



ALDA NEWSLETTER DECEMBRE 2015



ALDA wishes you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2016!

The President of ALDA, the Secretary General, the Governing Board, and all the Staff of ALDA want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2016!

This 2015 has been a year full of achievements and challenges, and we are very glad we had the opportunity to share them with you all, members, partners and friends of ALDA. The migration tragedies, the economic and political instability of Europe, the shadow of the international terrorism are just few of the big difficulties that put us to the test.

Motivated and animated by the values of freedom, human rights and dialogue, we will move on, on the path of democracy and citizen participation. And it's thanks to each single effort and contribution that we can work with passion and dedication to our mission.

Looking forward to foster cooperation and face new challenges with you all for the upcoming 2016, we want to wish you all, from the bottom of our heart, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Please find below the statement of our President, Oriano Otočan, written for the occasion.

Useful links:

[Statement of ALDA President: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2016!](#)



Special Initiative of LADDER project on the Eastern Partnership: energy efficiency, migration and sustainable agriculture

From 1st to 4th December 2015, the second Special Initiative of LADDER project with focus on the Eastern Partnership was held in Georgia. The event was organised by NALAG in cooperation with ALDA and UBBSLA, and it was structured in 3 phases.

In the first phase all partners and other participants met in Tbilisi for a one-day conference, which represented the occasion to present the project of LADDER. The opening ceremony was delivered by Mr Stephan Stork – Head of Operations of EU Delegation to Georgia, Mr David Melua – Director of NALAG, and Mrs Imislawa Gorska – Vice-President of ALDA.

Mrs Antonella Valmorbidia, Secretary General of ALDA, presented the LADDER approach, the goals and the global dimension of the project. “LADDER is not just a project – she stated – but a family, and each one of us has a specific role to play, in order to achieve results locally and globally”. This session was also animated by some representatives of LADDER partnership, namely Mrs Mariana Ivanova from UBBSLA – the Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities, Mrs Natalia Shovkopliias from UTCS –the Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia, Mr Dmitriy Sokol from Lev Sapieha Foundation of Belarus, and Mr David Melua, Director of NALAG.

The first-day conference also included a meeting of the Eastern Partnership Working Group, where challenges and solutions related to the eastern area were discussed, and an intensive plenary session with three panels focusing on: the role of Local Authorities in promoting Development Education and Awareness Raising; Development Education in EaP countries and role of the civil sector; and summing up of the plenary.

In the second phase of the Special Initiative, the participants were split in thematic groups and different locations. The climate and energy efficiency was held in Borjomi, migration issues in Kutaisi and sustainable agriculture in Telavi.

Coordinated by Mrs Natalia Shovkopliias from UTCS, the team in Borjomi discussed best practices from the municipalities of Slovakia and Georgia in terms of good management of resources with a respectful approach to nature, energy efficiency and sustainability were presented. The two days of intensive work were concluded by a brainstorming session and the drafting of recommendations.

The thematic group “Migration and Mobility – a challenge or an opportunity for local development” took place in Kutaisi, and was coordinated by Mrs Nino Tvaltvadze, Delegate of the LDA Georgia. Representatives of Georgian Local Authorities contributed to the debate and addressed migration and mobility from the Georgian perspective with a particular attention on how to raise awareness on these topics. The group also visited a Migrants information centre, learning how migration is addressed at the local level.

The workshops working on “Sustainable Agriculture – success models for rural municipalities” in Telavi, was coordinated by Mr David Melua, Director of NALAG. The activities focused on good

Citizens programme that focuses on the role of local authorities and citizens to promote environmental protection and sustainable development. The international seminar in Thiene, in November, was an occasion to bring together partners from 8 different countries across Europe to exchange knowledge, experience and good practice on the topic of recycling. The emphasis in 2016 will be put on young people because they are the future of Europe and must make the difference for a better and more sustainable world. Young citizens will contribute as protagonists to the discussions on environment and sustainable development.

ALDA's Active Citizenship funding programme supporting grass-roots level initiatives in Europe has been a pillar of our action in 2015. Out of more than 25 applications, seven organisations from Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, Estonia, Germany and Czech Republic have benefited of a total budget of 20 000 Euros to launch activities promoting citizens' reflections and debates on key topics of the European agenda such as COP21, radicalization, the migration crisis, the European Citizen Initiative revision and many more.

As a key stakeholder in the structured dialogue with the DG Home Affairs, ALDA is proud, with concrete actions, to contribute to reaching the objectives of the Europe for Citizens programme and to promote its development. The programme represents a key instrument to tackle new forms of populism and radicalisation, bring citizens closer to Europe and revive the European project. The challenges ahead in 2016 are bigger than ever and ALDA will be at the forefront of actions aimed at reinforcing the programme and promote its objectives.



ALDA and CORLEAP: strengthening cooperation and making joint plans for 2016 and 2017

The European Neighbourhood Policy, and in particular its Eastern dimension known as the Eastern Partnership Initiative, has found itself at the crossroads. Following the Riga

Eastern Partnership Summit of May 2015, where the EU reiterated its commitment to supporting the 6 Eastern partners as far as democratic reforms are concerned, it became apparent that a tailored-made approach is needed to better support those partners that chose to associate themselves closer with the EU. The Summit underlined the following areas of cooperation: strengthening democratic institutions, enabling functioning market economies, improving macroeconomic stability and the business environment, as well as enhancing interconnectivity, mobility and people-to-people contacts open up new opportunities for cooperation and also contribute to trade, growth and competitiveness.

The [Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership](#) (hereinafter referred to as "CORLEAP") is the political forum of discussion, consultation, supervision and monitoring in respect of all questions relating to the Eastern Partnership at the local and regional levels. CORLEAP will continue to pursue the common goal of the EU and Eastern partners, i.e. the establishment of a successful and prosperous neighbourhood based on the recognition of common values such as democracy, rule of law, good governance, the principles of market

economy and sustainable development at all levels of governance and will therefore actively support the priorities set out during the Riga summit.

ALDA fully shares this mission and it's deeply engaged in the Eastern Partnership countries with a handful of its projects and activities to support the cooperation between local authorities and civil society. ALDA has been cooperating closely with CORLEAP for several years, and is at present coordinating its activities in an even closer manner to reach the common objectives. As set out in the CORLEAP's Action Plan for 2016-2017, there are several synergies and undertakings that have been identified where the two could work hand in hand. ALDA has visibly become an important partner of CORLEAP as far as the implementation of its objectives is concerned and ALDA shares its take on joining the forces for a number of activities such as for instance the LADDER Special Initiative for the Eastern Partnership in Tbilisi on 1-4 December 2015 to begin with. Furthermore, ALDA is keen to support CORLEAP's activities in the field of decentralisation and best practices sharing, but also actively participate in the series of Platforms under the "Democracy, good governance and stability" theme.

Altogether, ALDA has also participated actively in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum since its beginning in 2009, and encourages closer ties and cooperation between the Forum and CORLEAP and other stakeholders, such as CONCORD in its capacity of the coordinator of the Subgroup on Public Administration Reform (LGPARG). A specific area for further cooperation is the development of local self-governance. The activities of the Civil Society Forum, and the LGPAR in particular, are therefore welcomed and in line with the priorities and mission of CORLEAP. Most recently, the joint work focused on the fiscal decentralisation and will continue and expand into other important areas. CORLEAP encourages equally a multi-stakeholder approach to local and regional development within the EaP region, based on the close cooperation between local and regional authorities, civil society organisations and citizens. The involvement of civil society is of crucial importance for the successful reform process. Local authorities associations are one of the strongest constituency-based actors in the society. Consolidating them further and strengthening their capacities will effectively support the decentralisation, democratisation and public administration reforms.

Furthermore, CORLEAP expressed the interest to cooperate in Moldova in the 2016-2017 time period, and also here the cooperation with ALDA would be hopefully fruitful and effective, considering that ALDA is in the process of opening a Local Democracy Agency in Moldova, and it's at the moment looking for partners from the EU regions to come on board and joint this partnership and cooperation mechanism in cooperation with its local member CALM-The Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova.



consortium.

Showcasing the project RE.CRI.RE to the European Commission and the Executive Agency REA

On 19th November 2015, the RE.CRI.RE project was showcased to the European Commission and its executive agency REA by a small team representing the whole

The team composed by Ms Antonella Valmorbida, Secretary General of ALDA, Prof Sergio Salvatore, University of Salento, Prof Alessandro Distanto, President of ISBEM, Aldo Xhani, Coordinator of the Citizenship programme at ALDA and Ms Viviana Fini, researcher at ISBEM, brought its methodological analysis into the panel addressing the topic “Political challenges in Europe” aimed at understanding what the research in social sciences and humanities tell us about changing Europe. The project will represent a milestone within ALDA’s citizenship programme in the upcoming three years. ALDA, in cooperation with its strategic partner ISBEM, is the coordinator of a network of 14 universities coming from 12 different countries across Europe.

Promoting good governance and citizen participation calls for a deeper reflection on the symbolic universes grounding social identity in order to analyse whether a major change occurred in European societies as a consequence of the socio-economic crisis. Reflecting upon the categories citizens adopt in representing the outside world is key to develop effective policies at all levels of governance.

The project brings therefore together academics and practitioners in accordance with the new approach of the Horizon 2020 programme focused on applied research. Besides the coordination of the partnership, ALDA will strongly contribute to the initiative by providing a network of more than 180 members as communities where to develop case studies and test the outcomes of the research.



ALDA at the General Assembly of EPD

The President of ALDA, Oriano Otočan, the Secretary General, Antonella Valmorbida, and the Head of the Resources and Development Unit, Marco Boaria, participated on 2nd December to the General Assembly of EPD, the European Partnership for Democracy. EPD is a non-

profit organisation supporting democracy worldwide, and has been extensively cooperating with ALDA in the last two years.

The meeting foresaw the establishment of a new legal entity based in Brussels, due to the decision of EPD to change its legal status and headquarters - from a Dutch Foundation to a Belgian NGO. Besides the new formal status, the meeting represented the opportunity to exchange and discuss about the future strategy of the EPD community - encompassing nowadays nine relevant European associations (NIMD, Club de Madrid, DEMO Finland, EESC, People in need, ECP, ECES, Elbarlament) - and to confirm a joint commitment towards democracy as a value to be promoted and “implemented” worldwide.

The General Assembly of the “new” organization also elected the members of its Governing Board: Mrs Valmorbida, on behalf of ALDA, was elected as Board member, together with other 6 representatives of the other organizations: her role in the board will further strengthen the contribution of ALDA in the field of democracy. Mr Hans Bruning was reconfirmed President of EPD while Mr Ken Godfrey was reconfirmed in his position of Executive Director.

For further information, visit the website of [EPD](#)



Promoting Active European Citizenship – ALDA trains the Communes of Brussels on the Europe for Citizens programme

Aldo Xhani, Coordinator of the Citizenship Programme, and Anna Ditta, Project Development Officer, delivered on 2nd December a one-day training course to the

Communes of Brussels on the Europe for Citizens programme, in cooperation with the Association de la Ville et des Communes de Bruxelles Capitale (AVCB). The objective of the training was to give an overview of the programme with particular focus on its objectives and priorities, as well as on its funding mechanism.

The training was also an opportunity to demonstrate three concrete cases of implemented projects under the Strands European Remembrance, Democratic Engagement and Civic Participation, with particular focus on Networks of Twinned Towns and Civil Society Projects. An interactive session on questions, answers and working groups on project development provided the participants with new knowledge on the programme.

The event was positively evaluated by the participants inasmuch as it was also an opportunity to network and pave the path for future project cooperation. The General Assembly of the “new” organization also elected the members of its Governing Board: Mrs Valmorbidia, on behalf of ALDA, was elected as Board member, together with other 6 representatives of the other organizations: her role in the board will further strengthen the contribution of ALDA in the field of democracy. Mr Hans Bruning was reconfirmed President of EPD while Mr Ken Godfrey was reconfirmed in his position of Executive Director.



Project "Mobilised society for local democracy" – training for young community leaders in Georgia

From 5th to 8th December in Tbilisi, Georgia, ALDA delivered a training for young community leaders. The training was envisaged in the frame of the EU project

[Mobilised society for local democracy](#), funded under the programme Civil Society Facility of the European Commission, namely the DG Development and Cooperation.

The goal of the project is to strengthen the role of regional CSOs (NGOs and CBOs) in Georgia and their mobilization for support to decentralization. The lead applicant of the project is NALAG - National Association of Local Authorities in Georgia - while ALDA and LDA Georgia are partners.

The first three days of the trainings were delivered by ALDA and namely by Anna Ditta, ALDA Project Development Officer. NALAG was in charge for the last day of the dynamic learning and focused on the role of local authorities in the management of communities and how CSOs and CBOs can efficiently relate with them for the promotion of local development.

22 young people aged between 20 and 30 years old, some of them representing local associations or small municipalities around the various Georgian regions, joined this training, aimed at providing the youth with skills in project development, in order for them to be able to prepare good quality proposals to be submitted for funding and supporting the development of their local communities.

The project indeed foresees a subgrant scheme that is expected to allocate small grants to various Georgian communities. The training was a preparatory action anticipating the launch of the subgrant scheme.

The training employed a non-formal education approach, which combined theoretical sessions with practical exercises into groups, and which led to development of concrete projects to be potentially presented for funding. The methodology also involved group activities aimed at developing specific skills useful for the project development, such as team building and responsibilities sharing, communication among partners, and the choice of project strategies.

Useful links:

[Photo gallery](#)



Project LADDER from global to local: closing the first year of activities and approaching new challenges of 2016

2015 is coming to an end after an intensive activity for the consortium of the LADDER project.

After having benefited from EU-level trainings on DEAR (Development Education and Awareness Raising) – more than 150 representatives of local authorities, networks of LAs and civil society organizations (CSOs) attended 3 training sessions held in Ireland, Croatia and Greece – the next steps of the cascade mechanism is now ongoing, with the organization of DEAR trainings at local & national level in the next weeks and months.

Acting as multipliers at national and local level, 10 of the co-applicants are running and organizing a total of 20 national level DEAR trainings (2 days each) in Slovakia, Malta, Poland, Croatia, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Ireland, Italy and Bulgaria, addressing 500 representatives of LAs and CSOs. These trainings are organized with the support of The Hague Academy for Local Governance and coordinated by ALDA.

Further down in this cascade structure, the above will be followed by another round of DEAR trainings at local level, implemented in the same 10 countries, addressing representatives of local authorities and local CSOs, targeting approximately 1000 beneficiaries (“local multipliers”).

For more information & participation, stay tuned on the [LADDER website](#) or contact us.



Busy week for the cooperation between Lower Normandy and Macedonia with activities on Human Rights

Inspired by the International Day for Human Rights on 10th December 2015, ALDA office in Skopje dedicated the second week of December on activities related to Human

Rights in the framework of the programme for Decentralized cooperation between Lower Normandy and Macedonia.

From 8th to 11th December 2015, a delegation of representatives of the International Institute of Human Rights and Peace of Caen and professors from the University of Caen (Lower Normandy) organized a set of activities on Human Rights with their Macedonian partners.

On Wednesday 9th December, the 5th edition of the Day of Comparative Law between France and Macedonia was held in Skopje on the topic of “Freedom of Religion”. The event was organized by the International Institute of Human Rights and Peace in Caen and the French Embassy in Skopje, in cooperation with the University of Caen and the Faculty of Law in Skopje, Macedonia.

The French Ambassador in Macedonia, Mrs. Laurence Auer, opened the event and highlighted the importance of exchanges between France and Macedonia in the field of Human rights especially in an academic context.

On Thursday 10th December, the 11th International E-Conference was held on the subject “Freedom and Privacy on the Internet”. The Conference was organized by the Metamorphosis Foundation in cooperation with the International Institute of Human Rights and Peace in Caen. Conference topics included human rights as the foundation of modern society. The best practices in human rights education were presented during the conference, including also the tools for improving the security and privacy on the internet, journalistic standards and the prevention and fight against hate speech.

The field of human rights is of great importance for ALDA and many actions have been implemented in this field in Macedonia especially through the programme for Decentralized cooperation between Macedonia and Lower Normandy.

NEWS FROM THE LDAs



Approaching the second phase of the project CHOICE: workshop with applicants of the regranting scheme organised in Gyumri, Armenia

CHOICE is the partnership project of ALDA (France), EuroBelarus (Lithuania), Centre for Cultural Management (Ukraine), ICOM

(Moldova), Millenium Foundation (Armenia) and Centre of Social Innovations (Belarus) that aims to preserve cultural heritage and strengthen the cooperation among organizations working in the sphere of culture.

The project is implemented in Armenia, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine. The partners launched in their countries a call for proposal for organisations. Afterwards, once the selection of applicants was completed, the partners also organised an event of information and dissemination for the selected organisations. In the end, around 35 projects will get funded from the 4 above mentioned countries.

In Gyumri, on 5-7 December, Millenium Foundation organized the workshop for Armenian applicants together with participants from Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. “Local Democracy Agency” Foundation, which also applied to the call and passed the second phase, participated in the workshop. The workshop was animated by an expert from Belarus, Igor Rahansky, who presented the concept of heritage, culture, perceptions of those concepts from the point of view of different cultures and values, while, Tatyana Poshevalova, Director of EuroBelarus, presented the main demands and strong points of the application for the second phase, and Vyacheslav Chernyavski, Financial manager of EuroBelarus, explained the points for the financial management and reporting of the project. The workshop was accompanied by active discussions, answers and questions that promoted the perception of the project and made it more understandable and tangible. Finally, the President of Union of Non-Governmental organizations, Mr. Tshartaryan, delivered a speech about the cultural programme in Armenia and Gyumri, the difficulties and visions.

The workshop was successful as it really addressed the understanding of cultural heritage and the concrete steps for further elaboration of the applications with positive remarks.