

# Socrates Action Day 1997

## Results

*“Evidemment, la Communauté ne peut imposer des règles aux universités en raison de leur autonomie et du nouveau principe de subsidiarité inclus dans le Traité sur l’Union Européenne à propos de l’éducation. Mais elle peut, de toute façon, être attentive afin que dans la réalisation de la dimension Européenne, les étudiants deviennent des acteurs principaux”*

**Domenico Lenarduzzi**

*Director General of DG XXII : Education, Training and Youth*

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With the Contribution of



European Commission

# Foreword

Education plays a major role in today's Europe. Problems like unemployment, sustainable development, employability which are on the agenda of the Union and of all governments can only be solved through a serious educational policy. Since these problems start to get global, the solution itself has to be the result of a global thinking.

There is one solution, and AEGEE has always promoted this idea, since its very beginning: Students Mobility, intended as *physical*, as well as *intellectual* mobility.

Students attach a great importance to the opportunity offered to them to make the experience of studying abroad. Such an experience means to know and get involved in a different educational system, to get in touch with other culture, way of thinking, to make of a foreign language a familiar one. But it means as well to receive a more Europe's aware education, since students feel themselves part of another country educational system because of the fact they are European.

Physical mobility can, then, be the easier way to give birth and grow up a European citizenship feeling.

Some of the difficulties encountered until now in the implementation of the physical mobility programmes can be overcome by a wide introduction of the intellectual mobility concept.

If we want to achieve a European dimension of education, we have to try to involve as many students as possible each one of us has to receive the chance to know history, economics, law and social questions of the other European countries. Every one of us should be able to communicate in a language other than his/her own one, should experience other system of teaching and learning. Even students who can not afford to leave and study in other countries have the right to receive this kind of open European education. And, in the same way, it should be possible also to reach the part of the students who don't feel like going abroad, assuring that they will be ready tomorrow to live as European citizens.

*By Sergio Caredda,  
President of AEGEE-  
Europe*

These are the aims of intellectual mobility. Which are the means? European studies curricula, languages training, teachers education, the common uses of technological means...

The challenge today is to make a common effort to have these new tools studied and implemented in the widest way as possible; and this is a challenge in which we are all involved students, professors, universities, countries and European institutions.

The Socrates Action Day AEGEE organised by AEGEE this year, goes into this direction.

When in 1987 AEGEE took the responsibility of convincing the European governments about the necessity of Erasmus this was done as a request coming directly from the students.

Ten years later, before the launch of the *Socrates II* programme, we want to take part again in the discussion for our future.

An evaluation which take into accounts the positions of students jointly with those of Rectors, Professors, Erasmus Experts of Universities, is of utmost importance for the continuation of the project.

That was the main reason for us to organise this *Socrates Action Day*.

Our wish for the future is a serious, European-minded education-policy across Europe, able to add value to the human dimension of Europe and to reach every young-European.

Reaching this goal means reaching a unified Europe, not only at economical or political level, but in the mind of every citizen.

Yours Europeanly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Sergio Caredda'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'S' at the beginning and a long, sweeping underline that extends across the bottom of the signature.

Sergio Caredda  
President  
AEGEE-Europe

# Flash-back

## **The duty of AEGEE-EUROPE: Being at the core of every debate concerning European Higher Education**

The strong links between European higher education and AEGEE-EUROPE are of course coming first of all from the very nature of AEGEE as a European student movement. As such AEGEE will keep a lasting credibility with the rest of society if it is of the major voice expressing truly European opinions on issues related with European higher education policies or programmes.

European students have to advocate positions on existing policies or asking for new policies in the field of higher education as it is a role that nobody else can play.

But beyond its very nature, this link is deeply rooted in both the history of AEGEE-EUROPE and the history of the European higher education programmes. In a much stronger sense that for any other European student organisation.

AEGEE-EUROPE played a big role in promoting the ERASMUS programmes all through European universities at a time when mostly scepticism was reigning in rector's and professor's offices and played a decisive role in getting it adopted. Thanks to an intense and very successful lobbying operation in 1986/87 towards big newspapers in most EC countries (promoting ERASMUS as the programme expected by the European students) and series of meetings with heads of states or government (W.MARTENS in Belgium, R. LUBBERS in The Netherlands and finally F. MITTERRAND in France), AEGEE-EUROPE helped keeping ERASMUS on the agenda of the Council of Ministers despite two refusals coming from France, Germany and UK. And finally, after this crucial lunch to which President MITTERRAND invited the 20 Board members of AEGEE-EUROPE and where he got convinced that a top level intervention was required to move ERASMUS out of a bleak prospect, ERASMUS was adopted three weeks later.

Immediately after, when AEGEE tried to change the way

*Intervention by Frank  
Biancheri, Honorary  
President and Founder  
of AEGEE-Europe.*

students were treated in ERASMUS (like products and not like partners), AEGEE then did learn how to use critics and the possibility to make them public has a powerful force to, at least, be able to keep an independent voice.

By being supported financially by the programme promoters, as a good promotion tool, and using the great interest generated by ERASMUS in the press, AEGEE-EUROPE benefited directly for its development from the European higher education programmes. This went on with TEMPUS when Eastern Europe came on the agenda. AEGEE-EUROPE has helped significantly the information and know-how concerning TEMPUS to get into several Eastern Europe universities as well as it benefited from TEMPUS to get funds to fasten its development in this region.

To summarise, these links of AEGEE-EUROPE and European higher education policies were the strongest when AEGEE was developing its more critical positions. Supporting the objectives but questioning the methods. As a student, grass-root organisation, it would indeed be quite a surprise that on the implementation aspects AEGEE will have the same opinion as a huge administration!

With SOCRATES II coming and the first results of SOCRATES I now available, AEGEE-EUROPE is again at a cross road to define its standpoint. This series of 54 Socrates conferences show at least clearly that AEGEE, as it has always done, will support first an open, transparent and public debates of those policies!

# Introduction

November 12th 1997  
SOCRATES Action Day

What was it ?

In 54 antennae (local chapters of AEGEE Europe) all over Europe, an evaluation of the SOCRATES programme has taken place at the same time.

Depending on how many people were available in each antenna to dedicate time to the preparation of the SOCRATES Action Day, the events which took place locally were very different, but always with the common aim to discuss and evaluate the implementation of the SOCRATES programme and its future.

Thus, the SOCRATES Action Day has been ranging from small round tables with 10 persons to conferences gathering 250 students, up to information spreading which got in touch with as many as 600 persons.

All together, **6500 persons** took part in the SOCRATES Action Day on November 12th 1997.

As AEGEE is spread outside the borders of the European Union, our results will also consider the opinion of countries like Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia who are now entering the SOCRATES, but more specifically of Turkey. In fact, AEGEE Europe is very concerned by the enlargement of the SOCRATES programme to Turkey, as a tool toward a greater democratic approach toward education and the civil society in general in this country.

To conduct this evaluation of the SOCRATES programme, we got in touch locally with the Representatives of International Relations Office, with Rectors and with Teachers deeply involved in the implementation of the programme inside their universities. As well, we contacted experts on Intercultural Education who helped us defining the great output of the SOCRATES programme for

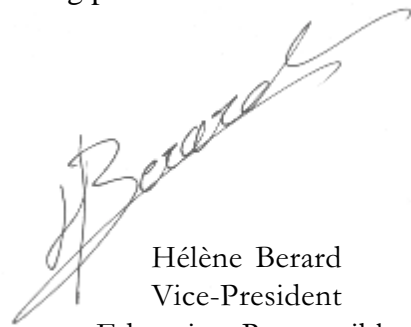
*By H el ene Berard  
Co-ordinator of the  
Socrates Action Day*

its participants.

We received from them a strong support for this action. The conclusions drawn in this brochure are therefore issued out of thorough discussion involving representants of each level of the implementation of the SOCRATES programme.

In fact, we believe that, to be accurate and valuable, this evaluation had to take into account the considerations of each person involved in it, at whatever level they would be. We thank each of them who helped us in conducting this process.

Last but not least, we wish to thank particularly, Dr. Joseph Bricall, President of the Conference of European Rectors (CRE) and Patron of AEGEE Europe, and Dr. Andris Barblan, Secretary General of the CRE, who gave us their support by contacting personally the Rectors, member of the CRE, in each city where the SOCRATES ACTION DAY was taking place.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Berard', written diagonally across the page.

Hélène Berard  
Vice-President  
Education Responsible  
AEGEE-Europe

# Background

During the *Dublin European Council* on December 13th and 14th 1996, the Head of States and Governments have agreed on a *Declaration titled : "The challenge of unemployment"*

In this Declaration, they recalled the fact that the fight against unemployment was the responsibility of the Member States and ask for the support of the European Commission on this process. Amongst other important points, they consider that the restructuring of Public finance should play an important role to enhance growth and employment, especially through investments in Human Resources and active policies on the job market.

A few measures must be taken in order to invest in human resources, and amongst them were stated :

- the development of a human resources policy **answering to the needs of qualification.**
- the creation of a job market more open to employment thanks to a **greater adaptability of persons and companies** toward economic changes.
- a modernization in the work organization and **a growing mobility.**

As well, in the *White Book on Education and Training "Teaching and Learning : toward a cognitive society"* presented in November 1995, the Commission presents three major elements which will have to be faced by the European Union :

- Globalization of exchanges which requires a general increase in the demanded qualifications.
- The upcoming of an information society
- The acceleration of scientific and technical progress.

In order to face these three "shocks", the European Commission proposes 2 priority answers :

To **revalorize the general culture** (ability to understand, to analyze, to create...)

To develop the capacity of being employed **through students and workers mobility.**

In order to achieve this aim, it is indispensable to set up a real recognition of knowledge and competence.

Five action lines have therefore been proposed to the Member States :

to enhance the acquisition of new knowledge.  
to bring schools and companies closer to each other.

**to fight against exclusion.** The White book here proposes to **redistribute complementary European funds through programmes like SOCRATES or LEONARDO** which are complementing local and national initiatives.

to bring to young people the **mastering of three community languages**

To treat on an equal plan, physical and training investment.

These considerations are showing very well the critical importance for students nowadays to acquire a more open minded approach along with a greater knowledge of the international environment in which they will have to live and work in the very near future.

A research conducted by the Higher Education Section of UNESCO has defined a Matrix of Skills which will be required in the future by employers.

*Traditional Academic Skills :*

specialist knowledge  
ability to apply knowledge

logical thinking  
critical analysis  
problem solving skills  
written communication  
spoken communication  
ability to handle numerical data  
computer skills  
research skills

*Personal Development Skills :*

self-confidence  
self-discipline  
awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses  
creativity  
independence  
knowledge on international affairs  
desire to continue learning

*Enterprise or Business Skills:*

positive attitudes to opportunity and risk  
ability to priorities tasks  
interpersonal skills  
ability to function in a team  
leaderships attributes.

Following our own evaluation and the evaluation conducted by the European Commission itself, it has been proved that most of these skills were acquired through a study stay abroad.

Each ERASMUS student has stressed the great added value his stay abroad gave him in terms of personal development, self-confidence in facing new situations, in acquiring flexibility and a more tolerant and respectful approach to differences.

The benefits acquired through international exchanges have been shown by many different organizations and present no doubt nowadays about their reality and importance, but nevertheless, the support granted to student's mobility, or in a broader context to the internationalization of studies is not so strong anymore and is even more and more put under question.

**AEGEE SOCRATES Action Day  
is therefore aimed at showing how crucial this support is !**

# European Results

As a student association, our concerns and thus our evaluation are mainly dealing with the ERASMUS program. Nevertheless, some critics and comments can be solved through other parts of the SOCRATES program and are therefore important.

## I. Financial overview

In 1994, while the negotiations were going on in the Commission for the financing of the SOCRATES program, the initial demand was to grant the SOCRATES program more than 1000 MECU (Million ECU) to cover a 5 years period going from 1995 till 1999.

The amount which was finally granted was 850 MECU to cover the participation of 12 countries.

The European Parliament imposed at that time that a revision of this amount should take place in 1997 in order to increase this amount.

Therefore, negotiations went on this year to decide which amount should be added to the SOCRATES budget.

The European Commission propose an increase of 50 MECU

The European Parliament propose an increase of 100 MECU

The European Council (Council of Ministers) propose an increase of 25 MECU

Finally, the decision was taken to increase the global budget of 50 MECU up to 900 MECU for the 15 Member States, Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland as well as Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania (entering the whole SOCRATES program) and Poland, Slovakia and Cyprus (entering only the ERASMUS program).

Therefore, the small increase agreed upon finally result in a real decrease of money granted to each country, as there are now more countries benefiting from it, and the budget has not been increased proportionally to the number of countries.

## II. Student's mobility

### Financial support and equal chances

Since ten years of its existence, the ERASMUS program has acquired fame in the university world and has attracted more and more students. As a result, the amount of money granted to each student is decreasing. When the aim of the SOCRATES program is to cover the difference of expenses implied by a stay abroad, it often doesn't cover even this amount and can be referred at as some "pocket money" (90 ECU per month in Germany).

Even if the ERASMUS student mobility grant is not aimed at covering the whole cost of a stay abroad, the fact that the amount of the grants is so low is creating a disadvantage for students who do not have high personal incomes (by themselves or through their parents).

It results in a certain elitism in the selection as poorer students do not even ask for an ERASMUS stay abroad, knowing in advance that they will not be able to cope with its financial cost.

As well, the usual way to distribute the money is to give an equal amount to each student even though the cost of living is much higher in Scandinavia than in Spain, which results also in a discrepancy in the financial situation of ERASMUS students.

Following the principle of subsidiarity, it has been decided that the funding for ERASMUS should be completed by the local institutions (universities, local and regional councils...). Here again, depending on the interest showed by these institutions toward Europe and on the wealth of these bodies, students might have another source of financial support or might not. For the unlucky ones living in a poor region or in a region hostile to the European Union, this support does not exist, creating more inequalities.

Another problem appearing to prevent student's mobility is that in some countries like The Netherlands or Germany the national grants given are depending on some requirements which are difficult to comply with when going abroad. In The Netherlands, the "Tempobeurs" system requires each student who receives a governmental support to obtain a minimum number of credit per semester. If the courses taken abroad are not recognized by the home university, the student then lose their national grant. In Germany, the national grant is given for a certain time (usually already not enough to finish studying) in which the time spent abroad is included. Again, if the courses are not recognized, the student face the risk of losing from six months up to one year and not having any more grant to finish his studies.

Of course, this affect first of all students coming from less wealthy families.

This situation is often worsen by the fact that the ERASMUS grants are usually distributed with a long delay (between one and two months) on the student bank account.

### Selection criteria

A few problems have also been noticed on this subject. The situation here depend a lot on the country policy.

While in some countries, students get automatically accepted since there are not enough demand to cover the number of places available, in some others, the selection criteria are so hard that whatever their motivation can be, students cannot go

abroad. The Netherlands for example has a system with three round of selections, lasting approximately from one to two years (in 97, 12 places used over 189 available in Enschede).

The transparency on the criteria applied is rather difficult to obtain, and there again, it varies from one university to the other. It ranges from no declared criteria at all to a selection depending on academic achievement, on tests, or on interviews.

Nevertheless, some complaints about the fact that ERASMUS grants are given preferably to relations or friends come out relatively regularly.

One of the selection criteria which consist a rather important problem is the language knowledge. While some countries are impeding any student who does not have a sufficient knowledge of the host language to go, some others are sending abroad students who hardly speak a word and cannot then follow the courses properly.

We will come back to this language problem later in this brochure.

## **III. Courses recognition**

One of the main hindrance to student's mobility is the non-recognition of the studies followed in a university abroad.

It seems that each country in Europe suffers from an "arrogance" virus which lead them to consider their system as being better than the other countries one. This situation is first of all due to a weak knowledge in universities over Europe of the system and of the content of the courses given abroad.

Home teachers and universities only accept to recognize courses when they personally know either the teacher who is giving them or if they have been to this university previously in order to check the program there.

Quite often, the home university requires, in order to recognize them, that the courses correspond exactly to those which should have been

followed at home and are taking place at the same time than in the home university.

Specific field of studies like Law, based on details and accurate knowledge then meet even more difficulties in organizing exchanges.

On the other hand, some agreements between universities are so strict that foreign students cannot follow courses given outside their host department even though these courses are corresponding exactly to the ones they would have followed at home.

Considering the fact that in Europe the university year begins at different period in each country, this time and content compliance is rather difficult to achieve. It often happens that semester are beginning abroad before the end of the home semester.

The recognition of the diplomas is also impeded not only by the slowness shown by the host universities to send the results, but also, beforehand, by the bad quality of the information reaching the home university about the available courses abroad. As a result, most students don't know exactly neither what courses they can take, nor the requirements their home university is expecting from them in order to recognize their study time abroad.

A lack of coordination between universities can also be seen, along with the previously seen lack of knowledge.

#### **IV. Teacher's mobility**

It has been shown previously that due to a lack of knowledge between universities, the courses recognition was very much dependent on teachers' personal contacts abroad.

Hence, if the ERASMUS program has to survive, it will happen through an increased teachers' mobility, giving then the abilities to universities to recognize credits acquired abroad more easily and thus, to solve one of the hindrance preventing students from applying for

ERASMUS stays.

In fact, since its beginning, the ERASMUS program has been very much carried by the teachers who showed a great interest in the implementation and the outcomes of the ERASMUS program.

While these teachers were still very motivated in 1995, when the SOCRATES program was implemented, they have now lost most of their faith in the program, thus depriving the program of its main strength.

Due to the low financial support from the European Union, teachers are nowadays foreseeing that this support will one day not exist anymore. Without support from the European level, they fear for the continuity of the program and are lacking motivation to create new contacts abroad or new exchanges.

In fact, the expansion of the program depends very much on the dynamism shown by university towards European matters. It rely totally on each university's will to create new contacts. No help or moral support is organized on that point, and as the administration officers have a too heavy load of work to carry, they cannot prospect by themselves. Teachers are then the only ones to fulfill this task.

Their motivation and their achievement are depending on their ability to travel and make new personal contacts in universities abroad. The funding for teachers' mobility should thus not be decreased any further.

Lacking money to support their initiative and lacking faith in the program's future, teachers could provoke the failure of the whole program.

This problem appears at a time when teachers already have difficulties to define their own identity. In fact, with the ever growing importance of the media, the teaching quality is decreasing. Teachers have problems to define their role in relation with the huge flow of information accessible nowadays as they are not anymore the main source of knowledge.

As a general process, the role and place of the teaching corporation has to be redefined in order to give them back their identity and thus, their motivation.

As it is now, the SOCRATES program is also rather illogical. The implementation is very much centralized (universities have to sign the Institutional Contract with the European Commission with a strong financial control over the Community money) but is more and more decentralized for its funding. The actors of the SOCRATES program therefore feels like orphans who have nowhere to find a moral support for their involvement and dedication.

At a time where the Social Europe has being delayed for so long that very few persons are going abroad to work, the SOCRATES/ERASMUS program is the only one which achieve the aims of creating more mobility and more understanding amongst the citizens of Europe and is therefore creating this human and social unity aimed at by the European Union. ERASMUS is the laboratory of the social Europe. It managed to unify Europe through the only possible way : personal contacts.

## **V. Financial support for universities**

After two years of delay, the Institutional Contract has finally been implemented in 1997. As a result, universities all over Europe have received on average 10% of the money they required.

In each university, considering this small amount of financial support to cover the administration costs, there is now usually only one person who works on this subject and implements the whole program both inside and outside the university.

Considering the very central role that they are playing, they need to know and understand very well the organization of their partners. However, they do not have the time to do so, due to the very heavy bureaucratic process they have to comply with.

Here again, the motivation degree is decreasing.

Moreover, the money distribution process imposed by the European Commission, splitting the payment of the grant in two parts, is complicating very much their work.

Universities would expect more simplicity, even more when the amount granted are so low (on average 15 000 ECU).

This lack of money and time is also impeding the good implementation of the program as it hinders a good communication and coordination between all the actors involved in the SOCRATES program.

## **VI. Miscommunication and lack of information**

One of the main critics addressed to the SOCRATES program is its inability to create good communications between its components.

Universities are often not ready on time to provide their partners with sufficient information upon the courses proposed for the foreign students. Generally, not enough information is spread beforehand in order to allow student to prepare themselves to the cultural chock waiting them on their arrival.

Here again, the lack of knowledge of the language of the host country is preventing them from establishing good contacts with the local population, whether students or other persons.

Many students expressed the regret that language courses were not available in their host university. This problem could also be solved or at least reduced if a proper preparation could be proposed before departure in their home university.

Many complaints were also relating to the lack of information before leaving about the courses which were open to students abroad This prevented them from getting a clear view of the possibilities offered and thus created problems for the recognition of the courses taken afterwards.

Once arrived abroad, the students often have to

face alone all the difficulties (adaptation to the culture, to a different academic system, social integration) they can meet, as very little support is organized by the host university.

Universities also have problems in communicating with DG XXII.

## **VII. Academic follow-up of ERASMUS students**

It has been regretted by both the students and university officers that an academic follow-up of the ERASMUS student has not been organized. Firstly in order to really check the impact of an ERASMUS stay as an help to find a job and secondly in order to create a database where future students and universities could refer in order to improve their action and find new contacts.

The pedagogical follow-up of the ERASMUS student is also important as students acquired there a great added value in terms of tolerance and understanding of differences. The follow-up would lead to a spreading of this knowledge and a bigger impact toward students who did not have the chance to go abroad.

The ERASMUS is nowadays losing half of the effect it could have by not exploiting this experience.

## **VIII. Language courses**

It has been noticed that the lack of knowledge of the host language was a strong impediment to both the selection of students and to the benefit they can get once abroad.

Languages courses should therefore be a strong focus in every field of studies and not only in humanistic faculties. The knowledge of a second foreign language, being other than English should really be promoted.

This would also help in attracting students to other countries than English speaking ones.

## **IX. Eastern countries**

As the SOCRATES (or only ERASMUS) program is only starting now in some of the CEEC, students and university officers don't know much about it yet, nevertheless they are very much interested in it and are looking forward both to go abroad and to receive foreign students in their universities.

However, with the creation of new standards of education in Poland for example, the ERASMUS program could be implemented through new courses but as the standards only allow to extend lectures time instead of adding new subjects, it will be rather difficult.

From the experience these countries acquired from TEMPUS, they are demanding a very clear and transparent system in order to avoid that the available places should be distributed only to friends and relation and also in order to make sure that the money is really allocated to the implementation of the program instead of being use for other purposes.

Foreign students coming from eastern countries have stressed the fact that it would be really interesting for western students to go and study in a less developed country or in a Muslim culture as they would experience a totally different style of life.

As coming from countries with a very low purchasing power compare to the western ones, the grant allocated to students through ERASMUS will be far from enough to allow usual students to live abroad. Again, only wealthy students will benefit from it. Even more than in the western countries, this will create strong inequalities in the student population.

Language skills here also have to be better developed in order to allow more student to access the selection phase.

Eastern students are also afraid that they might not have the opportunity to study abroad if their university is not dynamic enough to find connections abroad.

# Socrates and Turkey

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## Declaration on Students' Mobility

*The Agora (General Assembly) of AEGEE approves in Ankara a resolution for the enlargement of the Socrates Program*

AEGEE would like to emphasize its desire to provide all students in Europe with equal opportunities to conduct some time of their studies in a foreign European country. The support of AEGEE is therefore of fundamental importance for students from all the countries with problematic standing for their involvement in the EU program Socrates.

AEGEE wishes to stress the importance of exchange programs building up a European society of different cultures and understanding, for which personal experiences are indispensable. The great success of ERASMUS calls for further extension of the program, reaching clearly beyond the borders of the European Union.

Consequently, AEGEE feels that also Turkish students should be given the possibility to participate in the EU program SOCRATES, and likewise other European students should be encouraged to study at a Turkish university.

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*Agora Ankara, November 1997, [pr2297]*

Initiating a civil society movement in Turkey is difficult. A countrywide strategy should be identified on how to participate to the EU Programs ; once this aim is achieved, Turkish universities can also present interesting educational programs for European universities.

However, this has not been the case till now, both because of lack of a certain policy of European Union on educational matters, particularly on SOCRATES, and the lack of interest from Turkish government and public.

The EU policy on SOCRATES is not certain and defined. Educational systems in Europe are very diverse. The EU has been working on the international adaptation for credibility by means of Community programs.

In the case of the enlargement of the program to Turkey, various institutions of the European Union have different opinions. Apart from the fact that the Committee on Culture, Education, Youth and the Media of the European Parliament blocked a proposal from the Commission of the European Communities aiming at it, the Commission itself expressed a positive opinion, not only through the proposal itself, but through a Communication to the Council dated from 15.7.1997. ECOSOC has also adopted an advisory resolution to the European Parliament to include Turkey in SOCRATES.

Governing decision mechanism for EU-Turkey relations are organized according to the 1963 Association Agreement between EU and Turkey. The Association Council has adopted such advisory resolutions as well as the Joint Parliamentary Commission and the Joint Consultation Commission. The Customs Union Decision of the Association Council also foresees a cooperation on industry and vocational training.

According to the 1963 Ankara Agreement, Turkey has gained the associated country status even before Spain and Portugal. The EU argument to include the latter countries as Member States being to avoid possible antidemocratic regimes.

In the meanwhile a negative argument against Turkey's inclusion to educational programs was the unsettled democracy and the bad human rights report, ignoring the fact that these programs would be the main tools to obtain the settlement of these universal values. This is more than contradictory.

On the other hand, Turkey which is neither considered a Central and Eastern European Country, nor participating in Phare - Tacis programmes, has to have a specific position and needs to be added to the Basic Decisions as she has been an associated member since 1963 by the Ankara Treaty.

The 7th Article of the Basic Decision of SOCRATES has been amended to include CEEC, Cyprus and Malta; therefore, such a simple amendment to include the word "Turkey" should not be that hard.

Turkey's financial contribution will be directly made by Turkey or by using the funds earmarked for the financial contributions for Turkey by the MEDA funds (or both, whilst reserving the right to make a proposal the budgetary authority at a later date.)

Participation to the programs is not only important but essential for Turkey in order to be able to use European experience on education, especially in this crucial period of educational reform.

The Turkish Government and Parliament should show their interest and approach their counterparts in EU. It seems that by following a strategy on full membership in EU, many concrete

opportunities are missed like educational programs. Therefore, NGOs and student organizations should coordinate their acts both in the country and on the European level, they should sustain their monitoring role on the operation of the programs.

It is essential that the European Union act in accordance with its own policies reflected in the adopted resolutions and decisions in considering the enlargement. Turkey's inclusion in SOCRATES is essential not only for raising a European generation, but also for providing an intercultural medium for the educational community in Europe.

Additionally to SOCRATES, LEONARDO and Youth for Europe, a new organization is needed to gather Mediterranean programs like MED-Campus and EURO-MED, including the other non-member countries of the Mediterranean area.

# Conclusions

The society in which we are living is growing more and more international and as such, will require its citizens to master foreign languages and an intercultural environment.

There is a strong need now to acquire the know-how necessary to handle properly cultural differences and learn to be more flexible.

The objective is therefore to promote a European conscience through an increased mobility in Europe.

At a time when the European Commission is trying to involve more its citizens through information campaigns like "Citizen's First", it reduces at the same time its support to the SOCRATES program.

However, usually : "Actions speak louder than words"

The SOCRATES program has been the only one to achieve the aim of creating a European feeling. It helped to destroy prejudices and to enhance a mutual understanding, a tolerant approach towards different cultures and different ways of thinking and helped creating this long lasting ties which personal contacts are.

It is nowadays crucial for the future of Europe to create more than an economical Union. For 40 years now, the building of a Social Europe has always been postponed but in the meanwhile, the population is still waiting for an aim to strive for.

The European Union should concentrate more on fulfilling citizens' concerns and not only governments' ones. Since by growing closer to its citizens, the European Union would also

strengthen itself.

The EU population has grown wearied of being considered as a second choice objective and this feeling is now passing through the attitudes of students and universities.

In losing now the support of universities and most of all, of students, the European commission run the risk of losing support from the whole current generation and will have to wait for 20 more years before being able to gain them to its cause again.

For 10 years now, the SOCRATES program has been carried by the motivation of teachers and students, who, if they reject it tomorrow, will lead to the failure of the SOCRATES program. Losing SOCRATES, the European Commission will lose the only efficient tool it possess nowadays to build up a European citizenship.

Nevertheless, for students and teachers to feel motivated, they firstly need to feel supported, both morally and financially. This can only be achieved through a substantial increase in the funds granted to the SOCRATES program.

Teachers and students need now more than just a feeling, they need a proof that the European Union feels concerned by their future.

The European Youth now needs to know that the European Union is strongly concerned by the personal development of each young European and that it will give them the means to achieve this aim.

# Proposals

To improve the current implementation of the program and, before all, foreseeing the introduction of the SOCRATES II program, AEGEE wishes to bring its contribution to the current evaluation by defining very important lines of action for the future success of the program :

**Give a stronger financial support to the whole SOCRATES program** in order to give it the means to achieve its numerous objectives (see Appendix 1 ). The education policy of the European Union has to be considered as a global concept and should develop both the promotion of the European experience in primary schools and promote life-long learning.

**Implement a better spending of the funds.** Approximately 64% of the whole budget is nowadays spent in coordination costs. This proportion has to be considerably reduced.

**Favors flexibility and creativity in the ways to build a European citizenship.** Physical mobility has to be increased, but it should not be considered as the only way to make the European idea available for most of the students. New courses, new European programs, the intensification of language teaching and of course, the extensive use of the new media.

**Stressing the need for universities to build up a common structure in the organiza-**

**tion of studies in order to increase the mutual recognition of Diplomas.** Without making a standard of organization, universities all over Europe have to agree on a few common settings which will allow them to facilitate the recognition of credits acquired abroad.

**Uniting universities all over Europe without unifying them.** By promoting teachers' mobility and giving more means to universities to build up new contacts, universities

should constitute a strongly linked network, helping them to improve both coordination and cooperation.

**Reduce the bureaucracy and improve communication between all actors**

**taking part in the SOCRATES program.** The administrative part of the program is too heavy and some of it should be restructured and reduced.

**Enlarge the number of countries having access to the SOCRATES program :** PHARE and TACIS countries, Cyprus and Turkey.



# Follow-up

The SOCRATES Action Day has been organized with the aim of attracting attention from all the parties concerned by the implementation of the SOCRATES program.

Therefore, this final brochure presenting the results gathered European-wide will be distributed all over Europe. Each person who took part in it will of course receive a copy but the main aim is to attract the attention of the decision-makers to the real situation of the SOCRATES program and to call on their commitment toward an improvement of this situation.

In order to do so, these results will be presented on the occasion of the Public Hearing of the European Parliament Commission on Culture, Youth, Education and Media, on November 26th 97.

A personal meeting with Mr. Lenarduzzi, Director General of DG XXII will be arranged and the results will also be used in the frame of the ERASMUS 10th Anniversary meeting, in December 1997.

Afterwards, delegations of national students, members of AEGEE, will present this document to the Ministers of Education of their own country, in a campaign which will take place between January and March 1998.

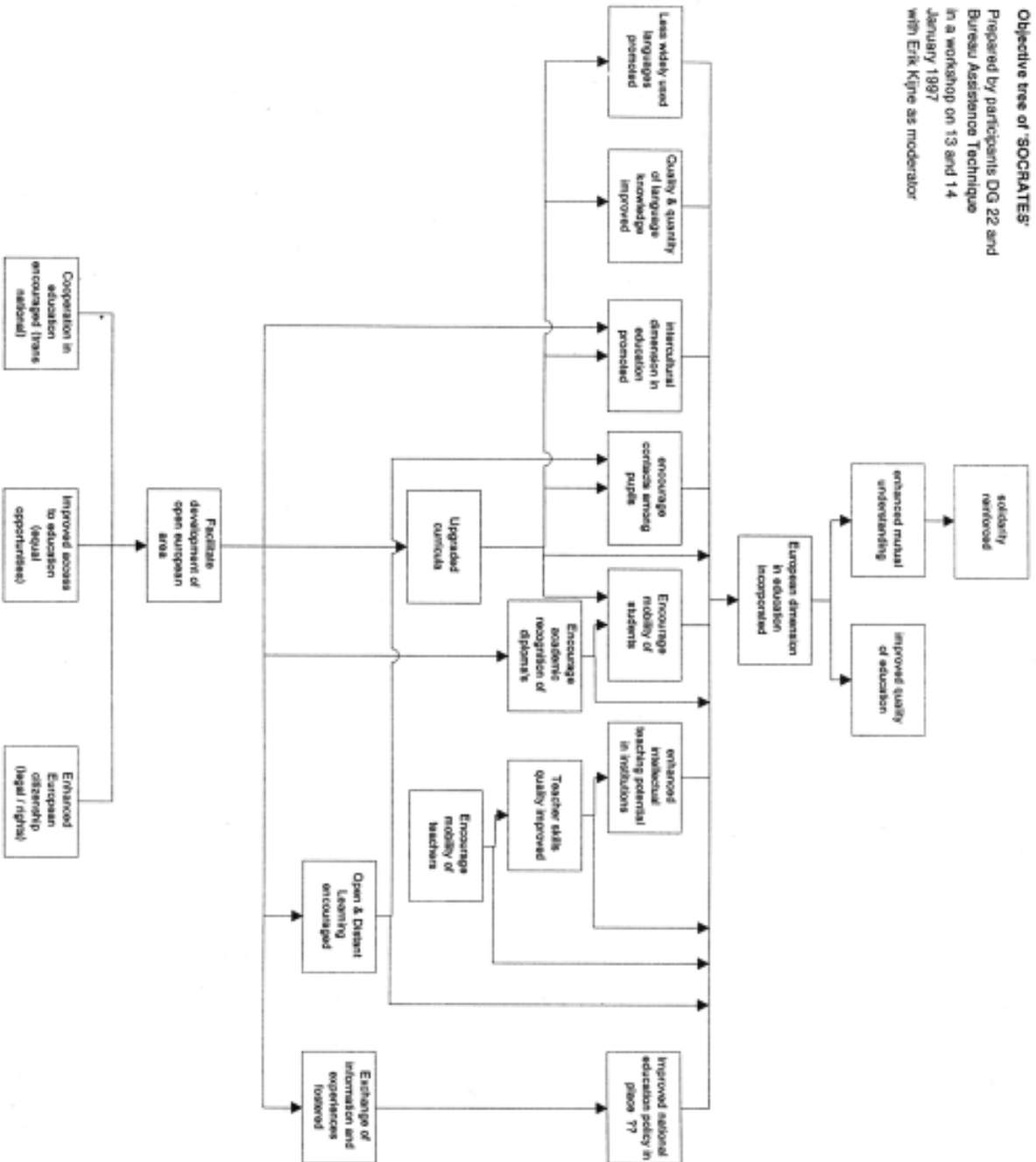
AEGEE will make every necessary effort to reach its objective : supporting the SOCRATES program for its aim but criticizing constructively its structure in order to improve it.

This first step being over, AEGEE will reorganize a second SOCRATES Action Day next March, in order to examine thoroughly the content of the SOCRATES II draft.

# Appendix I

## Objective Tree of Socrates

**Objective tree of 'SOCRATES'**  
 Prepared by participants DG 22 and  
 Bureau Assistance Technique  
 in a workshop on 13 and 14  
 January 1987  
 with Erik Kirje as moderator



# Appendix II

*Copy of the letter sent by the CRE  
to the rectors of the Universities for  
supporting the Socrates Action Day*

Geneva, 5 November 1997

Dear Rector,

As you well know, the SOCRATES programme has had a bumpy start considering the unmet expectations of students and academics who are still weighing the merits of the changed organisation of mobility activities that now refer to an institutional contract passed between European universities and the European Commission. This changed procedure, however, has not increased the mobility budget of the European Union, a fact that suddenly became obvious when the institutions received their awards.

Indeed, the new transparency pointed to the imbalance between policy and action, between administrative requirements and support level of various activities - to the great frustration of university members, be they teachers or students. CRE has already expressed to the European Union the need for a new departure if the European dimension of academic training is to develop to its full potential.

Students are obviously most concerned by the disillusionment that is now spreading in European institutions of higher education. That is why they would like to draw the attention of policy-makers, at national and international level, in particular in parliaments, on the needs of academic mobility and its necessity in an integrated Europe. On 12 November, 40 chapters of AEGEE, one of the largest associations of European students, will coordinate a common action throughout the 15 members of the European Union to make public their hopes and disappointment.

Your university is one of the institutions where AEGEE will organise this common action. The Board of CRE would welcome your active support of this SOCRATES day, which should give further arguments to the European Commission for still a greater commitment of the Union and individual member countries in the encouragement of free academic movement in an open European space of higher education.

For CRE, the active involvement of member universities in the defence of European mobility activities would complement its analysis of the present strengths and weaknesses of the SOCRATES programme, a study that will become part of the reflection process launched by the Commission on the future of academic exchange in a strengthened European community of citizens.

Certain that the improved future of SOCRATES is a full part of your institutions' interest in European activities, we hope that, with your support, AEGEE action on 12 November will meet its mobilising objectives, while we remain

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Andris Barblan  
Secretary General

# Appendix III

## SOCRATES ACTION DAY

November 12th 1997

54 antennae working together on the future of Socrates

### Questionnaire

The following questions are to be answered on a scale from 1 to 5

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Very bad | 4. Good      |
| 2. Bad      | 5. Very Good |
| 3. Average  |              |

PREPARATION OF THE EXCHANGE	1	2	3	4	5
1. Promotion for the exchange program					
2. How did you get to know about the exchange program within your own country ?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information by university</li> <li>• Information by students who had already been abroad</li> <li>• Own initiative</li> <li>• Information from a European Commission representation</li> </ul>					
3. How easy to understand and fill in were the application forms					
4. After which criteria the exchange places have been granted ?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Tests</li> <li>• Academical results</li> <li>• Every demand was satisfied</li> <li>• There was no explanations about the selection criteria</li> </ul>					
<b>ARRIVAL</b>					
5. Welcome at your arrival in the city					
6. Welcome at your arrival at host university					
7. Help on fulfilling the necessary administrative request					
8. Help on searching accomodation					
9. Quality of accomodation					
<b>STUDIES</b>					
10. Help on choosing courses					
11. Recognition of the courses you took by your home university					
12. Information beforehand about the courses available for you in your host university					
13. Information about the requirements expected from you in order for your studies abroad to be recognised by your home university					
14. Quality of the courses taken abroad					
15. Added-value to your curriculum					
16. Added-value to your personal development					
<b>FINANCE</b>					
17. If you receive any grant from the ERASMUS program, was the amount sufficient to finance your stay abroad					
18. If you receive any grant from a local organisation, did it finish to cover the cost of living abroad ?					
19. How was your overall financial situation					

Home University :

Host University :

# Socrates Action Day

## Participating Locals:



AEGEE-Aachen  
AEGEE-Aalborg  
AEGEE-Aix-en-Provence  
AEGEE-Amsterdam  
AEGEE-Ankara  
AEGEE-Athina  
AEGEE-Augsburg  
AEGEE-Barcelona  
AEGEE-Bari  
AEGEE-Bayreuth  
AEGEE-Berlin  
AEGEE-Bratislava  
AEGEE-Budapest  
AEGEE-Bucuresti  
AEGEE-Castellò  
AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca  
AEGEE-Debrecen  
AEGEE-Delft  
AEGEE-Dublin  
AEGEE-Eindhoven  
AEGEE-Enschede  
AEGEE-Gießen  
AEGEE-Gliwice/Zabrze  
AEGEE-Göttingen  
AEGEE-Granada  
AEGEE-Groningen  
AEGEE-Hamburg  
AEGEE-Heidelberg  
AEGEE-Iasi  
AEGEE-Istanbul  
AEGEE-Kaiserslautern  
AEGEE-Karlsruhe  
AEGEE-Leiden  
AEGEE-Leuven  
AEGEE-Lublin  
AEGEE-Lund  
AEGEE-Maastricht  
AEGEE-München  
AEGEE-Nijmegen  
AEGEE-Passau  
AEGEE-Rotterdam  
AEGEE-Sevilla  
AEGEE-s'Hertogenbosch  
AEGEE-Sibiu  
AEGEE-Trier  
AEGEE-Turku/Åbo  
AEGEE-Utrecht  
AEGEE-Warszawa  
AEGEE-Wien