## BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

### Background

With the rejection of our Erasmus application and our partnership with the FPH scheduled to finish at the end of 2015, we need to launch a broad consultation process. The current socio-economic context means that our organizations will find it much more challenging to survive. In what way can working together as part of an international network be beneficial? How can we prepare for our future?

One thing is certain, we can only develop the next stages with people who are ready to commit to the European Pacts approach in the years to come.

This survey is designed to provide an overview of our network before we meet at the General Assembly in November 2014, so that we can build a lasting future that benefits everyone.

### Objectives

- Acquire a better understanding of members' commitments, availability, needs, ideas, expectations and wishes.
- Define short- and medium-term objectives and concrete missions.
- Determine the relevance of a change in governance (more collective, more European) and prepare for a successful transition.
- Gather members' opinions of the different possible directions for our collaborative project: a political project, an economic project, a combination of both, other options.

## METHODOLOGY

The organization's president informed members about the survey beforehand. The information provided specified the survey's goal and deadline.

22 organizations, comprising 19 member organizations and 3 partner organizations, were contacted. 19 people from 16 organizations took part in the survey; 6 organizations did not participate.

Semi-directive interviews lasting around 45 minutes were carried out by telephone and video-conference or face to face. Individual and two-person interviews were based on theme-based sections defined beforehand and described in an interview guide. To optimise the process and make sure it was transparent, the guide was sent to interviewees before the interviews so that they would be aware of the contents and to give them the chance to prepare.

To ensure that the process is as objective as possible, the presentation of the survey results is resolutely quantitative. This method draws on the assessment process undertaken at the end of each Learning Journey during the Grundtvig programme.

Contributions remained strictly anonymous in the analysis process. Answers were analysed by theme-based section and are presented in reported form ("They said...."). Answers were grouped together when they were identical or similar. Each answer shows the number of people who expressed an opinion on the question concerned. The answers listed are only those that had a minimum score of two replies to ensure that we stay within a summary framework.

**PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION PROFILES**

- 14 out of the 16 participating organizations are European Pacts members, 2 organizations are interested in becoming members.
- Out of 14 organizations, 7 have been members for over 5 years and 7 have been members for less than 5 years.
- 10 of the 16 organisations are French, 2 are German, 1 is Austrian, 1 is Portuguese, 1 is Scottish and 1 is Irish.
- Interviewee positions: director (8), coordinator (4), partner (3), administrator (3), service supplier (1).
- 10 out of the 16 participating organizations were partners in the PACTES 2 project as part of the application for Erasmus+ - Strategic partnerships 2014, Key Action 2.

**Operational context**

- The organizations suffer from a lack of security, which:
  ◦ means they face the risk of closure and threatens individual professional paths;
  ◦ leads to a rise in volunteer activity;
  ◦ curbs creative growth (R&D) despite a strong desire for this type of development.
- Generational transition is a major feature of these organizations (operating modes, viewpoints, approaches, people leaving to retire, etc.).
- The quest for public funding is time-consuming, exhausting and less and less fruitful.
- In general, completed projects and the ingenuity of doing things differently do not get much recognition.
- IT is seen as a tool likely to lead to new forms of collaboration.
  ◦ There is a varying degree of IT skill, and a strong desire to learn about new collaborative tools.

**Motivations for joining European Pacts**

- To share practices, skills and experiences in order to further develop our expertise and benefit from other people's inventions and experiences (15).
- The introduction of new ideas and approaches to enhance skills and improve our range of goods or services (7).
- Network interculturality: tools, methods, European-level process (5).
- To learn about and share SSE values (4).
- The territorial approach and construction of a local development project (4).
- Participation in the Grundtvig programme as the basis of the partnership (3).

**Network benefits and practical value**

- The benefit of a European network made up of expert peers that enhances and broadens our own network (6).
- Individual and collective learning and improvement (4).
- Personal contact and friendships created thanks to the work undertaken (3).
- Encouragement to try out alternative approaches and help in disseminating them, strengthening the link between trying out and demonstrating other possibilities (3).
- The horizontal nature of relationships, territorial participation, relevant areas of expertise (2).

**EUROPEAN PACTS CURRENT STATUS according to interviewees**

**Strengths**
- Fertile ground for a diversity of great talent, experiences and skills, all deeply rooted in their respective territories (9).
- The European Pacts culture: openness, non-controlling approach, cross-cutting and productive discussions, lack of competitiveness, interculturality (8).
- The Learning Journey (as a tool for development) (2).
- A balanced network (culturally, gender parity, between practitioners and theorists) (2).

**Weaknesses**
- Overly intellectual tendency, themes too broad and not concrete enough (6).
- An overly French approach to the themes (4).
- Organizations isolated in terms of their themes, network and viewpoints that are not broad or diversified enough (4).
- A lack of regular organization and continuous contacts (4).

**Threats**
- Lack of mastery of another working language (11).
- Difficulties due to various realities: languages, concepts, cultures (7).
- An organization deeply rooted in the French context (4).
- Lack of financial resources and dependency on the FPH (4).
- Absence of clear objectives: we don't know where we're going or how to get there (2).

**Opportunities**
- Get to know each other better, work on understanding each other and the concepts, improve the language problem (6).
- Present the Erasmus project again (once it has been revised) (5).
- Develop the Learning Journey (4).
- Broaden the network and activities, do more (4).
- Develop greater representativeness and visibility for European Pacts in the world of European networks (3).
- Define clear, concrete and achievable objectives that are within our means (3).
- Develop cross-border projects (Euroregions) (2).

**Dangers and risk that threaten European Pacts**
- Stagnation in an overly French context, failure to become more international (6).
- Dispersal and demotivation due to the split between different concepts, approaches, generations and frames of reference (5).
- Without prospects and goals, failure to build a lasting future for European Pacts (3).
- Problem of horizontal and vertical management within its governance (3).

**THE LEARNING JOURNEY (LJ)**

**What has been achieved: participation in the European Pacts Learning Journeys**
13 of the 16 organizations took part in the Grundtvig LJs, 4 organizations took part in other journeys prior to the programme. 3 organizations did not take part in the LJs.

**Assessment: value and benefits of the journeys**
- The pooling of experiences and learning, construction of shared knowledge to introduce new ideas into our own networks (10).
- The LJ as an innovative learning principle that favours social innovation (8).

- Trust and feedback between peers (8).
- Fruitful discussions making it possible to improve our own approaches and tools and in return promote our own knowledge and remain an active force in the process (6).
- A broader vision at the European level (5).

**What should be achieved: what future development for the LJ?**
- Formalize the LJs so they are more visible and easier to understand; develop different formats in line with objectives and target audiences (5).
- Refocus on partners: develop LJs based on subjects specific to them in partnership with businesses and local and regional authorities (5).
- Expand to other European countries (cross-border countries or countries in the north and east) (5).
- Involve partners more closely in drawing up documents, formalizing the LJ (3).

### PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE, BOUNCING BACK...

**Motivations and wishes in terms of contributing to the European Pacts process**
- Take part in work groups to create concrete, useful and new approaches (7).
- Share our knowledge and teach our methods to improve our service thanks to the LJ (7).
- Get to know the partners better, help to consolidate and broaden the network (5).
- Develop the LJ at another geographic and conceptual level (4).
- Take part in drawing up LJ documents and methodology (4).
- Contribute to setting up an on-line communication/learning platform to improve dissemination of skills and knowledge (3).

**What does European Pacts need to do to make its activity useful?**
- **Governance**
  - Develop proactive coordination in order to create/maintains ties; acquire new contacts (6).
  - Clarify objectives (3).
  - Introduce a more appropriate form of governance for working as a network (2).
- **Work themes**
  - Define clearer and more practical themes ("less is more") so we can introduce them into our daily working lives (3).
  - Refocus themes on members' activities in order to promote these activities (3).
- **Operating mode**
  - Continue to share experiences, hold discussions and compare ideas (5).
  - Get closer to each other (2).
  - Contributing to the European Pacts process should also be a source of pleasure.
  - Work on win-win projects.
- **Funding**
  - Be able to depend on a minimum level of funding to avoid purely volunteer work.

**Availability for active participation**
- Generally, **fairly limited** availability.
- **Yearly** participation under certain conditions (availability, funding).
- 2/3 would get 1 person involved in European Pacts, 1/3 would get 2 people involved.

**WORKING TOGETHER: the missions**

**Explore the relevance of short-term missions** (late 2014 - early 2015)
Everyone is happy to commit to working as a group within the limits of their availability. For 1/4 of them, this work should be paid. Only 2 partners would agree to coordinate one of these work groups, as a paid task. A third of interviewees would take part in drawing up a proposals paper under certain conditions (payment, availability).

**Opinions on missions listed/validated at Berlin** (rated in descending order)
1. Shared framework for documents/communication (10).
2. Laboratory on work methods and decision-making (7).
3. Resilience of territories and businesses (7).
4. Practical tools for local partnerships (6).
5. Education and training (5).
6. Organizational structures (3).
7. Collective property and commons (3).
8. Future of our work (2).
9. Continued discussions on our main values (1).
10. How to achieve a decent income (0).

**Opinions on proposals for predefined missions** (starting in spring 2015)
- **Market the LJ** as part of the training provision promoted by a "European Learning Journey Agency": **Most people did not express an opinion** due to a lack of understanding or awareness of this project.
- **Become a European territorial branch** of European Pacts that would promote and organize regional LJs with a certain degree of autonomy: **Most people expressed doubts.**
- **Organize/host LJs** in their region with their partners: a **widely supported activity,** on condition that the mode of operation and remuneration would be clarified.
- **Develop a European think tank** that would primarily carry out in-depth work on subjects tackled by member organizations. **An appealing idea to most people**, on condition that the activity is given a practical purpose.
- **Present the Erasmus project again**: **a probable mission** for most people, under certain conditions. A number of Erasmus partners would continue to participate, others were unable to indicate their availability, and yet others would no longer take an active part.

**Spontaneously formulated missions. They proposed...**
- Creating a virtual communication and learning platform (9).
- Working on bringing members closer together: our operating modes, communication modes and collaborative tools (8).
- Training, with or without the LJ, relevant to their fields of expertise (4).
- Developing skills in the areas of methods, networking, forms of learning, etc. relevant to the transition (4).
- Developing the LJ (4).
- Studying the possibilities of a Euroregions project (2).
- Getting European Pacts more involved in the leading European networks (2).

**Where the different ideas meet – the favoured missions** (in descending order)

- Create a virtual communication and learning platform and shared document framework.
- Work on bringing members closer together: our operating modes, communication modes and collaborative tools.
- Laboratory on work methods and decision-making.
- Develop skills in the areas of methods, networking, forms of learning, etc. relevant to the transition and the development of local partners.
- Resilience of territories and businesses.
- Develop the LJ.
- Training, with or without the LJ, relevant to their fields of expertise.

**What type of collaboration? Summary.**

Most people are very much **in favour of remote collaboration in small work groups** via a communication platform. This operating mode, based on clearly defined missions, would make it easier for people to participate despite their limited availability. It would contribute to raising the profile of European Pacts' actions and have a positive impact on the network's cohesion and external image. They feel that this type of collaboration requires regular organization and training on collaborative on-line tools. It would alternate with a **minimum level of face-to-face meetings** (depending on financial resources).

**Their active participation** would take the form, in particular, of **contributing skills** related to their fields of expertise. In more concrete terms, they would:

- produce and make available documents developed as part of their activity, or co-developed with a partner;
- add their existing intellectual output to the communication platform;
- attend virtual work group meetings on a specific mission.

A number of them proposed supplying technology or making their premises available.
On the other hand, many of them **expressed doubts over taking responsibility** as part of a mission, or only under certain conditions.

**FUTURE GOVERNANCE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

**No one** from the member organizations wants to become a board member.
Most interviewees are either not interested in taking on this particular responsibility, or do not have the availability needed to do so.

**On the subject of the organization's governance, they said: " ... "**

- Reflect on a more decentralized governance.
- There is a need for strong management and ties.
- There is a need to develop the network, create a shared work basis and work themes: responsive coordination is vital for creating and developing ties between partners and acquiring new contacts at the European level.
- There is a need to clarify the things we have in common.
- The network is fragile, how can we succeed in bringing about the change in governance desired by people who want to leave?
- We need a form of governance appropriate to the network.
- Members do not have the means to take part in governance, how can we replace the FPH?
- The people currently in charge should remain in place to oversee the transformation during the period needed to refocus. This is the wrong time to change, we would risk disruption.