

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2015



LDA Dnipropetrovsk introductory meeting: the first Ukrainian LDA will be opened soon

The Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Dnipropetrovsk introductory meeting took place on 6 March back-to-back with the youth event organised by the Congress of the Council of Europe within the framework of its project on “Strengthening the capacity of local authorities in Ukraine”.

ALDA, in collaboration with its partners, is planning to **launch the LDA in Dnipropetrovsk on 18th May 2015** in line with the Europe Day celebrations. The current confirmed partners include the regions of Lower Silesia (Poland), Alsace (France), and the region of Dnipropetrovsk (Ukraine). The LDA is endorsed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, by the UNDP ART initiative and CORLEAP (The Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership) of the Committee of the Regions (CoR).

The introductory meeting gathered young leaders from the Dnipropetrovsk city, the region and the neighbouring regions, and experts and civic activists from Kyiv, Odessa, Kharkiv, Lviv, and Rivne.

Mr Volodymyr Perehudov, Deputy Chairman of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional Council, welcomed the participants on behalf of Mr Yevgeny Udod, Chairman of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional Council, who was travelling to the partner region of Lower Silesia at that time. He confirmed the commitment of the local authorities to the LDA and its planned activities.

ALDA’s Secretary General, Ms Antonella Valmorbida, outlined the LDA concept stressing the role of both local and international partners, civil society organisations as well as that of the local authorities, in developing the activities of the LDA.

Her words were echoed in two presentations that followed. Mr Blazej Zajac, President of the Wroclaw-based Association for the East-West Mutual Understanding, spoke about the ongoing cooperation between Lower Silesia and Dnipropetrovsk, while Mr Jan Szebesczyk, Project Coordinator with the House of Meetings of Angelus Silesius in Wroclaw, stressed the role of youth exchanges in breaking the stereotypes, bringing youngsters together, leading to improved understanding between the neighbouring countries.

The participants could hear from the top experts, such as Mr Andrii Krupnik of the all-Ukrainian Association for Community Self-Organisation Assistance, on the available mechanisms of public participation in formulation and implementation of policies locally. Mr Oleksii Orlovsky, Director of the International Renaissance Foundation, discussed the challenges of ensuring participation in local democracy in view of the current legislation in Ukraine.

The presentation of Mr Dobrica Milovanovic, Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, focused on the LDA work in the Balkans accompanying the transition from the 1990s onwards. In his words, the Balkan LDAs represented a milestone of the communities for dialogue between civil society and local authorities. They were providing better conditions for developing local democracy and citizen participation by building their capacities, initiating cooperation and helping in finding partners for joint projects.

The afternoon session was an opportunity to discuss the various aspects of LDA Dnipropetrovsk practical work in smaller groups, in particular how, and through which means, to maximise its impact on the ground.

There was a lot of enthusiasm in the room and many expressions of interest and questions from the participants as to how they can be involved with LDA Dnipropetrovsk. Equally, the civil society representatives travelling from other regions were convinced that there is a need to set up LDAs in other cities in Ukraine, quoting Odessa and Kharkiv as the next possible locations.

The objectives of the meeting – in particular to make aware the potential stakeholders of the May 18th inauguration of the LDA Dnipropetrovsk but also to discuss with them the role of the LDA, exchange ideas on how to best cooperate with the local authorities and civil society in the regional context, and identify needs and priorities for the initial work of the LDA – were met.

For further information, please find here the [Agenda](#) of the event.

Please find below some interesting material about the event:

- Dobrica Milovanovic's [presentation](#)
- [Photo gallery](#)
- [Video](#) of the event
- [Opening of a Local Democracy Agency in Dnipropetrovsk on 18th May](#)
- [A Local Democracy Agency opens its office in Dnipropetrovsk](#)
- [In Dnipropetrovsk, for the first time in Ukraine, a Local Democracy Agency will open](#)
- [Yevgeny Udod invites community to Dnipropetrovsk's development](#)
- [For the first time in Ukraine, a LDA will open in Dnipropetrovsk](#)
- [Dnipropetrovsk: for the first time in Ukraine an LDA will open](#)
- [In Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, a Local Democracy Agency opens for the first time](#)
- [In Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, opens the first LDA](#)
- [Dnipropetrovsk: observing democracy and developing civil society activity](#)
- [Dnipropetrovsk teaches democracy](#)
- [News of Dnipropetrovsk region](#)
- [Ukraine: for the first time an LDA will open in Dnipropetrovsk](#)
- [Dnipropetrovsk: an LDA in Ukraine for the first time](#)
- [In Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, a Local Democracy Agency opens for the first time](#)
- [Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine: opening of a Local Democracy Agency](#)
- [In Dnipropetrovsk an LDA opens for the first time](#)



Gianfranco Martini scholarship 2015 - Apply by 10 April

ALDA set up a scholarship in memory of its Honorary President Gianfranco Martini.

University students and researchers can apply by 10 April for the 2015 edition. Focus of their study or project have to be the development of theoretical and practical strategies to promote local democracy, engagement of civil society and/or interethnic dialogue.

Further information about application form, candidates selection, projects selection, scholarship amount, can be found on the [dedicated web page](#).

The successful candidate will be announced at the annual General Assembly of ALDA in May 2015, where the scholar will present the results of his or her study, which will be widely disseminated.

Gianfranco Martini, who passed away in October 2012, was among the initiators of the concept of Local Democracy Agencies, and became the first President of ALDA when it was founded in 1999. Throughout his active life he passionately promoted local democracy, civic engagement, and interethnic dialogue, especially in Western Balkans.

[More information on the scholarship Gianfranco Martini](#) (.pdf)



The lottery that celebrates ALDA's 15th anniversary: one month left to the draw date!

There is still one month left to buy the lottery tickets that celebrate our 15th anniversary. Wonderful prizes, including stays all over Europe, typical food and wines, electronic devices and magazines, to be won!

The draw will take place inside the **Council of Europe**, in Strasbourg, on **15th April 2015**, with the presence of representatives of the Council of Europe, and of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, to ensure high visibility and legitimacy to ALDA lottery *

*The draw date moved from 15 March to 15 April to guarantee the presence of the representatives of the CoE and of the Congress

List of prizes:

Discover Europe and the work of ALDA!

1. Travel and 3-night stay in Strasbourg (France) for 2 people - offered by ALDA

2. Travel and 3-night stay in Brussels (Belgium) for 2 people - offered by ALDA

3. Travel and 3-night stay in Vicenza, Veneto (Italy) for 2 people - offered by ALDA



4. Travel and 4-night stay in Caen, Lower Normandy (France) for 2 people - offered by Region Lower Normandy



5. Travel and 3-night stay in Kotor (Montenegro) 2 people - offered by LDA Montenegro



6. Travel and 3-night stay in Mostar (Bosnia Herzegovina) for 2 people - offered by LDA Mostar



7. Travel and 3-night stay in Ohrid (Macedonia) for 2 people - offered by Region Lower Normandy



8. Travel and 3-night stay in Palic / Subotica, Vojvodina (Serbia) for 2 people - offered by LDA Subotica



9. Travel and 3-night stay in Georgia, Black Sea for 2 people - offered by LDA Georgia



10. 2-night stay in B&B in rural tourism, Erdut / Osijek (Croatia) for 2 people - offered by Erdut Municipality



11. 2-night stay in B&B in rural tourism, Daij (Croatia) for 2 people - offered by Erdut Municipality



12. 2-night stay in B&B in rural tourism, Aljmaš (Croatia) for 2 people - offered by Erdut Municipality

13. 3-night stay in Strasbourg (France) for 2 people - offered by Strasbourg

14. 3-night stay in Brussels (Belgium) for 2 people - offered by ALDA



15. New Eastern Europe, a bimonthly dedicated to Central and Eastern Europe – 1 year subscription - offered by New Eastern Europe

For you and your family!

16. Travel and 3-night stay in Strasbourg (France) for the Christmas Market 2015 for 2 people - offered by Strasbourg



17. 3-night stay in Hammamet (Tunisia) for 2 people - offered by Lam Echaml



18. 3-night stay in Varna, Black Sea Coast (Bulgaria) for 2 people - offered by UBBSLA



19. 1 week-end stay in Karşıyaka (Turkey) for 2 people - offered by Karsiyaka Municipality



20. 2-night stay in San Candido, Dolomites (Italy) for 2 people - offered by Hotel Leithof - Dolomiten Living



21. 5-night stay in Salento, Apulia (Italy) for 2 people - offered by ISBEM



22. 6-night stay in Ravenna, Emilia Romagna (Italy) for 2 people - offered by Hotel Diana



23. 6-night stay in Ravenna, Emilia Romagna (Italy) for 2 people - offered by Association ENDAS

abc.it

24. iPad Apple mini Retina 16 GB Wi-Fi + Cellular - offered by abc.it



25. 6 PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) bottles of wines from Apulia (Italy) - offered by Albano Carrisi

26. 6 PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) white organic wines from Alsace (France) - offered by family Friederich/ Zasova



27. Large basket of typical food and drinks from Cilento, Campania (Italy) - offered by Laurino Municipality

28. 3 entries to Disneyland Paris (France) - offered by ALDA

29. 3 entries to [Gardaland](#), Verona, Veneto (Italy) - offered by ALDA



30. 2 entries for EXIT Festival 2015 in Novi Sad (Serbia) - offered by LDA Subotica

31. 4 entries for the exhibition "Tutankhamon Caravaggio Van Gogh" in Vicenza, Veneto (Italy) - offered by Vicenza



ALDA meets Italian MEP Brando Benifei: discussing about the challenges and opportunities of Europe.

ALDA staff are interviewing MEPs as well as other important stockholders at European level, to

hear their views and positions on topics concerning local democracy, and citizen participation in the European Union. Aldo Xhani, Active Citizenship Project Manager, interviewed the new elected MEP Brando Benifei to discuss about the challenges that Europe is facing and opportunities it can offer.

According to MEP Brando Benifei, a general climate of mistrust is affecting Europe. In this sense, the greatest challenge in this moment is recovering the mutual trust not only among ruling class and civil society, but also among the countries of the European Union. Mutual solidarity and cohesion are essential in order to avoid the breaking up of Europe, which is perceived as a real danger. The European Union is not a real Union yet: governments and MEPs do have a fundamental role in building a real integration.

Another great challenge is to reconnect citizens to Europe, promoting their participation at the local level in order to build a common ideal of integration. Europe is often perceived as a distant concept, but at the same time, its decisions concretely influence citizens' lives, often without people realizing it. The success of activities organised in the framework of Youth in Action and Erasmus + programmes are contributing to this growing feeling of integration and common sense of belonging to Europe, something which is very important in a period dominated by Euroscepticism.

Although Europe offers several opportunities, it has to improve the accessibility to these opportunities, broadening the number of individuals, authorities and associations that can have access to the European funds.

The interview was also the occasion to discuss about the five-year break from the European Union enlargement: actions fostering mutual dialogue and citizen participation among people coming from EU and Neighbourhood countries are essential to establish peace and cohesion also beyond European borders. In particular, international relations with Neighbouring countries are often limited to political and economic agreements, but it should include also exchanges among students, local authorities and civil society associations.

As MEP, Mr. Benifei's priorities are: the improvement of social integration and union within the European Union, since there is gap between economic and fiscal integration and the convergence of social parameters among the different countries of the EU; the strengthening of Europe as an actor able to represent our interests and values across the world; and the direct commitment in social policies focusing on youth, people with disabilities and European digital agenda.

The complete podcast of the interview is available on our [SoundCloud channel](#)



ALDA Skopje, a fundamental actor for international development What is the crucial role of ALDA Skopje in Macedonia?

ALDA has been developing its activities for more than 10 years in Macedonia, in particular in the framework of the cooperation between the French region of Lower Normandy and Macedonia. Thanks to several projects and partnerships consolidated on the territory, ALDA realised a solid base for the development of actions. Therefore, few years ago, ALDA officially established one of its branches in Skopje. Today, we are very proud of the importance achieved in the country by ALDA Skopje as developer of local democracy through international cooperation. We are currently running projects involving a wide range of stakeholders: government departments, local communities, associations, schools, cultural institutions. Macedonia is looking for its way to join the European family, and ALDA Skopje supports this effort creating new opportunities of development between the several Macedonian actors and their European counterpart.

ALDA Skopje gets involved in cooperation activities in Europe and in the Neighbouring countries

Driven by the desire of the Board of ALDA, the on-site team and its partners, ALDA Skopje is expanding its range of action. Since this year, ALDA Skopje also took part to the establishment of a platform for youth participation. Relevant for its uniqueness as network melting together local communities, civil society and youth, it puts in communication five Balkan countries, while ALDA Skopje is in charge of its development. Despite the geographical and cultural proximity of Balkan countries, the establishment of a network, gathering together young people and political actors from the region, always remain a challenge, and it represent a necessity for regional development.

Furthermore, besides the several projects with the European Union, ALDA Skopje expands its action in the neighbouring regions: the Caucasus and the Mediterranean. For instance, last week ALDA Skopje held an event of “YES TODAY” project: a group of young people from Azerbaijan came to Macedonia for an educational study-visit concerning youth employment. “The positive reaction of participants and the strong resonance of the event on the Macedonian press, represent a relevant signal of the importance this kind of exchanges has for our territories – says Mrs. Ivana Dimotrivska, head of ALDA Skopje office – The exchanges with different countries, outside our habitual boundaries, seem to be very rewarding for our partners. And this interest should let us reflect on our normal practices”. And she adds: “Motivated by this excellent experience, we would like to increase the interest on the topic of youth employment, and we are working on a project in collaboration with Morocco and Tunisia”.

The new challenges we have to face

Reasoned by our vision, there are still a lot of opportunities to try. With its new operating functions and projects, ALDA Skopje is firmly consolidating its position. “We are shaping our identity as Macedonian as well as in the network of ALDA – says Mrs. Dimitrovska – and it requires a lot of devotion, engagement and enthusiasm. Our dynamic staff here in Skopje is growing in

numbers. Thanks to the big efforts of our staff, the support given by ALDA and the involvement of our partners, we are ready to realise the great goals of development of ALDA Skopje”.



Azeri youngsters on study visit in Macedonia

Macedonia

A group of young Azeri attended from 2nd to 6th of March 2015 in Macedonia a training on the issues of employment and social inclusion in the frame of the project YES TODAY! Youth Employment and Social Inclusion: Training and opportunities for Developing Azeri Youth, implemented by ALDA.

The purpose of this training was to enhance the knowledge of the young Azeri about youth unemployment, social and economic inclusion and local development through a multidisciplinary and multicultural approach. The methods and tools used helped the youngsters in gaining abilities to increase their personal employability and open various opportunities.

The young Azeri had the chance to visit the most relevant institutions and organisations present in Skopje, to learn about the opportunities offered for youth employment and to exchange positive practices and experiences.

The group visited the Agency for Employment and the State Agency for Youth and Sport of the Republic of Macedonia, where they had a presentation on the institutional frame of employment and youth policies. Moreover, they had an interesting exchange of practices with the UNDP office in Skopje, especially about the opportunities offered to start ups. They also had the chance to visit local organisations for young people.

The young Azeri presented their country, their culture and traditions, and offered a degustation of Azeri delights to the Macedonian peers.

The program of the study visit, at a later stage, focused on the personal skills of the participants through Project cycle management training, which aims at bolstering and strengthening the management and entrepreneurial abilities of the participants.

This study visit was the follow-up of the project FUNNY and part of the project YES TODAY! Youth Employment and Social Inclusion: Training and opportunities for Developing Azeri Youth, implemented by ALDA in partnership with SEGA, Coalition of Youth Organizations, and with the financial support of Waldesian Evangelical Church.

This study visit had very large media coverage in Macedonia. You can see some of the links in the Macedonian media here below:

[STUDY VISIT “YES, TODAY! YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION”](#)

[Students from Azerbaijan visit the Employment Agency of Macedonia](#)

[Yes, today ! Youth Employment and Social Inclusion](#)

[Students coming from Azerbaijan to Macedonia to visit the Employment Agency](#)

[Photo gallery](#)



Legality, trust and social cohesion are not starting points but the outcome of good governance and citizen participation

Representatives and officials of local authorities are more and more suffering from intimidations: in this article we collected the answers of mayors of municipalities that are among the network of ALDA's members.

An article by G. Baldessaro, published in the Italian newspaper La Repubblica on 2nd March 2015, reveals a shocking truth: around 8% of Italian municipalities, without no discrimination for dimensions and geographical position, suffers from acts of intimidation, concretely addressed to mayors and councillors.

According to the data presented, the phenomenon is constantly increasing: in 2013, the registered cases were 870, while in the first four month period of 2014 the cases were 395. In the last 16 months the number of intimidations counts up to 1,265.

Although the situation is alarming, the European Association for Local Democracy – ALDA, with more than 15 years of experience in the field of citizen participation at the local level, wants to highlight some good examples identified during these years. ALDA is a membership-based organisation, gathering more than 170 members – including local authorities and NGOs coming from Italy, Europe and Neighboring countries. Constant collaboration with civil society and local authorities allows discovering the authenticity of relations, fostering mutual trust and good governance, and giving relevance to the values of democracy, participation, development and legality.

The puzzling report by La Repubblica made ALDA and its Italian member reflect on this issue, in particular with the mayors of municipalities that are among our members. The Mayor of Mesagne, in the province of Brindisi, and the Mayor of Thiene, Vicenza, underlined the importance of involving citizens and joining the European network for an effective local democracy.

Franco Scoditti, Mayor of the Municipality of Mesagne, affirmed: “ When the organised crime affected the historic, social and economic fabric of the territory, as the Sacra Corona Unita in Mesagne, the risk of intimidations is constant, although the bench and good sense struggled against it. In this sense, we, as municipal administrators, keep dealing effectively with goods seized to mafia, working on social cohesion and taking part to national and international networks, which are able to accelerate cultural regenerating processes and to foster the exchange of good practices that are necessary for a real and healthy development of the territory. We decided to join the network of ALDA for these reasons, in order to support citizens' awareness that there are many experts working on that.”

“Although nowadays our territory seems to be free from the the organized crime, at the environmental and urbanistic level, we cannot be naïf regarding this issue”, declared Giovanni Battista Casarotto, Mayor of Thiene (Vicenza). “It is essential to make more transparent administrations, allowing citizens to participate directly to the activities of the local administration. Integrity is pursued through the internal regulations, such as the anti-corruption plan and the program for transparency, which are approved every year, and the regular update of the information on the municipality website, in a particular the section called “Transparent administration”. In addition, citizens can ask to publish information that is not present or updated in the website. The exchange of good practices is essential to educate the bureaucracy system and citizens the culture of legality, transparency and mutual collaboration, in particular to reach the European citizenship. In this context, ALDA represent the ideal interlocutor between different national and European municipalities, aiming to contrast those phenomena that threaten integrity and good governance”.

“The network and our members’ opinions on our work is really important to us” said Antonella Valmorbida, Secretary General of ALDA. “Our members and partners have to be satisfied of joint work and should perceive our collaborations as an added value. We live in a world where transparency is not common and where serenity is not always taken for granted. But we want to highlight those experiences and cooperation marked by authenticity and commitment of people working with passion. We hope to create stronger relations, marked by respect, cohesion and mutual trust.”



DECIDE - Launching the testing phase of the “Youth Council” in Godeni, Romania

On 27th – 29th March, within the framework of the project DECIDE, the Iezer Muscel Mountain Community Association, Romania, kicked off the pilot testing phase of the “Youth Council” as one of the measures of the democratic compact promoted by the Slovakian Center for Community Organizing and the Municipality of Banska Bystrica.

More than 30 good practices promoting citizen participation have been collected during the first phase of the project and exchanged through an international platform. The aim of this phase is to test existing forms of participation and to analyse the possibilities of forming a Youth Council in Godeni, Romania, based on the experiences of other municipalities.

The local stakeholders in this phase (Godeni and Domnesti municipalities, schools, youth association and unemployed young people) were identified through the cooperation between IMMCA and local actors. 7 young counsellors were elected and their role in the YC was established. The general objective of the implementation is to engage youth representatives in decision making process at the local level; gain experience in doing responsible services for the

local community benefit; and allow young people to experience democracy and participation in their daily life.



Report by CONCORD on "Mutual engagement between EU Delegations and civil society organisations"

CONCORD, the European confederation of Relief and Development NGOs, produced a report on mutual engagement between EU delegations and civil society organisations across the world.

The report is based on responses to a worldwide survey from 229 civil society actors (CONCORD members and their partners) working in 70 partner countries, supplemented by interviews with some EU delegations (EUDs).

The aim of the report is to gather examples of good practices and lessons learnt from the engagement between EU delegations and CSOs in order to give feedback and make recommendations to the EU delegations, EU member states and civil society community. The final goal is of course improving the engagement EUDs- CSOs.

The report shows that huge progress has been made and that the dialogue between EUDs and CSOs is constantly increasing, but major challenges still remain. Existing *ad hoc* consultations need to be transformed in a more permanent dialogue, the range of civil society actors to involve needs to be broaden, as well as the engagement with local and grassroots organisations. But it's not only about EU Delegations, also CSOs should coordinate better to ensure a more effective engagement with EUDs.

You can access the report in English, Spanish and French via this [link](#).

CONCORD is also organising 3 webinars on the 31st of March 2015 in the 3 languages of the report in order to exchange further on this report, its recommendations and its usefulness. In order to participate to the webinars, please register through the following links, by 15 March.

- [English webinar, March 31 \(10.00-11.00 CET\)](#)
- [French webinar, March 31 \(12.00-13.00 CET\)](#)
- [Spanish webinar, March 31 \(17.00-18.00 CET\)](#)



Paris - ALDA showcased its contribution to the ELDW 2014 edition

ALDA was invited last 16 February in Paris by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to contribute to the coordination meeting of the European Local Democracy Week 2015. The event called the most active cities and associations that demonstrated strong commitment to promote citizen participation at local level. It was also an occasion to share good practices between the participants and foster knowledge on local democracy.

ALDA was represented by Aldo Xhani, Coordinator of the Citizenship Programme, who showcased ALDA's contribution to the last year's ELDW edition focused on the topic "Active Citizenship: voting, sharing, participating". Participants were pleased to hear about ALDA's publication "**Citizen Participation in Local Decision Making – Case studies in the framework of the European Local Democracy Week (ELDW)**".

The publication collects the main good practices promoting participatory democracy at local level and will be distributed in 400 copies in Russian in Belarus, as a tool to further foster citizen participation in the country. The objective of the publication is twofold: to give an overview and transfer best practices on citizen participation and cooperation between LAs and CSOs in Belarus as well as to raise awareness on the ELDW initiative and open up possibilities for Belarusian municipalities and organisations to join the context.

ALDA also expressed its strong commitment to contribute to the 2015 ELDW edition by promoting the initiative within its network and inviting all members to take an active role in the Congress' activity.

NEWS FROM THE LDAs



"Local Democracy in Armenia: Call to Government" presented to the Armenian Government: supporting the consolidation of local democracy in Armenia.

In the framework of a vast programme for supporting the consolidation of local democracy in

Armenia developed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Communities Association of Armenia, the Communities Finance Officers Association and the Association of Municipal Councillors publicly presented the document “Local Democracy in Armenia: Call to Government” to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations, on 21st January 2015.

The *Call* summarises suggestions of 150 communities heads and councillors from 10 regions of Armenia collected during two seminars, organised by the CoE, held on 9 and 11 September 2014 in Gyumri and Sisian. It compiles proposals and concerns of the communities on the subsidiarity principle, administrative-territorial reforms, inter-municipal co-operation, finance and taxes, role of councillors and citizen participation.

LDA Armenia and Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida, Secretary General of ALDA, took part to the initiative respectively as local partner and as civil society expert. In particular, Mrs. Valmorbida coordinated in September 2014- both in Gyumri and in Sisian - the workshop on citizens participation dedicated to raise awareness on the issue and identify possible improvements.

The *Call* was welcomed as an inspiring example of collaboration among local authorities, associations and central government. In the meanwhile, the Government of Armenia has officially requested the Congress to engage in post-monitoring dialogue, which will probably start in mid-2015.



Another step towards the LDA Tunisia, and ALDA activities of social responsibility in the country

The Communication officer of ALDA, Irene Zanetti, was in Tunis from 2 to 6 March 2015 in the framework of the association activities in the country.

The mission was yet another step for ALDA's work to establish the future Local Democracy Agency Tunisia, which according to the plan will be opened in 2016. Meetings with key partners of the Association took place, especially with Mr. Moncef Ben Slimane, President of the network of CSO Lam Echaml, and with Mr. Imed Abdeljaoued, Director of the Civil Society Strengthening Programme (Programme d'Appui à la Société Civile - PASC Tunisie).

At the same time, the mission was part of ALDA's social responsibility activities. ALDA Communication officer participated as an expert volunteer to two projects led by the American NGO Financial Service Volunteer Corps, aimed at building communication capacities for the Tunisian Ministry of Finance, and for two civil society organizations - the Tunisian Association of Public Auditors, and Transparency First. It goes without saying that the role of these stakeholders in the country is huge, and that transparency is a key pre-requisite for citizens trust and engagement.