

LEDA PARTENARIAT (LDnet) ASSOCIATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Held at 260 Chaussée Saint-Pierre, 1040 Brussels, 8 October 2019 at 18:00

Present: Urszula Budzich-Tabor, Katalin Kolosy, Robert Lukesch, Jean-Pierre Pellegrin, Haris Martinos, Toby Johnson, Peter Ramsden, Giuseppe Pace, Bert Verbrugghe, Pietro Verga, Pedro Brosei, Luis Chaves;

and via Zoom: Eileen Humphreys, Rosalba La Grotteria, Filippo Strati, Alistair Adam-Hernandez, Loris Servillo, Stefan Kah.

Gave proxy: Yves Champetier

Sent apologies: Maria Joao Filgueiras Rauch, Danielle Borrelli.

MINUTES

1. Agenda, Proxies, Apologies

Urszula Budzich-Tabor was elected to chair the meeting. The draft agenda was adopted. Members' proxies and apologies received were reported.

2. Annual Report

The attached annual report for 2018-2019 was presented by the secretary of the association, Haris Martinos.

The financial information contained in the report was presented by the treasurer of the association, Jean-Pierre Pellegrin.

The report was discussed and, in view of the fact that no income was received in this and in the previous year, various options for replenishing the financial resources of the association were discussed. **It was agreed**, in principle, to introduce an annual subscription but the timing of its introduction and the level of the subscription should be considered further by the board of the association.

The annual report was approved unanimously by the assembly.

3. Priorities for 2019 - 2020

3.1 Building bridges between research, policy and practice

This topic was introduced by Pietro Verga and Alistair Adam-Hernandez and focused on the creation of a platform or database of local development experts. This forms part of the efforts to develop an expert community and LDnet has already taken several steps in this direction, including an inventory of researchers and university courses/qualifications on local development, and special sessions with researchers at the annual RSA conferences in 2018 and 2019.

The discussion explored, at strategic level, whether such a platform or database should be for internal use by the members of the community itself or external use by organisations wishing to access/engage such expertise. The assembly also discussed practicalities such as categorisation by field of expertise or competencies, hosting and potential accreditation.

It was generally considered desirable to establish such a database. **It was agreed** that Pietro and Alistair should develop a specific proposal for a database that is initially internal, within LDnet, and flexible to allow adaptation as it becomes established.

3.2 Overview of the state of local development in EU Member States

This topic was introduced by Loris Servillo and Stefan Kah, who outlined the extensive research they have carried out which includes gathering data from a large number of LAGs, as well as interviews with MAs and national networks.

There is now a substantial database, which also allows geographical representation and a wealth of other information on CLLD. The discussion explored how these and other resources could be used to develop an overview of what different Member states are doing with CLLD. It was also considered important to capture, as far as possible:

- other territorial approaches and policy agendas;
- the discussion that is taking place about the new period 2021-2027.

It was agreed that a small working group should advance this initiative with the first steps being: a) a template for MS overviews; and b) pilot overviews for 2 or 3 countries. The initial core group will consist of Loris, Stefan, Urszula, Jean-Pierre and Peter. Other colleagues would be welcome to join. Urszula offered to propose a template and convene the group.

3.3 Social innovation: harnessing initiatives and connections

This topic was introduced by Robert Lukesch, who highlighted recent research on forms of social innovation emerging from LEADER in Austria, and the work of the SIMRA project, which is concluding with a policy brief and guide and a final conference in February 2020.

The discussion explored whether and how we could blend the tenets of social innovation emerging from recent research in a rural context with similar findings from the urban context. It was noted that there is a lot of social innovation in urban areas and the thinking is organised along different aspects, such as governance and the economy.

It was agreed to explore the feasibility of a number of actions that would allow us to gather/collate, compare and potentially blend social innovation perspectives of direct relevance to local development, including: a) an internship; b) joining the Social Innovation Assembly; c) asking the RSA to join forces in exploring this topic; d) holding an LDnet meeting on this topic in the margins of the SIMRA conference on 16-18.02.2020 in Brussels.

3.4 Cooperation with other networks

The close cooperation in recent years with AEIDL, ELARD, RSA has been fruitful and **it was agreed** that it should be continued and intensified.

The assembly noted that cooperation is also being developed with the ERP and that other opportunities could arise for cooperation with other organisations and networks, such as the OECD and UIA.

Some specific opportunities for cooperation were discussed in some detail and, in general, the assembly responded positively:

- At a meeting with LDnet colleagues on 8.10.19, the RSA Chief Executive Sally Hardy stressed that the RSA management is keen to continue and deepen cooperation with LDnet, including: a) making some RSA publications available for free for LDnet to “translate” for use by practitioners; b) LDnet participation in next year’s RSA conference in Ljubljana (May 2020); c) harmonising the policy impacts of the two associations, e.g. through coordinated or joint representation on policy debates; d) applying together for COST Actions for networking. The assembly felt that the last type of action will not be easy for LDnet to pursue within its resources.
- AEIDL President’s suggestion for a partnership in organising study visits to smart villages as part of its 30-year anniversary events. The assembly felt that this was not of any immediate interest for the association in view of its limited resources.
- ELARD would welcome LDnet’s participation in their events, such as the forthcoming GA and seminar on 26-28.11.2019 in Amarante (PT). It can also contribute directly to the efforts under point 3.2, above, through the country profiles ELARD prepares for its GA and the survey currently being conducted by the ELARD vice president, Kristiina Tammets.

It was agreed that the board of the association should take further the above cooperation opportunities, in line with the indications provided by the assembly.

4. Election of the board of the association

Eileen Humphreys informed the last board meeting that her current professional commitments do not allow her to continue on the board. The assembly passed a vote of thanks to Eileen for her presidency of the association.

All other members of the previous board stood for re-election and were reconfirmed by the assembly. The assembly also elected Giuseppe Pace to the board. The board members present at the meeting elected the officers of the association.

Therefore, the new board for the 2019-2021 period stands as follows:

Urszula Budzich-Tabor (President), Peter Ramsden (Vice President), Haris Martinos (Secretary General), Jean-Pierre Pellegrin (Treasurer), Maria Joao Filgueiras Rauch, Robert Lukesch, Katalin Kolosy, Alistair Adam-Hernandez, Pietro Verga, Giuseppe Pace, and Rosalba La Grotteria (Honorary President).