



ALDA FESTIVAL & GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2023

Local Democracy will save Democracy



LOCAL DEMOCRACY WILL SAVE DEMOCRACY

Four days of exciting events, more than 200 participants coming from all over Europe and beyond, debates, conferences, workshops: the **ALDA Festival and General Assembly 2023** was this and so much more.

From June 6 until June 9, 2023, the ALDA staff, members and whole network of the Association met in Brussels, Belgium, for the most important annual event of the year: the ALDA General Assembly.

In 2023, this key event entitled **“Local Democracy will save Democracy”** was conceived to engage the whole network of members and partners, involving them not only in the culminating event of the General Assembly, but also in a series of related activities to discuss and reflect together on current challenges and events, European values, priorities and next steps.



30 YEARS OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY

This year's ALDA Festival and General Assembly had a different taste, because the event was carried out on the occasion of an important anniversary, namely **30 years since the establishment of the very first Local Democracy Agency** in the Balkans, the LDA Subotica, which also marked the origin of ALDA's presence in the Balkans. Since then, the network and expertise of the LDAs and of ALDA itself, has only expanded and deepened.



SCAN AND
WATCH THE
YOUTUBE
VIDEO OF THE
FESTIVAL!





ALDA General Assembly

The highlight of this 4-day long event was most certainly the **ALDA General Assembly**, which took place on June 8 in the beautiful and historical location of the Etterbeek Municipal Hall, kindly hosted by the Mayor of Etterbeek, Mr. Vincent De Wolf. We have been very proud of noticing an increasing participation and engagement by the whole network of ALDA, the hall was filled with **members' representative, partners and friends of the Association**, who not only had the chance to acquire a new understanding of ALDA's activities in Europe and beyond, but could also actively participate in shaping ALDA's present and future action plans. The opening of the General Assembly was conferred to the vice-president of the European Commission, **Ms. Dubravka Suica**, which enlightened the audience with an insightful speech on the importance of Local Democracy.





ALDA General Assembly

Extremely interesting speeches were also delivered by our keynote speakers namely, the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, **Mr. Leendert Verbeek**; the Head of Unit of the programme Europe for Citizens, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), **Mr. Gilles Pelayo**; and the Executive Secretariat of the Central European Initiative, **Mr. Ugo Poli**.

They all emphasised how crucial it is to act locally and to promote and sustain local democracy, so that a solid foundation can be built to establish a resilient global one.

The ALDA General Assembly continued with the presentation of the paper "Local Democracy will Save Democracy" by **Ms. Daniela Ciaffi**, Labsus vice president and ALDA member: a publication that capitalises on the experience of ALDA and its members and partners in an attempt to contribute to the challenges posed to Democracy in Europe and in the world. The event concluded with the preview of "ALDA, Europe", the documentary on the 30 years anniversary of the Local Democracy Agencies in the Balkans, produced by **Mr. Francesco Zarzana**, ALDA vice president, and director of Progettarte Officina Culturale.



THE ALDA FESTIVAL



Not only a General Assembly...

The ALDA Festival and General Assembly 2023, was more than a General Assembly. From June 6 to June 9, several events unfolded in the Municipality of Etterbeek, focused on ALDA key priorities and objectives, under the motto of “Local Democracy will Save Democracy”.



..but a triumph of Democracy!

Keynote speakers, beautiful locations, exciting workshops and insightful conferences: these are all elements that made the ALDA Festival a true celebration of democracy.





INTERNATIONAL EVENT ON MIGRATION



La Tricoterie



June 6, 2023



ALDA Festival 2023 hosted the Final Event of the EPIC project

Migration, integration and inclusion are topics extremely dear to ALDA.

This is the reason why we decided to include the Final Event of the EPIC project- *European Platform of Integrating Cities*, within the ALDA Festival and General Assembly 2023.

EPIC addresses the challenges of the integration of migrants by targeting medium-sized cities that have the need to develop expertise in integration services and, at the same time, wish to learn and get inspired from the experience of Local Authorities and NGOs in other European countries. The event gathered partners and both local and international stakeholders who had the opportunity to discuss the project's achievements and the actions to undertake beyond the official project lifespan.



INSIGHTS ON EU PROGRAMMES & TOOLS



Maison Hap



June 7, 2023



EU Programmes and tools to support citizens participation, democracy and good governance Event

ALDA's commitment to support democracy and good governance in Europe and beyond, is based on key policies of the EU which are implemented through a number of different programmes. The aim of the workshop was to present the main "EC tools and programmes" that ALDA employs to achieve its goals and, thus, contribute to the mission and the objective of the EU. With this 2-hours workshop, ALDA gave the opportunity to the attendees to increase their knowledge around the **EU funding and opportunities and provided information and tools to support citizens participation, democracy and good governance.**



AN EXPERIMENT OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Maison Hap



June 7, 2023



Follow-up on the Conference on the Future of Europe: discussing the Final Draft of the Sub-Group Democracy

This workshop, was aimed at presenting the final draft document regarding the topic of Democracy, Rule of Law, Civic Space and EU in the World as a key section of the **Civil Society State of the Union Report** that was disseminated in September 2023 as a follow-up of the work done during the Conference on the Future of Europe.

ALDA, together with the European Civic Forum, chaired the chapter I of the Report, entitled “*Strengthening democracy, fundamental rights and civic space in the EU and the world*” and contributed to creating a vision for the European Union as a vibrant democracy, where citizens actively participate in decision-making processes and have trust in their institutions. ALDA envisioned an EU that upholds the rule of law, protects fundamental rights, and promotes equality and social cohesion.

alda

European Association
for Local Authorities

Member since 2005
Democracy
Partnership
Citizens



HUMAN RIGHTS & INCLUSIVITY AT THE CORE



Maison Hap



June 9, 2023



Fighting Hate Speech and Hate Crime at the EU Level

The event took place in the framework of STAND-UP project which aims at countering and standing-up against hate in the EU; the event was a good opportunity to discuss this rising phenomena and to present the new Hate crime & Hate speech victims support Handbook, to see what has been done and what needs to be tackled in the next phase of the project.

ALDA is extremely engaged in this regard as the **Gender, Inclusion and Human Rights HUB** is working unceasingly to ensure that Gender equality and the principle of non-discrimination are clear and defined concepts at the base of everyone's daily actions.



A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES



Maison Hap



June 8, 2023



Town Twinning Programme - Call for Proposals

During the ALDA Festival 2023, the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) presented the funding opportunities under the 2023 Call for Proposals for Town Twinning to any interested applicants and stakeholders. The session was held by **Mr. Marco Sioli**, call coordinator at the EACEA, who helped participants to gain better knowledge of the content and requirements of the Call for Proposals.



FOCUS ON DIGITALISATION & INNOVATION



Maison Hap



June 7, 2023



Digitalisation & 2024 European elections: P-CUBE project final conference & TALE world café

As we move towards the digital transition, digital education and gaming already play a crucial role in promoting participation, technical skills, and transversal competences. During this event, key stakeholders, including the EACEA, Science for Democracy, European Parliament representatives, relevant NGOs, and our members (i.e., ALL DIGITAL), came together to present the outcomes of their work within the P-CUBE and TALE projects.

The P-CUBE project - Playing Public Policy, focuses on helping people understand how decisions are made in the public sphere by gamifying various elements of policy. During the event, the final version of the Policy Game was unveiled and presented to the audience.



Regarding the TALE project, which aims to engage a larger number of voters in the upcoming European parliamentary elections in 2024, this event served as an opportunity to inform citizens about EU priorities, values, and activities foreseen. It also served to raise awareness among young people on the importance of the elections, stimulating their active participation.



ALDA STANDS WITH UKRAINE: A NEVER ENDING COMMITMENT



La Tricoterie



June 7, 2023



Challenges for local communities in the face of migration of Ukrainians during the war

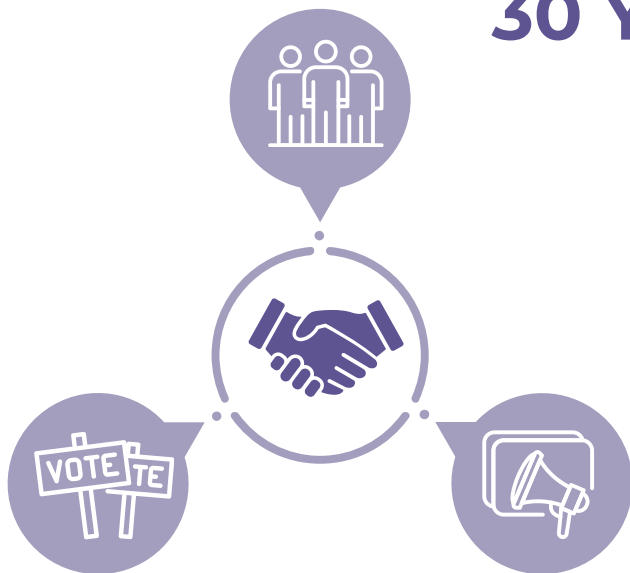
ALDA's presence in Ukraine dates back to 2015, when the Local Democracy Agency (LDA) in Dnipro was opened, followed by LDA Mariupol in 2017, thus representing, for almost 10 years, a strategic partner in the country.

Today more than ever, ALDA's presence in Ukraine has increased and keeps doing so, committing to support local government, civil society organisations and the Ukrainian population as a whole.

The event "Challenges for local communities in the face of migration of Ukrainians during the war" gathered partners and stakeholders to discuss recommendations for actions to support local communities in Ukraine.



30 YEARS OF RESILIENT DEMOCRACY



Maison Hap



June 9, 2023



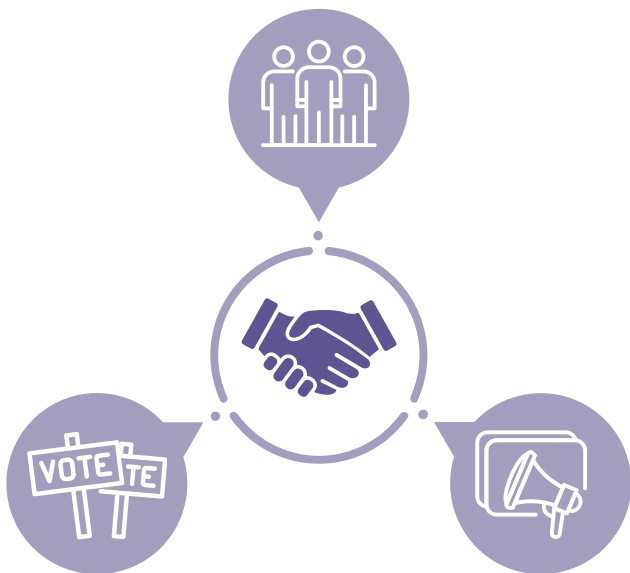
30 Years Local Democracy Agencies in the Balkans

This year ALDA celebrates the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the first Local Democracy Agency in the Balkans, LDA Subotica. This special occasion has been at the core of ALDA Festival and General Assembly 2023, within which the event **“30 Years Local Democracy Agencies in the Balkans”** took place on 9 June, 2023.

Since 1993 several things have changed. Year by year, the Local Democracy Agencies proved to be a successful tool of cohesion and cooperation and have grown until reaching a network of 16 LDAs spread in the European Neighbourhood, with 2 Operational Partners (OPs). During this event, ALDA and its network looked back together on the road so far and discussed tomorrow's commitments.



DEMOCRACY & CHALLENGES IN THE EAP



Maison Hap



June 9, 2023



Local Democracy in the context of a renewed geopolitical framework in the Eastern Partnership Countries

Recent years have brought several new challenges for the Eastern Partnership region related to migration, defence and security, enlargement and international threats from Russia.

Capitalising on Brussels' increased interest nowadays regarding its eastern neighbours, especially the countries with EU-candidate status, this panel aimed to showcase the **importance of local democracy in the EU-integration processes** thanks to the contributions of LDAs, EU institutions and municipalities representatives that have been engaged for a long time in supporting their eastern counterparts and other civil society experts and actors.



STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE AND BEYOND!



Maison Hap



June 9, 2023



Stronger together: exploring EU's contribution to local democracy around the globe

This round table addressed the theme of the **European Union as a global agent promoting democratic values in third countries**, exploring three specific areas: the African continent, Türkiye and the Euro-Mediterranean area. The aim was to highlight the main challenges affecting local democracy in the EU's neighbouring communities and the initiatives taken by institutions and civil society organisations to address them, through concrete examples. Prominent speakers from the European Commission and ALDA partner and member organisations took the floor and provided inspiring contributions on global challenges and next steps.



PEOPLE AT THE CORE



Maison Hap



June 9, 2023



Knowledge fair at ALDA Festival 2023

The Knowledge Fair revolved around the message that 'Local Democracy will save Democracy.' It aimed to address issues of both general and global interest, which strongly impact our daily lives and have relevance at the local level. During the Knowledge Fair, participants engaged in networking and lively discussions about projects, initiatives, and events related to local democracy, participatory mechanisms, and citizens' engagement. The goal was to strengthen communities, making them more resilient in the face of multiple crises. The international atmosphere at the fair was truly inspiring. To get a glimpse of it, check out our Instagram reel!



NEXT STEPS: WHY BARCELONA?

Barcelona has a long history of civic engagement and activism and it has been at the forefront of movements advocating for social and political change, making it a natural fit for **a democracy-focused event**.

This year, a pan-European Citizen Jury has chosen **Barcelona** as the inaugural **European Capital of Democracy** and until the autumn of **2024**, Barcelona will serve as the **European hub for enhancing and revolutionising democracy** for a full year.





European Association
for Local Democracy

ALDA Festival and General Assembly aims to offer an **all-encompassing democratic encounter**: since Barcelona will host an array of initiatives, projects and endeavours designed to commemorate democracy throughout 2024, it would be the perfect setting to highlight **exemplary approaches and engage with the pivotal discussions concerning our current and future democratic landscape**.

Through collaborative efforts involving citizens, institutions, civil society, and stakeholders, we will collectively develop an engaging, diverse, and inclusive program tailored for an **European audience**.

Moreover, **Barcelona** is a **melting pot** of cultures, languages, and traditions, making it a natural choice for an event focused on democracy as its **rich history and heritage**, the city embodies the principles of inclusivity and cultural exchange that democracy seeks to promote.

The local **population's commitment to democratic values** and their willingness to engage in meaningful discussions provide an inspirational backdrop for the event.

Listen to the testimony of the **Mayor of the Municipality of Etterbeek, Mr. Vincent De Wolf**, who warmly welcomed ALDA and its network in Etterbeek for the ALDA Festival and General Assembly 2023!



SCAN ME



**ALDA -European Association
for Local Democracy**



E-mail

alda@alda-europe.eu



Website

www.alda-europe.eu



@aldaeurope



@ALDAeurope



@AldaEu



**ALDA - European Association
for Local Democracy**

This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union under the CERV - Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme.

The contents of it are sole responsibility of ALDA and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.



Citizens, Equality, Rights and
Values programme



Co-funded by the
European Union



alda*



European Association
for Local Democracy



Citizens, Equality, Rights and
Values programme



Co-funded by the
European Union