

Dear Colleagues in Networking,

2023 has been a very good year for development of our networking and a very bad year for humanity. Although very little has happened on the networks (among which you may think of www.naturalliance.org, www.sakernet.org, www.perdixnet.org and www.falconet.org but please don't forget the original multilingual www.naturalliance.eu), we have secured funding for further development. After adding Belarusian as a 43rd language and a few more satellites (now 53 altogether), and discussion about a global initiative on environmental decision support with UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in March, we learned in June (just before going to talk with government in West Cape South Africa about the new initiative), that the bid to European Commission for a 20-partner PRO-COAST project had moved from wait-list to approval.

The year for humanity and ecosystems has been shocking. In 2022 we learned that countries in Europe were still prepared to flout the rules-based international consensus against cross-border military activity. We saw this from two sides again in 2023, again with gross disrespect for civilian lives and providing an unnecessary a distraction from the threat of global warming. Indeed, a focus on oil and gas supplies from all this aggression has, in some countries, boosted the popularity of politicians with little interest in the environment. However, and here is where hope creeps back in: many people have realised that local sources of solar and wind-power can improve energy security and security more generally.

PRO-COAST is about understanding how communities can best be encouraged to transition to practices which benefit the environment, focussed in coastal areas initially but then with much wider dissemination. ESUG, as the coordinating partner, is responsible not only for project management but also for dissemination. We will provide tools to collect and exchange standardised data for Case Studies and then disseminate the process in a scale-up exercise with support also for social data through survey. The project's social scientists will study the dependence of community transitions on trust-building, which is essential for good relations everywhere. PRO-COAST will need help for translation and other Country Coordination, for which we now have some funding to share round. We are so grateful to our long-term Greek cooperators in Tero for the opportunities in this project, for which the start-up process has needed total attention in recent months. We will be telling you more early in 2024 and as the project develops. There is a lot to do in three years!!

In the meantime, all good wishes for the holidays that are just starting, and for us all to be able to help towards a more peaceful world.

Robert, Julie & Adrian