



ALDA NEWSLETTER JULY 2014



"Citizens' participation at the local level in Europe and Neighbouring Countries" is the title of the new publication of ALDA, edited by Antonella Valmorbida, Secretary General of ALDA, and published by Peter Lang .

ALDA – The European Association for Local Democracy – is an organisation dedicated to the promotion of good governance and citizen participation at the local level. It is made up of over 160 members comprising local authorities and civil society organisations in the enlarged Europe.

Recently, new forms of interaction between citizens and decision makers have been put in place. By analysing ALDA's 15 years of hands-on activities with its members and partners, this publication contributes to a better understanding of the added value of citizen participation at the local level in Europe and its neighbouring countries.

This book brings together the work of the Secretary General and staff of ALDA and of the Local Democracy Agencies, as well as numerous practices and voices from the members and partners of its vast network. Through the field experiences presented, ALDA shows how and why citizen participation leads to the adoption of better solutions, and, at the same time, fosters long lasting, balanced development.

This publication formulates conclusions and offers insightful input for future activities aiming at building truly democratic local democracy. It is therefore particularly useful for all those who intend to work within the recently adopted programme 'Europe for Citizens' 2014-2020, as well as to bridge the topics of active citizenship and development – the focus of the European Years 2013 and 2015.

You can order the book by downloading this [form](#).



High honor awarded to our President Oriano Otočan

On Monday 14th July 2014, an important honor was awarded by the President of the Republic of Italy, Giorgio Napolitano, to our President, Oriano Otočan, as Director of the Department of International Cooperation and EU Integration of Istria Region.

The awarded honor is the “Stella d’Italia” (Italian Star), assigned for the particular attention and the strong activity in developing good relationships and important cooperation between Italy and other Countries and for the promotion of the importance of links with the Republic of Italy.

The honor was delivered by the Italian General Consul, Renato Cianfarani, at the headquarter of Istria Region, in Pola. The President of the Region Valter Flego hosted the meeting, and also other Croatian and Italian representatives attended the event: the President of Veneto Region, Mr. Zaia, the President of the Regional Council of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Mr. Iacop, the Vice-President of ALDA, Mr. Perelli, and the Delegate of Local Democracy Agency Verteneglio, Mr. Ademollo.

President Iacop has been collaborating with Representatives of Istria Region for over ten years, recognizing in Mr. Otočan a relevant interlocutor, and stated that it's very easy to work on issues of common interest when you cooperate with a person believing in participation and dialogue, which can imagine a world where friendship between peoples, synergies and shared knowledge can contribute to build a better future. President Iacop also wished to Mr. Otočan all the best for the new assignment, which is going to be soon conferred in Brussels, as member of the Cabinet of the new European Parliamentarian elected Mr. Ivan Jakovcic. Thanks to this new challenge, the collaboration with Europe can go on in a very positive way.



The Local Democracy Agency in Dnipropetrovsk is needed more than ever

The Governing Board Member of ALDA, M. Lucio Gregoretti from Monfalcone, and the Secretary General, Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida, took part in a preparatory meeting for the establishment of the LDA Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine.

**WORKING
TOGETHER for
DEVELOPMENT**



The meeting, held in Akmeme (Lithuania) and funded within the programme Working Together for Development (WTD), gave the possibilities to the partners from Europe and Ukraine to exchange views on possibilities of cooperation and to identify new partnership.

Volodymyr Peregudov, Deputy Chairman of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional Council, called for the setting up of the Agency: "This initiative is necessary more than ever and we need to open a dialogue between citizens and authorities. Risks of further difficulties could emerge if we do not open and clarify the dialogue". Mrs Tatyana Kudina from UNDP Ukraine also gave the opportunity to the partners to understand the possibilities of cooperation with their on going Community Development programme.

The programme UNDP Art - with the presence of Mr Francesco Bicciato, connected from Brussels - was also introduced as a key partner for this initiative, moving its first steps in Ukraine.

The meeting was hosted by the city of Akmene and its Mayor, Vitalijus Mitrofanovas, gave a brilliant introduction to the debate and understanding of how the cooperation with Ukraine could be meaningful for them, having gone through such a difficult transition in the last years.

The LDA Ukraine includes the support and partnership of the Lower Silesia (Poland). The action plan identified a possible development of the Agency in Autumn 2014.



Enroll in ALDA Summer School on “EUROPE, PARTICIPATION, REMEMBRANCE”

Are you interested in active European citizenship and European commemoration? Take part in ALDA’s summer school on Europe, participation and remembrance, from Monday 1st to Saturday 6th September 2014, in Asiago (Vicenza), Italy.

The 4-day activities, addressed to students, people working for NGOs, and representatives of local authorities, will deepen your knowledge on the programme ‘Europe for Citizens’ and its priorities. The school is organized during the centenary of World War I in the meaningful settings of Asiago and Rovereto, Italian territories strongly connected to war as much as to peace.

The **programme** will cover a variety of topics, in particular:

- **European history and challenges**
- **Elements of Project Cycle Management (PCM)**
- **[Master class on the programme ‘Europe for Citizens’ 2014-2020](#)**
- **Visits and activities inspiring project ideas in Asiago, linked to WWI**
- **Visit and meeting in Rovereto with the [‘Fondazione Opera Campana dei Caduti’](#), worldwide known for its Peace Bell.**

[You can find here the full information sheet.](#)

For registrations and further information, please contact **Marco Boaria**, Resource and Development Unit Coordinator of ALDA Office in Vicenza (Italy) – Email: marco.boaria@aldaintranet.org - Tel: +39 0444 54 01 46

Deadline for registrations: 25 July.

Cost: starting from 1,150 € including accommodation, board, visits, materials, activities, trainings, local transfers (travel costs to Asiago and from Rovereto not included), and 6-month trial of ALDA services for non-members.

ALDA members will enjoy 10% discount.

100 years since World War I: What we do not talk about, it does not exist – What we do not remember, we repeat it!



ALDA supports the statement of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on the arrest of Hasan Huseynli, the head of Intelligent Citizen Enlightenment Center Public Union, Azerbaijan

On 14 July, Nizami Region Court of Ganja, sentenced Hasan Huseynli, head of “Intelligent Citizen” Enlightenment Center Public Union based in Ganja city in Azerbaijan for 5 years, 11 months and 28 days.

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum protests strongly against the arrest of Hasan Huseynli. He was arrested on trumped up charges of hooliganism for allegedly stabbing someone with whom he had never come in contact. The police in Ganja have confirmed the charges. The investigation that was carried out against Hasan Huseynli is completely unlawful and absurd, and does not warrant his detention.

Hasan Huseynli is an education promoter, social activist, and community leader, who has had a huge positive impact on hundreds of young Azerbaijanis, encouraging them to study abroad and contribute to Azerbaijan’s development with their knowledge and skills. He is a highly respected civil rights activist, and his organisation is highly regarded in Azerbaijan and abroad. We consider Hasan Huseynli's detention to be part of a larger clampdown on civil society.

We urge the government of Azerbaijan to immediately free Hasan Huseynli, and to drop all charges against him. The authorities must understand that every additional political prisoner in Azerbaijan undermines the country’s image abroad and its position in the Council of Europe and in the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe as well as its relations with the European Union.

We urge the European Commission, the EU Delegation in Baku, and the European Parliament to condemn his arrest in the strongest terms, and to support the Civil Society Forum in putting pressure on Azerbaijan authorities for the immediate release of all political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

Download the .pdf version [statement](#)

ALDA supports the statement on the unfair arrest of our member Hasan Huseynli, and calls for his immediate release.



Making local democracy work - ALDA and the LDAs in the spotlight in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine

The Communication officer of ALDA Irene Zanetti presented the work of the association, and the specificity of the local democracy agencies, during the First Seminar of the South-Eastern Programme organized by our member association the Ukrainian School of Political Studies, in cooperation with the Council of Europe. The seminar was held in Dnipropetrovsk during the week 14-19 July.

The session ALDA was invited to contribute to was titled 'Making local democracy work', and the experiences of the LDAs in the field are a best practice whose value is more and more visible. Even in Ukraine and in Dnipropetrovsk, where the future LDA will be established, thanks to the collaboration with the Region of Dnipropetrovsk and international partners, the Polish Region Lower Silesia, as well as with the Municipality of Akmene, in Lithuania.

Participants showed a great interest in the working method of the LDAs and expressed all their support to the future agencies. On the occasion, Irene Zanetti met with the representatives of the Dnipropetrovsk Region, Mr Volodymyr Perehudov and Ms Yana Gorobets.



Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine signed the Association Agreement with the EU - Paving the way for local democracy and participation

The European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) joins Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in celebrating today's signature by these countries of the Association Agreements and provisions on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with the EU. These agreements mark the beginning of a much closer relationship with the European Union – in terms of political association, economic integration but hopefully also people-to-people contacts and civil society links. Friday's signatures represent the culmination of great reform efforts undertaken by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in the context of the Eastern Partnership – also in supporting the development of civil society and

transparent decision-making.

ALDA has been working in the Eastern Partnership region since the mid-2000s to support local democracy, citizens' participation in local decision-making and effective cooperation between local authorities and Civil Society Organizations. These are the values widely shared by the European Union too. In fulfilling the Association Agreements and pursuing further integration of Eastern Partnership countries with the EU, good governance and human rights should remain a priority.

Only two days ago, ALDA held a partner meeting for the establishment of the future Local Democracy Agency (LDA) in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, which would represent the third one in the Eastern Partnership - together with the LDA Armenia, in Gyumri, and the LDA Georgia, in Kutaisi. On that occasion, Volodymyr Peregudov, Deputy Chairman of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional Council, called for the agency to be set operational soon in order to open a dialogue between citizens and authorities. This piece of news does not only represent a key step in the relationships between the three countries and the EU, but also a concrete act in paving the way for local democracy and active citizens participation.

Antonella Valmorbida
Secretary General of ALDA



100 years since the WWI commemorated in Sarajevo

Together with many organisations, visitors and locals, ALDA commemorated the beginning of the First World War in Sarajevo, on 28 June, 2014.

100 years ago, on the same date, at the same place, the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by Gavrilo Princip, local 19 year old boy. This event is considered to be the catalyst of the First World War, also known as the "Great War", which changed the map of the Europe and the World forever.

The streets of the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina gathered many local and international guests who attended the cultural, sports and educational events. Commemorating the centennial, the locals were sharing the stories about this historic event, but inevitably they were also referring to the recent history, related to the war in the Balkans, that took place just 20 years ago.

Sarajevo, also called the heart of Europe, indeed gave its heart for freedom in the past, all the more reason to celebrate the peace, earned the hard way in this part of Europe. Our conversations

with the visitors reminded us once again to continue remembering the harsh times, and share the message of peace, solidarity and dialogue, in memory of those who gave their lives for freedom.



ALDA at the Meeting of Working Group 1 “Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance & Stability” of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership

In its capacity of the coordinator of the Subgroup on Public Administration Reform and Local Self-government (LGPARG), ALDA contributed to the annual meeting of the Working Group 1 “Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance & Stability” of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum held in Brussels on 17 June 2014.

The meeting discussed the future of the EU support to civil society in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries region and provided a good opportunity for local civil society organizations from the region to have a dialogue with the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS). Speakers included Mr Richard Tibbels, Head of Division for the Eastern Partnership, Regional Cooperation and OSCE at the EEAS, Sintija Bernava from DONUM ANIMUS, Latvia, Lasha Tugushi from the European initiative Liberal Academy Tbilisi and other local NGOs from the six EaP countries.

Mr Tibbels highlighted four key areas that EU should work on in preparation of the 2015 Riga summit:

1. Effective implementation of the Association Agreements;
2. Differentiation of the Eastern Partnership countries by different stages of transition, with three countries opting for full political association and economic agenda (Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia);
3. Communication to get correct messages across as to what the EaP really means;
4. The factor of Russia: the EaP does not exist in vacuum. The EU response to Russia should be guided by clear red lines (e.g. on Crimea) and targeted sanctions but at the same time EU should try to undertake the dialogue with Russia.

Ms Carmen Falkenberg, Head of Sector, in the Unit for Regional Programmes Neighbourhood East at the European Commission's DG DEVCO, stressed the importance of supporting business and professional organizations and encouraged more CSO participation in Platform and Panel meetings.

The second part of the meeting broke out in sub-groups to discuss the activities and action plans of each of the sub-group. Some of the main action points identified for the LGPAR subgroup for the next year are: Public Administration Reform, decentralization, citizen's participation in local decision-making, participation in civil service reform, continued cooperation with the Conference of Regional and Local Authorities (CORLEAP) and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, follow up on the implementation EU Municipal Flagship Initiative, engagement in consultations of UN Localising Post 2015 and preparation of the Index of fiscal decentralization in the six EaP countries .



Project DECIDE – from exchange to implementation of best practices

The mid-term international seminar of the project DECIDE has successfully been completed on 13 June 2014.

A three day event brought together representatives of the 25 partners from 15 countries as well as local participants to exchange and discuss about tested measures promoting citizen participation at local and regional level across wider Europe.

More than 30 successful initiatives were analysed within clusters such as youth participation and civic education, environment and public spaces, participation of elderly people, support of civil society associations and citizens' projects, public resources, e-participation and cross-cutting tools. Split into working groups, participants identified the quality elements of the initiatives and discussed about their impact.

As concrete steps for the launching of the second phase of the project at the local level, two key sessions were held on the second day. Firstly, based on the exchanges and debates of the previous day, each national delegation identified one-two measures to implement in their own territory so as to increase the rates of citizen participation. An action plan on how to put the measures into place was then drafted and shared among the partners.

The afternoon's session was dedicated to the testing stage in order to share common indicators for evaluating the success of the implemented measures. The delegations reunited around common measures and agreed on an assessment process based on two steps: evaluating the perception of participation in public life on a given topic before and after the implementation and the running of the measure adopted.

In order to reach a further involvement of local participants, the partners organised an exhibition event aimed at giving visibility to all successful projects promoting citizen participation. It reunited

international and local representatives of local authorities and civil society associations and was a unique opportunity to network and exchange on funding opportunities for future initiatives. As many of the projects showcased were adopted within the Europe for Citizens programme, the event was also an occasion to promote the programme and enquire about potential partnership under the new programming period 2014-2020.

The three day event was completed by the in-field visit to the Museum of Nesebar, whose construction was a good practice of participatory process in the planning of public spaces. It was also an opportunity to have an insight of the historical path that led the city centre of Nesebar being recognised as a UNESCO heritage site.



Localising the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Within the framework of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, a consultation on localising is now open by LRA4DEV.

Its aim is to explore means of implementation which will put the Agenda into practice at local level. Contributions will be included in the Dialogues result which will be presented to the UN General Assembly and will inform the UN Secretary General Report on the post-2015 Development Agenda.

To contribute to the consultation please answer online from the [European Portal of Decentralised Cooperation](#) where contributions are possible until 31th July 2014.

The survey for consultation was realised by the Committee of the Regions of the European Union in collaboration with UNDP.

For further information, please contact LRA4DEV@cor.europa.eu



New Delegate and partnerships for LDA Georgia - ALDA welcomes Nino Tvaltvadze

A new Delegate for the Local Democracy Agency in Kutaisi, Georgia, has been appointed. Starting from July, Nino Tvaltvadze is the Delegate of the agency, and replaces the former delegate Soso Khakhaleishvili.

Nino graduated in law, and has a broad experience both in the private and in the non-governmental sector, as well as in academia. She participated in various trainings and seminars in Georgia and abroad.

Nino is married and has three children, Tekla, Sesili and Tengiz.

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Furthermore, a successful visit of the Polish delegation from the Kujavsko-Pomorskie Voivodship Region took place in Georgia's Imereti Region. Led by the Vice President of ALDA, Ms Imka Gorska, the Polish delegation met the Governor of the Imereti Region of Georgia to agree on the partnership between the two regions.

Furthermore, partnerships will start between the Polish region, ALDA and LDA Georgia. For more information, read the [related news item](#).

The whole network of ALDA welcomes Nino Tvaltvadze and looks forward to cooperation with the Polish Region Kujavsko-Pomorskie Voivodship!



New partnership between the LDA Central & Southern Serbia and Patrimoine Sans Frontières

We are very pleased to inform you that the French NGO Patrimoine Sans Frontières (PSF) and the

Local Democracy Agency Central and Southern Serbia (LDA CSS) have started working on the preparation of a joint project that will adapt the methodology of the educational program '[Patrimoine en partage](#)'[®], developed by our French partner, to the context of the Serbian education system.

The aim of the project is, as in France, the promotion of awareness of individual and collective cultural heritage, their complementarity, the wealth that represents the cultural heritage of others, the connections between the local and universal cultural values and the importance of respecting the differences that exist between them.

According to our plan, the pilot phase of the project will be implemented in schools in Knjaževac. Scientific Committee of the project will be composed of relevant stakeholders such as local branch of the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, local administration, Land Museum, National Library and several primary schools from Knjaževac.

Founded in 1992 with the support of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, Patrimoine Sans Frontières (PSF), is dedicated to preserving endangered or neglected cultural heritage sites and issues worldwide.

You can read more about our new partner [Patrimoine Sans Frontières on their official webs-site](#).



Final event of "Start up Training" project

On Monday 23rd May, in the conference room of Ramada Hotel in Podorica (Montenegro), the final event of "Start up Training" project took place. Alessandro Perelli, Vice-president of ALDA, and Kerim Medjedovic, delegate of Niksic LDA, attended.

The project, funded by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, which has Niksic LDA as strategic partner, aims to support the employment and the creation of new jobs in Montenegro, and to improve the internationalization process of the entrepreneurial system of Friuli Venezia Giulia in Montenegro, involving traditional actors and entrepreneurial Associations at the same time.

In particular the project aims to the development of specific objectives, such as the interest for a creational strategy, the start up of a Centre for professional education in Montenegro, the following selection and preparation of the staff and the administration and analysis to figure out the entrepreneurial needs in Montenegro.