



LDnet: Annual Report to General Assembly Brussels, 12th October 2016

1. **LDnet and LEDA Partenariat:** Following agreement of the partners in LEDA Partenariat that were contactable and discussions at the LD Net General Assembly in 2015, changes were made to the statute of LEDA Partenariat. These were registered as required under French law by Jean-Pierre Pellegrin, Treasurer LDnet. Resources LEDA Partenariat, approximately €1,923 were transferred to LDnet from the FR LEDA Partenariat and €5k from the NL LEDA Partenariat. These resources are now available for some specific activities that could assist in the development of LDnet (e.g., website, preparation of bibliography on local development, some expenses associated with meetings, or other ideas?).
2. **LDnet website.** It was agreed by the members that the LDnet website needed improvement. This was in order to make the site easier to navigate, more attractive visually and more accessible. Over the last 2-3 months, a new LDnet website was been created (<http://ldnet.egicity.com/>), developed by Nicolas Stephanou, Parosweb (organised by Haris Martinos, Secretary LDnet). The new site uses WordPress. It allows for members to contribute information and upload new material. It is still possible to access the old site. The next task is to export the content of the old site onto the new website. This is now in progress. There are some technical issues to be resolved. The transfer of this material is being organised.
3. **Actions to influence policy and practice and promote local development.** The main focus of the efforts of LDnet since its inception has been to connect with, and seek to influence, the Community-Led Local Development agenda in ESI Funds 2014-2020. In order to distinguish LDnet from the other “official” EU level network (of which members of LDnet are also involved in a professional capacity), LDnet activities aim to offer a more critical perspective on local development (and CLLD). LDnet, as in previous years, delivered a workshop related to CLLD at Open Days for Cities and Regions 2015, hosted by the Committee of the Regions.
 - The 2015 workshop addressed the subject of “food sovereignty and urban-rural linkages”. The content was developed by Robert Lukesch who also delivered a context piece on the issue. The workshop included contributions from academic researchers, experts and practitioners with presentations from Austria, Belgium, the UK and Greece followed by a panel discussion and contributions from the audience.
 - Following from the workshop, a discussion paper was prepared by Robert Lukesch on the subject of food sovereignty. The paper presents a critical analysis of the subject going beyond CLLD in the EU to reflect on the wider dimensions of food sovereignty and its connection key global challenges including social inequality, climate change and other environmental issues. This paper is available on the LDnet website.
 - It was proposed by the LDnet Executive to host a second workshop-type event during the year, say March, connecting into other EU-level events in Brussels and a potential audience. While there was such an event in Brussels at the time in relation to rural development (ENRD on 17th March), it was not possible to progress an LDnet workshop to coincide with this.
 - Following discussions of potential topics for the European Week of the Regions and Cities 2016, it was decided to address the topic social inclusion in CLLD in the context of the results-orientation of the ESI Funds, offering perspectives of this from the experiences of

different Member States and new topical issues such as the migration crisis. The LDnet workshop proposal to the Committee of the Regions was accepted. The workshop will involve contributions from Greece, Sweden, Poland and Ireland and will take place on 12th October.

- LDnet members in their professional capacity continue to be involved in EU-wide networks on local development: FARNET, URBACT, ENRD and with AEIDL.
4. **Projects:** In 2016, following from contacts made at the OD 2015 LDnet workshop (with Sandra Karner), LDnet was invited to participate in a proposal to Horizon 2020 involving some 30 partners and led by the city of Milano. The role of LDnet in this consortium related to dissemination of the know-how generated from the research. Following discussions with the LDnet executive, it was agreed that we should take up this opportunity. Members of the LDnet executive contributed to the preparation of the proposal (comments and proposed additional points). While the proposal received favourable feedback and scored well, it did not meet the threshold to proceed to the next stage. However, the experience here suggests that H2020, with LDnet as a minor partner, could present opportunities for the network.
 5. **Links with other potential partners:** On suggestions from the LDnet Executive, informal approaches were made to academic institutions where members have some contacts – e.g. Oxford Brookes regarding possible cooperation / connection into research on local development. In principle, it could be possible where individual academics have research interests in relevant areas. Institutional links would be more difficult and likely not feasible for LDnet.
 6. Over the last 12 months, three **Executive Committee meetings** have been held on skype. These have focused on: scope for hosting a second workshop by LDnet; ideas to progress the development of the network; participation in the H2020 bid; topics and preparations for EWRC 2016 (topic, format, potential speakers); and the re-development of the website.
 7. **Issues for discussion** at the General Assembly 2016 include the following:
 - Priorities, activities and resources for next year.
 - The philosophy and processes of local development.