



Association Européenne pour l'Information  
sur le Développement Local a.s.b.l.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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# Candles for Europe

Stranded here in Brussels on the day after the shocking events of March 22, 2016, I am inspired to write this somewhat unusual preamble.

I landed at Brussels airport yesterday morning, just a short time before the bombs destroyed so many lives, and something else - the gift generations of Europeans have enjoyed for many decades now: the feeling of being safe.

As I walked through Brussels later in the day the streets were deserted. Only policemen and soldiers dared to venture out. Shops were closed. The city centre was eerily quiet; the only sounds were the sirens of police cars and the rumble of helicopters. Meetings were cancelled; people stayed at home, shocked by the surreal events that had befallen their city. This is not the Europe we know or want.

Today there is a vigil at the corner of the Bourse; lots of candles and flowers and many, many people. It's a spontaneous event, a show of solidarity, a plea for peace. A group of refugees stand in silence on the steps of the Bourse, written placards in their hands. Every wall and inch of pavement is full with chalk-written messages to the terrorists: not in my name, do not touch, love is stronger, live and let live, pray for Brussels - some are repeated in many different languages.

A well-dressed woman approaches the refugees and hugs and kisses them. Others followed her lead.

I light some candles and take photos, a little more introspect than the photos you might see in the media perhaps.

We should be working together on AEIDL's strategic evaluation today, but instead the Director of and some of the other team members are help-

ing me to get home in time for Easter. Solidarity comes in many forms.

I share these observations and reflections with AEIDL colleagues and very quickly I receive appreciative and comforting words from Italy, France, Sweden, and many other parts of Europe:

'Compassion, solidarity, resilience... and, in a way, our Belgian sense of humour will help us to toughen this. I was stuck in Charleroi airport on Tuesday, with no way of getting back to Brussels, but the volunteers working there were fantastic - anonymous people offering to drive us anywhere in Belgium. This also shows us the good side to human nature.' 'Fear cannot suspend the lives of people and we should try to cope with the feeling of uncertainty.' 'We are all incredulous, but even more determined to defend the European spirit'. 'Resilience and cohesion are the essential reasons for engaging in local initiatives. These horrendous events will only accelerate the replication of these local actions.'

Then I discover that one of us was in Brussels airport at the time of the bombings, having just passed through the entrance hall ten minutes before the explosions... 'I had time to go to the gate and was the first on the plane but after just a minute our take-off was aborted. We were then transferred to a huge aeroplane hangar. There was at least one thousand people there. It was all well organised, just calm and total silence for four hours before we were authorised to leave. I was able to get my car in the parking lot and bring a Swiss man to his hotel in Brussels. Much of what happens in life is fate, and I will probably hear the sound of the ambulance sirens in my dreams for some time.



Photo: Yves Champetier & Márta Márczisz

This is AEIDL's annual report of activities for 2015. AEIDL, now 26 years old, has had a busy but successful year. The renewal of some contracts and the winning of others shows that our clients continue to be satisfied with our work. Own initiatives and projects also attest to the fact that we reflect sensitively on the issues that concern us and believe strongly in an inclusive Europe. You can read about all of these activities in the report.

While I am writing these sentences, I am reminded of John Hillcoat's film, 'The Road', which opens with images of the everyday lives of ordinary people - it looks banal, almost boring. It then switches to the story of the war and then, at the end, the opening scenes are repeated. This time, however, the images of the everyday lives of ordinary people look far from being banal or boring. Let's not forget to cherish the things that we so often take for granted.

**Márta Márczisz,**

*President*

23 March 2016

# A pivotal year

The year 2015 was a pivotal one for AEIDL. Contracts were signed with a number of Directorates-General of the European Commission (DG Fisheries & Maritime Affairs and DG Employment) and new financing streams, such as the EU's Horizon 2020 programme, were accessed, opening up new opportunities to strengthen our position in the field of social innovation.

Services provided to customers included our core business activities (network management, communications, publications, event management, website creation and maintenance) and focused on local development in the context of employment, the environment and territorial development.

Similar to previous years, contracts with the European institutions represented the main proportion of AEIDL's business activities.

Overall revenue increased by 26% year-on-year, exceeding our bud-

get estimate (+17%). This strong performance was mainly due to the renewal of the contract with DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs and to the restarting of activities under the ESF Cooperation Platform (DG Employment).

Expenditure followed a similar trend as revenue, increasing by 19% compared to 2014, and by 16% compared to the projected budget. Cost control and the optimisation of contract budgets allowed us to record a net profit in 2015, helping to further consolidate the balance sheet.

AEIDL also financed a number of in-house projects, targeting some of the main themes identified in its strategy. Exploring new funding opportunities has also been a priority and an important success was achieved in 2015 with the approval of a proposal under the EU's Horizon 2020 programme.

Turning to staff development, part of the 2015 budget was used to provide in-house training on specific topics, helping to renew and update skills and competences

A considerable amount of staff time was also devoted to maintaining and improving AEIDL's website, with the aim of developing an exemplary information tool on local development in Europe.

In line with revenue, the volume of activity also increased in 2015, up by 7,870 hours compared to 2014. This was mainly due to the start of the new ESF contract and to additional recruitment to meet an expansion of demand under the LIFE contract. The total time worked in 2015 came to 46,140 hours, representing 26.2 full-time equivalents (FTEs). This was spread between 44 people - employees, free-lancers, and partners.

Finally, a number of meetings were organised during the course of the year to bring together all of AEIDL's stakeholders to coordinate activities related to strategic planning.



Photo: Anita Cortés

**Jean Vanweydeveld,**  
Managing Director

# 2015 - The year in the Association

**AEIDL's activities in 2015 were characterised by the launch of an information and communication campaign on the refugee crisis, while obtaining an environmental label and continuing work on the strategic plan.**

The current tragic migrant crisis has led AEIDL's Board to propose to give a special focus on this issue through collecting and presenting local initiatives dealing with the reception of refugees (*see specific article*).

Committed to reducing its environmental impact, AEIDL entered an environmental certification process and obtained the "Entreprise écodynamique" label (*see box*).

In December 2015, AEIDL participated in the "WIN-WIN-WIN" campaign for employment for disabled people.

Membership remained stable at 30, with 13 European countries represented: Belgium (8 members), France (6), Italy (4), Hungary (2), United Kingdom (2), Bulgaria (1), Germany (1), Spain (1), Ireland (1), Lithuania (1), Portugal (1), Serbia (1) and Sweden (1).

*AEIDL's General Assembly, 28 March 2015.*



Photo: Jean-Luc Janot



Photo: Jean-Luc Janot

*AEIDL's General Assembly, 28 March 2015.*

The 4 board meetings held in 2014 featured a high attendance of directors. They were responsible for:

- carefully monitoring activities and their progress, maintaining budget stability despite concerns founded in changes to European

programmes, and dealing with current issues;

- Members are kept abreast of events by regular management e-mails and by the twice-monthly *AEIDL Flash* sent out to all stakeholders;
- Discussion meetings continue to be held: on 28 March, on the occasion of the association's General Assembly, we received Hannes Lorenzen, an advisor on agriculture and rural development for the European institutions (*see box*).

## Strategic plan

The further development and implementation of the strategic plan was conducted by AEIDL members:

- The four subcommittees (SCs) established under the June 2011



## “Entreprise écodynamique”: AEIDL gets environmental label



**By Bruxelles Environnement Jury decision dated February 10, 2015, a two-star «Entreprise écodynamique» label was awarded to AEIDL.**

Committed to reducing its environmental impact, AEIDL is working towards adopting more sustainable practices and raise its environmental awareness and standard practice within the organisation and with its members, partners and suppliers. To ensure neutral third party control over this, AEIDL entered an environmental certification [process](#) and obtained the “Entreprise écodynamique” label.

Valid for 3 years, the label is awarded after full investigation by a panel of representatives of public institutions, environmental and consumer organi-

sations, business associations and universities. According to its environmental performance, the company or institution gets one, two or three stars.

In its [Environmental Statement](#), AEIDL expects its most significant impacts to concern:

- Emissions into the atmosphere from the use of carbon-based energy in offices and fuel in transport for work-related travel;
- Consumption of resources by use of raw materials, water, office supplies and furniture;
- Production of waste materials;
- Environmental policies of AEIDL’s suppliers, partners and members.

<http://www.aeidl.eu/en/news/what-s-new-at-aeidl/2040-aeidl-gets-environmental-label.html>

Strategic Plan held meetings in accordance with their own work schedules, though for the most part in connection with Board meetings, thereby allowing the work of the 4 SCs to be shared in an overall meeting and limiting travel.

• Each SC is made up of AEIDL members and members of the operational team. Each SC has established a work plan and budget for the implementation of the planned activities. SC work is regularly presented and discussed in Board meetings.

• There is general consensus on the part of directors and team members over the quality of exchanges and the involvement of Board members and the team in the proposed projects.



### Hannes Lorenzen at AEIDL

**Hannes Lorenzen was AEIDL’s guest for a panel discussion on “The new European Parliament from the inside” on the occasion of the association’s General Assembly (28 March 2015).**

An advisor on agriculture and rural development for the European institutions for 30 years, Hannes Lorenzen paints a rather critical picture of the current European Parliament, and more generally of the lack of vision of the EU institutions in the context of multiple crisis. Nevertheless, he remains convinced that a generous and sustainable Europe can be rebuilt, based on a local citizen-led dynamic.

The European project must be redefined at the initiative of civil society at local and regional levels, with a common vision of European solidarity. “If we want to find the European vision again, it is essential to use the next five years to mobilize people and to convince MEPs that the European spirit is still alive and that they should support it. Many young people expect this!”.

<http://www.aeidl.eu/images/stories/pdf/lorenzen.pdf>

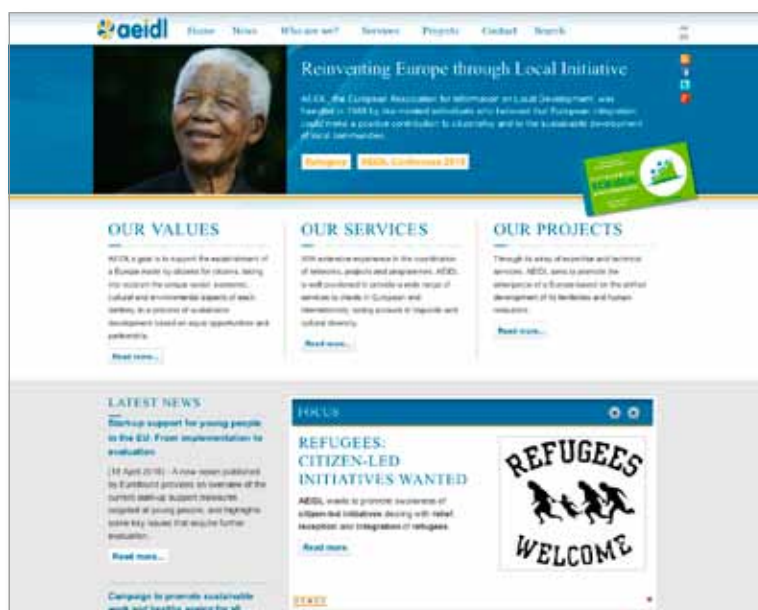
# AEIDL Flash and website

The purpose of our fortnightly electronic newsletter, *AEIDL Flash*, is to draw attention to our activities and the news on our website. These news items from different sources are selected for the interest they may have for local development in Europe.

The “Latest News” and “What’s New at AEIDL?” sections of the website are being fuelled every day with information from various sources (European institutions, think-tanks, NGOs, foundations, Eurostat, EurActiv, OECD, media...). This information work is “activated” by the *AEIDL Flash*.

The *AEIDL Flash* is sent every two Fridays to three main “circles”: 1) General Assembly members; 2) Team; 3) AEIDL’s experts, partners, “friends” (including the 120 people or so who attended the 2014 conference).

The *AEIDL* website attracts around 1 700 single visitors per month.



## ADDED VALUE

*AEIDL Flash* draws attention to the AEIDL's website, while promoting AEIDL's activities to members, team, and around 150 people (practitioners, experts, partners, networks...) involved in local development.

Furthermore, the newsletter creates a “sense of belonging” to AEIDL, as shown by the large number of positive reactions and article suggestions received.

## 2015 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

- A new, more attractive **layout**, was launched in September 2015.
- A new **dissemination system** (via MailChimp) has been adopted.
- Two new **sections** (“Videos”, “*AEIDL Flash*”) have been created on the website.
- A certain amount of work has been dedicated to the identification of **citizen-led local initiatives for refugees** throughout Europe, possibly leading to a new “Refugee initiatives” section. Sweden, Lesbos, France, Italy, Germany and Serbia have been covered so far.
- These initiatives are also published on the special refugee section of the SIE platform.
- We are now trying to expand the *AEIDL Flash* readership (currently around 200 subscribers). A campaign started in November with a call to AEIDL’s members and team, as well as adverts on social media.

**Client:** AEIDL

**Duration:** ongoing

**Budget:** -

**Team:** 1 person (Jean-Luc Janot) + graphic designer’s punctual intervention (Daniel Renders)

**Website:** <http://www.aeidl.eu/>



# Promoting citizens' initiatives for migrants and refugees

The current tragic migrant crisis has led AEIDL's Board to propose to give a special focus on this issue through collecting and presenting local initiatives dealing with the reception of refugees.

Jean-Luc Janot, in collaboration with Yves Champetier, has collected, edited and published such initiatives on [AEIDL's website](#) and our fortnightly newsletter, *AEIDL Flash*.

Work started in September 2015 through three means:

- AEIDL's members identifying initiatives in their respective countries,
- A repeating advert on the website, in the Flash and on social media (LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter) calling for initiatives in favour of refugees,
- A general scanning of articles in quality newspapers and websites dealing with the migrant crisis.

We have been able to publish an initiative every two weeks since the end of September:

- **Sweden:** Social inclusion of refugees and immigrants in rural areas
- **Greece:** Lesbos (interview with Lesbos Local Development Agency)
- **Social Innovation Europe (SIE):** Innovative approaches to the integration of migrants
- **France:** CALM: refugees "just like home"

*A Syrian family in Finland.*



Photo: Maarit Tittanen



Photo: Michel Veys

*Artwork by Jabl Safoon, a Syrian migrant in Calais, France.*

- **Italy:** Migrants bring new life to deserted villages
- **Serbia:** Grupa 484: Helping migrants for twenty years
- **France:** 34 authors for refugees
- **Germany:** Kiron: World-class upper education for refugees, for free

## Cooperation AEIDL–Social Innovation Europe

These publications have led to cooperation with the SIE platform which recently opened a [section dedicated to migrants](#).

In this context, Jean-Luc Janot has begun to work with SIE - his articles are now published both on the AEIDL website and on the SIE platform, and Jean-Luc is also helping Armelle Ledan and Shagana Ehamparam to fuel the SIE section.

The last seminar of the SIE platform will take place in April 2016, in Syracuse, Italy, on the theme of welcoming refugees.



# 2015 – Year 4 of the strategic planning

The year 2015 is the fourth year in the implementation of the AEIDL strategic planning process. During the year a number of important milestones were achieved and the process has continued to gain momentum and benefit from experience. The four sub-committees (SCs) remain the main drivers of the implementation process.

## SC1 – Strategic planning

SC1 continued to oversee the strategic planning process, to support and facilitate the activities of the other SCs and to monitor and review progress. During 2015 SC1 has:

- Organised and facilitated a joint SC meetings in Brussels in February, June and September;
- Initiated the implementation of an internal communications plan (including an internal newsletter and a e-library);
- Finalised the process of eco-certification for AEIDL;
- Began the process of planning an evaluation of the strategic plan and the strategic planning process. This included interviews with two outside consultants in September 2015, the preparation of a terms of reference, the review of proposals from the consultants, and the recommendation of a final selection to the board in October 2015.

## SC2 - Contracts

By 2015, all of the multi-year contracts previously won by AEIDL (as part of various groupings or by itself) had come to an end and AEIDL was actively bidding for the renewal of these contracts and/or to win new contracts. To prepare for this period of change:

- A task force was created for each major contract, and a SWOT analysis was conducted.
- A methodology for setting up and managing an EEIG was defined.
- A commitment was made to achieve certification as an eco-dynamic or-

ganisation, which was achieved in February 2015 with the award of a label that is valid for two years.

- The AEIDL databases were updated and developed.

The aim was to win a sufficient number of calls for tenders in the four target areas/subjects of AEIDL (environment, employment, rural development, and fisheries area development) to ensure the viability of AEIDL, and to position AEIDL for other markets/contracts rather than only calls for tender (i.e. stimulate own project development, and tackle calls for proposals).

So far, AEIDL, with its partners, has been successful in winning large contracts in all four of the main target areas:

- The ENRD Contact Point
- LIFE communications
- The FARNET Support Unit
- The ESF Transnational Platform

It also won more focused contracts, one with DG ENV for the setting up of results-based payment schemes, and another with DG GROW for running the SIE platform on social innovation.

AEIDL has been and still is also actively involved in preparing responses to a number of call for proposals, especially under the Horizon 2020 programme. A notable success in this area is the Social Innovation Community project, which has been awarded just under €3M in EU funding - with AEIDL leading a group of 12 organisations, and research centres/universities.

## SC3 – Own projects

SC3's task is to initiate, stimulate and support internal projects which further AEIDL's objectives as a not-for-profit organisation.

In 2013, it issued the first in a series of annual calls for proposals, to which it invited the 'AEIDL community' of members, staff and freelance workers to respond.

The 2014 call, which had a budget of €100,000, led to the approval of another project – **The Place for Everyone** - on Roma inclusion, led by Marta Marczis.

## SC4 – Public Relations, Funding and Membership

During 2015, SC4 finalised a review of AEIDL's Internal Regulation ("Règlement intérieur") and Statutes in order to ensure coherence between the two documents. The modified documents were verified by a specialised lawyer and agreed at the 2015 General Assembly.

After this validation, SC4 worked on a draft proposal on the possibility to welcome "network members".

## ADDED VALUE

The strategic planning process is an important opportunity to strengthen internal cohesion, to improve communication, build trust, and generally to unite all the stakeholders in AEIDL around a common vision.

# LIFE at the service of the environment and climate

**Informing, promoting, making known, publicising – since 2001 AEIDL has been the “Communications Team” for this major European environment programme.**

## ADDED VALUE

**This contract strengthens AEIDL's position and reputation, combining its know-how in communications and European environmental and climate policy. It has also allowed AEIDL to establish and maintain contact with numerous experts throughout Europe in a wide range of fields linked with environment, climate, nature and biodiversity protection. The experience gained through LIFE demonstrates AEIDL's ability to produce high-quality information in a specialist area. This can be exploited in other fields linked to the environment, such as climate change, renewable energy, and more generally, sustainable development.**

The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental and climate policy and legislation by co-financing projects with European added value.

LIFE began in 1992 and to date there have been four complete phases of the programme (LIFE I: 1992-1995, LIFE II: 1996-1999, LIFE III: 2000-2006 and LIFE+: 2007-2013) for which AEIDL has been awarded

communication contracts. Since 1992, LIFE has co-financed some 4319 projects. For the 2014-2010 funding period, LIFE will contribute approximately €3.4 billion to the protection of the environment and climate.

The European Commission (DG Environment and DG Climate Action) manages the LIFE programme. The Commission has delegated the implementation of many components of the LIFE programme to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME).

External selection, monitoring and communication teams provide assistance to the Commission and EASME.

In October 2014, the European Commission signed a framework contract with NEEMO EEIG, which includes AEIDL, for services related to monitoring and communications for the LIFE programme.

In the context of this partnership, AEIDL's task is to provide technical support and assistance to European-level communication activities.

*The human-led migration of the northern bald ibis (*Geronticus eremita*) takes place once a year following the successful reintroduction of the species in Europe.*



As the Communications Team of LIFE. AEIDL is responsible for the following tasks on a permanent basis:

- LIFE website maintenance, updating and development
  - Updating the LIFE website (<http://ec.europa.eu/life>) on a daily basis
  - Feeding new content into the LIFE Video Player (<http://lifevideos.eu/videos/>)
  - Managing LIFE's Facebook ([facebook.com/LIFE.programme](https://www.facebook.com/LIFE.programme)) and Twitter ([twitter.com/LIFE\\_Programme](https://twitter.com/LIFE_Programme)) accounts)
- Summaries of completed projects (some 150 a year)
- Collections of new projects
  - 3 collections (1 per thematic area) covering a total of more than 150 new projects selected each year
- The **LIFENews** newsletter (10 issues a year)
- **Thematic brochures** (2 a year)
- Brochures on the **best LIFE projects** (2 a year) and organising the Best Project Award ceremony
- Thematic diffusion and dissemination of the results of LIFE projects to stakeholders and decision-makers
- “**Country overviews**” (summaries of the LIFE situation in each EU Member State)
  - We update the country overviews of the 28 Member States, integrating each year's selection of projects. Each overview is translated into the respective country's language(s).
- LIFE promotional material
- Multimedia **databases** (photos, videos, documents, publications, etc.)
- PR assistance for LIFE projects
  - At the request of LIFE project owners, AEIDL provides PR advice and support
- Review of PR activities
  - AEIDL assists the LIFE Units within DG Environment in working out a communication strategy. AEIDL is also responsible for compiling statistical data on how



often the LIFE website is visited, providing a quarterly analysis.

## 2015 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

- Since the beginning of 2015, the publications of **LIFENews** have covered the following themes:
  1. Winter issues
  2. Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF) and Private Finance for Energy Efficiency (PF4EE)
  3. Peatlands
  4. LIFE Marine Platform Meeting held in Madrid
  5. Green Week
  6. Boosting nature conservation by private landowners
  7. Circular economy
  8. Air quality
  9. Nature-based solutions
  10. COP21 & Climate change
- The following **thematic brochures** are being prepared:
  - LIFE and circular economy
  - LIFE restoring Coastal Habitats (or LIFE by Seaside)
- The following **thematic brochures** were published:
  - LIFE and Climate change adaptation
  - LIFE and nature stakeholders' involvement

- LIFE and Climate change mitigation
- LIFE and freshwater fish

- Publication on the Compilations of new projects selected in 2013
  - Four compilations (one by **component** + environmental NGOs) concerning a total of around 160 new projects and 30 NGOs selected this year.
- Participation in around ten conferences/workshops per month throughout Europe.
- Additional task (July 2015 – June 2016)
  - Improve the interconnectivity between the Nature related information and data in the LIFE database and the N2000 Biogeographical process Communication platform.



**Client:** European Commission (DG Environment, DG Climate action & EASME)

**Duration:** 2014-2018

**Budget:** €2 400 000 (2013-2014)

€6 400 000 (2015-2018)

**Team:** 20 persons (14 FTEs)

**Websites:** <http://ec.europa.eu/life>, <http://life.aeidl.eu>, <http://www.aeidl.eu/en/projects/environment/life.html>



# FARNET: Sustainable development of Eu

Within the framework of DevNet, an EEIG established in partnership with Grupo Alba (Spain), AEIDL is participating in the Support Unit for FARNET, the European Fisheries Areas Network. The new contract started on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

## ADDED VALUE

FARNET represents an opportunity for AEIDL to apply its experience in rural development (gained in the context of LEADER) in a new context, as well as to exploit its expertise in communications relating to European programmes. It also ensures that AEIDL is associated with an initiative which has become a key feature of European fishery policy.



Members of the FARNET Support Unit at the 'Sailing Towards 2020' Conference, Brussels, 2-3 March 2015.

The FARNET Support Unit (FSU) is the technical assistance team established by the European Commission to assist in the implementation of Community Lead Local Development (CLLD) under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). It works closely with DG MARE, the Member State administrations, the national fisheries networks and with the FARNET Local Action Groups

(FLAGs) and others involved in the implementation of CLLD, building a "learning network" that connects the growing knowledge and experience in CLLD from across Europe. It consists of a permanent team of 10 people, based in Brussels, assisted by 18 regional expert.

The FARNET Support Unit is responsible for the following activities:

- Build knowledge and capacity in Community-Led Local development
- Identify and disseminate successful responses to key challenges for coastal, fisheries and aquaculture areas across Europe
- Ensure the flow of information among stakeholders involved in Community-Led Local Development



# Europe's fisheries areas

- Support cooperation between FLAGs and with other local development partnerships throughout Europe and beyond.
- How we do it:
  - Expert advice and assistance to FLAGs and administrations
  - Events: capacity-building events, transnational seminars, conferences
  - Cooperation with other local development networks
  - Identification of CLLD Good Practices
  - Publications: regular electronic FARNET Flash, a yearly FARNET Magazine, thematic and methodological guides and other technical reports
  - The FARNET website and social media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and the FARNET YouTube Channel.

## 2015 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The new contract started on July 1st, 2015 with a kick-off meeting; the FSU team was fully operational immediately. Activities focused on:

- The launch of an analysis of the needs of the FARNET stakeholders for the programming period 2014-2020
- The development of draft support itineraries for ES, PL and RO
- The preparation of a Communication Strategy
- The design and planning of a transnational seminar on "Implementing CLLD across the ESI Funds", to be held in Edinburgh on 8-10 December 2015
- Two issues of the *FARNET Flash*
- The preparation of *FARNET Magazine* N°14.



**Client:** European Commission (DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries)

**Duration:** 2015-2020

**Budget (2012):** €1 890 000

**Team (AEIDL):** 5 persons

**Website:** [www.farnet.eu](http://www.farnet.eu)

A Cypriot fisherman reading the FARNET Magazine.



# Contact Point of the European Evaluation and Development (ENRD)

The Directorate-General for Agriculture of the European Commission (DG AGRI) has contracted the RURANET EEIG, made up of five partner organisations including AEIDL, to manage the Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) during the 2014-2020 period

## ADDED VALUE

After LEADER (1992-2001) and the Helpdesk of the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development (2008-2013), this contract allows AEIDL to continue to be a key actor in the field of rural development.



Photo: Maart Tiltanen

Refugees visiting a farm in Punkalaidun, Finland.

The purpose of the ENRD is to increase the involvement of all stakeholders (in particular in agriculture, forestry and rural development) in the implementation of the EU rural development policy; to improve the quality of rural development programmes; and to play a role in informing the broader public on the benefits of rural development policy.

RURANET is an equal partnership of four organisations with complementary skills and expertise: AEIDL, [Grupo Alba](#), [IEEP](#) (Institute for

European Environmental Policy and the [Rural Development Company](#).

A permanent team of 20 full-time equivalents works for the ENRD Contact Point, the first activities of which began in July 2014.

The ENRD Contact Point is in charge of three major tasks:

### • Knowledge development:

- Analysis of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) and their implementation
- Animation of thematic groups
- Gathering of good practices, project examples, case studies.

### • Knowledge sharing:

- Website and social media
- Publications: newsletter, magazine, periodicals, project brochures.

### • Exchange and cooperation:

- Events: ENRD Assembly, sub-groups and steering group; National Rural Networks (NRNs) meetings; ENRD seminars
- Networking with NRNs and other actors
- Cooperation with regards to LEADER and CLLD
- Transnational cooperation.

# European Network for Rural

## 2015 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

- Analysis of 28 Partnership agreements and 112 approved RDPs all together;
- Assistance to DG AGRI and DIGIT IT consultants in the migration of the former ENRD website;
- On-going up-load of new information on the website;
- Publication of
  1. The [ENRD Newsletter](#) ([subscribe@enrd.eu](mailto:subscribe@enrd.eu))
  2. A [promotional brochure](#) on ENRD 2014-2020
  3. The 2015 Spring, Summer and Autumn issues of the [ENRD magazine](#)
  4. Issues 19 and 20 of the ENRD Rural Review
  5. 25 new [Good Practices](#) (total: 50)
- Animation of the social media accounts: [Facebook](#) (2,294 Likes), [Twitter](#) (1,226 followers), a [LinkedIn page](#) (387 members, 43 discussions) and 3 sub-groups;
- Contribution to or organisation and/or animation of
  1. A special edition of the [NRN meeting](#), in Milano, IT (September 2015)
  2. A [LEADER/CLLD conference](#) on “Strengthening Local Development through Cooperation”, in Milano, IT, (September 2015)
  3. A [workshop](#) on Rural Networks’ self-assessment, in Brussels (October 2015)
  4. The third meeting of the European Rural Networks’ Steering Group, in Brussels (October 2015)
  5. Jointly with the EIP-AGRI Service Point, a [workshop](#) on “Networking for innovation

- under measure 16 in RDPs”, in Tallinn, EE (October 2015)
6. The [first meeting](#) of the Thematic Group on Smart and Competitive Rural Areas, in Brussels (November 2015)
7. The 2nd Rural Networks’ [Assembly](#), in Brussels (November 2015)
8. Five Ruralabs: NL (April 2015), PL (June 2015), UK (July 2015), BG (November 2015) and HU (December 2015)
9. The first meeting of the Thematic Group on Green Economy, in Brussels (December 2015)
10. The first NRN meeting (November 2014) on increasing the involvement of stakeholders, improving the quality of RDPs and communicating about RDP; and the [second NRN meeting](#) on NRN activities (May 2015) in Jurmala (LV)
11. The ENRD [Assembly](#) (January 2015)
12. The [1<sup>st</sup> ENRD Seminar](#) on Stakeholder involvement in Brussels (March 2015). The 2<sup>nd</sup> one is due in June.
13. Two training workshops on [Simplified Costs Options](#) (February and May 2015)
14. Several meetings of each of the Thematic Groups: Stakeholders involvement (February, March and May 2015, RDP implementation (March, May and June 2015);
15. A training workshop on [Reasonableness of costs and public procurement](#) (March 2015)
16. A training workshop on Results-based agri-environment payment schemes (RBAPS) for biodiversity (April 2015)



17. The LEADER/CLLD Subgroup in Brussels (April 2015)
18. The first meeting of [Rural Networks’ Steering Group](#) (February 2015). The 2nd one is due in June.
19. Several meetings of each of the Thematic Groups: RDP implementation (March, May and June 2015), Stakeholders involvement (February, March and May 2015). The next one is due in July.
20. A Users experience workshop on the ENRD website, led by DG AGRI’s IT consultants (June 2015).



**Client:** European Commission (DG Agriculture)  
**Duration:** 2014-2020  
**Budget:** €3 000 000  
**Team:** 5 persons (2.5 FTEs)  
**Website:** <http://www.enrd.eu>



# TRIP: Disseminating European research on mobility and transport

As part of a consortium consisting of NEA (coordination), KIT, ISIS, ITC, IGES and DEMIS, AEIDL was involved in the TRIP project supported by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE).

## ADDED VALUE

TRIP allowed AEIDL to use its base skills in a new sector – mobility and transportation -, working together with high-class partners mainly from the academic and research world. This enlargement of its scope opened up very interesting new perspectives for AEIDL.

The purpose of TRIP (*Transport Research and Innovation Portal*) was to continue the already existing Transport Research Knowledge Centre (TRKC) portal which aims at giving a complete picture of all finished and ongoing EU-funded transport research projects, as well as becoming a central information point on current national and regional transport research priorities and programmes.

Within TRIP, AEIDL was in charge of various editorial and dissemination tasks including video production.

## 2015 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

- The following publications were produced (graphic design and reporting by AEIDL):
  - Research for a smart and competitive railway system
  - Research makes the difference: highlights of EU transport research
  - Smart and sustainable logistics for a competitive Europe

- The production of on-line videos by AEIDL accompanying these publications was underway (<http://www.transport-research.info/web/publications/video.cfm>).
- The following "Transport Research Summaries" were published and in the process of being translated (graphic design, iconography and reporting by AEIDL):
  - Transport R&D - cooperation with international partner countries
  - Road transport
  - Rail transport
  - Air transport
  - Multimodal transport
  - Assessment and decision support methodologies
  - Climate policy and energy efficiency
  - Accessibility, social and equity impacts

- Security and safety
- Infrastructure and TEN-T
- Freight transport
- Environmental impacts
- Intelligent transport systems
- Land use and transport planning
- Long-term perspectives
- The following videos were produced and delivered:
- TRIP - Successful Projects in Transport Research (<https://youtu.be/B7USY6DLNUE>)
- TRIP - Smart and sustainable logistics (<https://youtu.be/3c2C5GNWjIU>)
- TRIP - Aviation: A Greener Sky (<https://youtu.be/6s4CX180N5A>)
- TRIP - Deploying Innovative Transport Solutions (<https://youtu.be/EbaRdwxf2ss>).



**Client:** European Commission (DG Mobility and Transport)

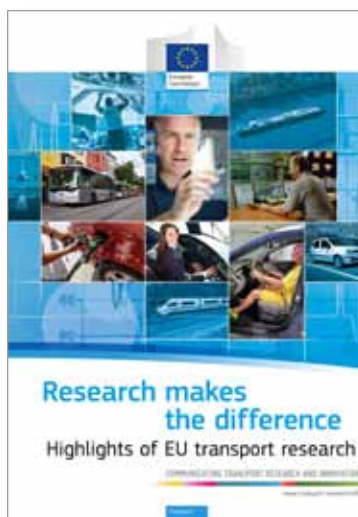
**Partners:** Panteia/NEA (coordinator, Netherlands), KIT (Germany), ISIS (Italy), ITC (Bulgaria), IGES (Germany) and Demis (Netherlands)

**Duration:** 2011-2015

**Budget:** €2 250 000

**Team:** 5 persons concerned

**Website:** <http://www.transport-research.info>





# ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) has contracted AEIDL to provide technical assistance to the EU-level platform for transnational cooperation in the European Social Fund (ESF).



Photo: Thomas Chuilka

The ESF Transnational Platform Team.

## ADDED VALUE

AEIDL has been involved in the ESF since 2001; from 2001 until 2008 it provided technical assistance to the entrepreneurship pillar of the EQUAL programme and from 2009 until 2013 it supported 17 thematic learning networks among ESF Managing Authorities.

The purpose of such transnational cooperation is to improve the quality of policies and to deliver effective reforms. This relies on the sharing of information and good practice, and working together towards common solutions by bringing together administrations, social partners and non-governmental organisations. For project promoters, input from foreign partners may enable them to approach challenges in novel ways, to solve problems more efficiently, and to avoid pitfalls during processes of change. For public administration, transnational cooperation provides a structure in which to pursue mutual learning.

To support this, AEIDL has been selected to establish an EU-level platform which will facilitate the exchange of experience, the making of transnational partnerships, capacity building and networking, and the dissemination of outcomes.

More specifically, AEIDL's technical support concerns:

- Animating and supporting up to 10 thematic networks among ESF Managing Authorities. Eight have so far been asked for, on employment, inclusion, youth employment, learning and skills, social economy, governance and public administration, simplification and partnership. A ninth network on migrants is under discussion
- Creating a website which will include a database to enable ESF project promoters to find partners abroad.
- Publishing technical dossiers and good practices
- Organising an annual event

## 2015 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The team was established in September 2015, and consists of a core

team of six working from AEIDL's offices supported by freelance thematic experts and other specialists.

The initial meetings of the thematic networks took place in November and December 2015.

The website and database are being developed by our partner Tipik and will be launched around Easter 2016 to enable the Member States to publish their first set of co-ordinated calls for proposals.

**Client:** European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion)

**Duration:** 2015-2019

**Budget:** €1.8m p.a.

**Team:** 11 persons concerned

**Website:** <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=56>

# Innovation and local development

In 2015, AEIDL was also involved in three projects in three sectors: social innovation, sustainable development and urban development.

## SOCIAL INNOVATION EUROPE

### ADDED VALUE

This 2-year contract will create the momentum to enable AEIDL to join a major consortium. It is also an occasion to broaden the scope of social innovation and make it more user-friendly among circles that do not consider themselves as social innovators, although they possess all its characteristics (LEADER and FARNET groups, transition initiatives, social economy initiatives, etc.). CLLD often contains social innovations and deserves to become more visible under this dimension.



"Exploring Ecosystems for Social Innovation", conference in Berlin, 22-23 June 2015.

Photo: Marc Beckmann/Ostkreuz

**Social Innovation Europe (SIE) was launched in March 2011. It is a collaborative hub set up to help organisations across Europe to connect, learn from each other and share experiences in Social innovations - new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations.**

Since summer 2014 and until summer 2016, SIE is coordinated by AEIDL and SIX (Social Innovation eXchange, UK), in collaboration with Euclid Network, Young Foundation, EMES, Nesta, Groupe SOS, Partners Albania and the Danish Technological Institute.

The aim of SIE is not to replace existing networks of innovation, but rather to bring them together, to build up operational links with the bulk of organisations involved in analysing and promoting social innovation in Europe.

### 2015 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

- A policy paper entitled '[Making Good our Future](#)' was published and disseminated through the network. In this policy paper we have attempted to explore how social innovation and open source principles can inform manufacturing by enhancing productivity, creating more rewarding jobs, generating private and public value and, eventu-

ally, embedding new democratic practice at the core of industrial production. Now translated into French, German, Spanish and Polish.

- A second policy paper '**Innovation in health**' was prepared by the Young Foundation, will soon be published (October 2015). This publication synthesises existing research (e.g. Tepsie, SI Drive, Wilco, Innoserv, etc.) that has focused on social innovation in health and social care and which communicates key findings for policy with examples of SI in action.
- On 22-23 June 2015, Social Innovation Europe and the BMW Foundation hosted the "[Explor-](#)

ing Ecosystems for Social Innovation” conference in Berlin, Germany. The event gathered 70 participants from many different sectors of activities. Participants worked in the European social enterprises, NGOs, funding and policy; attendees came from as far as Canada, Malaysia and Hong Kong to Berlin, Germany, which has gained a reputation as a major centre of creativity and social innovation sector, particularly with respect to the sharing economy and maker movements.

- In the magazine section, special thematic collections are regularly created and published, such as the “Women in Social Innovation” series, which coincided with International Women’s Day. The series saw a diverse mix of female social innovators from across Europe. Another topic covered by interviews and content on Digital Social Innovation (DSI) followed the related event in late February 2015. The latest focuses on topical theme: **Beyond Crisis: Innovative Approaches to the Integration of Migrants**, connecting with AEIDL initiative and the AEIDL Flash on this subject.
- The bulletin ‘What to see on SIE’ goes out bi-weekly. It highlights the 3 latest and most in-

teresting articles on the SIE website. It is designed to remind people to take a look at the SIE website. The newsletter goes out on average on a bi-monthly basis and it highlights the special content we create including our interview series, policy papers and event reports.

- The **funding alert** goes out on a bi-monthly basis and is a part of our SIE Fundraising Hub initiative (replacing the microfinance site) run by the EUCLID network. It highlights the key 3-4 upcoming funding opportunities. Last September, a service contract from the EC “capturing innovation impulses from emerging economies”, “EU Prize for Women Innovators” and a call for proposals from civil society organisation “supporting civil society in socio-economic development at local level (Egypt)” were highlighted.
- SIE daily can easily be followed on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
- A consortium meeting took place in Brussels on September 22. Its main objectives were fulfilled, being to improve each other’s knowledge among the consortium partners, to provide a snapshot of SIE over the last year to the EC and the partners, to debate with DGs other than DG GROWTH about SIE and how they could benefit from and contribute to it, and eventually co-creating a work plan for the remainder of the contract, including notably transnational cooperation (Peter Ramsden). One of the target will be to highlight and improve the cooperation. Exploring the sustainability of SIE after 2016 was discussed, concluding that the new SIC (Social Innovation Community) project (DG Research) recently won by AEIDL and partners would be the logical following. This needs to be further exploited though.



- SIE will be hosting its final event on 11-12 April 2016 in Syracuse, Sicily, organised in partnership with the Impact Hub Siracusa. Building on its ‘Beyond Crisis: innovative Approaches to Migrant Integration’ collection, this 2 day event “A brighter future for Europe: Innovation, integration and the migrant crisis” will gather 60-80 policy makers, foundations, academics, social enterprises and local communities to share innovative practices, citizen and community-led experiences, in order to provide opportunities to explore collaboration and innovative policy development on this topic, very high on the EU political agenda.



**Client:** European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion)

**Duration:** 2014-2016

**Budget:** €289 010 (AEIDL: €58 550)

**Team:** 5 persons concerned

**Website:**

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/socialinnovationeurope/home>



## SIRClE: SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

### ADDED VALUE

This project allows AEIDL to focus on the specific role of social entrepreneurs as innovators in local development, as well as being an opportunity to further broaden AEIDL's training offer.



Photo: SIRClE

*SIRClE training session.*

**Funded by Erasmus+, the Social Innovation for Resilient Communities (SIRClE) project uses adult education to address one of the most pressing needs of our time, namely how to combine effective grassroots responses to climate and social change with the capacity to make a sustainable living in a challenging economic environment.**

Adult learners will acquire the skills needed to set up and run a social enterprise and sustainable business that contributes to the sustainability of their region. In this way they will be supporting the development of a new economy based on the creation and distribution of the goods and services needed to deliver a sustainable and resilient future.

SIRClE brings together a diverse range of organisations from Austria

(plenum), Belgium (AEIDL and Still Consulting), Portugal (FFCUL), Romania (Asociatia Romania in Transizie), Spain (Altekio), and the UK (Findhorn Foundation and Global Ecovillage Network UK) to implement the project.

AEIDL's main roles are to create the project website, provide a dissemination platform for the learnings of the project, make connections with NGO and social enterprise networks to identify potential participants and analyse needs in Belgium, and organise 2 pilot training seminars and a final conference in Brussels.

### 2015 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Following a survey of training needs, and a series of meetings between partners' held respectively in Findhorn, Scotland and Bad Blumau, Austria, the SIRClE group has drafted the canvas of the 'Evoneers Journey' a learning journey for evolution pioneers, i.e. social entrepreneurs working on resilient solutions and seeking to make a livelihood from these. The curriculum involves a multi-modular training programme, a series of learning patterns and learning videos which will support participants in the

pilot trainings in travelling through their project ideas. The [project website](#) was launched in July 2015.

The SIRClE project is now in its second year of implementation and the partners met in Scotland in September 2015 for a 5-day train the trainers event in preparation for the pilot courses to be implemented in the spring of 2016. In-depth discussions on methodology, approach, and content took place that allowed the partners to get a better common understanding of the desired outcome of the pilots, practice facilitation tools and to maximise the impact of the curriculum and partnership developed.

Preparations were also ongoing between AEIDL and Still Consulting for the setting up of the pilot trainings in Belgium. An Open day is scheduled to take place on 21 April 2016 in Brussels, followed by two 5-day pilot trainings in May and October 2016. The partners will invite participants and develop contacts with key organisations interested in being involved in the training. The [project website](#) will undergo further development in the spring of 2016 with new content being uploaded and the whole structure will be made available in 6 additional languages.



**Client:** AEIDL  
**Duration:** 2014-2017

**Budget:** €446 000 (AEIDL: €50 575)

**Team:** Patrizia Brandellero (coordinator/trainer) Eveline Durieux (trainer) Fabrice Wagner (web development)

**Website:** <http://www.sircle-project.eu/>



## URBACT STUDY

The URBACT Secretariat has chosen an AEIDL-led team of experts to do a study on the “Production and implementation of Local Action Plans within URBACT networks”.

The main goal of the study is to report and share what URBACT has achieved at city level in a selection of partner cities (call 1 and call 2) and what has been the impact of their participation in the programme, i.e. what has become of their Local Action Plans (LAP) and URBACT Local Support Groups (LSG) after the end of the network activities.

The idea is to tell the story of what has happened with the implementation of the LAP as a starting point, along the various types of integrated approaches (horizontal, vertical, integration from inside, etc.), and to see whether and how the Local Support Group (LSG) dynamic has spread in other parts of city planning.

Ten cities are explored: Białystok (Poland), Riga (Latvia), Regensburg (Germany), Naples (Italy), Limoges (France), Köbanya (Hungary), Sabadell (Spain), Södertälje (Sweden), Glasgow (UK) and Kavala (Greece).



Photo: Graham

Riga, Latvia.

Members of the study team are: Katalin Kolosy, Laura Colini, Fernando Barreiro, Piotr Wolkowski, Gunta Kakteniece, Nils Scheffler, Lorenzo Tripodi, Bela Kezy, Ulf Hägglund, Philip Stein and Dimitra Siatitsa.

### 2015 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The project started in January and was completed in September 2015. The 10 case studies and the final report were presented and approved by the URBACT secretariat during the steering committee meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> August 2015. The study has been introduced to the Urban Audit Workshop in Brussels in October 2015.

The report highlights the experiences of municipal authorities that made a commitment to testing and learning new models (or in some cases even reshaping old models with new labels) on local governance by creating a Local Action Plan (LAP). The results and lessons learnt are varied, but interrelated. The most salient finding is that voluntarism and non-monetary resources have shown to be crucial in the success of the Local Action Plan.

### ADDED VALUE

The URBACT method strongly relies upon local development principles and a participative, bottom up and integrated approach to policy design and delivery.

In the follow-up of the urban development study of 2011-2013, the URBACT secretariat chose AEIDL for its capacity to capture local urban ecosystems EU wide.

**Client:** URBACT Secretariat (Paris, France)

**Duration:** January-September 2015

**Budget:** €49 830

**Team:** Katalin Kolosy (contract manager), Jyostna Patel (proofreading)

**Website:** <http://urbact.eu/>

## OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

AEIDL is partnering with METIS (AT), PANTEIA (NL), CASE (PL) & GHK (UK) in a framework contract for EC/DG REGIO entitled ‘Studies related to the future development of Cohesion Policy and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) (Lot 3)’.

In 2015, a first assignment was awarded to the consortium, entitled

‘The implementation of the provisions in relation to the Ex Ante Conditionality during the programming phase of the ESI Funds 2014-2020’ (ref. 2014CE16BAT062). AEIDL’s involvement concerned geographical expertise (France), with a budget of €22 000.

A café in Vic s/Seille, Lorraine, France.

Photo: Jean-Luc Janot



# AEIDL in 2015



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## AEIDL PROFILE

**Name:** Association Européenne pour l'Information sur le Développement Local (AEIDL) / European Association for Information on Local Development

**Legal status:** asbl (non-profit organization).

**Founded:** 1988

**Purpose:** To contribute to a Europe based on solidarity and citizen involvement, founded on sustainable development and equal opportunities, by offering a wide range of services to local development and civil society stakeholders, as well as various institutions, including the European Commission.

**Services:** Managing networks and technical assistance; evaluation and advice; information, communications and publishing; training.

**Fields of activity:** Territorial development (local, regional, rural, urban); the environment and sustainable development; employment and social development; citizenship.

**Partner institutions:** European institutions; local, regional, national and European authorities, decision-makers and “developers”; development agencies; citizen groups; professional organisations; non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

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