

ALDA NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2014



Tackling money laundering and tax heavens in Europe - Seminar in Brussels on 9 October

ALDA organised the seminar on “Tackling money laundering and tax heavens in Europe” taking place at the European Parliament, in Brussels, on 9 October.

The seminar is held within the framework of the project Tackling Illegal Economies – TIE, funded by the EU Prevention of and Fight against Organised Crime Programme (ISEC).

The project is implemented in strong cooperation with the associations [LIBERA](#), [European Alternatives](#) and other nine organisations and university institutions coming from six EU countries. The aim of the project is to create grounds for cooperation between the judiciary, media, civil society and academia in Europe in identifying and promoting ways to undermine the profitability of crime by means of the aggression to criminal assets.

Within this framework, four seminars have been held from September 2013, respectively in London, Berlin, Stara Zagora and Paris aimed at identifying good practice in tackling criminal assets and three academic researches have been developed on this topic. The aforementioned initiatives have identified money laundering and tax heavens as a key element to be further analysed and discussed. The upcoming event in Brussels will be an occasion to present and discuss the outcomes of the first year activity and hand to European institutions a set of proposals to contribute to effectively tackle organised crime across Europe. The event is sponsored by Ms Eleonora FORENZA (MEP) and will bring together representatives of the European institutions, national, regional and local authorities, academics and journalists with expertise in financial crimes as well as representatives of civil society associations. Please find here the [draft agenda of the event](#) (.pdf).

Register to the event by submitting the following [online form](#). Attendance of the seminar is free of charge. A limit number of places is still available and the registration will be on a "first come, first served" basis. We therefore suggest that you register as soon as possible to ensure your smoothest access to the European Parliament.



Focus on LDA Ukraine and impact of EU strategies in SEE – ALDA side events during the Open Days 2014

Also this year, ALDA is actively participating to the Open Days 2014 – European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels. Two main events were organised by the association, respectively focused on the future Local Democracy Agency in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, and on the Impact of EU regional strategies in South East Europe.

The strategic meeting “Working towards a Local Democracy Agency in Dnipropetrovsk”, on 7 October at the Committee of the Regions, will be a key moment for all stakeholders who have been working towards the opening of the Agency. Among the speakers representatives of the Polish Region Lower Silesia, Dnipropetrovsk Regional Council, of CORLEAP, UNDP Ukraine and UNDP Art, as well as of ALDA Governing Board and staff.

On 8 October, in collaboration with the European Projects Association - EPA, ALDA organised the political debate on the Impact of EU regional strategies in South East Europe hosted by the Member of the European Parliament Mr. Ivan Jakovčić, a Member of the Committee on Regional Development, together with the European Projects Awards 2014 of EPA.



Italian Presidency of the EU, still some months to go and to act. No excuses to be passive now!

The Italian Presidency of the EU has been, as expected, mostly devoted to putting back on the

track the institutions. The elections of the European Parliament, the new Commission and the launch of the programming period (with consequent delays of programmes and stand by situations) created a vacuum of power and representativeness. Let's admit that one could have hardly chosen a worse timing for Europe to be voiceless. Despite the usual pro-European attitude of the Italian positions, the Presidency did not manage to have, so far, any influence on the important emergency decisions that would have been needed for a long lasting effect on our present situation: programmes for employment and economy, immigration, the crisis in Ukraine. We can only be sorry for that. Certainly, Italy could have done more in its Presidency to steer the integration process of the EU and a single voice to address common problems. But, as said, the calendar of the institutions decided in another way. But still, looking at the glass rather full than empty, there are still some four autumn months to go. The Parliament is working and the Commission – even if not still in place, expected to be operational on 1st November and after the final audition at the Parliament - is now more or less decided. We see the programmes starting. In short, the machinery is starting and moving. Therefore, there are now little excuses to be passive and not use all the possible efforts to raise and address problems and try to solve them. Some months are ahead of us and should be wisely used. At the top of the Italian agenda is the issue of **immigration**, which – according to a recent survey presented in Rome mid of September - is among the highest causes of upcoming concern among Europeans. The problem is addressed only very marginally at the European level and the national plans are limited. Often local communities are left alone (with no means and guidance) to address the problems. The EU should develop a broad common policy on the matter since the flows of illegal immigration start by landing in place for then being spread freely all around all countries. Hot in the agenda is the European answer to the question of the **crisis in Ukraine**. The common understanding is that the answer given thanks to the sanctions against Russia are part a more global answer. Ukraine is an integral (not marginal) part of the European sphere of interest, and a more articulated answer, including a decisive support to accompany a stronger – in democratic terms [1] - Ukrainian State, should be adopted. Last but not least, Italy should play its vital role **pro-european integration** role as a convinced founding member of the EU. In this perspective a shared sense of European identity needs to be consolidated [2] . It is through integration that burning **economic issues** should be addressed. We remember here the European Citizens Initiative, proposed by the European Federalist Movement (New Deal for Europe) [3] which introduces, with clear options and solution, a possible way to follow to give competitiveness, sustainability and future to Europe.

The crisis is a crossroad. In a way or another, we'll get out of it. It is up to us to decide the road to follow. We hope that the strength and stability of Italy (not so common) these days, could pave the way towards the right direction and a place for us, European citizens, in the global and worldwide landscape.

[1] ALDA is supporting the establishment of the Local Democracy Agency in Ukraine – Dnipropetrovsk (for information please see the news item about the [most recent mission in Ukraine](#), and support via the [project on GivenGain](#))

[2] See the programmes of ALDA and the Local Democracy Agencies to support local governance and citizens' participation in Europe and the Neighborhood on our [projects page](#)

[3] To support the ICE 'New Deal for Europe', visit and sign www.newdeal4europe.eu



DECIDE - Launching the testing phase on citizen participation in Slovenia

On 22 September, the Association for Voluntary work Novo mesto successfully launched the pilot testing phase of the “Information research through alternative method” practice run by the Birgu Local Council in Malta. A seminar was organised to support and prepare local citizens and stakeholders for the testing phase of the measure.

The practice, successfully evaluated in Birgu by local several citizens and stakeholders, is an internet site that satisfies the need of information about the works, activities and consultations between the Local Council and citizens. The site is a platform where citizens can express their problems, observations, solutions and get prompt response from the local council.

The activity took place within the framework of the project DECIDE, an initiative launched by ALDA in cooperation with 24 partners from 15 countries from wider Europe, that promotes the exchange of good practices fostering citizen participation at local and regional level. More than 30 practices have been identified, assessed and showcased in the first phase of the project. The measures, collected into the Democratic Compact, are being now exchanged and tested by the partners according to the needs of their territories.



Vox in Box - ALDA training 120 young Tunisian activists on citizen participation

Four trainers of ALDA provided a training on citizen participation and innovative methodologies for young Tunisian activists from 9 to 14 September in Hammamet. The activity is part of the EU-

funded project Vox in Box, led by our partner association Lam Echaml, and featuring ALDA and the Macedonian NGO Metamorphosis as partners. Aim of the trainings organized by the three associations is increasing public awareness on the importance of the upcoming national elections in Tunisia. Over 120 young activists of Lam Echaml participated, representing six regions in the country. "The week was inspiring and intense" said Anna Ditta, lead trainer for ALDA. "Young activists coming from all over Tunisia shared their enthusiasm and motivation to contribute to the democratic transition of their country, in this historical and complicated moment. Their contagious energy rewarded the work of ALDA, who participated with a training on participative methodologies for engaging citizens in the life of their community, before, during and especially after the vote. Wishing Tunisia a bright future!"

Read more about [Lam Echaml on their website](#)



The exhibition “Wild Horses in Europe” a rewarding partnership between House of Europe in Caen and Cercle francophone Skopje

The exhibition “Wild Horses in Europe” is the result of a rewarding partnership and a unique vision between several partners in Macedonia and Lower Normandy. This photography exhibition which presents the idea of horses preserving natural areas in Normandy and Europe aims to highlight the origin and the ecological role of horses descending from primitive races to preserve natural environments with different characteristics; the mountain Pelister southeast of Macedonia and the Bay of Seine in Normandy. It entails photographs of Normandy, Macedonia and Poland and legends for pedagogical purposes that illustrate the lives of horses in their natural environments and explain more precisely the action of animals towards their environment. The exhibition has been presented on both territories. Firstly in Normandy during the World Equestrian Games 2014 in Caen, the most important event of the equestrian world with more than 500 000 spectators. Then the exhibition came to Macedonia where it will be shown in several cities from September 2014 until January 2015.

This exhibition is part of the project “Wild Horses in Macedonia and Lower Normandy” implemented by House of Europe in Caen in partnership with Cercle francophone Skopje and several other actors: Macedonian Society of Sciences Bitola; High School Paul Cornu of Lisieux; Natural Park in Baie de Seine - Lower Normandy.

This project is supported by the Decentralized cooperation between Lower Normandy and Macedonia, coordinated by ALDA. For more information please visit the [official website](#).



Study visit in Vicenza within the project Topsa Patras

On Tuesday 15th July 2014, one of the crucial steps of Topsa Patras project, coordinated by Chrissa Geraga, ADEP S.A.-Patras Municipal Enterprise for Planning & Development and Head of Programming-Networking & International Affairs Dpt., took place in Vicenza (Italy).

Topsa Patras is a project which focuses on the problems of unemployment in Patras (Greece), trying to gather new ideas to tackle the actual condition of the area. Nine delegates coming from Patras municipality participated to this session of the project, to learn from the Italian experience how to develop good practices in the field of social cooperatives. The meeting held during the morning in ALDA office in Vicenza was a great occasion to learn more about social cooperatives operating in the area of Vicenza.

Between the main representatives who attended the event there were Mr. Alessandro Perelli, Vice-president of ALDA, Mr. Lucio Gregoretti, Member of the Governing Board of ALDA, Mr. Alberto Sattin and Mr. Ezio Lartini, respectively the Director and the Responsible of Social Cooperatives of Confcooperative Vicenza, Ms Sonia Stefanovichj, European Project Coordinator of Margherita Cooperative, Mr. Giuseppe Pellegrini, Responsible of Cosmo s.c.s. and Mr. Stefano Mantovani, President of Cooperativa Sociale Noncello and Head of the project COSB.

The meeting aimed to improve the knowledge of Greek Delegates about the role of Social Cooperatives in ensuring the welfare services in the Italian legislative framework and their concrete experience and actions. It represented a great occasion of exchange and an important opportunity to learn through the international cooperation and the sharing of good practices. "Our social and cultural background is quite different from the Italian one.

That's why we never worked out the idea to develop Social Cooperatives. But through this experience we gathered some important information and we want to bring this reality also in Greece" said some participants at the event. During the afternoon, participants visited the Cooperative of Studio Progetto, placed in Cornedo Vicentino (Vicenza) to understand how a Social

Cooperative is practically organised and to have an example of the wide range of activities a cooperative can manage.

See the [video](#) about the study visit

[Photo gallery](#)



ALDA Secretary General at the European Movement Federalist seminar in Neumarkt, Austria: how to foster citizens participation in Europe

A group of 35 students from the Italian Region Veneto attended a seminar of the European Federalist Movement in Austria (Neumarkt). The students addressed the different challenges of the European Union and elaborated ideas and innovative approaches to the issues.

The Secretary General of ALDA, Antonella Valmorbida, contributed on the different possibilities on citizens' participation at the local, national and EU level. It was made reference to the [last book issued by Peter Lang](#).

Two students of the High School of Vicenza (Alberto Moro and Marta Iselle), Liceo Quadri, participated to the seminar thanks to ALDA.

The event takes place in the [Austrian Europa Haus](#).



Bridges of Expertise to Fight Gender Based Violence

Programme funded by the EU in Turkey: Strengthening Capacity of National and Local NGOs on Combating Violence Against Women.

The kick-off conference was held in Nevsehir, Turkey, on 18th and 19th July 2014, marking the beginning of the new project in which ALDA is the EU based partner responsible for capacity building and awareness raising actions in support to empowering of local and national NGOs in combating violence against women.

The Lead Partner – Kapadokya Kadin Dayanisma Dernegi – Women’s Solidarity Association, based in municipality Nevsehir, in partnership with thirteen local Turkish and EU based organisations will be working together to promote establishment of sustainable and functional networks in the field of fighting gender based violence.

Activities envisage capacity building, research and data collection on needs assessment of the local public and civil society stakeholders, exchange of best practice with EU based counterparts, actions in support to widening the scope of services in area of prevention and assistance to victims in combating the violence against women as well as a series of local and EU wide awareness raising events on issues related with gender based violence. Entire action promotes inter-sectoral partnership based initiatives for improving the situation in local communities so as to develop sustainable services to victims, help encourage women to participate in social, economic and political life of respective local communities in Turkey.

PARTNERS:

The partners from Turkey include the NGO “Cappadocia Woman Solidarity Association” (as applicant), the University of Nevşehir (Women Research Center), two Municipalities from Cappadocia region (Nevşehir, Kirşehir), two Municipalities from the Black Sea region (Karadeniz Ereğli, Zonguldak) and Ahiler Development Agency engaged in five Turkish Provinces: Nevşehir, Kirşehir, Aksaray, Kırıkkale, Niğde).

EU partners are: Provincial Administration of Gorizia, the Municipalities of Monfalcone and Sacile, the NGO “CMC Hope” from Italy, the “Centre for Social Assistance” of Municipality of Koper, the University of Koper and the NGO “Association for Developing Voluntary Work” of Novo Mesto, Slovenia, and the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA), France.



EuroBelarus executive board study visit to Vicenza

A study visit of EuroBeralus, a member of ALDA, took place in Vicenza Office from September 1st to September 5th.

The delegation of EuroBelarus executive board was headed by the Chairman Ulad Vialichka, and composed by Mrs Tatiana Poshevalova, Program director, Mr Viatcheslav Tcherniavski, Financial

director, and Ms. Oksana Shelest, Executive director.

The training focused on the management and the administration of an international organisation: therefore the 3-days study visit was divided into different specific sections, concerning ALDA internal organisation.

In particular, ALDA staff in Vicenza, presented the organisational division of ALDA, the different daily tasks and procedures the financial management, the fundraising and development projects, the communication strategies and tools. Besides, during the training participants and speakers promoted an exchange of ideas and best practises about different topics.

Finally, the study visit represented a further opportunity to enhance the

Read more about [EuroBelarus on their website](#).



SUPPORT TO CONSOLIDATING LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN ARMENIA - Alda and the LDA Gyumri partner of the programme

Gyumri

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is developing a vast programme for supporting the consolidation of Local Democracy in Armenia.

ALDA and the LDA in Gyumri are involved in this initiative, in particular in its Citizens' participation dimension. In these days, around 200 representatives - Chief of Communities and Councillors - participate in a training and policy making exercise, under the umbrella of this project. Such a big gathering is already a big achievements since it also the local representatives to know more about the Monitoring report on Local Democracy in Armenia, approved by the Plenary of the Congress in March 2014.

[- Local democracy in Armenia: 200 mayors and municipal councillors come together at seminars in Gyumri and Sisian](#)

[- Chambre des pouvoirs locaux - 26e SESSION - Strasbourg, 25-27 mars 2014 - CPL\(26\)2FINAL - 26 mars 2014 - La démocratie locale en Arménie](#)

Local Democracy in Armenia is among the on going public administrative reform which seem to be

necessary for the development the country. The report and the following Recommendations insist on the role of citizens participation that should be based on legislative provisions (already in place, to a certain extend) but on a strengthening of practices by local authorities and capacities of citizens. Armenia is indeed one of the few Members of the Council of Europe which ratified the Additional Protocol on Citizens participation.

The Secretary General of ALDA, Mrs. Antonella VALMORBIDA, coordinated - both in Gyumri and in Sisian - the workshop on citizens participation dedicated to raise awareness on the issue and identify possible improvements.

[26e SESSION - Strasbourg, 25-27 mars 2014 - La démocratie locale en Arménie](#)



Transborder cooperation LDA Gyumri - LDA Kutaisi, launching initiatives

Georgia

The Local Democracy Agency of Kutaisi/Georgia and the Local Democracy Agency Gyumri/Armenia are working together for two days in Gyumri setting the basis for a more intense transborder cooperation.

A delegation from Georgia, composed of a new Delegate of LDA Georgia, Nino Tvaltvadze, a representative from the city of Kutaisi and the local Director fo the GYLA association from Kutaisi visited the office of the LDA Armenia.

They addressed common problems and possibilities of cooperation, in particular within the framework of support to the involvement of women in political life, support to local tourism with the participation of local authorities and civil society and constant exchanges of best practices with the involvement of the international partners.

The Secretary General of ALDA, Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida, attended the event too. "I hope we'll continue the good practice of cooperation among us. It is very helpful for all of us", confirmed the delegate of the LDA Armenia, Lusine Aleksandryan.

The transborder cooperation event took place together with a large seminar organised by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to support Local Democracy in Armenia.

[See here](#)



Partnership for better democracy - LDA CSS with the Citizens Foundation

The Local Democracy Agency Central and Southern Serbia - LDA CSS - has teamed up with Island's Citizen Foundation for Balkan E-democracy Start Up Project.

The Citizens Foundation from Island is the leader in electronic collaborative democracy around the globe. They won the European e-Democracy Awards 2011 and numerous Icelandic awards for innovation and participation. The Citizens Foundation is nominated for United Nations WSA awards in 2013.

[Balkan E-democracy Start Up Project](#) will bootstrap eDemocracy in the Balkans with 12 local partners, LDA being one of them, that will reproduce successful Better Reykjavík project in Iceland while transferring knowledge to and between the Balkan countries.

LDA participates with the project proposal "[Your Idea, Our Priority](#)", an innovative citizen e-service to boost local democracy.

Protector of the project is Mr. Jón Gnarr, Mayor of Reykjavik.

[Visit the official website of the project, join and support us!](#)