



"Let's network in EVS: Odyssey continues"

Ithaca, Greece,
25 – 30 of November 2008

Networking conference for organisations/participants of previous "EVS Odyssey in Euro Med" contact seminars, aimed to sustain the EVS cooperation in EuroMed

The "EVS Odyssey in EuroMed" started its trip in November 2006 from the Greek island of Hydra and continuing ever since from harbour to harbour: Copenhagen (September 2007), Oslo (April 2008) and Aix en Provence (October 2008).

The common purpose of those 4 contact making seminars was to explore a) the meaning and potential of EVS in EuroMed cooperation and b) the idea to build sustainable partnerships in this field.

As a result and follow up of these 2 years of work, the SALTO Euro Med Resource Centre and the Greek National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme – with the support of the National Agencies of Denmark, Norway and France - decided to organize a Networking Conference, "Let's network in EVS: Odyssey continues", to offer to the participants of those events the opportunity to stop for a while and think all together about the partnerships and EVS projects on process since the beginning of the Odysseys, the developments in the common understanding of volunteering in Euro Med; to open new possibilities for partnerships/projects and open the path to sustainable cooperation through the reinforcement and creation of networks

"Let's network in EVS: Odyssey continues", a part from the participants, their organisations and the promoting stakeholders, counted on the support of other National Agencies and EuroMed Youth Units (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Portugal, Turkey, Jordan, Tunisia), that complete a monitoring group of support to NGOs, their actions and quality of the projects in Euro Med.

This ongoing cooperation has been the result of two years of institutional networking and will be a valuable support for the sustainable cooperation in EVS in Euro Med in the future years.



AKTIV UNGDOM

Stakeholders of "Let's network in EVS: Odyssey continues"

Aims and objectives

The stakeholders offered to the participants of the past EVS Odyssey in EuroMed contact making seminars the opportunity to evaluate what has been accomplished so far and to jointly draw a more solid route for their future common trip, based on:

- partnerships and EVS projects on process since the beginning of the Odyssey
- developments in the common understanding of volunteering in EuroMed
- sustainable cooperation through the reinforcement of existing network(s)
- development of new partnerships and new projects

So we can say that the overall **aim of the conference** was: to sustain the EVS cooperation in EuroMed, through reinforcing understanding, projects, partnerships and networking.

The specific objectives were:

Objective 1: to assess the impact and the quality of the partnerships and EVS projects on process since the beginning of the Odysseys.

Objective 2: to explore the developments in the common understanding of volunteering in Euro Med.

Objective 3: to sustain the ongoing cooperation reinforcing the existing network(s).

Objective 4: to support the creation of new partnerships and new projects.

Profile of participants

Information on the Networking Conference has been spread by the Greek National Agency, in coordination with the supporting National Agencies and EuroMed Youth Units and SALTO EuroMed.

The selection process was carried out by the National Agencies and by the EuroMed Youth Units, under the supervision of the SALTO Resource Centre and the Greek National Agency.

The participants of "Let's network in EVS: Odyssey continues" have been selected among youth workers, youth leaders and project managers from Programme and Mediterranean partner countries, with this profile:

- took part to a previous "EVS Odyssey in EuroMed" contact making seminar;
- other representatives of participating organisations could replace the former participants only if directly involved in partnerships or projects.

A special effort has been done to have at the conference representatives of the National Agencies and EuroMed Youth Units involved in the EVS Odyssey in Euro Med. Their task has been thought as a monitoring group with the aim of supporting participants in the follow up.

English was the working language.



The Odysseys in Ithaca

The Networking Conference "Let's network in EVS: Odyssey continues" brought together 46 participants and 16 representatives from NAs and EMYUs, from 18 different countries (Algeria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Malta, Morocco, Norway, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian Authority, Portugal, Tunisia, Turkey).

From Programme countries: 24

From Mediterranean partner countries: 22

The team

The Seminar counted on a training team composed of 2 trainers that, alternatively, coordinated all the “EVS Odyssey in Euro Med” contact making seminars implemented previously. The logistic team was organized by the Greek National Agency.

The **training team** was composed by:

Sylvain Abrial, free lance trainer, France

Davide Tonon, free lance trainer, Spain, coordinator of the Networking Conference

A special support to the training team came from *Evi Koutsouspirou*, free lance trainer, Greece



Trainers and monitoring team, waiters of the Ithaca Odyssey Café

The **logistic team** was composed by:

Martha Diamantopoulou, *Layia Tzortzi*, *Sofia Kentistou*, of the Greek National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme

The **monitoring group** was composed by:

Ammar Chikhi, EMYU of Tunisia

Bernard Abrignani, Director of the SALTO Euro Med Resource Centre

Dora Bei, Director of the Greek National Agency of Youth in Action Programme

Hur Guldu, Turkish National Agency of Youth in Action

Katrine Daviknes, Norwegian National Agency of Youth in Action

Muhannad Al Akroush, EMYU of Jordan

Peter Markov, Bulgarian National Agency of Youth in Action

Rachid Halouani, EMYU of Tunisia

Rosa Ferreira, Portuguese National Agency of Youth in Action

Sadi Soboh, EMYU of Jordan

Salima Boudoukha, French National Agency of Youth in Action

Yiannis Yannakis, Cypriot National Agency of Youth in Action

Results and impact

The conference managed to gather on board the really motivated “EVS Odyssey in EuroMed” participants and brought them on the other side: the networking side. The result has been highly satisfactory. The participants are ready to reinforce links and implement projects during the follow up.

We can say that all the aims have been achieved, in different measure.

“To assess the impact and the quality of the partnerships and EVS projects on process since the beginning of the Odysseys”

A personal reflection on the follow up after Odysseys and a group discussion on the ongoing partnerships have been moments for deepening. This self assessment has been also very important for the monitoring group in order to understand what happened and which are the trends and the obstacles. And to assess participants with its feedback.

“To explore the developments in the common understanding of volunteering in EuroMed”

We managed to open a discussion/exchange on good practices and “hot issues” (main obstacles) of EVS in EuroMed. With the feedback of the monitoring group. Also the topic of recognition of key competences and evaluation of EVS experiences has been introduced.

“To sustain the ongoing cooperation reinforcing the existing network(s). To support the creation of new partnerships and new projects”

Participants worked in their partnerships, had the chance to mix the experiences of the different Odysseys, to work in new groups, to establish new connections, to start networking in small groups and with the big group. At the end of the conference 32 ideas for projects/partnerships/networks were presented.

The conference has been in part an evaluation, in part a training and in part a projects/ partnership/ networking building seminar.

We had fewer participants than expected, around the half of all the Odysseys, but this was normal because along the travel always someone get lost or busy. And also it was a lucky circumstance because this fact allowed us to work well with a reduced group to build links and to reflect on challenges.

In terms of human resources it would have been very difficult with the current team (2 trainers) to work out a conference with so many aims and the double of participants. It has been a challenge anyway.

During the session “Our ship sails again: projects and partnerships gallery”, **32 projects/partnerships/networks have been exposed**, as a result of the discussions and work of the participants during the conference.

Participants have been invited to fulfil a template with more information about the contents and timing of their ideas under construction.



The monitoring group is growing and the stakeholders are finding their role inside this “floating ship” of EVS in EuroMed.

The possibility of a big follow up, with projects, partnerships and networks, is visible and touchable.