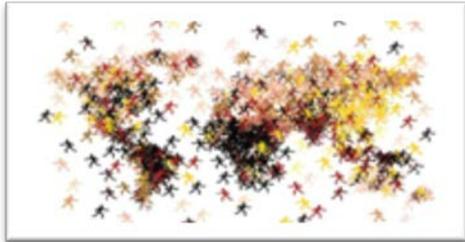


## ALDA NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2015



### “Humane, comprehensive and immediate action for Migration”, LADDER consortium in action!

Following recent events affecting Europe and its neighborhoods regarding migration, the LADDER consortium, (namely 46 organisations & networks of LAs and CSOs from 35 EU & non-EU countries) launches an open letter to the EU and Member States for a “Humane, comprehensive and immediate action for Migration”.

The letter stresses the importance of **humane treatment of Asylum Seekers**, calls for **improving the European asylum mechanism** and **combating illegal migrant smuggling**, encourages involvement of Civil Society, and emphasizes the necessity of addressing the root causes of migration.

Call for action: [“Humane, comprehensive and immediate action for Migration”](#)

The letter was written on the occasion of the Extraordinary Council meeting of Home affairs & Justice Ministers of the EU, on the 14th September 2015.



### Migration crisis: the support of ALDA

In the framework of EYD2015, September is dedicated to migration. Migration always represented a crucial issue, with its complicate causes and effects, and in this historical moment it is getting more serious than ever.

September started with shocking images: on one hand thousands of people running away from their

countries looking for a safe place, a shelter, some help, looking for their own dignity; on the other hand the reaction of the European countries and their people, the humanitarian aid and the several initiatives and campaigns to welcome refugees, but also the physical and moral walls, violence, abuse of power and loss of control. While a dead child washed ashore on a Turkish beach becomes the new symbol of Europe's migration disaster, thousands of migrants every day choose even the most dangerous ways to reach Europe, often paying the highest price for this decision. Europe and European Union has witnessed many desperate attempts of refugees trying to cross the borders of European Union and find safety.

ALDA strongly defends human rights, and it is actively engaged in initiatives aimed at solving the migration crisis, which is affecting Europe. In the framework of [LADDER project](#) several paths were created, among which also the Migration path. The consortium of LADDER has launched an open letter to EU and Member States for a "[Humane, comprehensive and immediate action for Migration](#)" which was written on the occasion of the Extraordinary Council meeting of Home Affairs & Justice Ministers of the EU, on 14th September 2015. The letter stresses the importance of humane treatment of Asylum Seekers, calls for improving the European asylum mechanism and combating the illegal migrant smuggling. Other activity of project LADDER is "LADDER Special Initiative on Migration" which is going to take place on 10th – 14th November 2015 in Malta.

ALDA is also experiencing the migration reality through its offices in Subotica and Skopje. Since Subotica is located near Serbian-Hungarian border, they are facing the influx of refugees every day. Moreover, there are concerns about the upcoming winter. With such a huge number of refugees, it is going to be very difficult to provide people with shelter and warm environment. In order to contribute to the solution of this problem, Mayor of Subotica and Kanjiza, together with the UNHCR delegation and Red Cross, visited the old brick factory in Subotica, which could serve as a temporary shelter for migrants. Meanwhile all the Local Democracy Agencies of ALDA, led by the LDA Subotica and the Youth section of Skopje office, are mobilizing to practically get involved in humanitarian actions, in order to provide first aid goods to refugees.

In this chaotic and disastrous situation, Europe is probably facing the biggest migration crisis in history, and European Union is constantly working on developing the common strategy to take care of such a big influx of refugees.



## **First Balkan Youth Forum for Local Democracy in Subotica**

The First Balkan Youth Forum for Local Democracy was held on 21st September 2015, in the City Hall in Subotica.

Representatives of local and regional authorities, as well Civil Society representatives, discussed about the topic of youth participation, youth policies and youth conditions in the Region. More than 60 participants

from the Balkans, members of the Regional Network for Local Democracy (eight Local Democracy Agencies in five countries) and their partners promoted the regional platform for cooperation between civil society organizations and public authorities that encourages youth participation in public policy, targeting young people with less opportunities.

Representatives of local and regional authorities discussed the challenges during decision-making processes for youth policies. The benefits from inclusive youth policies and progress was the focus of the decision makers. "Nothing about youth, without youth" stated Mr. Michael Uayehara from OSCE Mission to Serbia, underlining the need of full inclusion of youth in youth policy making.

Umbrella youth organizations and Civil Society representatives had a panel discussion on the issues when dealing with youth participation and dialogue. Both the passivity of youth and the lack of will to hear youth voice was the conclusion among speakers and participants. "Young people don't believe that they are important or influential on social changes. It is up to us to show them their relevance in the community" – stated M. Rodic, research expert during the presentation of the first regional research on the position of youth.

Regional comparative analysis "Youth active citizenship and democratic participation" conducted by experts in the platform clearly showed that youth from rural areas have low access to information, which creates barriers for active participation, and offered a solution to this problem. The Forum ended with an exhibition of art photos by young people in Subotica Gallery.

This conference was organized in the framework of the project [Balkan Regional Platform for youth participation and dialogue](#) funded by the European Union, through the Civil Society Facility - Operating Grants to IPA CSO Associations (Support to Regional Thematic Associations). This project is implemented by ALDA and 8 Balkan Local Democracy Agencies from Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia.

### [Photogallery](#)



## **ALDA and its partners from Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine are kicking-off a new project on cultural heritage and civic engagement**

“CHOICE – Cultural Heritage: Opportunity for Improving Civic Engagement” is kicking-off with a workshop and the project steering committee at ALDA’s office in Vicenza on 2-4 September. The partners – EuroBelarus International Consortium, Centre for Cultural Management from Ukraine, ICOM Moldova National Committee, Millennium Foundation for Education and Research from Armenia, and the Belarussian Public Association Centre for Social Innovations – joined us in our offices to talk about cultural heritage as an opportunity for conscious and engaged citizenry.

The project aim is to enhance the civil society's role and to build its organisational capacities to develop a heritage-friendly living environment in Belarus, Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine and across the Eastern Neighbourhood in general. The partners will be engaging local CSOs through a sub granting scheme. It will be a great opportunity for the interested organisations to gain new skills and develop new expertise as agents for socio-economic change in their communities. They will also receive a chance to develop their organisational change plan thanks to the assistance of the project country teams.

The project is going to run for almost another two years and it is going to finish off with a regional CSO forum, which is going to gather the cultural heritage professionals from across the Eastern Partnership countries to discuss and approve policy recommendations.

Please read the press release on [the website of EuroBelarus](#).



## **Europe for Citizens Programme, Project BET ON EU – Third international event held in Subotica**

The third international event of the project [BET ON EU](#), gathering 18 partner organisations, was held in Subotica (Serbia) from 31 August – 02 September 2015. The conference brought together participants from 12 countries from the Western Balkans and EU.

The first day the participants were welcomed by Alexander Lovcanski, from LED Project Office of the City of Subotica, and Stanka Parac, ALDA Regional Programme Coordinator, and got introduced to the work program anticipated for the next days.

The introduction was followed by a training session during which the participants worked together in groups in order to discuss and exchange practices about potential follow up actions. The presented ideas and conclusions will serve as a basis for future cooperation among the partners within the created network of towns.

During the second day of the event the participants attended the official session of the City Assembly on occasion of the Day of the City of Subotica, held in the City Hall, which traditionally gathers the representatives of twinned and partner cities of Subotica. The participants were addressed by the Mayor Jene Maglai, President of the City Assembly, Ilija Maravic, and the Serbian Minister for Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Kori Udovicki. Also, a public signpost containing the names of the twinned towns and project partners of BET ON EU was installed on the main square in Subotica.

The afternoon session was organized at the Open University, where Silvia Ceccarelli from Ravenna (Italy) and Martin Dangerfield from Wolverhampton University (UK) presented their activities and experiences

from local events organized within the project, which were the introduction to the exchange that followed among the participants.

The areas for future cooperation emerged from the interactive workshops led by Stanka Parac, ALDA Regional Programme Coordinator, where the partners proposed future joint activities in areas worth to bet for the future of the European Union: intercultural dialogue, remembrance, civic participation and dialogue, volunteering. The best four project ideas were chosen and participants agreed to work together on the follow-up plan development, formulating the aims for which they are willing to invest and work for.

During the field visit on the third day, the participants had the opportunity to see the results of EU funded Cross-border Co-operation projects at the ZOO Palic and to visit the Palic lake.

Please see the [photogallery of the event](#).



## **Bridges of Expertise to Fight Gender Based Violence - closing conference in Nevsehir, Turkey**

ALDA participated in preparatory activities and coordination of the closing conference of the project, which took place on 18th September 2015 in Nevsehir, whilst together with the lead partner **Kapadokya Kadin Dayanisma Dernegi – Women’s Solidarity Association**, and **University of Nevsehir** and the **Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto**, in Slovenia, the project publication – guide was designed and its contents agreed. It will serve both as an opportunity to present the results of local survey most recently conducted in the municipalities included, as well as an overview of some good local practice of institutional and legislative framework regulating the prevention and protection of women victims of gender based violence. Furthermore, the publication titled: *Bridges of expertise to fight gender based violence – overview of local practice in Turkey and EU MS*, will be prepared for presentation of the project in the special event that will be organised in the Council of Europe, on 20/22 October during the 29th Session of the CoE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

The closing conference gathering some fifty participants - local and regional authorities, CSOs, development agencies, respective public institutions and centres for protection of women victims of violence, women’s associations from Nevsehir, Kirsehir. local government representatives from Zonguldak and Karadeniz Ereğli. In the introductory session, the guest speakers, representatives of Nevsehir municipality, University of Nevsehir and EU partners reiterated the need for more coordinated efforts in tackling the violence against women, while neither traditional or patriarchal attitudes nor “modern” attitudes can serve as any excuse for any forms of violence against women. However, according to the research conducted, lack of awareness and even more lack of recognition of the issue is among the key

concerns in addressing the issue. Therefore, both the Guide and the presentation of the project in the Council of Europe aims to help raise awareness on efforts made at local level in Turkey in tackling the violence against women.

Entire project is addressing the issue of fighting gender based violence and the presentation of local practices in Turkey and EU partner countries in prevention and protection of women victims of domestic violence is at the same time an opportunity in support to announce and plan activities for the **2016 European Year of combating violence against women**.

Please find more information about the project in our [website](#)

#### PROJECT 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, Italy, the “Centre for Social Assistance” of Municipality of Koper, the University of Koper and the NGO “Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto”, Slovenia, and the Association of Local Democracy Agency (ALDA), France.



## **CORLEAP conference in Yerevan to focus on local democracy in the Eastern Partnership**

On Friday 18th September, a meeting of the Bureau and public event of the Conference for regional and local authorities for Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) took place in Yerevan, Armenia.

The meeting brought together representatives from EU and EaP countries and it was also the occasion to consider the conclusions of the Riga EaP Summit in May, which recognised the work of CORLEAP in promoting cooperation at the regional and municipal levels of government and approved CORLEAP's Action Plan for 2016–2017, setting further priorities for the Assembly.

The meeting was then followed by a conference focusing on strategies to foster local democracy in EaP. Coordinator of the working table was Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida, Secretary General of ALDA – the European Association for Local Democracy. ALDA and CORLEAP have a long-standing cooperation, which is a crucial element for developing their strategies in the EaP. In the past, both organisations worked together

in several important occasions, such as for the post monitoring events on local democracy in Armenia and Ukraine, after the report of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

Both ALDA and CORLEAP share the importance of decentralisation processes and trust the strengthening of public local institutions. The event took place in an important moment for the EaP strategy, already affirmed through the ENPI review.

Please see the [Agenda of the Conference](#).



## **An autumn full of activities for LADDER project on different topics: decentralisation, education and migration**

LADDER (Local Authorities as Drivers for Development Education & Raising awareness) project is now moving to its next phase, from inception to implementation. Following the 2nd Steering Committee (16/10/2015), the consortium agreed to take the project forward with great enthusiasm!

In the next weeks, the LADDER calendar includes several dates where the DEAR approach will be brainstormed and promoted, tackling the **role of Local Authorities in development education**, in cooperation with CSOs. Here is a glance of the next "LADDER" dates:

The 3rd **training on DEAR** in Greece (4-6 November), Special Initiative on **Migration** in Malta (10-14 November), and **Eastern partnership Special initiative** in Georgia (1-4 December), and many more! The DEAR approach of LADDER will also be showcased during other key moments, including during the *World LED Forum* in Turin (14-16 October), the *DEAR Fair* in Brussels (22-23 October) & the *3rd Congress on Global Education* in Croatia (26-28 November) and many more!

Migration and the role of LAs in response to the crisis will be granted a particular attention during the Special Initiative in Malta (10-14 November), addressing the challenges of the current migration crisis and the role of LAs.

Two particularly participative calls have been launched in September, the **Citizen Journalists initiative** (supporting citizens writing on or covering development topics) and the **Slogan Competition initiative** (involving schools in all partner countries to collect the best slogans for raising awareness on development). Interested to join or know more? Stay tuned on: <http://www.ladder-project.eu> or keep posted on the dedicated page regarding [upcoming events](#).



## **Let the citizens know how taxpayers' money is spent for development: 4 months left for the EYD 2015!**

The European Year for Development 2015 is the flagship initiative of the EU to present the role and contribution of the EU in eradicating poverty across the world. Recent figures show that less than 50% of EU citizens know how the EU is supporting poverty eradication, and how development aid is spent, while the vast majority (80%) of them believe that development aid is important (source: Eurobarometer 2013). Latest figures of 2015 confirm these trends, justifying the importance of our collective actions and our support to the EYD 2015.

ALDA, within its strategy and projects (such as the LADDER project) fully supports the promotion of the EYD 2015 and its objectives, stressing the importance of communicating clear, concise and relevant information to citizens. The upcoming events foreseen in LADDER's calendar will have a clear EYD 2015 dimension. If you want to know more or join this initiative, share the news, suggest an event, a creative idea or a personality to become ambassador of the EYD2015, please read more on [EYD 2015 website](#).



## **ALDA and Monfalcone Municipality sign the establishment agreement of GEIE**

On 2nd September, in Monfalcone (Italy), the agreement of establishment of GEIE, the European Group of Economic Interest, was signed between the Municipality of Monfalcone and ALDA – the European Association for Local Democracy.

The agreement was signed by Silvia Altran, Mayor of Monfalcone, and Lucio Gregoretti, Head of the International Relations Department of the Municipality, Antonella Valmorbida, Secretary General of ALDA, and Marco Boaria, Head of Resources and Development Unit of ALDA and administrator of GEIE.

“This agreement and the establishment of GEIE would allow us to activate an organism that would make us face the EU project development – stated the Mayor, Silvia Altran – it’s an ambitious partnership”.

“Monfalcone has always been very active – added Antonella Valmorbida – and we have formed a solid

alliance for years. The EU support is fundamental to realise some projects, and now with the GEIE platform it would be even easier”.

GEIE is a legal form proposed by the European Union, which aims at joining capacities and resources of economical actors belonging at least to two EU countries. The goal of GEIE is to find community fund for the implementation of European projects and, in this respect, Monfalcone Municipality has been prominent in the last ten years as leader in the acquisition of European funds, with 28 projects approved.

The Agenda of GEIE for this year already promises to be full: four initiatives for development cooperation, several projects in the framework of Central Europe and Interreg Europe calls for proposal, as well as a project proposal in progress in the framework of Med are in fact expected.

For further information on the event:

[TGR Friuli Venezia Giulia](#) (minute 11.05)

[Il Piccolo](#)

[Press release of the Municipality of Monfalcone](#)

[Agenparl](#)

[NordEst News](#)



## **SumLab 2015: ALDA participates presenting the Citizen Journalists initiative**

From 23rd to 25th September 2015, ALDA took part to the second edition of SumLab in Cesena, Italy, presenting the Citizen Journalists initiative as strategy conceived to involve citizen participation in development issues through communication and journalism.

After the successful results achieved last year with the first edition in Matera, Italy, the SumLab also took place this year, focusing on the theme of “Cross-border Communication”. The 3-days seminar was characterised by presentations, lessons, workshops and contributions by communication officers and experts, sharing innovative techniques and methodologies used in the communication field, referring to the topic of the year.

Elena Debonis, Communication Officer of ALDA, took part to the seminar presenting the Citizen Journalists initiative as strategy developed in the framework of LADDER project. Citizen Journalists is an initiative that aims at developing a network of people interested in Development Education and Raising Awareness, giving their contribution through communication and journalism. Participants cannot be experts in

journalism and have to come from the 18 EU and 17 non-EU countries of LADDER's consortium. After the selection of the Citizen Journalists, participants will attend a training on communication tools, drafting techniques, video reporting, as well as development issues. Once the network is ready, they will start drafting news and creating reports and interviews in their countries, at the local level, having an impact at global level. In fact, their outputs will be published and spread among ALDA and LADDER's channels.

SumLab is a learning and knowledge network of EU communicators dealing with policies, both at the project and programme level. It focuses on practical learning, inviting high level experts and exchanging innovative experiences, with a people-based, bottom-up and non-institutional approach.

This initiative represents an important occasion to build a heterogeneous network of people sharing same interests that want to get involved in issues of global relevance. Furthermore, this opportunity is in line with ALDA's mission of fostering citizen participation and including all citizens in the community life, but it also meets the DEAR policies of the EYD 2015 – the European Year for Development – flagship initiative of the EU for 2015, that aims at raising the awareness of citizens on development issues, informing them how the taxpayers' money is spent by the EU with regards to development.

Useful links:

[SumLab2015 Agenda](#)

[Citizen Journalists presentation \(Prezi presentation\)](#)

[LADDER website](#)



## **Newsletter BN-MK relaunched!**

The Program for decentralised cooperation between the French Region Lower Normandy and Republic of Macedonia, launched this September their monthly Newsletter. We are inviting to you to follow all the news regarding the cooperation, such as past activities, future activities and news from the partners.

For 10 years now, the Region Lower Normandy and Republic of Macedonia are working on different topics in order to strengthen the local development on both territories. If you are interested in reading the latest news of the cooperation, you can subscribe here for your [French](#) or [Macedonian](#) version of the Newsletter, or you can simply read this month's issue in [French](#) or [Macedonian](#) online.

Decentralised cooperation programme between Lower Normandy (France) and Macedonia is coordinated by ALDA Skopje. Read more about this project on the official [website of the cooperation](#) or follow the news on the official [Facebook page](#).

# NEWS FROM THE LDAs

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## ALDA celebrates the International Day of Democracy: contributions by the LDAs

On 15th September 2015, we celebrate the International Day of Democracy, all around the world. Having the Democracy as a core of its mission, ALDA joins this celebration too, not forgetting the support of good governance and active citizen participation.

On this special occasion, ALDA Secretary General, Antonella Valmorbidia, wrote a statement: [Participative democracy: Time to deepen democracy for a global responsibility and citizenship](#) stressing the necessity to strengthen democracy, especially during the difficult period that Europe is now facing. In the same manner, the Local Democracy Agencies contributed to this celebration, sharing their reflection on democratic value and its role in the world. Their statements focus on the hard times affecting Europe, and emphasize the importance of democracy, now more than ever, in the framework of active citizen participation and educational values:

*“It is apparent that we are facing a crisis of socio-moral resources in our societies today. Democracy is in danger. That is why we need to focus strongly on education for development of democratic capacities of citizens. We need to start from our own local communities, from non-formal programs and moving to institutionalized education in order to achieve long lasting development of democracy.”*

Sasa Marinkov, Delegate of LDA Central and Southern Serbia

*“Democracy can be considered as a universal responsibility that causes major revolution in thinking and contributes the acceptance of a human overall right "to live" in 21st century.”*

Lusine Aleksandryan, Delegate of LDA Armenia

*“Democracy is a live process of permanent building and maintaining achieved, and meeting new challenges to improve our society. Continuous work that permanently seeks new standards and innovative methodologies for raising life quality and therefore is essential to have a focus and capability to see our community in a global family. It is a long, demanding yet very rewarding job of changing mind-sets for our better today and great tomorrow of our children. Still, we have to keep on our mind that without active and politically literate citizens and without transparent, accountable and visionary governments at all levels we cannot progress. Therefore, the role of civil*

*society organisations is very important as a promotor of change and watchdog of democratic standards.”*

Paula Rauzan, Delegate of LDA - OP Sisak

*“We are witnessing that democracy is in decline around the world. That is why it is necessary to reinforce citizens’ trust in the values and principles of democratic processes and their power to make a change.”*

Silvija Patarcic, Delegate of LDA Subotica

*“As a part of the decentralization of power and assistance in the development of local democracy, LDA of the Dnipropetrovsk Region, during July-August 2015, have helped the initiative group in the form of systematic consultation, preparation of documents and personal meetings with the population of Vasylkivka district of Dnipropetrovsk region (Ukraine). As a result, after 2 sessions of Vasylkivka District Council, there was established a body of self-organization of the population named “Zeleniy Gai”, which united 6 settlements.*

*After consultations with LDA of the Dnipropetrovsk Region, members of the Permanent Working Group of NGOs to Monitor the Activities of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional Council, and Execution of its Decisions could take a leading position in the newly created public councils in the city of Dnipropetrovsk and Dnipropetrovsk Regional State Administration.*

*Young LDA of the Dnipropetrovsk Region supports the image of the democratic processes in the area and distributes guidelines of decentralization, creating an effective platform for the development of social partnership and project implementation.”*

Anzhelika Pylypenko, Delegate of LDA of the Dnipropetrovsk Region

Kirill Batalov, Deputy Delegate of LDA of the Dnipropetrovsk Region

Brussels, 15th September 2015