

# AEGEE IDENTITY

## STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

*Agora Utrecht, May 2000*

We, the members of AEGEE,

Realising that the young people of Europe are building the future of our continent,  
Aspiring to a peaceful Europe free of obstacles and enmities, of false divisions and forced differences,

Resolved to remove barriers between the peoples of Europe,  
Determined to contribute to a Europe of co-operation and understanding,  
Creating a network of young Europeans desiring to spread our ideals and ideas concerning Europe,

Hereby declare

Our belief that, while cherishing our diversity and respecting the character of our regions, we can find on the basis of our cultural and historical heritage the principles that unite us and guide us in our effort to strengthen the European conscience,

Our faith in a Europe standing for liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and our will to co-operate with institutions that promote these concepts,

Our resolve to establish an open Europe which recognises the importance of all cultures in the shaping of its past, present, and future and which plays an active role in fostering peace, stability and prosperity throughout the world,

Our intention to promote unlimited access to education as being of fundamental importance to increase mutual understanding,

Our desire to encourage student mobility in order to fight prejudice and xenophobia by increasing people's awareness of different cultures, and

Our strong belief that our association is a unique platform enabling us to contribute to these visions of Europe.

### **AIM<sup>1</sup>**

AEGEE is a secular, non-profit organization not linked to any political party which aims to promote, through the student world, the European idea amongst young people in Europe. Thus AEGEE strives to foster European integration, democracy, human rights, tolerance, cross-border co-operation, mobility and a European dimension in education.

### **MISSION<sup>2</sup>**

AEGEE's mission is to promote the European idea and identity among young people in Europe.

Drawing our strength from the dedication and open-mindedness of our members, we

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<sup>1</sup> Cf Article 2 Statutes of AEGEE-Europe

<sup>2</sup> Cf Strategic Plan AEGEE-Europe: [http://www.karl.aegee.org/aeg-info.nsf/9ae067a50c88886fc12563680051d692/4b134704ffba3af8c12572610078c947/\\$FILE/strategic%20plan%202006-2009.pdf](http://www.karl.aegee.org/aeg-info.nsf/9ae067a50c88886fc12563680051d692/4b134704ffba3af8c12572610078c947/$FILE/strategic%20plan%202006-2009.pdf)

involve young people in the common European project:

- informing and educating them about European values, diverse cultures and heritage
- finding realistic solutions to social and political problems
- building democracy and civil society, a culture of peace and intercultural cooperation
- extending the range of educational opportunities available to young people throughout Europe
- encouraging and facilitating youth mobility, activism and integration

## **VALUES**

Our values are both European and human, and must guide Europe also in its dealings with the rest of the world. These include peace, liberty, participatory democracy, human rights, diversity, tolerance and the rule of law.

## **VISION**

- We strive for an open and integrated Europe with a common sense of identity, defined and united by shared values, taking diversity as its source of strength, which will actively foster peace, stability and prosperity throughout the world.
- AEGEE will help shape Europe according to this vision through independent action at the grassroots level, making sustainable social and political changes.
- We will be known for courage, creativity and idealism in our work, for the originality of our projects and methods, and for the enthusiasm and cultural diversity of our members.
- Our projects, statements and structures will reflect our strong sense of European identity and common purpose.

## **MAIN FIELD OF ACTION<sup>3</sup>**

Deriving from the Statement of Principles, the Vision, the Mission and AEGEE-Europe's statutory aims, the Agora decides upon AEGEE's thematic Main Fields of Action. The number of Main Fields of Action is limited to five.<sup>4</sup>

*Since the mid 90's, AEGEE has mainly dealt with topics of Higher Education, Peace and Stability, Cultural Exchange and Active Citizenship. Therefore, at the 30th General Assembly held in Udine (I), November 2000, it was decided and voted upon that the following four topics represent the four main pillars of AEGEE's youth involvement.*

We call them **FIELDS of ACTION**, and here is what they represent in short:

### **HIGHER EDUCATION**

AEGEE has a long history behind when it comes to its involvement in the Higher Education matters. Everything started already in 1987 when AEGEE started to support the Erasmus program of the European Community. AEGEE insists on *Mobility* being one of the most important tools of developing Higher Education in Europe. AEGEE members participate in European Higher Education mobility schemes which allow them to get a better understanding of the European dimension and help building the foundations of a future European society.

At the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, which took place in Paris in 1998, AEGEE contributed by presenting its views in the form of a book under the title: "The future of higher education: a student vision".

In the same year, AEGEE started its co-operation with ESIB and ESN on the project: "Socrates on the Move" which lasted until 2001.

In 2002 the Eureca project took place, including the Erasmus Action Week.

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<sup>3</sup> Information taken from: <http://www.karl.aegee.org/aeg-web.nsf/Full/Projects--Fields-of-Action?OpenDocument>

<sup>4</sup> Cf Article 1 Planning Working Format

In 2006 the effects of the introduction of the Bologna Process became visible throughout Europe, and at the General Assembly in Warsaw (PL) the Year Plan Topic '[the Bologna Process: know your chances, know your rights!](#)' was adopted. This resulted in the AEGEE Flagship Project 2007 '[Education Unlimited! Improving European Education](#)'. Project partners are BEST, EMSA, ESTIEM, ESN ESU, IAPSS, YFJ and UNESCO. It has the support of Doris Pack MEP.

Since 2007 AEGEE is member of the TEMPUS Steering Group.

If you wish to know more about AEGEE's involvement in Higher Education matters please visit the [Education Working Group](#) website.

### **PEACE & STABILITY**

Spreading knowledge on democracy, value of tolerance and open-mindedness, AEGEE has always held quite an important role when it comes to Peace and Stability, especially in SouthEast Europe. AEGEE projects are the best example of how AEGEE has been working towards that particular goal. "Peace Academy" in 1999 dealt with conflict resolution, "Education for Democracy" in 2000 was bringing students from conflict areas into EU countries to study and develop an objective viewpoint on the conflict issue. In 2005, 'Tolerance - Acceptance Peace' was organised which resulted in the annual 'mediation and conflict resolution training', organised by the International Politics Working Group of AEGEE. Via Election Observation Mission AEGEE contributes to the stabilisation of young democracies like in Albania, Azerbaijan, FYROM and Ukraine.

### **CULTURAL EXCHANGE**

AEGEE would like to give its members the chance to explore another culture, learn a language and overcome prejudices. To prevent xenophobia and actively correspond with the evolution of the muslim religion, the [Euro-Islam project](#) has been initiated in 2003 to foster inter-religious understanding. Our antennae organise multilateral exchanges, the [European Day of Languages](#) project promotes multilingualism and the [Summer University Project](#) is already 20 years for many young people their first experience abroad. They are organised by most of our local branches and incarnate the nest of cultural exchange in AEGEE. More than 5 000 students every summer go for an adventure somewhere in Europe, to learn about the language and culture of another country for two whole weeks...

### **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

AEGEE follows what is happening in Europe. If it touches one of the fields of our interest we, AEGEE members, feel the need to express our opinion. We recognize the need to be well informed about issues which shape our future. With "[EU & Europe](#)" AEGEE was already looking beyond the 2004 enlargement by focussing that year on the wider neighbourhood countries. In 2005 AEGEE started a project to enable the activities for disabled youth. Furthermore, '[The BRIDGE- Connecting Mobility and Disability](#)' aimed to change the perception of the disabled youth and show that they can and should contribute in building the civil society. With '[Take Control, Ways to democracy in Europe](#)' AEGEE launched project which contained a series of training events, conferences, political campaigns, educational and media activities all intended to increase the involvement and engagement of young people in the (European) political process. The highlight was 'Model European Union' in March 2007, with 150 participants in the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Whether it concerned strict VISA policies, Bologna process or some other topic, AEGEE has always kept the pace with the hottest topics on the European Agenda, and expressed opinion of the active Youth. The European Commission launched the idea to develop a White Paper on Youth Policy.

An example of AEGEE's involvement: The Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee, in co-operation with the European Youth Forum, were organising a Hearing on "Youth Policy" (February 2001). AEGEE has expressed its view on education and mobility at the hearing on White Paper on Youth Policy. [AEGEE statement on White Paper Youth Policy](#).

To have an overview of all major events during the past 20 years, please have a look at the [Past Events](#) website.