General Assembly ELARD
10:00-15:00 CET, 20.5.2021

I. Attendees:

1.	Marion Eckardt ELARD President	LUS, Local Development Sweden	Sweden
2.	Hartmut Berndt ELARD Vice-President	German LEADER Association (BAG LAG)	Germany
3.	Stefan Niedermoser	LEADER-forum Austria	Austria
4.	Katarina Miličević	Croatian Rural Development Network	Croatia
5.	Bojana Markotić Krstinić	Leader Network Croatia	Croatia
6.	Jan Dražský Florian	Narodni sit MAS CR, o.s.	Czech Rep.
7.	Christian Prip	LAG Bornholm	Denmark
8.	Hans Joergen Jensen	LAG Bornholm	Denmark
9.	Kirsten Birke Lund	Council of Rural Districts (Danish LAGs)	Denmark
10.	Kristiina Tammets	Estonian Leader Union	Estonia
11.	Marjo Tolvanen	Suomen Kylät - Finnish Villages	Finland
12.	Pedro Brosei	German LEADER Association (BAG LAG)	Germany
13.	Anastasios Perimenis	Hellenic Network CLLD/LEADER LAGS/FLAGS	Greece
14.	Iro Tsimpri	Hellenic Network CLLD/LEADER LAGS/FLAGS	Greece
15.	Zsofia Szőnyi	Hungarian National Rural Network	Hungary
16.	Terry Keenan	Irish Local Development Network	Ireland
17.	Leotrim Germizaj	Network of Org. for Rural Development of Kosovo	Kosovo
18.	Anita Seļicka	Latvian Rural Forum	Latvia
19.	Santa Harjo-Ozoliņa	Latvian Rural Forum	Latvia
20.	Virginija Šetkienė	Lithuanian Rural Communities Union	Lithuania
21.	Françoise Bonert	NRN Luxembourg	Luxemboug
22.	Petar Gjorgievski	Rural Development Network of North Macedonia	Macedonia
23.	Patricia Varzari	National LEADER Network of the Republic of Moldova	Moldova
24.	Jarne Heuff	LEADER Network Netherlands	Netherlands
25.	Piotr Sadlocha	Polish LAG Network	Poland
26.	David Canaveira	MinhaTerra Network (PT)	Portugal
27.	Luís Chaves	MinhaTerra Network (PT)	Portugal
28.	Tereza Straussova	MAS MAGURA STRÁŽOV	Slovakia
29.	Aleš Zidar	SNRD - Društvo za Razvoj Slovenskega Podeželja	Slovenia
30.	Goran Šoster	Slovenian Rural Development Network	Slovenia
31.	Maria Jose Murciano Sanchez	Spanish Network for Rural Development	Spain
32.	Mia Lundqvist	Leader Mälardalen	Sweden
33.	Beata Styczeń	ELARD Administrative Coordinator	

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II. Agenda:

1. Start and welcome

   Marion Eckardt, President of ELARD, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the online General Assembly Meeting on the Zoom platform *(Meeting ID: 883 3050 7742)*.

2. Agenda

   The Agenda has been presented.
   ELARD Council recommended to delist point 6c) concerning the accession of the Union of Serbian Villages due to further verification required and postpone the decision until the next General Assembly meeting.
   The assembly did not raise an objection.
   The Agenda was approved unanimously by the General Assembly.

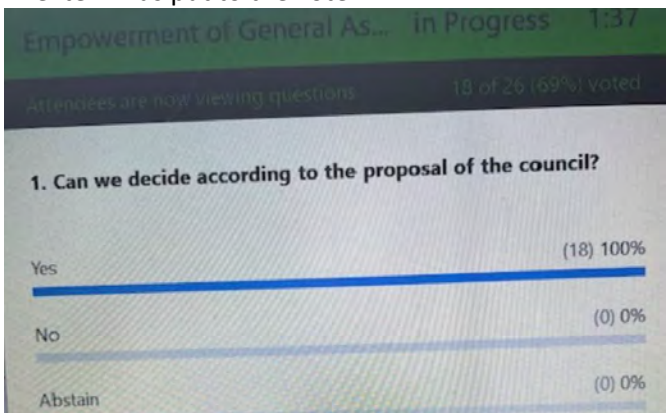
3. Minutes of the last meeting

   Minutes were available to participants for prereading before the meeting.
   There were no comments raised regarding this item.
   Minutes of the 03.02.2021 GA meeting were approved unanimously by the General Assembly.

4. Decision on empowerment

   Council recommendation:
   After the analysis of ELARD statutes, §5 Vote, and considering the travel restrictions imposed by Covid-19, the ELARD General Assembly held by videoconference, upon approval of the majority of votes to do so, shall adopt the decision-making powers generally reserved to an in-person meeting.

   Decision:
   To adopt the power of decision making reserved to an in-person meeting for this General Assembly conducted online. *(Attachment 1 – Decision Annex 1)*
   The item was put to the vote:



   Vote results:
   Yes: 18 + 1* = 19; No: 0; Abstain: 0

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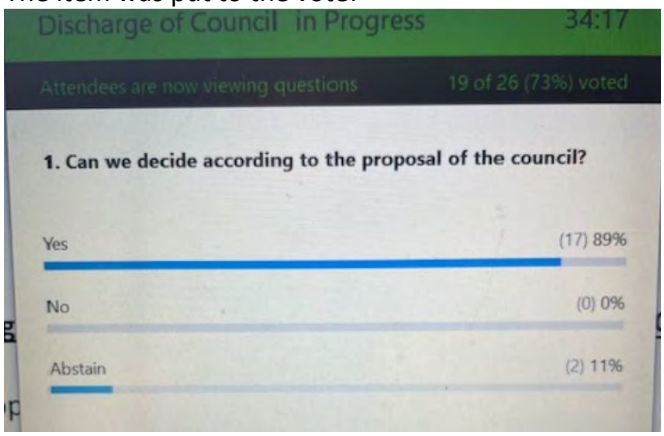
(*) + 1 stands for the vote of the meeting chairman, who, while initiating the online vote as the administrator, could not cast his vote at the same time. Therefore this vote is not visible on the screen, although it was cast in line with protocol and counts in the total result.
Above applies to all the votes below.

The General Assembly unanimously agreed on the empowerment.

5. Discharge of the 2020 Council

The General Assembly held on 3.2.2021 approved the financial report and activity report for 2020 while the Council was not given the discharge due to lack of empowerment to make decisions in a videoconference meeting.

Decision:
To grant discharge to the Council for 2020. *(Attachment 2 – Decision Annex 2)*
The item was put to the vote:



Vote results:
Yes: 17 + 1*= 18; No: 0; Abstain: 2
The General Assembly agreed on the Discharge of the Council.

6. Members application

The Application forms from candidates were available for Members review before the General Assembly meeting:

a) Network of Organisations for Rural Development of Kosovo (NORDK)
(Attachment 3 – Application)
b) National Rural Network Luxembourg
(*Attachment 4 – Application*)

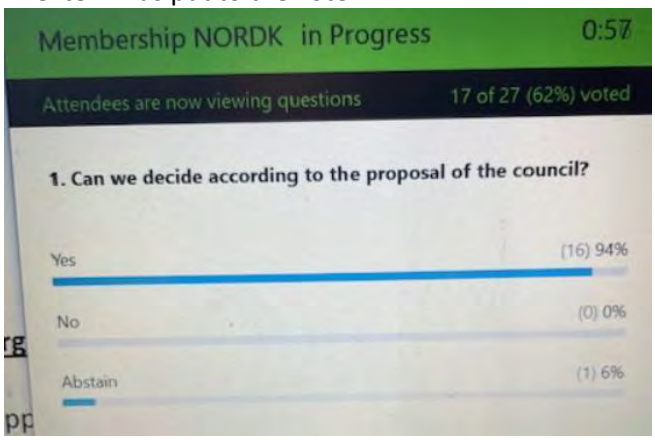
Both candidates gave presentations on their organisations, members, the scope of activities and motivation to join ELARD.

The question was raised regarding ELARD membership of NRN, which is a governmentally connected organisation.
There is a limited number of LAGs in Luxembourg, they are all enrolled in NRN, and they have voluntarily chosen the NRN to represent them. From the ELARD statutes point of view, there are no obstacles to admit NRN as a member.

The Council recommended accepting both Applications for associated ELARD members.
(Attachment 3 a – Decision Annex 3; Attachment 4 a – Decision Annex 4)

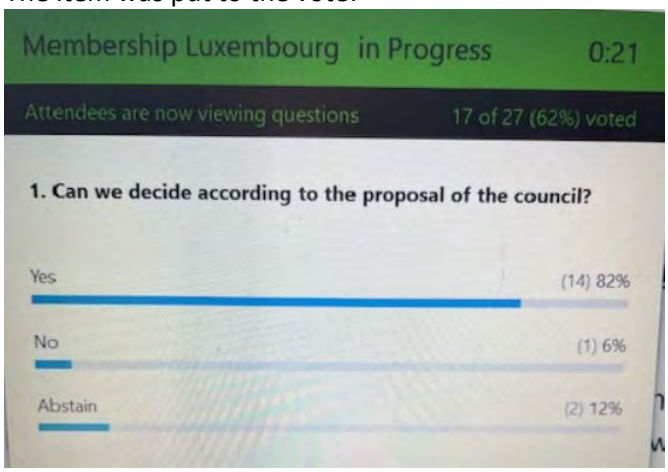
Decision:
To welcome the Network of Organisations for Rural Development of Kosovo (NORDK) as an associated member of the ELARD.

The item was put to the vote:



Vote results:
Yes: 16 + 1*= 17; No: 0; Abstain: 1
The General Assembly decided to welcome NORDK as an associated member of the ELARD.

Decision:
To welcome the NRN Luxembourg as an associated member of the ELARD.
The item was put to the vote:



Vote results:
Yes: 14 + 1*=15; No: 1; Abstain: 2
The General Assembly decided to welcome NRN Luxembourg as an associated member of the ELARD.

7. The Vision of ELARD

The President presented the history of working on the Vision, Values and Business Idea document. The final result, Attachment 6, considers suggested amendments discussed during previous meetings.
As stated before, the document is crucial for us as it says where we are going and what organisation we want to be.

Decision:
To adopt the Vison, Values and Business Idea of ELARD.
The Vison, Values and Business Idea of ELARD was approved unanimously by the General Assembly.

8. Activity report

The chairperson presented the Activity report for 01-05/2021.
Details of meetings, representation in working groups and other activities details can be found in *Attachment 7.*
The Activity report was approved unanimously by the General Assembly.

9. LEADER 30 years – process for celebrating

This Agenda point was discussed during the second session of the meeting, after the Networking session.

10. Conference on the Future of Europe

The Presentation was given by guest -
Anguel Beremliysky - Member of the Common Secretariat of the Conference on the Future of Europe. DG REGIO - European Commission.
Main topics covered in the speech:
What is the Conference about?
- bottom-up experience,
- innovative approach,
- inclusiveness, openness and transparency,
- no predetermined outcome but clear commitment to follow up,
- unprecedented opportunity to shape the EU policies and future together.

The Conference milestones and timeline.
Presentation of the online tools.
Moore information available at: https://futureu.europa.eu/
National contact list at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact/meet-us_en

Actions:
ELARD members to communicate the Conference and its benefits/importance within their organisations and advise LAGs to connect with their respective Europe offices to investigate possible events and initiatives.
The Council to work out the proposal for ELARD to make the input to the Conference.

The proposal from the networking session:
The theme for the Conference: Changing perspective - "Learn from Rural".
The Covid crisis changed many people's opinions on rural areas; thay seem more appealing, and their attractiveness has improved significantly. Values like community, social relationships, healthy environment became critical, and there are lots of good examples in our rural (LEADER) areas that can be shared there.

11. Networking session

Using hub.mozilla application, participants in the virtual chat room, working in small teams, discussed LEADER/CLLD related activities scheduled in their countries for 2021.
The session aimed to identify events that could be forums to communicate in line with ELARDs' Activity plan. The emphasis should be on strengthening LEADER principles, communication of added value, the necessity of measuring it to prove LEADER impact on rural areas development, and celebrating 30 years of ELARD.

The outcome of the session was reported in padlet, showing the following events:

a)	Austria	– 01/06	The power of transformation through LEADER
b)	Greek event	– 03-5/06	
c)	Croatian event	– July (tbc)	
d)	Estonia	– 08-10/08	Estonian Leader summer seminar
e)	Lithuania	– 14/08	Lithuanian rural communities gathering
f)	Czech Republic	– 14-17/09	LINC
g)	Czech Republic	– 23-26/09	LEADER fest Kutna Hora (tbc)
h)	Lithuania	– 23-24/09	Lithuanian rural parliament
i)	Slovenia	– 30/09 – 1/10	Event at Slovenian conference Smart Villages for a digital, green and resilient Europe
j)	Portugal	– 28-30/11 (tbc)	
k)	Latvian	- November	Latvian national LAG gathering

Action:
The Council will work on details of participation, possible speakers and scope of communication.
The President office will work on a communication tool/concept to promote 30 years of ELARD consistently across the events.

12. Activity plan for the second half of 2021

The main focus will be on three areas:
- Policy work 2021
- Spreading of the LEADER-Principles
- Strengthening and expansion of ELARD members network
Detailed information on actions scheduled in each area is to be found in *Attachment 8*.

There were questions raised regarding Logn Term Vision, whether it was finalised and published. To the best knowledge of Council members taking part in the working group on that subject, it has not been finalised yet; this will be confirmed. However, we should not expect particular communication because the request is to promote The Vision through available resources.

13. Presidency election – preparation

Up to date, after sending out a notification about the election due in December 2021, there is no information about the country planning to run for The Presidency or Vice-Presidency.
In case of interest, there is the highest time to start the procedure and found raising. The candidates are welcomed.
In case of a lack of new candidates, Swedish LAGs are willing to prolong the Presidency for another year; however, it will require covering additional staff cost; the information on the budget will be prepared for the next GA meeting.

Members expressed their satisfaction with Sweden's decision.
Council representatives, as well as Members, showed support for extending Marion Eckard's term of office.
The financing of the Presidency was also highlighted with the comment that it should be revised in the future. It is problematic that the country holding this office, apart from the extra work, must also obtain additional funds to finance those additional activities.

14. Other points of interest

Issues regarding local strategies for the new programming period have been discussed briefly concerning Croatioas questions:
- periods to be covered 2021-2027 vs 2023-2027;
- multi funding, approach examples from different countries;
- legal and organisational issues related to LAGs and FLAGs operating in the same territory.

15. Next meetings

The Council meeting: 15/06/2021
Members meeting: 29/06/2021; 13-16 CET
Other meetings for 2021 will be agreed on at the following Members meeting.

16. End of meeting

The President, who conducted the meeting, thanked all for their participation and contribution and closed the session.

Marion Eckardt
President

Beata Styczeń
Administrative Coordinator