized an alternative online meeting that took place on March 23d. During this meeting, the members agreed upon a roadmap and discussed different opportunities to develop the IRN. Apart from funding opportunities, currently, the network can benefit from several EU-projects that both the AER and different regions are participating in, and which will contribute to the capacity building and policy analysis in the different member regions.

Although this initiative is quite at an initial stage, we are pleased with the results achieved, and we are looking forward to advancing in the work that has been initiated.



### LUKAS MANDL

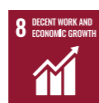
Vice President for Enlargement  
& Neighbourhood Policy  
Lower-Austria (AT)

*The AER-Membership means a lot to Lower Austria. The strong network between the Member Regions means a large impact and a great leverage for important achievements for the European Regions and its people for example in the field of cohesion or regional diplomacy. Lower Austria has a great track record in connecting AER Member Regions to jointly outreach to the EU Institutions. Our Regional Minister Martin Eichinger is heading the AER Task Force on Digitalisation with the perspective of supporting regions to adapt to the digital transformation. We are more than happy about the interest in that important field by the Member Regions.*



### DAMIR ZOBENICA

Vice President for Regional  
Economic Development  
Vojvodina (RS)



### Regional Business Forum

*The Second Regional Business Forum (RBF), initiated by the AP Vojvodina, strongly supported by the AER was held in Novi Sad in October 2019, and had 171 registered companies,*

*Chamber of commerce or Regional development Agencies from 21 countries on 4 continents in attendance. 128 B2B meetings were held with the aim to support SME development and new investments, creating new opportunities, jobs and potentials for growth.*



### Summer Academy 2019

*Novi Sad, European Youth Capital 2019, hosted the AER Summer Academy in July 2019. The title was "Youth is future, youth is Europe" divided into 4 sub-topics corresponding to 4 plenary sessions and 11 workshops. The Summer Academy had 110 participants from 18 countries and 32 regions, as well as representatives from 12 regional and international organizations from Europe.*



### Erasmus+ project – Youth Exchange between Nordland (Norway) and Vojvodina (R. Serbia)

*Nordland and Vojvodina, both members of the AER, carried out an Erasmus+ project with 31 young people in August 2019. The aim was to bring young people together to share their interests, goals and views. This project strengthened the good relations between these two regions established in 2016, during the AER General Assembly in Bodø.*



### ALESSANDRA ZEDDA

Vice-President for Employment  
& Skills  
Sardinia (IT)

*Europe is often perceived as something distant but AER enables us to overcome the distance. With AER we can be connected and confront ourselves with other regions, exchange experiences and learn. This stimulates actions and initiatives towards crucial policies directed to enhance employment, human rights, cohesion, integration and connectivity.*

*Working together and succeeding together: this is the added value for my region as part of an important community such as the Assembly of European Regions. Common work and periodic meetings strengthen the interaction between member regions and allow AER to be a main reference also for the EU institutions.*

*AER is also a group of political influence and periodically meets with central representatives of the EU institutions. Last May I had the pleasure to participate, with President Magnus Berntsson, in an interesting meeting arranged with Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit. The meeting was an excellent opportunity to discuss the employment and social impact of Covid-19, learn more about EU measures to support more and better jobs and investigate new initiatives planned to respond to the Covid-19 crisis.*



### JEAN-LUC VANRAES

Vice President for Cooperation  
& Strategic Partnerships  
Brussels-Capital (BE)

### KENNETH BACKGÅRD

President of Committee 1  
for Economy and Regional  
Development  
Norrbotten (SE)





### MIHAI RITIVOIU

President of Committee 2  
for Social Policy and Public Health  
Timiș (RO)

### FILOMENA CALEDA

Vice President  
Molise (IT)



### RADIMIR ČAČIČ

President of Committee 3  
for Culture, Education and Youth  
Varazdin (HR)



*I am very pleased that our Committee has successfully achieved major goals set in its work plan.*

*An interregional civil servants exchange programme has been developed, which includes both theoretical and practical part. The survey and the Rules of procedure have been prepared and pilot seminar implemented. The plan is to start with the Programme in 2020.*

*In September 2019, Varazdin County organized the FolkoFonia festival, which brought together ensembles from 5 different countries. The idea is to make the festival an AER event, including more ensembles, and enlist it to the CIOFF (International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts) community. Regions can and must help preserve and promote cultural heritage.*

*I am really glad that the exchange of experience in entrepreneurship education took place within an EU funded project – “Together for Cohesion: Let’s rEUnite!”. Seinäjoki University from an AER member South Ostrobothnia (Finland) presented their valuable experience and approach. The result was a detailed overview of the existing situation in Varazdin County and Croatia, together with recommendations for the improvement of entrepreneurial skills in formal education and lifelong learning.*

*AER is a platform which helps regions generate ideas and turn them into concrete projects and programmes.*

## ADJUNCT MEMBERS



### GLORIA VITALY

President of the AER  
Youth Regional Network  
Innlandet (NO)

*During the last year, YRN has accomplished new goals and produced successful work within the network. At the Plenaries, our mission is always to create as many concrete outcomes of all the topics which are being discussed by the members. The last year we have been working on connecting the SDGs to our work. We believe that it is essential to address the SDGs, in order to be a part of the global debate and bring forward our best practices as well as concerns from the youth of Europe.*

*At our last Spring Plenary and General Assembly in Wrocław, we renewed the membership strategy, organisational strategy, rules of procedures as well as updated the statutes. I am proud to announce that we have renewed the whole structure of the network. My goal is to further strengthen the cooperation with AER, Council of Europe, UN Major Group for Children and Youth, and other European and global organisations. We aim to be the youth voice for the European regions. We are the youth, we are the future, we are the present!*



### ESTHER ESTANY

President of Eurodyssey  
Catalonia (ES)

*Catalonia, as one of the proud founders of Eurodyssey, has played an active role, together with the members of the Steering Committee and the whole membership, in shaping the programme over its 35 years of existence. Over the last year, Eurodyssey has undergone a number of milestone transformations in terms of operational management, outreach and visual identity. Some examples of these are the imminent launch of a new website, a co-designed communication strategy and disaggregated data to measure the impact of the programme on youth employment. Furthermore, Eurodyssey is experiencing a vigorous growth in terms of exchanges (+16% as compared to 2018) and has added new regional partners to its Steering Committee who are more determined than ever to secure a brighter future for the programme.*

*Eurodyssey provides Catalonia and the rest of the member regions an extensive network of “tangible” interregional cooperation as the programme delivers directly on strategic policy areas such as employment, education or inclusion. Despite the COVID-19 situation, the network is looking forward to further advancing all the progress made as the best way to celebrate Eurodyssey’s 35th Anniversary.*





### RUNE FREDRIKSEN

AER Summer Academy President  
Viken (NO)

*As the president of the Summer Academy Organizing Committee, I am proud to be a part of facilitating the exchange of experience and good practices between regions in Europe through the Summer Academy events. Also the fact that we bring policymakers and young people together to support mutual learning and promote regional democracy in Europe underlines the priorities of my county, Viken in Norway. The Summer Academy in Novi Sad Vojvodina was a great experience for the 100+ participants under the theme "Youth is future, youth is Europe". Viken county was honoured as the winner of Europe's most youth-friendly region some years ago, and our engagement in the Summer Academy Organizing Committee underlines our commitment to this important work.*

### EX OFFICIO MEMBER



### HANDE ÖZSAN BOZATLI

Honorary President  
Istanbul (TR)

*The Assembly of European Regions (AER), with its rich history, is a strong network of regions in wider Europe. The AER, like the Council of Europe, works not only with EU member regions but also with non-EU regions like those from Turkey. Even though the majority of its member regions are from EU countries, a non-EU member region of AER can also be on board to discuss issues, related to all European regions, regardless of the region they come from, and regardless of the political party that they belong to.*

*The Turkish regions have been members of AER for many years. Even during the times that Turkey and the EU have had national political conflicts, the Turkish regions, together with the other European regions at AER, have continued their constructive dialogue and have represented the differences and diversity of European territories. They have altogether shown that diversity can serve the cause of a strong Europe; a multi-level continent where all stakeholders work hand in hand towards a better, inclusive and more prosperous future.*

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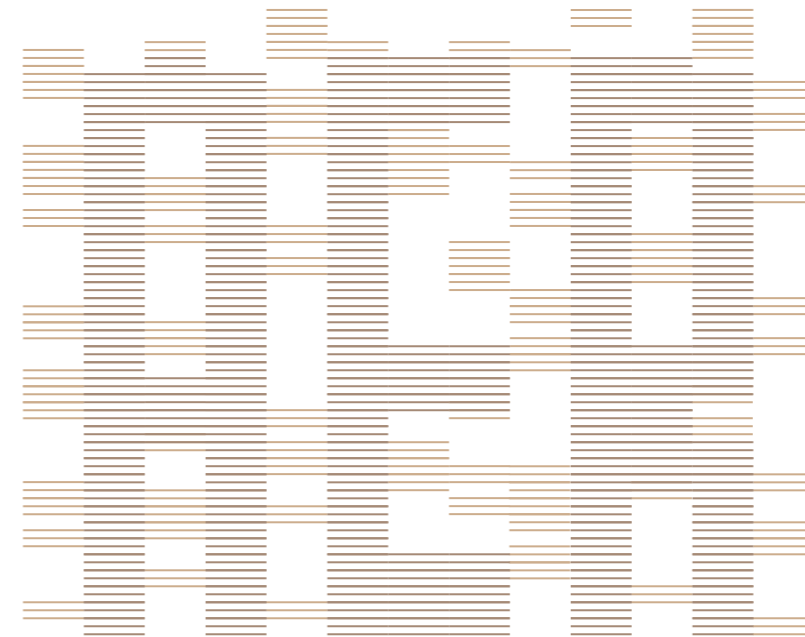
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