

ERYICA Newsletter

European information for local youth information and counselling centres

N° 8 December 2000

ERYICA NEWS

11th General Assembly

Brussels was the venue for the 11th ERYICA General Assembly, which took place on 5-7 November 2000, just after the "Working Together" seminar.

The fifty participants represented 28 member organisations and co-operating organisations from 19 countries, as well as the European Association of Youth Cards and Eurodesk.

Among the issues discussed were:

- a) youth participation in youth information work
- b) promotion of youth information, and development of a European quality label
- c) preparation of a minimum training course for youth information workers
- d) new ways of communicating within the ERYICA network.

The Assembly also adopted the budget and work programme for 2001 (see below), and decided to examine proposals for a modified structure of the Agency at its next session.

NEW Bureau

Meeting after the 11th Assembly, the Executive Committee elected a new Bureau to serve for the next three years, composed as follows:

President:

- Päivi Timonen-Verma, representing Allianssi (Finland)

Vice-Presidents:

- Ljubo Raicevic, representing MISSS (Slovenia) and
- Jorge Queiros, representing IPJ (Portugal)

Treasurer:

- Dan McCool, representing YCNI (United Kingdom)

Members:

- Erich Pauser, representing ARGE (Austria) and
- Lisbet Bjone, representing Forum UIK (Norway)

Secretary-General:

- Jon Alexander (ex officio).

Norway and Portugal are members of the Bureau for the first time. Best wishes to the new Bureau for every success in its work.

Report of Activities

The report on ERYICA activities in 2000 is available on request (free of charge) from the ERYICA secretariat, in English or French versions.

New members

The following organisations were admitted into ERYICA membership in October and November 2000:

- National Youth Agency (United Kingdom), admitted as full member
- John Atanasoff Community Centre, Sofia (Bulgaria), admitted as affiliated organisation
- Institute for Children and Youth (IDM, Czech Republic), admitted as full member.

In addition, ERYICA has begun to co-operate with the Department of Youth and Sport in Malta, which is developing information services for young people.

At present, the ERYICA partnership (members, affiliated organisations and co-operating organisations) numbers nearly fifty organisations in thirty-five countries

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Next Issue

Material for the next issue of the Newsletter should be sent, before 15 February 2001. Preferably as a file attached to an E-mail message, to the ERYICA Secretariat (sgeryica@aol.com) or to the President (timoska@lasipalatsi.fi)

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WORK Programme for 2001

In adopting the ERYICA Work Programme for 2001, the 11th Assembly gave priority:

- a) to the development of the INFOmobil service, which is to be updated by the end of 2000 and to be made more user-friendly during 2001
- b) to the training activities of the Agency; a Basic Training Development Group is to be created, in order to prepare a Minimum Basic Training Course for youth information workers which can be adapted to national needs and conditions
- c) to the promotion of good practice in the area of youth participation in youth information work.

In addition, a number of activities are foreseen which will be organised in the framework of the Partnership Agreement between ERYICA and the Council of Europe.

These include the organisation of a Study Session on "Different Approaches to Youth Information in Europe", aimed at youth information workers with little experience coming from the Member States of the Council of Europe.

The Working-Group on Communication will also continue its work, and will give particular attention to the development of the ERYICA Web-site as a communication and information tool for local and regional youth information centres as well as for the Agency's national partners.

BASIC training COURSE

“WORKING TOGETHER”

seminar

Youth Participation and Youth Information

In recent years, an increasing number of ERYICA partners have developed innovative ways of involving young people in different aspects of youth information work. This was one of the reasons why ERYICA partners in the Benelux countries decided to organise a European seminar on “Working Together” to examine the link between youth information and youth participation: information as an aid to participation, participation in the information process.

The seminar, which took place in Brussels on 2-5 November 2000, received support from each of the Benelux governments, and from the Youth 2000 Programme of European Union. A total of 106 participants from 17 countries took part.

A large part of the seminar was devoted to an exchange of experience in this field based on 16 projects undertaken in different countries. Each of the projects involved young people directly in some form of youth information work, and was presented to the seminar by some of the young people involved in the project. Different issues arising from the projects were then discussed in working-groups, some composed only of young people and others with a mix of young people and less young workers in the youth information field. A very fruitful dialogue was developed between participants with different backgrounds and experience. A number of proposals for the development of youth participation in youth information were presented to the final session, which was held jointly with participants in the ERYICA General Assembly.

The final report of the seminar will be available in early 2001, in English, French and Dutch versions.

The need to develop a minimum basic training course for youth information workers with little or no experience was the main conclusion drawn at the end of the ERYICA Study Session on “Training of Youth Information Workers”. Held on 8-15 October 2000 at the European Youth Centre in Budapest, the Session was one of the activities organised this year in the framework of the Partnership Agreement between ERYICA and the Council of Europe.

The Study Session was attended by 25 participants from 16 countries, together with a preparatory team of 5 persons. It was the first time that ERYICA had brought together persons from its member organisations who had experience as trainers, together with persons interested in training coming from countries where little or no organised training existed for youth information workers.

The first part of the Session was devoted to an exchange of experience concerning the training activities in the field of youth information which already existed in a number of countries. This was based on a working-paper containing information about the situation in 15 countries, which had been prepared and distributed as part of the preparation for the Session. This paper showed that, while training for youth information workers was quite developed in some countries (France, Netherlands, Spain and the U.K.) including university level courses or other officially recognised diploma courses, in most countries there was no nationally organised training and local centres had to provide it themselves or individual workers had to look for relevant external training possibilities.

The participants then discussed the different skills which were required in youth information work, and identified a number of key skills and attitudes which were essential. They stressed the fact that there were several “horizontal” attitudes which needed to be kept

in mind when undertaking the more “technical” tasks which were part of the youth information worker’s day. They then worked, in project groups, on a series of proposals for the content of a minimum basic training course for youth information workers (40-48 hours), with a view to these proposals being further developed within the ERYICA framework into a series of training modules which could be adapted by different countries for use at the national and local level. Taking account of the need for youth information trainers in many countries, they also expressed the hope that ERYICA could initiate European training courses for trainers who would then be able to deliver basic training in their countries.

These proposals were discussed and accepted by the 11th ERYICA General Assembly and, subject to finding the necessary resources, will be implemented as part of the Agency’s Work Programme in 2001.

Copies of the report of the Study Session, and of the working-paper presented at the Session, are available on request (free of charge) from the ERYICA secretariat.

TRAINING SEMINAR in Malta

Providing training in a single country for a group of its nationals is another example of an ERYICA training activity in co-operation with the Council of Europe, in addition to European Training Courses which may be attended by one or two people at most from 15-20 European countries.

The first such national training seminar on “Youth Information and Inter-governmental Youth Programmes in Europe” was held on 25-27 November 2000 in Sliema (Malta), in co-operation with the Department for Youth and Sport. It was attended by 25 voluntary youth workers who are expected to develop in the near future the information dimension of their work. The two-day seminar provided an introduction to “Youth Information in Europe” and “European Institutions and Their Youth Programmes”.

ORGANISATIONS in the ERYICA BUREAU, 2001-2003

The following are short profiles of the organisations which have been elected to the ERYICA Bureau for the period 2001-2003.

Allianssi, Finland (President)

In the field of youth information, the role of the Finnish Youth Co-operation Alliance (Allianssi) is to promote the concept of youth information in Finland, to represent and organise the participation of local centres in international co-operation activities, arrange national training and meetings in co-operation with local youth information centres and other agencies, publish surveys about young people, and to produce services for the local centres, such as guides, brochures and other materials. Allianssi also runs various electronic services on Internet: eg. Youth Info House (for youth workers), Youth Info Data-Base (for young people) and Pro Youth International (a portal in English for international youth-related information). The Ministry of Education gives financial support to Allianssi for its work as National Co-ordinator in the field of youth information. All the local centres are governed by the municipal youth work authorities. www.alli.fi

Youth information- and counselling centre Kompassi is one of over 100 facilities run by Helsinki City Youth Department. Kompassi in a word: information, direct counselling and guidance (specialised in counselling on housing problems), and the target-group is young people between 15-24 years. Kompassi has various tools to provide information for Young People (the NettiKompassi web-site: www.kompassi.lasipalatsi.fi its own newsletter, publications, youth information videos, plasma screens, etc.), as well as a large network of professionals: in Youth Information Centres in Finland, in ERYICA, in Eurodesk, in European youth programmes, in multicultural Helsinki, in housing agencies, etc.



MISSS, Slovenia (Vice-President)

Member of ERYICA since 1995, MISSS is the national co-ordinator of the Youth Information and Counselling Network in Slovenia. Created in 1995, MISSS now co-ordinates and supports a network of 12 local youth information centres located in all the major provinces of the country. Together with information services, the local centres also offer a variety of services and activities, ranging from cultural events and leisure activities to educational courses and prevention actions. They also function as co-ordinators for local information relay-points.

MISSS also functions as the main youth information centre in Ljubljana. Its programmes are mainly focused on information services, on educational activities, as well as actions in the field of primary prevention (mainly advising), which have been the basis of the centre since its creation. www.z-miss.si

IPJ, Portugal (Vice-President)

The Portuguese Youth Institute (IPJ) is member of ERYICA since 1993. It is currently member of the ERYICA Bureau for the first time, as one of the two Vice-Presidents. The IPJ Youth Information Network (RNIJ) is composed of a Co-ordination Centre, which is the Youth Information Department of the IPJ in Lisbon (now co-ordinated by Mr. Jorge Queiros), of 18 Youth Information Centres (one in the capital of each region), and of 275 Youth Information Points (one in each municipality). One of the IPJ projects for 2001 is to make the Internet site of the Secretary of State for Youth available in English. www.sej.pt

YCNI, United Kingdom (Treasurer)

The Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI) is the ERYICA member organisation in Northern Ireland, there being three other members for the other parts of the United Kingdom. One of the main roles of YCNI is to advise the Department of Education and other related bodies on the development of Youth Services. In the absence of any government policy on Youth Information, YCNI has linked with the Southern Education and Library Board Youth Services, and some voluntary organisations to provide at least one Youth Information Centre, which supports smaller Youth Information points in youth clubs.

YCNI provides regular updates on Youth Information through its representation in ERYICA. There are ongoing links with Youth Information centres in the Republic of Ireland, which has a government policy for Youth Information, and is also a member of ERYICA.

ARGE, Austria (Member)

Member of ERYICA since 1996, the Working-Group of the Austrian Youth Info Centres (ARGE) brings together all the Youth Info Centres which exist in Austria. These centres were all designed to be used as first contact points. Although they differ in their content and the scope of their information depending on their region and location, they all offer information concerning leisure, events, travel, E.U. youth programmes, AU-pair jobs, further education, courses and seminars, as well as about youth protection laws, etc. The majority of these info centres are NGOs financed mainly by their provincial government. At present there is a "Jugend-Info" in every province except in Lower Austria where one will open in Spring 2001. There are two youth info centres in Vienna, as the Jugend-Info of the Ministry for Youth is also situated there. www.jugendinfo.at

Forum UIK, Norway (Member)

The Norwegian Youth Information Forum, "Forum for ungdomsinformasjonskontor" in Norwegian, has been a member of ERYICA the last three years. There has been a long time of co-operation between the Norwegian offices, but it is only the last three years we have formalised it into an organisation. There have been members from our network participating in the ERYICA General Assembly before that, and we share the membership in ERYICA with Atlantis Youth Exchange. Today the network consist of 13 member offices from Kristiansand in the south and Karasjok and Kautokeino in the north. They differ in organisation. Have a look at our Web-site for more info: www.unginfo.no and click on the English version. This is the first time that the Norwegian Youth Information Forum is a member of the Bureau.