



## EES 2018 – NEWSLETTER 1

### We´ve laid the foundations for the conference route – up to you to contribute!

Welcome to the first real newsletter for the EES 2018 Conference *Evaluation for More Resilient Societies*. From Q4 2017 up to the publication of the registration module on the conference website last week, it has been quite a rush. But now all's prepared and it is now **UP TO YOU** to submit abstracts, register for the conference, lead a training workshop, become a sponsor – or propose any other innovative initiative! It is time to briefly look back on the past couple of months and look forward to things to come.

Since last summer we have concretely started the preparation of the conference. After having had the past conferences in North-western Europe, and following a public call for site proposals, the choice finally was made to go to the opposite side of Europe – the far South-East. This region of Europe, together with the social, economic and (geo-)political events of the past decade, provided the inspiration for the conference theme, revolving around how evaluation could contribute to more resilient societies.

Also following a public call for candidatures, a **conference programme team** (consisting of May Pettigrew, Robert Stryck and Sebastian Lemire) was set up and published their **letter** to the evaluation community. In the past the coordination and establishment of the programme was generally the responsibility of one single person. However, a team would allow to interact, to generate ideas through cross-fertilisation and to spread the workload a bit. And I can tell you, having been there (Prague 2010), it's a complex and time-consuming job! Now that abstracts are coming in, the team needs to be reinforced with additional peer reviewers. Several people have already volunteered. But do not hesitate to contact **May Pettigrew** would you want to participate. We have also moved on with the **preconference training sessions** that will take place over the two days preceding the conference, i.e. on October 1 & 2, 2018. Their coordination is again in the hands of Albine Guitard and Ian Davies. A **call for trainers** was recently published and proposals are already coming in. Deadline for submitting of proposals is **March 15, 2018**.



With support from our **PCO** the EES has contacted a huge amount of potential sponsors (international organisations, foundations, bilaterals, etc.), especially to find funds for bursaries as the EES traditionally does. This starts to yield interesting results but we can always do better. Please refer to the **sponsorship brochure**, if you are interested in sponsoring, or contact **Andrea Ambrozova** or **me** if you have a splendid idea.

Two other initiatives around the conference should be mentioned. First, the buddy and mentoring programme for **emerging evaluators**, which we again envisage to organise. This is coordinated by Julia Brümmer and possibly in the future by one of our new Board members. Second, we have set up a small advisory group to have a critical eye on the communication and use of social media around the conference, and make suggestions. This is currently led by Mariana Branco who will in a forthcoming newsletter brief you about the activities of the group.

Also the **TWGs** have started to take the direction of the conference. An internal call for participation was launched by the **Private Sector Evaluation TWG** and the **professionalisation TWG** is planning to present progress on the **VEPR** initiative. Join the TWGs to be part of their initiatives!!



Most recently, on 26 and 27 January together with our PCO we did a site inspection in Thessaloniki. The conference venue is pleasant, at walking distance from the sea, and lies within the city with its warm-hearted people, excellent climate and good food and drink – not to mention the region's obvious link with the conference theme.

The site visit was preceded by a seminar organised by the **Hellenic Evaluation Society** (HES). HES is our local counterpart which are of invaluable help and have opened several local doors already. The seminar – which, being on site, EES attended – was focused on evaluation in Greece. I gave a **presentation on the conference** followed by a Q&A session which allowed to explain its different aspects and brainstorm on possible conference initiatives relative to the region and country, e.g. on EU Structural Funds. The next day, Saturday morning, we continued in a smaller group with evaluators from different evaluation **societies and networks from the Balkans**. We discussed opportunities, during the conference, for drawing the attention to building evaluation capacity and reinforce the evaluation networks across this region, possibly with the support of international donors.



Apart from progress with the conference, forthcoming issues of this newsletter will inter alia contain a presentation by the communication group, of the initiatives proposed by the different TWGs as well as an explanation of the different conference formats.

I hope this information has been useful to you and raises your appetite for the conference. I look forward to see you in Thessaloniki, 1-5 October of this year!

**Bastiaan de Laat**

**EES President**

**#EES2018** Conference Coordinator

**#evaluationformoresilientsocieties**

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