

## ALDA NEWSLETTER APRIL 2014



### ALDA General Assembly, 4-6 June 2014

On 4-6 June, the General Assembly of ALDA 2014 will take place in Strasbourg, France.

This important appointment will be connected to a variety of opportunities, such as a **free training on the programme 'Europe for Citizens' 2014 – 2020**, the **final International conference of the project Working Together for Development**, and the **Ordinary and extraordinary General Assembly of ALDA**. We invite all the members of ALDA to participate and address together this crucial times, its challenges and opportunities. We also welcome everybody to participate to the final conference of the project WTD "**Bridging the European year 2013 and the European year 2015: from participation to development**", which will put citizen participation and local development in the spotlight.

#### Agendas of the events:

[Training on the programme 'Europe for Citizens' and other parallel events on 4 June – Agenda](#)

[Final International conference of the project Working Together for Development – Agenda](#)

[Ordinary and extraordinary General Assembly of ALDA - Agenda](#)

For information and registration to the General Assembly and parallel events, please contact

[Mattia.Brazzale@aldaintranet.org](mailto:Mattia.Brazzale@aldaintranet.org)

For information and registration to the final international conference of the project WTD, please contact

[Nicolas.Gamouras@aldaintranet.org](mailto:Nicolas.Gamouras@aldaintranet.org)

Members can register via this [online registration form](#)



### WTD key event: Bridging active citizenship to development

ALDA organized a three-days event within the project WTD – Working Together for Development, in

Brussels from 7 to 9 April. This was also an occasion for our President Oriano Otočan to formally open our new office in Brussels, in Rue de la Science 14.

Three days of intensive work, the first two dedicated to training activities for the project partners, and a final open workshop on the cooperation between local authorities and civil society organizations for development, organized in cooperation with EPAN Working Group of CONCORD - the European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs. Our Director Antonella Valmorbida is Chair of the Group.

The event provided the opportunity to share information and strengthen cooperation between LAs and CSOs or their associations and other relevant stakeholders of the post-MDG framework, while discussing the possible broadening of the post-MDG framework's objectives and its implication with regards to the involvement of local actors and civil society.

The workshop featured presentations by international panelists including representatives of the European Commission, UNDP, networks CSOs, as well as local NGOs. Among the keynote speakers Oriano Otočan, President of ALDA, Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA, Marius WANDERS, Director of World Vision's EU office and Acting Chair of CONCORD Task Force on EYD, Maurice Classeens, Senior Coordinator of Concord EPAN Working group, Jan Robert Suesser, Vice-president of the European Civic Forum, Doerte Boss from the European Commission, Ferran Perez from UNDP, Tatiana Poshevalova, Program Director at International Consortium EuroBelarus, Moncef Ben Slimane, President of Lam Echaml Association, Nestor Vega, Senior Policy Officer of Platforma.

The event was a further step to bridge the European Year of Citizen 2013 - which is on-going in 2014 with the implementation of the recommendations elaborated, to the European Year of Development 2015, as well as another confirmation of the impossibility to think of a development which does not take into account democracy and civic participation.

See the .pdf presentation '[Fiscal decentralization and role of Local Authorities & Civil Society Organisations](#)' by Jorge Rodriguez, Civil Society and Local Authorities (DEVCO B2 Unit)

[Photo gallery – International event of the project WTD](#)

[Photo gallery - WTD event, day 1](#)

[Photo gallery - WTD event, day 2](#)

[Photo gallery - WTD workshop - LAs and CSOs working together for development](#)

Training and national workshop - Presentations:

- 8 April

[Alfonso Alcolea, Committee of the Regions EGTC](#)

[Per Bodker Andersen, Member of Committee of the Regions](#)

[Jorge Rodriguez, Bilbao DG DEVCO](#)

[Dmitriy Sokol, Lev Sapieha Foundation, Financial Decentralization in Belarus](#)

[David Tumanyan, Community Finances officers Association](#)

[Michael Smyth, EESC Fiscal Decentralisation](#)

[Maris Pukis, LALRG Fiscal decentralization and attempts of centralization](#)

- 9 April

[DG DEVCO, Dorte Bosse 9 April](#)

[UNDP, Ferran Perez, localization post 2015](#)

[Eurobelarus, Tatiana Poshevalova](#)

[Lam Echaml, Association Moncef, Ben Slimane](#)

[Nestor Vega - Senior Project officer at PLATFORMA](#)



## **Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020 officially adopted!**

On 15 April, the Council of the European Union has unanimously adopted the Regulation setting up the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020.

ALDA has been looking forward to the adoption of the programme, as it is a key programme for our projects and activities - and this is why we are part of the Structured Dialogue with the European Commission.

By beginning of May, the programme guide that includes information on funding opportunities, application procedures and a calendar for the submission of applications will be published. The first deadline for submission of applications for town twinning projects, networks of twinned towns and remembrance projects is provisionally set for 4 June 2014; the second deadline for submission of applications for town twinning projects, networks of twinned towns and civil society projects is provisionally set for 1 September 2014.

For all our members interested in starting working on projects within the programme "Europe for Citizens" soon, we are also offering a [master class](#) tailored for the needs of local authorities and civil society organisations eager to develop projects on remembrance and civic participation.

[More information on the approval of the programme on the website of EACEA](#)



## **2015 will be the European Year for Development – "Our world, our dignity, our future"**

On 14 April, the European Union's Foreign Affairs Council gave the green light to designate 2015 as the European Year for Development. The motto of the year will be "Our world, our dignity, our future". ALDA welcomes this achievement.

The European Year for Development 2015 would be the first designated to a global theme. European years have been designated since 1983. 2015 is the year of expiry of the Millennium Development Goals, with many European Union states falling off track on anti-poverty aid targets.

The 2015 European Year of Development is a CONCORD initiative that was taken up, supported and co-developed by the EESC, the European Parliament and by Mr. Barroso, the president of the European Commission.

Marco Boaria, Responsible of ALDA Resources Unit, is a member of the Steering Committee of CONCORD Taskforce for EYD 2015. ALDA will be particularly involved in bridging 2013, the European Year of Citizen, which is continuing in 2014 with the implementation of the recommendations drafted, to 2015. ALDA's work to promote citizens' participation and good local governance is crucial to ensure sustainable development worldwide.



## **Let's build together the LDA in Dnipropetrovsk - Help us fundraising!**

In an effort to collect resources to establish the future Local Democracy Agency in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, ALDA has decided to think out of the box and find new tools. For this, we are launching our campaign on the crowd funding platform GivenGain.

GivenGain is a crowd funding platform dedicated to not-for-profit associations. Through our [project](#), everybody will be able to contribute with an amount of money to the creation of the LDA, as well as to monitor the progress of the fundraising action.

We are calling to all our friends to support us - how? Easy! You can donate, spread the information among your networks, and in case you feel like you want to actively contribute to our goal, you could even participate as an activist by setting up your project to collect money for the LDA.

Should you want more information, please do not hesitate to contact our Communication officer Irene Zanetti: [irene.zanetti@aldaintranet.org](mailto:irene.zanetti@aldaintranet.org)



## Strengthening civil society in Belarus: an important role at the local level

The development and strengthening of civil society is of particular importance in Belarus. A possible facet of this issue has been discussed, looking at its local dimension, during the conference organised by ALDA and EuroBelarus, in Vilnius, from 19th to 21st March 2014. More than 70 organisations from Belarus, from the EU - engaged in the area - and from other Eastern Partnership countries have addressed the topics in plenary and in working groups. The added value of the participation of citizens at the local level has been raised in different fields such as culture, social development and urban context and rural living. ALDA took a particular role in identifying possible strategic paths to reach a more global empowerment of civil society in this country of Eastern Partnership.

"Despite the difficulties encountered and the lack of legislative and environment met in Belarus as for the strengthening of local communities and decentralisation, we still see a strong added value in working with citizens actions at the local level. They could perceive the direct results of the engagement and they create a positive and rewarding mechanism of their participation. Certainly, the isolated action should not remain as such. We - as networks - should connect all these actions to give them a systemic approach and a more global role. Sorting them out either for the stakeholders involved or by the thematic approach to it." contributed Mrs. Valmorbida, Director of ALDA, in the strategic working group of the conference.

On the other hand, the importance of having - as counterpart - more autonomous and self governed local authorities was highlighted, which is far from being the case in Belarus. Therefore, it is important that our common work as for civil society matters in Belarus at the local level, is accompanied by the lobby and advocacy at the EU level to bring Belarus closer to the stand of implementation of the European Charter on Local Self Government.

The local partner of ALDA, the Lev Sapieha Foundation, was represented by its Director, Miroslav Kobasa, who presented the current implemented project Tandem, highly appreciated as a best practice in the field of community development.

Lev Sapieha Foundation and EuroBelarus are members of ALDA. At the beginning of April, the Director of ALDA, Antonella Valmorbida, and the Financial Officer Barbara Elia, worked with [Lev Sapieha Foundation](#) to further develop future actions.

Read more on [Lev Sapieha Foundation](#) and [Euro Belarus](#) websites  
['Eastern Partnership - the way ahead'](#) - Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 28 - 29 November 2013

See also the programmes of ALDA in Belarus:

[TANDEM](#)

[TANDEM II](#)

[SPREAD](#)



## President Martin Schulz pledges support for EYCA

Representatives of the European Year of Citizens Alliance (EYCA) Steering Committee met with the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, on 3rd April 2014 in Brussels to discuss the EYCA recommendations aimed at enhancing European citizenship.

We raised a particular warning about the profound social and economic distress, but also the political distrust Europe is facing today. Deploring the institutional appetite for direct dialogue with “THE” citizen, we called for the recognition of associations and NGOs in their capacity of gathering together millions of citizens across Europe and for their involvement on equal footing with trade-unions and businesses in the policy dialogue and democratic processes.

Convinced that “Europe can no longer survive without a social pillar”, President Schulz pointed out the real risk of Europe’s failure, as highlighted by the lead in opinion polls from Eurosceptic and regressive forces, even in some founding Member States.

Aware that civil society organisations can be “valuable allies” for the institutions in working to bring about more solidarity, equality and democracy in Europe, and paying due attention to the EYCA recommendations, Mr. Schulz undertook to “seriously consider the issue and leave a strong legacy for his successor to integrate civil society organisations in a dialogue process with the European Parliament”.

This position goes totally in line with article 11 from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which underlines the need for “institutions to maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society”. We can therefore only welcome President Schulz’ will to make civil dialogue a reality and hope that this discussion will bear fruits and continue to work towards a more transparent and democratic Europe.

*The EYCA worked throughout 2013 and drafted [recommendations for a democratic European Citizenship](#). ALDA Director Antonella Valmorbida is part of the Steering Committee of EYCA, and co-chair of the group 1 working on participatory citizenship. During the EYCA meeting in Madrid on 31 March, all members further agreed to keep working together in 2014 to implement the recommendations.*



## Master class on the programme Europe for Citizens 2014-2020

After over 10 years of work in the field of the European Active Citizenship and being recognized as one of the main partners of the European Commission within the Europe for Citizens programme, ALDA presents

the Master Class, a new training course aimed at stimulating our members' preparation of quality projects in the framework of the new Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020.

Master Class is addressed to Local Authorities willing to engage citizens through innovative methodologies, civil society organisations working on active citizenship and municipalities interested in town twinning and networks.

The programme is now officially adopted, and it is crucial to get ready preparing the firsts projects!

**ALDA Master Class is a 1-day training, enriched by a 6-month help desk, designed to address the following issues:**

- The concept of active European citizenship
- In-depth presentation of the Programme Europe for Citizens 2014-2020, including practical hints for project preparation and presentation of successful projects
- New issues, changes, and insight information regarding the programme Europe for Citizens 2014-2020
- Networks and main stakeholders

In order to improve and deepen the long-lasting cooperation on European active citizenship, we address this initiative to ALDA's members.

**By joining the Master Class initiative the hosting members will get:**

- Financial income: a part of participants' fees will cover materials and organizational costs incurred by the hosting members
- Visibility as active contributors to the implementation of EU programmes all over Europe
- Multiplying power of the initiative, to be extended to further programmes and target groups
- Knowledge of the programme and get ready to draft projects

**We ask the hosting members to:**

- Promote the Master Class to involve a significant number of participants
- Book and set a proper equipped room for the training, according to the number of participants (needed equipment: PC, beamer, whiteboard, flipcharts, markers, ...)
- Take care of the logistics and organization (search for participants and their registration, coffee break, lunch, etc.)
- Provide accommodation for ALDA's trainers
- Print the training materials provided by ALDA and prepare folders for participants
- Ensure local promotion and publicity about the Master Class and the Europe for Citizens programme as such

Please find here the detailed [programme of the training](#) and information about the [help desk service](#) (pdf).

Get in touch with our colleague Marco Boaria ([marco.boaria@aldaintranet.org](mailto:marco.boaria@aldaintranet.org) - +39 0444 540146) as soon as possible for this initiative, to discuss all details and define a tailor-made solution!



## **REACTION final event – Memorandum of Understanding signed**

Last 10-12 April, the final event of REACTION project took place. Financed by the programme Europe for Citizens, Network action of twinning towns, the project is supported by ALDA through the technical assistance for the implementation.

Thanks also to another initiative of Europe for Citizens called WELCOME, the project partners, which carry on this process started some years ago, are now part of a consolidated network, motivated in strengthening the collaboration.

The Executive Committee of REACTION project met on last Friday in order to discuss the follow up of the project and to consider the themes for the next steps of the process. These themes have been defined and included in the Memorandum of Understanding, signed on Saturday morning by the partners in the prestigious and historical “Palazzo Ragazzoni” building of Sacile.

Another piece has been placed to build this European project, which aims to the increasing of sustainable development of European communities and citizens, thanks to a bottom up approach which involves citizens as protagonists of change.



## **For a creative and inclusive Europe - Training 'Growing Steps'**

Two representatives of ALDA participated in the training Growing Steps, to promote the participation of youngsters by improving their capabilities in civil society organisations.

Participants coming from European and Neighbouring countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine) exploited the potential of creativity, entrepreneurship by using different techniques in order to strengthen their sense of solidarity, self-confidence and reflexion. Through a non-formal educational methods, workshops and some group activities participants coming from different countries and ethnic backgrounds met and shared experiences and acquired new competences.

The study visits in Palermo, to the CESIE headquarter and to the association Libera against mafia were particularly interesting. The creative workshops on “How could be the city of your dreams...” and on “How



could you create a strong advertisement for your idea” were particularly interactive: participants made videos, prepared poster and acted.

The “Partners’ Café” gave the participants the opportunity to propose thematic open spaces of debate on: social impact of the YiA trainings, ecology and respect of the environment, art as on the most important instruments of communication, the importance to experience other cultures.



## **ALDA at the Spring session of the Congress: raising attention and support for LDAs**

The Governing Board of ALDA, Mr Dobrica Milovanovic, representing the city of Kragujevac in Serbia, and the Director of ALDA, Antonella Valmorbida, attended the last Plenary session of the Congress in Strasbourg on 25-27 March. It was an important occasion to collect interest and support for the Local Democracy Agencies.

In particular, Mr Milovanovic and Mrs Valmorbida met several representatives of the German delegation to the Congress, Mr Vohringer, M. Lammerskitten and Ms. Drees from the German Association of Municipalities.

The relaunch of the Local Democracy Agency Albania was the focus during the meeting with the Ambassador of Albania, Mrs. Ardiana Hobdari.

A fruitful meeting was also organised with the Permanent Representation of Poland at the Council of Europe. Of particular interest was the development of the Local Democracy Agency in Ukraine, where the Polish Association of Municipalities counts more than 200 twinning initiatives.

Furthermore, ALDA Director Antonella Valmorbida met Mr Andris Jaunsleinis, Chair of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, [LARGL](#), active member of ALDA and involved on a number of projects in Eastern Europe (in particular in Belarus) and in the EU.

See the [website of the Congress](#)



## **New stage in the cooperation programme Lower Normandy / Macedonia**

On March 25, 2014 Macedonian partners of the decentralised cooperation program between Lower Normandy and Macedonia met in Skopje. The national and local authorities, associations and different

institutions involved in cooperation introduced the new phase of the program for the period of 2013-2016.

This meeting aimed to present the entire cooperation to the partners which integrated the new three year programme. The French Ambassador in Macedonia, Ms. Laurence Auer and Ms. Biljana Cvetanovska - Gugovska, State Secretary of the Ministry of Local Self-governance, honoured the participants by opening the meeting. Mrs. Auer, very involved in the program, stressed the importance of territorial development, in particular illustrated by the cooperation of the twinned towns and communities from Lower Normandy and Macedonia. Mrs Cvetanovska - Gugovska stressed the originality of this cooperation based on the wide range of actors involved in various areas of cooperation.

Since its beginnings in 2007, this cooperation produced excellent results due to involvement of different stakeholders and the originality of the approaches used. It continuously keeps contributing to the local development on both territories through exchanges on various themes. The diversification of actors, as well as the involvement of different levels of governance ensures the territorial anchoring of this cooperation.

Two important historical events mark this year 2014. The first is the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the D-Day in Normandy, and the second is the Centenary of the First World War and the Eastern Front in Macedonia. Given their impact on both territories, the current program has been designed around events and themes related to these commemorations: memory, peace and reconciliation, heritage and Human rights. Having these themes as a core, nine projects were selected as part of the annual call for projects 2013/2014. Also, contributed to this stage of the cooperation are the activities within youth mobility and institutional cooperation at a local and national level. Thus, a series of diverse and varied activities are planned for this year both in Macedonia and in Lower Normandy: study visits and training on the memory tourism, research and trainings on the issue of human Rights, exchange of traditional music, etc.

Driven by the motivation and the dynamics of partners, this meeting has presented not only a better understanding of the challenges in the cooperation, but it has also created opportunities for networking and partnership among the participants. The second meeting of partners is scheduled for June, around one of the main cultural summer events in Macedonia, the French Film Festival. This event is held for several years now, and it's also supported by the Lower Normandy.

*The decentralised cooperation programme between Lower Normandy and Macedonia it's coordinated by ALDA. For further information please consult the website of the Cooperation programme [www.bn-mk.org](http://www.bn-mk.org), or contact Ivana Dimitrovska ([ivana.dimitrovska@aldaintranet.org](mailto:ivana.dimitrovska@aldaintranet.org)).*



## **Last session of trainings for the municipality staff of Gyumri**

The last session of trainings for the municipality staff of Gyumri organized by LDA foundation Armenia, ALDA in cooperation with Counterpart Armenia took place on 1 and 2 April 2014.

Following the confirmed agenda the topics include community budget, service provision, PR and participatory and transparent governance. The participants again displayed very active and participatory behavior showing their team member capacities and strengths. Following the methodology of the first phase at the very beginning of the sessions the trainers distributed quizzes to the participants to check their level of knowledge. At the end of the sessions the same quizzes were given to be filled in to measure the differences before and after the sessions and assess the effectiveness and productivity of the trainings. Role games and team assignments were part of the chosen training methodology.

The only challenge the participants face in this phase was the community budget session, as the topic was very complicated and inclusive and hard to be absorbed by the employees from non-financial departments that have nothing with financial and budget activities in their everyday working procedure. The training courses were wrapped up with the handing of certificates. Lusine Aleksandryan, the director of LDA foundation Armenia, presented and thanked the organizations with the assistance of which the trainings took place and were of great success.

Mr. Chartaryan, the department acting head of projects and analytics, gave the closing speech once more mentioning the importance of these courses for the municipality employees. He expressed his deep gratitude to the organizers for that useful initiation and stated the possible continuity of the trainings in future.



## **Teacher Training Programme "Education against Corruption " in Osijek-Baranja County**

Local Democracy Agency hosted a teacher training programme organized by the Forum for Freedom in Education. It is the first in a series of four teacher training programmes planned for teachers in primary and secondary schools , expert staff, unemployed teachers and students at Teacher Colleges. Teacher training programmes are conducted in the framework of the project "Local Partnerships for Anti Corruption Education" in cooperation with the international organization the Network of Education Policy Centres, Local Democracy Agency from Osijek, Local Democracy Agency Sisak and Info zone from Split. The project is funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Croatia Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs and the City of Lausanne from Switzerland.

Anti-corruption education is one of the components of the civic education and implies that the teacher has competence to transfer to students knowledge , skills and attitudes relevant for a democratic society. This training has encouraged teachers to work with students in order to develop competencies characteristic of anti-corruption education , with the overall aim to make anti-corruption behaviour a regular practice in Croatian schools and society.

In addition, participants have been encouraged to creatively approach lectures on anti-corruption and apply them in schools , in order to bring this issue accross to students and to make them realise its social relevance.



## **Sarajevo: Meetings of ALDA and LDA Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar, Prijedor, Zavidovici)**

On 18th and 19th March, the Delegation composed by Dženana Dedic (LDA Mostar ), Jasna Zvekić (LDA Zavidovici ), joined by Dragan Dosen (LDA Prijedor), and led by Stanka Parać Damjanovic (ALDA Regional Programme Coordinator), visited in Sarajevo the Delegation of the European Union, UNDP Head Office, USAID Head Office and the Office of the Council of Europe.

The main purpose of the visit was to introduce the work of LDAs in local communities and provide information about implemented and planned projects in relevant areas in order to strengthening the capacity of civil society , the development of local democracy, social services, youth empowerment, as well as networking with partners in the EU and neighbouring countries in the region.

Especially important for all LDAs in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the planned activities of UNDP in strengthening local democracy through programs LOD, as well as the EU Delegation and USAID program in the field of reconciliation in local communities. Very important for the future activities of ALDA in BiH is the recognition of Local Democracy Agencies as relevant partners, which have necessary human resources, long standing experience and organizational capacity to successfully develop and implement projects in their local communities and at the regional level.

**More information** on [LDA Mostar](#) , [LDA Zavidovici](#) , [LDA Prijedor](#) .