



ASSEMBLÉE DES RÉGIONS D'EUROPE
ASSEMBLY OF EUROPEAN REGIONS
VERSAMMLUNG DER REGIONEN EUROPAS
ASAMBLEA DE LAS REGIONES DE EUROPA
ASSEMBLEA DELLE REGIONI D'EUROPA

Sopron, 30th November 2001

Press Release

Nordland crowned the most Youth-friendly region for 2001

The region of Nordland was unanimously nominated by the jury for the competition, organised by the Assembly of European Regions (AER), as the most Youth-friendly region for 2001. This Norwegian peripheral coastal region faced severe depopulation in the early nineties, essentially due to the exodus of young adults seeking employment. Thanks to the implementation of measures in favour of youth employment figures, this situation has changed: young adults now stay in the region and the unemployment rate has dropped spectacularly, from 25% to 2.9%, in just a few years.

The jury, made up of the Secretary Generals from the twelve AER founder and member interregional organisations and representatives of the Presidency, also unanimously decided to award a prize of recognition for the regions of Thüringen (D) and Timis (RO) at a meeting in Strasbourg on 29th October. 33 regions from 14 countries participated in the competition.

This event, launched by the AER and open to all European regions, initially came into being at the first Youth Conference in Odessa (UKR) in Spring 2000 and is, in reality, much more than a competition between the regions. The idea is to make the innovative initiatives and projects of candidates better known and ensure their promotion as a source of inspiration for other regions wishing to take the expectations and talents of their young population into account. The aim is to include young adults in decision making and to encourage their involvement in politics.

Nordland was officially awarded its prize at the AER General Assembly in Sopron (H) on 30th November, in the presence of high ranking representatives from regions having participated in the competition and their young population. The trophy was in the form of a work of art entitled "The Gold Cup" symbolising the power of youth. This trophy was donated by the region of Sörmland (S) and created by Kakizaki Hitoshi, a Japanese artist living in Sweden and working with Åsa Brant, member of the Swedish Glass Academy, and will be up for winning at the next edition of this two yearly competition. The AER calls out to all of the regions in Europe, which aim to construct the future for and with young adults, to start preparing their candidatures for 2003 now!

Created in 1985, the AER is a political organisation of the Regions in Europe and the speaker for their interests at European and International level. Its mission: bring together the regions of Europe and allow them to be, together, actors in the construction of Europe and European integration. The AER currently has 250 member regions from 25 European countries and 12 interregional organisations. The AER headquarters are in Strasbourg (F).

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