



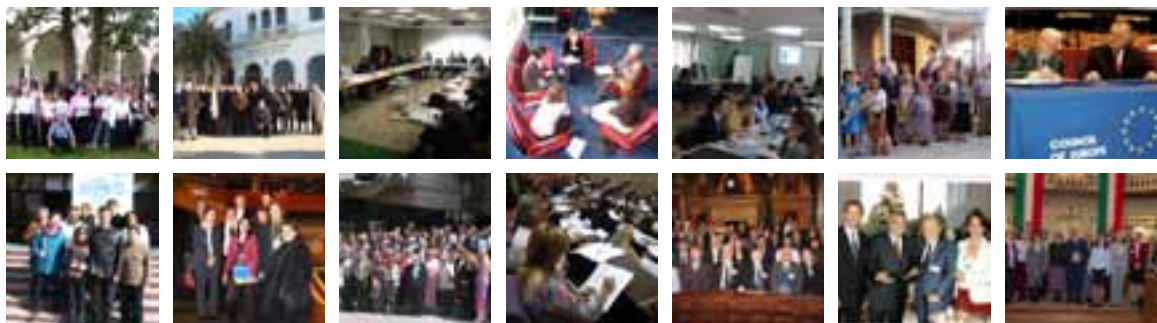
**ALDA**  
Association of Local  
Democracy Agencies



# ALDA

## 10 years in the making of a new Europe

in support of local democracy  
and citizens' participation



Strasbourg, May 2009



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## Preface



Helping promote local democracy and respect for human and minority rights in South Eastern Europe is a challenging task, the success or failure of which is difficult to measure. The Association of Local Democracy Agencies has been active in this field for 10 years now and individual Local Democracy Agencies even longer. However, instead of concluding that ALDA is no longer needed let me quote a professor from Skopje to the effect that “it was thought that it would be difficult to oust communism but it would be easy to install democracy. In reality it has turned out to be the other way around.”

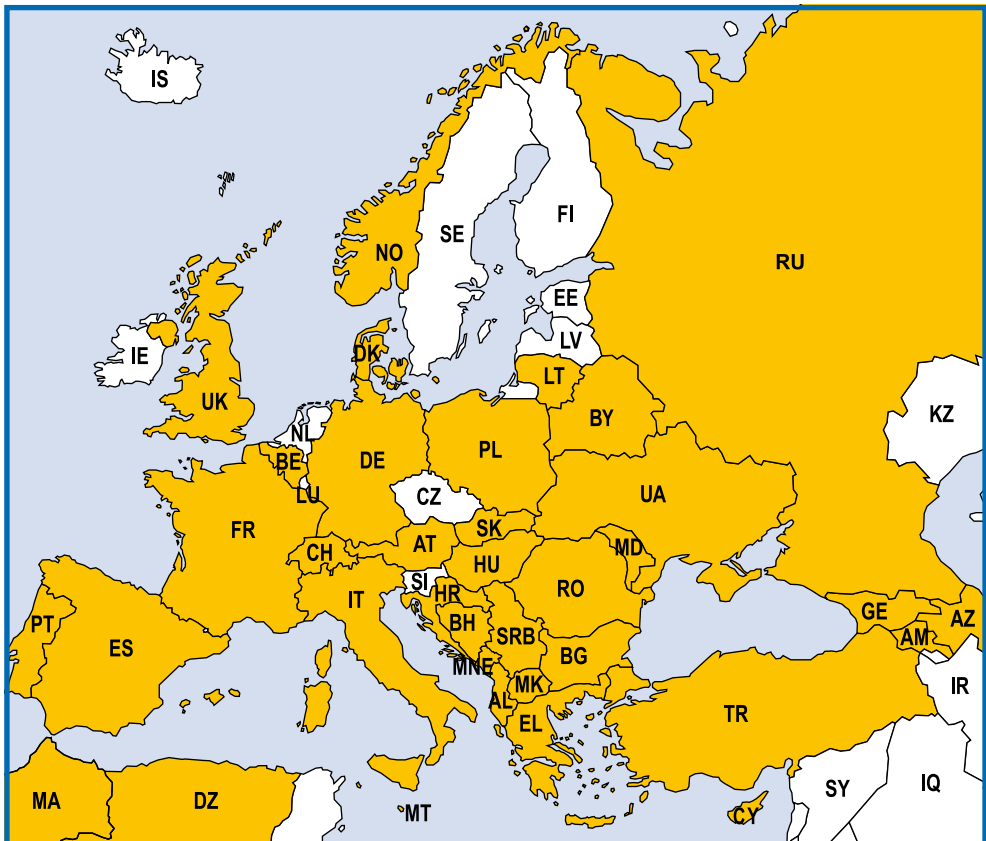
You cannot force democracy on anyone! Democracy with all its pros and cons has to be appreciated and embraced by citizens in order to make it firmly rooted. And even after that it needs to be nurtured for years, possibly generations, to ensure that there is no relapse. This is where we who have been associated with the “local democracy process” in South Eastern Europe for quite a few years now, feel that we have been able to make a genuine contribution and will be able to continue to do so for some years to come.

However, realising also that the countries of SEE slowly but surely are heading towards becoming rightful members of the European Union – and offering them support also in this endeavour – ALDA has some time back explored whether the model of bottom up decentralised international cooperation could also be used to good effect in Southern Caucasus. A first Local Democracy Agency was opened in Kutaisi, Georgia, in 2006 and we have launched the first fact-finding missions to Armenia and Azerbaijan last year with follow-up missions planned for this year. Projects to support and strengthen civil society in Belarus are being and have been successfully implemented by ALDA and cooperation with civil society in the countries around the Mediterranean is developing at an increasing pace.

It seems certain that ALDA and the LDAs with the support of members and partners in many European countries are headed for another 10 years of engagement in the promotion of democracy and of civic participation across our Continent.

This publication and the testimonies it contains are meant to give an impression of ALDA and LDA activities in the past 10 years and the results achieved. I wish you an exiting and thought provoking read!

Per Vinther  
*ALDA President*



*The map shows the countries where ALDA is active in 2009.*

## A time to look back... and ahead



Celebrating an anniversary is often a reason to be satisfied and even more so if the reason for celebrating is a creation to whose birth one contributed together with many other good willing people.

With this in mind and with these feelings I write this presentation for the publication of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies on the occasion of its 10th anniversary. I write in my capacity as the first President of the Association, and today, as my personal choice, in my capacity as its Honorary President.

This role allows me to combine memory of the past with the present commitments, initiatives already realized and visions for the future, in the context of a complex society such as the Balkan and Caucasus ones and, at the same time, in the framework of European, national, regional and local institutions.

It is just this one “identikit”, not a usual one, of the Local Democracy Agencies and of the Association (ALDA) which gathers and coordinates them: a project which was set up within civil society in co-operation with several stakeholders, which promotes a European perspective and which in this way is incorporated in the institutional framework of the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities at its initial stage, but afterwards, unavoidably, also in the structures of the European Union and other international organizations.

In Europe, characterized by numerous historical, cultural, political, socio-economic and religious diversities, but at the same time, aware of a historic vision of its unity (even if today potentially questioned) and in search for the most effective politic and institutional formula capable of translating this dichotomy into practice, the “invention” of the Local Democracy Agencies represents an innovative experiment for promoting peace, democracy, participation of citizens, respect for human rights, interethnic and intercultural dialogue and cooperation. A meeting point for the basis and the summit, we could say, taking into account a modern “federalist perspective” of unity in diversity.

The following pages will clarify if and to what extent, this initial intuition and the concrete experience of the Local Democracy Agencies have been coherent with the mentioned objectives and what results they have achieved over the last ten years. Allow me, as one of the founding members of ALDA, without being pretentious, to offer a positive response to this question, since I firmly believe in a genuine commitment to continue along the path initiated, despite numerous challenges of the present. We cannot ignore the reality of economic crisis, the disparities and polarisations in multicultural societies, the persistent interethnic tensions, the puzzle of a Europe still far from the expectations and hopes of its citizens and still far from achieving a functional cohesion of the political and institutional entity.



What would (or should) ALDA do within the context of the severe financial, economic and social crisis now gripping all the countries of our planet, to a different extent and in different ways? What should ALDA accomplish today in anticipation of the future ?

Being part of Europe, the Balkans share the common European expectations, hopes and concerns. The question is how they intend to address the current crisis, in the specific circumstances of each of the countries established after the dissolution of former Yugoslavia and how they can contribute to the Local Democracy Agencies?

It is essential for these countries to seek adequate democratic responses for social and economic challenges taking into consideration the specificity of their political and institutional architecture. Local Democracy Agencies have always been privileged observatories, since they operate in the field and within the civil society, in a diverse, complex and sometimes confusing reality of the Western Balkans. During turbulent times, this role could become even more valuable, not only for ALDA (and for its founder the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities), but also for the Council of Europe and the European Union, with even more effective means to address the current crisis.

But above all, it would be worth to explore how the current crisis affects the citizens and the widest public in the above mentioned countries, considering an evident decline of confidence among the citizens of the region in EU integration and in the prospect to become members. One should bear in mind that, since the end of the conflicts in the Balkans, the very prospect to join the European Union has not only been perceived among the citizens of this region as a way to post-conflict reconciliation, but has also become a hope for the future growth and prosperity.

Perhaps the above mentioned may seem utopian and impractical: but isn't it worth the effort? In addition to the results achieved in the Balkan countries, such an initiative would contribute to the widest possible recognition and international visibility of the Local Democracy Agencies and to ALDA that coordinates their work. In many ways, such an effort would be fruitful for both the Council of Europe and the European Union.

I have a dream!

Gianfranco Martini  
*ALDA Honorary President*

## Local Democracy Agencies: an Initiative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities



Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs), first known as Local Democracy Embassies, were born out of the horror of the Balkan wars, out of the need to restore trust and rebuild confidence between war-torn communities. Launching this initiative in 1993, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe was driven by its strong belief that consolidating local self-government and carrying out concrete projects at community level – projects involving communities themselves – was the best way to achieve this goal. To this day, we remain firmly convinced that local democracy is the strongest binding force which holds together the multiethnic quilt of South-East Europe.

History proved us right. The spectacular success of Local Democracy Agencies resulted in the creation, ten years ago, of their network – the Association of Local Democracy Agencies, ALDA – which has expanded since then, taking its experience to another troubled region in need of post-conflict reconstruction – South Caucasus. Local Democracy Embassies (renamed Local Democracy Agencies in 1998) furnished assistance to villages, towns and cities devastated by warfare in the former Yugoslavia. Over the years, they grew into a genuine network seeking to strengthen local democracy, promote a pluralistic civil society and solidarity between local and regional communities and their authorities, as well as safeguard a pluralistic, multicultural and multireligious society.

In 1999, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies was founded to co-ordinate the growing network of LDAs, which expanded into South Caucasus in 2006, with the opening of an Agency in Kutaisi, Georgia. Today, ALDA facilitates collaboration within the network of twelve LDAs in the Western Balkans and South Caucasus, involving 300 members and partners (towns, regions and NGOs) from 28 European countries. In addition, the Association provides the LDAs with technical and administrative support and represents its members in negotiations with institutions and funding agencies, especially with the Council of Europe. Undoubtedly, ALDA has become a key local player in the advancement of democracy and stability in South-East Europe.

Today, I am delighted that ALDA decided to mark its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by publishing an account of its many achievements and successes, an account of its day-to-day work, often in difficult circumstances, for the benefit of local communities. In this publication, you will find stories of hope and perseverance, stories of endeavour and accomplishment.

In the ten years since the Association's creation, its work has proved useful and necessary, and it remains today as vital as it was a decade ago. I wish the Association and its Agencies every success for the years to come.

Ulrich Bohner

*Secretary General of the Congress of Local and  
Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe*



*PEARL.EU exchange programme Mostar-Brindisi*



*PEARL.EU Compa fair in Bologna, Italy*



*PEARL.EU activity in Sisak*



*PEARL.EU activity: delegation of Zavidovici in Monfalcone*



*Microcredit launching conference, Sarajevo, 2008*



*Emanzipar event in Malta, 2008*

# 1. ALDA: from a window in Europe for the LDAs to a strong network of local authorities and NGOs

## 1.1 Introduction

### From the war to peace and European integration

In no other places in the world like in South Eastern Europe, ten years ago seem like a century ago. The growth of the LDAs and the establishment of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies have followed the process from a period of war to peace, development and, eventually, the enlargement of the European Union in this part of the continent. ALDA is not working today only in South Eastern Europe but this is where we have preserved in our everyday activities, the memory and the essence of this long way we went through. Over the past years, both globally and in Europe, the situation has changed rapidly and drastically.

The Association of the Local Democracy Agencies has its roots in the mountains of Central Bosnia, in the besieged Sarajevo, in the former occupied area of Krajina, in Knin, in Banovina, in the dark forests of Montenegro at the border with Sandzak, in the planes of Pannonia, in the troubled Macedonia (or Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), in Serbia that for many years of isolation could not be approached. At that time we were struggling to understand thoroughly the rules, the system of local self-government and the civil society in the aftermath of a terrible war, at the door of Europe, not far away from most of us.

Many years after its establishment, ALDA still lives in memory of the people we all met during our projects and activities. Even more, the images and reminiscence are still alive and preserved in our decade long journey during which we collected numerous personal testimonies of the people we met at the airports, trains, city halls, dark and smoky rooms of the small NGOs and civil society groups and in the bars for never ending coffees and cigarettes. Many sad and happy stories have been told that helped us understand better why democracy, human and minority rights, rule of law, intercultural dialogue and understanding are all the values worth fighting for.

A very educated middle - aged man once told us, in Sarajevo (it could have been Belgrade or Zagreb), that the war cancelled everything. He used to have a home, a family, some savings and a job. Everything was lost in a minute. The lesson he learnt and wanted to share with us was very simple: in former Yugoslavia, nobody could see – or did not want to see that the war was coming in. He said that it is important to be aware that peace and dialogue are delicate goods, worth to be looked after every single moment. Even in Europe.

## **Establishment of an Association from the LDAs**

The first LDAs were established at the initiative of the Council of Europe and owing to the determination and political will of a group of enthusiasts who conceptualised and shaped the initial idea. At the end of the '90-ties, the entire programme was at stake, while some of us still may remember the crucial meeting held in the building of the Hotel Osijek in 1999., still damaged after the attack from the other side of the Drava River. We were all looking for a solution to effectively coordinate the process and help develop its specific “network” identity. The decision to found the Association seemed as the right one. Indeed, we created a vision for a programme by taking it “out” from the Council of Europe. The Congress of the Council of Europe became a substantial partner but without the burden to lead a programme without a proper capacity and role for it. In addition, an Association was the most appropriate tool to involve the members, through an effective participative decision making process, by establishing the governing board and the general assembly. Thus, the challenge was accepted to start from a zero point and as a result a well developed European wide recognised NGO was established, composed of local authorities and civil society with the mandate to promote local democracy and active citizenship.

ALDA and the LDA-s are striving to respond to the needs of preserving the peace and respect for human rights and dignity. Genuine values of local democracy and citizen participation are ambitiously promoted all across Europe and in its neighbourhood. In many ways, the modern globalisation made the principles of good local governance even more important. One can not neglect the large scale projects and schemes that are implemented locally and according to the rules of the higher tier of government. But, it would be even better to propose to the higher level the solutions from the grass-root level. Inevitably, what we learn is that one can not be a “citizens of the world” if he/she is not “a citizen of his/her own town”.

## **From the LDAs to the commitment in Active Citizenship in Europe**

The LDA-s are structured as a partnership based instrument to promote active citizenship, even in those difficult areas characterised by total absence of trust between citizens and authorities. LDA-s are supported and managed by a group of local authorities and civil society organisations working jointly in the framework of the partnership agreed by the memorandum of understanding. The local partners are fully involved and active in this partnership. We have always worked with these two stakeholders: local governments and NGOs or groups of citizens. In 2003, ALDA got the first European Union project not strictly connected to the LDA-s in South Eastern Europe. It was the project PRINCE, mainly focused on the forthcoming enlargement of the EU in 2004. In that particular case, the network of partners of the LDA-s, i.e., the partners in Europe were included in implementation of the action, thus paving the way to all other ALDA projects within the framework of Active Citizenship Programme in Europe.

Today, we are one of the biggest and most important NGOs connecting the local authorities and civil society involved in European Active Citizenship Programme. This particularly refers to activities implemented in the future EU member States in SEE and in Eastern Europe. Naturally, ALDA expanded and built up on the long lasting experience of the LDA-s in enhancing citizen participation and the role of civil society in democracy development.

These target countries may be far in the East – such as Azerbaijan and Armenia – but the objectives might be applicable even next door, in Strasbourg or in Vicenza.

## Still worth going on?

The years 2009 and 2010 might be remembered as a difficult period for economy, while numerous new challenges universally linked with societies may also arouse. Our activities are often perceived as “delicate” and “complex ” ones, especially considering the very practical needs emerging today: unemployment, corruption, mass violation of human rights, intolerance, etc.

However, the members of ALDA and its Governing Board, whenever addressing any of the issues mentioned, feel that they are targeting the core of the problem. Governance and balance of powers, respect for citizens, promotion of youth and women’s rights, as active participants of the local community and political life can be an answer to most of these challenges. In this way, both the powers and decision making are oriented towards a sustainable future. It is a long process and implies substantial changes in political culture and code of ethics . But, this is where we need to start from. Therefore, the projects and existence of ALDA and the LDA-s are not only valid today, but will become essential in the future.

The sense of being at service to the community may have disappeared a long time ago. This seems to be the case in many countries in Europe, not only in non-democratic regimes in today’s Africa or in other parts of the world. Difficult times offer us an opportunity of rethinking the way of visioning the politics by the means of public consultations and by evaluating the needs and interests of citizens. Modern e-governance could be an option. The role of civil society organization as watchdogs might be an alternative as well. ALDA and its members, to the best of their capacity are heading toward this direction.

## The European project

The Association of Local Democracy Agencies is essentially a European Association and even though the term itself is not contained in the name, ALDA gathers more than 150 members from all over Europe. The European project is essentially incorporated in our vision. It is a vision of peace and stability, respect for human rights, balanced social and economic development. We know and we work for a Europe as a solution for peace and welfare. We consider the local community and local authorities as the milestone of the system of democratic governance.

*Berlin Declaration, of the German Presidency of the European Union of 2007:*

*“We, the citizens of the European Union, have united for the better. (...)*

*We are facing major challenges which do not stop at national borders. The European Union is our response to these challenges. Only together can we continue to preserve our ideal of European society in future for the good of all European Union citizens. This European model combines economic success and social responsibility. The common market and the euro make us strong. We can thus shape the increasing interdependence of the global economy and ever- growing competition on international markets according to our values. Europe’s wealth lies in the knowledge and ability of its people; that is the key to growth, employment and social cohesion. (...)*

*We preserve in the European Union the identities and diverse traditions of its Member States. We are enriched by open borders and a lively variety of languages, cultures and regions. There are many goals which we cannot achieve on our own, but only in concert. Tasks are shared between the European Union, the Member States and their regions and local authorities. (...)*

*The European Union will continue to promote democracy, stability and prosperity beyond its borders”*

There is a sense of hope in these words that ALDA is picking up and it brings them in its future activities.

## 1.2. Our history and the partnership with the Council of Europe

### 1.2.1 The LDAs' programme before the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies

The Local Democracy Agencies (or Embassies at the beginning) were in place much earlier than the Association of Local Democracy Agencies. The Association was established in 1999 at the initiative of a number of active partners of the Local Democracy Agencies, with a special political support of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

The concept "*local democracy Embassy*" was introduced<sup>1</sup> and proposed by *Causes Communes Belgique*, supported by *Causes Communes Suisse*, discussed with the *Helsinki Citizens Assembly*, incorporated into CLRAE Resolution 251 (1993), and later developed and clarified by the Monitoring Committee set up under CLRAE auspices. The concept was further developed in Resolutions 25 (1995), 39 (1996) and 56 (1997) and Recommendations 15 (1995), 24 (1996) and 33 (1997) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE).

The Programme was at that time a pilot initiative since it was given a general functioning scheme, described in the Resolution 251 (1993) recalling the essential aspects of the LDA-s:

- a) a network of European Partners
- b) appointment of a Delegate (responsible of the field operation and representing the partnership)
- c) a programme of activities included in the general mandate of the LDA-s: interethnic dialogue, human rights and empowerment of civil society and local authorities

With the resolution 73 (1998) the name Local Democracy Embassies was changed in Local Democracy Agencies. The Congress was addressed and reported about the importance of the LDA-s and its Association on different occasions<sup>2</sup>.

The aims of a *local democracy Agency* are in particular:

- to contribute to the improvement of life conditions;
- to foster peaceful co-existence and the development of civil society through mutual acquaintance and understanding, developed by means of exchanges and intermunicipal co-operation;
- to strengthen the democratic process and to incorporate confidence-building measures (in accordance with the scheme devised by the Council of Europe) through intercultural activities, human rights and peace education;
- to combat racism, intolerance and xenophobia by implementing non-violent solutions;
- to commit itself to a pluralistic society and to protect multicultural and multi-religious society;
- to encourage the development of unbiased and non-partisan pluralistic information;
- to encourage micro-credit economic projects, development and reconstruction aid;
- in general, to promote dialogue and mediation.

The programme was run by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities thanks to a Standing Committee composed of experts and members of the Congress, and, of course, the Secretariat.

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1 In co-operation with Médecins Sans Frontières (Belgium) and Amnesty International (Belgium).

2 Local Democracy Embassies: Instruments for Peace and Democracy in Europe, Recommendation 33 (1997), Resolution 56 (1997).

During its first year of activities, and before the creation of the Association, the contact with respective LDA-s was direct in terms of financial support. The LDA-s received a substantial contribution from the Confidence Building Measures programme of the Council of Europe, within the Political Affairs, as the departments dedicated to interethnic dialogue.

### **1.2.2 The creation of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies**

After several years of activities, entire programme was reaching its crucial point and hence required a strong and clear identity with a common vision. As it often happens, the weakness did not come from the lack of funds in itself but rather from a lack of perspective and global programme. The main problem was that all the LDA-s were acting isolated one from another and hardly knowing each other when attending the meetings in Strasbourg held once a year, during the Steering Committee of the Congress. The Council of Europe itself found it difficult, for financial and human resources, to establish a wider and more articulated coordination. The option identified was an Association, registered with the local law in Strasbourg and therefore with an opportunity to have international founding members.

The mandate of ALDA is described in its Statute and it includes the coordination and support to LDA-s as well as the mandate of the LDA-s such as a) local governance b) human rights and interethnic dialogue c) local economic development d) civil society empowerment in local decision making process.

The Association was a challenge since it implies new commitments and new resources, which were, already at that time, difficult to collect. On the other hand, the full support of the Council of Europe and the Congress, at the beginning, was fundamental to establish the ALDA's activities. ALDA developed a unique platform of cooperation, a guarantee of good management for donors, a forum for public debate and decision making for the members and partners of the LDA-s.

The partnership with the Council of Europe and its Congress is still present today in the composition of the Governing Board, where most of the bodies of the Council of Europe are represented. They are in minority in relation to the elected members in order to preserve the independence of the Association of the LDA-s.

ALDA and the Council of Europe programme, but the Congress in particular, work in full synergy and mutual support. The LDA-s and ALDA with its members proved to be eyes, ears and arms of the Congress in many occasions and initiatives. On the other hand, the Congress and its members are a resourceful network of partners offering skills and expertise for the Association.

### **1.2.3 Regular support from the Council of Europe and the Congress**

As already mentioned, the support of the Council of Europe and its Congress has been extremely valuable, especially at the beginning of the Association of LDA-s, when fundraising potentials and credibility were still to be developed. The Congress had supported for years (see the annexe of projects attached) the institutional meetings of ALDA thus providing a real incentive to the institutional life of the Association of LDA-s, allowing a wide participation in decision making process. For many years, the programme of the LDA-s was channelled and coordinated by ALDA and supported by the Congress. Therefore it was possible to plan a joint action and thus to increase the overall impact of the activities. The contribution of the Congress as for the support to ALDA and LDA-s, unfortunately stopped. Over the 10 years it reached almost 1.000.000 Euro and helped create unique partnerships.



As for the international relevance of the programme, it was recognised as a main tool for promoting democracy and respect for human rights in South and Eastern Europe by the Council of Europe, in particular with the support and the activity of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The **convention** signed in 2002 by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Walter Schwimmer, and the President of the ALDA, Mr. Gianfranco Martini, confirmed the importance attributed to the LDAs activities.

#### 1.2.4 Partnership with the Council of Europe

The link with the Congress is substantial and strategic by its nature. However, it should be noted that over the last ten years the programme of the Local Democracy Agencies and then the Association of the Local Democracy benefited much from the contributions of other different programme initiatives of the Council of Europe.

The first to mention is the programme of the **Confidence Building Measures** of the Political Affairs which supported the first civil society programme in South Eastern Europe and in particular the so called Political Schools of the Local Democracy Agencies. The cooperation with Department of Political Affaires continued with ad hoc programme on specific countries which needed a local governance approach, the on-going programme with Youth in Kosovo supported by the DGAP. A partnership has been developed over these years with a wide and interesting network of the **Political Schools of Council of Europe**, since its members are often involved in ALDA activities ([http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/themes/ecoles\\_politiques/default\\_FR.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/themes/ecoles_politiques/default_FR.asp)).

Other networks established in the CoE family involved ALDA, such as ENTO ([http://www.coe.int/t/congress/presentation/ento\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/congress/presentation/ento_en.pdf)), also promoted by the Congress. The training institutions network is honorary member of ALDA. A common geographic coverage with (<http://www.nalas.eu>), the Network of the Association of National Association of Local Authorities of South Eastern Europe. NALAS is a honorary member of ALDA and we have developed activities and projects together.

With its LDA-s and following the principle of local approach, ALDA and the Council of Europe worked together in the establishment of the **Association of Municipalities of Kosovo** (AMK) (where the first President of the Association, Lufti Haziri, was also the Mayor of Gjlilane, place were we based the LDA Kosovo) and the establishment of the **Association of Municipalities of Georgia** (NALAG). In this case, our LDA in Georgia was created following the contact and the National Strategy on training activities of the Council of Europe in that country. NALAG is former partner of the LDA Georgia. Most of the Association of Municipalities in countries where LDA-s are based are members of ALDA or partners of LDA-s.

Cooperation with the Council of Europe helped ALDA establish contacts and approach the **member States of the Council of Europe** for different programmes that are listed and described in the annexe attached.

Today ALDA is also involved in the **Strategy of Valencia on Innovation and Good Governance at the Local Level** promoted by the Council of Europe<sup>3</sup> and it is a member of the Conference of the INGOs, while the Director of ALDA is the chair of the Committee on Democracy and Civil Society of the **Conference of the INGOs** (<http://www.coe.int/T/E/NGO/Public/>). ALDA is actively involved in the development and drafting of the Code on Best Practices for NGO participation as well as in the **Local Democracy Week** of the Council of Europe.

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3 See Reference document CELGR(2007)7

## 1.3. Partnership with the European Union Institutions

### 1.3.1 The work in South Eastern Europe

The Local Democracy Agencies have been implementing, since their establishment, programmes dealing with Active Citizenship and Civil Society Empowerment. Indeed, the development of Community Based Groups (CBO-s) and Civil Society was among their first tasks in the aftermath of the war in former Yugoslavia. It implied NGO capacity building, balanced participation of ethnic groups, involvement in decision making process at local level. The LDA-s and further on the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies became one of the major organisations combining the effective cooperation of Civil Society and Local Governments in stabilization and peace process in former Yugoslavia. ALDA was involved in the **CARDS** programme as well in almost all the **Interreg Transadriatic** programmes.

This role of ALDA was formally recognised by the **Stability Pact for Southeast Europe**<sup>1</sup>, in particular within its **Table dealing with Local Democracy**. At the Inter-ministerial Conference in Zagreb in 2004, ALDA and the LDA-s were quoted among the most useful tool to promote local democracy and civil society in the Region. Furthermore, the Stability Pact Office in Thessaloniki, that implemented the last phase of the mandate of the SP for SEE dealing with Democracy, identified ALDA as its main partner and eventually handed over the work on local democracy and trans-border cooperation by signing a formal Memorandum of Understanding in 2008<sup>2</sup>.

A formal recognition came also from the **Committee of the Regions** and the programme was mentioned in the Opinion drafted by M. Giancarlo Galan, President of the Region Veneto, “The role of the European Union’s local and regional authorities in the democratic consolidation process in the Western Balkans”, by “**recommending** that the **CARDS** programme supports the development of local partnerships in the framework of the Local Democracy Agency programme (LDA).”

### 1.3.2 The European Active Citizenship

Since 2003, ALDA naturally submitted projects on Active Citizenship to the DGEAC (Directorate General for Education and Culture) of the European Commission. Its experience in building Active Citizenship in South Eastern European and working with NGOs and Local Governments in Europe represented a strong and fantastic opportunity to deal with the same topics in Europe and to launch a new and innovative way of consultations.

Based on projects implemented (described later on), ALDA persistently worked on becoming a reliable partner with the European Institutions. Since 2007., ALDA takes part in the **Structured dialogue on Active Citizenship** promoted by the DGEAC. The Group comments and interacts with the European Commission on the priorities and the implementation of the programme **Europe for Citizens**. It is therefore possible to interact, propose and give feedback to the EC, which thus becomes

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1 The Stability Pact for SEE was established in 1999 to coordinate the actions for SEE and includes the governments of the Region. It stopped its activities in 2008 and now part of its mandate was handed over to the Regional Cooperation Council <http://www.rcc.int/>

2 See also final conclusion of the SP in Tirana, December 2007, [http://www.stabilitypact.org/rt/CONCLUSIONS\\_Working%20Table%20I%20Meeting%203%20December%202007.pdf](http://www.stabilitypact.org/rt/CONCLUSIONS_Working%20Table%20I%20Meeting%203%20December%202007.pdf)

a partner rather than a donor. At the level of the group, ALDA is bringing in its experience with local governments and civil society working together. It also represents a bridge towards the “enlargement” of the programme and its extension to South Eastern Europe and future members countries.

Today, ALDA is present also in the **evaluation group of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue**, also promoted by the DGEAC.

**Youth in Action** is one of the main programmes ALDA activities that are realised together with the EC in South Eastern Europe.

Because of its main implementing actors and its focus on local governments, ALDA often acts as a partner within on the **Non State Actors Programme**, while the activities are mainly focused on capacity building for local authorities and civil society.

However, ALDA is constantly working together with the European Union institutions in the framework the EU Enlargement process and is actively engaged in the development and implementation of projects for **IPA countries**, and hopefully soon also, in **MED** and **ENPI programmes**.



*Emanzipar study visit to Strasbourg*



*Summer school, 2002*

## 1.4. Development of the Local Democracy Agencies

### 1.4.1 From a pilot project to an efficient and sustainable instrument to promote democracy and civil society

Today, at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ALDA, the network of the LDA-s is a well-established system of promotion of Local Democracy and Civil Society in Europe.

The network of 12 Agencies is covering seven countries in South Eastern Europe and in Southern Caucasus.

They are supported by more than 100 partners (local authorities and civil society groups) in Europe, giving us financial and political support to fulfil their mandate to accompany local democracy, civil society empowerment and participation in the decision making process at the local level.

List of LDA-s, the year of establishment and the Lead Partner.

	LDA	year of opening	Lead Partner
1	LDA Verteneglio - Croatia	1996	City of Bellinzona, Switzerland
2	LDA Osijek - Croatia	1993	City of Lausanne, Switzerland
3	LDA Sisak - Croatia	1996	City of Mogliano Veneto, Italy
4	LDA Mostar - Bosnia and Herzegovina	2004	Region of Puglia, Italy
5	LDA Zavidovici - Bosnia and Herzegovina	1996	Association of the LDA Zavidovici, Brescia, Italy
6	LDA Prijedor - Bosnia and Herzegovina	2000	Association Project Prijedor, Trento, Italy
7	LDA Subotica - Serbia	1993	Wolverhampton City Council, UK
8	LDA Central and Southern Serbia, Serbia	2001	City of Aarhus, Denmark
9	LDA Montenegro	2001	Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy
10	LDA Georgia	2006	Newport City Council, UK
11	LDA Albania	2008	City of Brindisi, Italy
12	LDA Kosovo	2003	(in phase of re-launch by autumn 2009)

LDA-s closed:

- LDA Ohrid – FYROM in 2007.
- LDA Maribor – Slovenia in 1998.
- LDA Tuzla - Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2004.



*The Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) in 2009.*

Since the establishment of ALDA, partners of the LDA-s have contributed to support the LDA-s with around 550.000 Euro. The figure does not include all the financial or in-kind resources that were attributed to the LDA-s directly.

## Political achievements

The network of Agencies has been established in line with the major political events marking the overall developments in Southeast Europe and in the Caucasus:

- political and economic isolation of Serbia during the Milosevic regime made it necessary to find a flexible means of assistance from 1993 onwards, and the opening of the first Agency in Subotica, which operated in a difficult political climate, enabled the Council of Europe to develop activities to promote civil society and help improve the relations in a multiethnic and multicultural local community;

- the influx of refugees to Slovenia led to the opening of an Agency in Maribor (1994-1996), in order to provide support to refugees and displaced persons;
- by opening an Agency in Tuzla in October 1995, through assistance from the City of Bologna, the Congress sought to mark its support for the policy of openness and tolerance promoted by the Mayor, Selim Beslagic, in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- the establishment of an Agency in Osijek (1994) opened the way for valuable co-operation activities with the United Nation Transitional Authority in Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES);
- the creation of an Agency in Ohrid, involving the local authorities from Karditsa (Greece) and Ohrid (“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”), made it possible to establish dialogue at local level between these two countries;
- following the signature of the Dayton Agreement (November 1995), the presence of Agencies in Sarajevo (1996) - under the auspices of the City of Barcelona, particularly active in the youth area - Zavidovici (1997) and Prijedor (2000) made it possible to work for inter- ethnic co-operation, encouraged by a consortium of Italian partners;
- the commitment of Mr. Zoran Zivkovic, former Mayor of Nis and president of the Union of Free Towns of Serbia, led to the opening of an Agency in Nis after the fall of the Milosevic regime in 2001;
- the creation of an Agency for Montenegro (2001), then Kosovo (2003), in close co-operation with the associations of local authorities in these entities, has made it possible to give these regions a tool for European action and to develop a regional programme for promoting local democracy, civil society and local development;
- the support of the region of Sisak Moslavina heavily affected after the war in Croatia in 1996., to support the minorities’ protection related issues all over the country;
- the support to the local administrative and decentralization reform in Albania with the Agency in 2008;
- accompanying the outcome and first activities of the local democratic institutions in Southern Caucasus after the Revolution of the Roses in Georgia.

After many evidences of their relevance and the results achieved, their sustainability in the long run has been assured by the partnership network.

## Developing our focus

Since their establishment, the LDA-s focused primarily on local government issues and interethnic dialogue and understanding. However, considering the evolution of the local context both in South Eastern Europe and in Southern Caucasus, they concentrate on the process of European integration as constituting an ideal platform for the Programme of Pre-accession planned by the European Commission.

### 1.4.2 Methodology of multilateral decentralised cooperation

The partnership established around the LDA context by the means of international decentralised co-operation has been developed through two main lines of action:

- Territorial based, involving all the actors of the communities concerned on a geographic basis
- Thematic networking, focused on a specific, commonly determined issues connecting different local communities.

## **Types of action**

### **City to City Partnerships**

The partnership, which involves only the local authorities – without any support or involvement of NGOs require adequate level of administrative capacities and, as a rule, exist mainly in the cases when large or capital cities are involved.

This kind of co-operation partnerships have brought to creation of diverse European wide network of cities attracting substantial funding from the European Union in the region and are dealing also with relevant support provided for infrastructure. They imply, and it goes without saying, a particular attention of the political level for these issues as well as a relevant experience and internal capacities. Being purely linked to the institutional level, it often happens that they are suspended if the local administration has been changed by the elections. Sometimes, the contacts at the institutional level were also the result of previous formal twinning.

### **Partnerships between local authorities and civil society**

Co-operation between the cities and NGOs has become one of the most efficient, result - oriented tool of capacity building for networking and twinning programmes. Support by a local NGO ensuring the continuity and persistent support to their municipal and city authorities. On the other hand, the NGO with a long-standing experience and whose work is recognized by the local authority, may initiate an important process of contributing actively to local policy making and participatory planning. In many ways, such an approach opens up new opportunities for empowering the local community in support to the principles of transparent local governance.

Participation of NGOs might also help assure certain continuity and stability in communication with international partners, since the political changes, and different political majority might shift the priorities and leave aside the already established partnerships.

### **Long-term programmes**

Partnerships among towns and regions, based on official relations and institutional contacts tend to be long-term relations, even if sometimes this aim is not reached. The activities related to the partnership represent a step of a shared programme and co-operation. The projects involve the communities of the two partners. Their main objective is to help create conditions, in the medium and long term, for social and economic development in SEE and to raise the awareness of the citizens in Europe regarding these issues.

The long-term programmes with the involvement of civil society and public authorities are the most effective but at the same time the most difficult to be implemented. It is very difficult, indeed, to maintain the level of commitment of the authorities for a long time, especially when the time of the emergency has passed.

In addition, local authorities, find it difficult to keep their commitment in the long run, mainly due to the annual budget. Furthermore, this difficulty is also linked to the change at the political level of the authority during each mandate. If the decision regarding the co-operation is shared by majority and opposition, it is then easier to make the programme continue after the change of the majority. Again, the support of civil society could be fundamental since it can keep alive the connection and the partnership for a long time.

For some cities and regions in Europe, the co-operation with SEE has become a main characteristic of their international activity. They have been extremely committed over the last 10 years and their success has proved to be recognised by the international community but also by the citizens, at the local level.

In any case, the experience shows that the partnership – even strongly established and institutionalised – between local and regional authorities, if it is not supported by a wide range of representatives of civil society, has some difficulty to survive for many years. This may happen if the local authority is connected to any network that supports them in the partnership or if a member of the city board, or even a senior officer, might be particularly committed. But, it is, then, related to a personnel question, which can really matter for a long-term engagement.

### **Participatory planning process**

As far as the partnership among local authorities and NGOs is concerned as for the methodology of their actions, a special feature has to be underlined. By definition, the decentralised international co-operation is based on the participation of all the different actors in the phases of the action. Therefore, the two parts of the partnership should be involved in a process of evaluation of the needs and identification of the resources, from both sides. The basis of this partnership is the exchange among the parties in the co-operation.

A balanced co-operation and understanding that it is not a one-way process, is fundamental for achieving tangible results of the programme. European community, involved in the programme should be made aware of a general benefit resulting from this action (not only a political visibility for the current political representatives). The result for them is a deeper understanding of the democratic processes, a revitalisation of their civil society through practical action and co-operation, the growth of the whole community by being involved in actions for the protection of human rights and democracy. The programmes of co-operation, without doubts, are focusing on the need to learning from good local practice, while the development – and this is the central aspect of the partnership among towns and regions – is understood in a wider sense, which includes a general welfare of the community: education, environment, human rights, employment and other issues related to economy. The partnerships presented in this document have a common objective to promote a shared and long lasting development in the community. Economic revitalisation is also part of these partnerships (exchanges of business people and possible investments).

The partnership among local authorities and NGOs, reflecting the specific needs of all actors involved may help promote the democratic participatory planning process if the partners are committed to the commonly shared vision and objectives.

Whenever the activities of the co-operation are genuinely shared, the results will be applicable and effective. It is not only about top - down process responding to the objectives “of the donors”, but much more, the meeting point between the expression of the needs and resources of the local community in SEE and the possible interests and resources from the other local authorities, from Europe.

In this case – and this is the substance of the partnership among towns and regions, with NGOs, the international decentralised co-operation – the process itself is more important than the programme itself. The process of co-operation among cities and an active participation in all its phases is – in the long run – as much important as the support for the rebuilding of a single house, for instance.



## Institution building (local authorities, NGOs)

Long history of cooperation between local authorities has already brought substantial benefits to the institution building process. More transparent and responsive local self-government has become one of the most important criterion of the democratic achievement of the countries in the region.

The institutional building concerns the development of the capacities and skills of the local authorities and NGO-s, as the actors of the partnership: how they are managed, how they are organized for reaching their objectives, etc.

Activities aimed at institution building carried out in different partnership are:

- a. Exchanges of good practices (in the different fields of competence of the local administration or the relative NGO)
- b. Training programmes and training of trainers
- c. Analysis and comparative studies
- d. Internship offered by the members of the partnership
- e. Development of pilot cases
- f. Technical assistance, peer-to- peer exchanges

### The role of the LDA-s is:

- To promote good local governance and support initiatives aimed at improved citizen participation
- To enhance institution and capacity building at local level through exchange of know-how and training of local elected representatives and administrators
- To develop a Europe-wide network of citizens committed to respect for human and minority rights
- To foster the development of a civil society in which all sections of the community participate.
- To support intercultural dialogue and diversity management capacities in multicultural local communities
- To promote the respect for human / minority rights in local communities

Each LDA project is based on an agreement setting out the practical contribution of the main partner local and regional authorities. These authorities provide technical and financial support and expertise for projects run by the LDA.

Through the network thus established, the other partner authorities have the opportunity to participate, as their resources and expertise permit, in a convincing and effective policy of external relations. Their involvement reflects a commitment by residents of the partner authorities. Depending on the needs voiced by the host authority, local and regional authorities and NGOs may take part in an LDA's programme of activities in a variety of ways.

One of the partners is designated the “**project leader**” and takes particular responsibility for managing the network, co-ordinating projects, raising funds and overseeing the administration and financing of the project.

The **host city** provides the Agency with an office headquarters which constitute the basic prerequisite for the activities. The main target groups are citizens, NGOs, elected representatives, local government officers and civil servants.

Through the network thus established, the partner authorities have the opportunity to participate, as much as their resources and expertise allow, in a convincing and effective policy of external relations. Their involvement reflects a commitment by residents of the partner authorities. Depending on the needs expressed by the host authority, local and regional authorities and NGOs may take part in an LDA's programme of activities in a variety of ways:

- by supporting specific projects (in the field of education, health, media, environment, youth or microeconomic projects, for example);
- by sending elected representatives or experts to lead seminars;
- by hosting study visits in partner towns, regions or associations;
- by establishing links between representatives from the socio-economic or voluntary sectors and key stakeholders in the host authority.

Partners of the LDAs:

## **LDA SUBOTICA**

Wolverhampton City Council (UK, Lead partner), host city of Subotica, Minority Rights Group International London, Buskerud County Council (Norway), Centre for regionalisation, Novi Sad (Serbia), Vojvodina Human Rights Centre, Novi Sad (Serbia), Dalmatia Solidarity Committee, Split (Croatia), Centre for Minorities' Rights Protection, Sarajevo (BiH).

## **LDA CENTRAL and SOUTHERN SERBIA**

City of Aarhus, lead partner, (Denmark, Suresnes, (France); Reggio nel Mondo (Italy); Municipalities of Vefsen and Saltdal (Norway); Commune of Hemnes (Norway); Italian Consortium of Solidarity - ICS; Kent County Council (UK); Tavolo Trentino con la Serbia, Codess Sociale Venezia (Italy); Cités Unies France; Balkan Assist Association (Bulgaria); East West Institute; the cities of Nis, Kragujevac, Kraljevo and Leskovac (Serbia); Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities; Local Democracy Agency Zavidovici (BiH).

## **LDA MONTENEGRO**

Region Friuli-Venezia-Gulia, lead partner (Italy); East Staffordshire Borough Council (UK); Association Betton-Montenegro (France); City of Neuchatel (Switzerland); City of Ancona (Italy); City of Lingen (Germany); City of Levanger (Norway); Cities of Niksic, Kotor and Rozaje (Montenegro); Union of Municipalities of Montenegro, Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Montenegro.

## **LDA OSIJEK**

City of Lausanne, lead partner (Switzerland); City of Osijek (Croatia); Causes Communes Vaud, Lausanne (Switzerland); Croatian Chamber of Commerce/County Chamber Osijek (Croatia); SLAP Association for Creative Development, STINA News Agency (Croatia); Association of Regional Training Centres (Nitra, Slovakia).

## **LDA SISAK**

Mogliano Veneto, lead partner, (Italy); the cities of Lainate, Arese, Roncade, Noale, Preganziol, Casale Monferrato, Province of Venice (Italy); the cities of Sisak, Hrvatska Kostajnica, Petrinja, Dvor, Kutina (Croatia), NGO “Going to Europe” (Italy), International School for Peace Studies (Northern Ireland, UK).

## **LDA VERTENEGLIO/BRTONIGLIA**

City of Bellinzona, lead partner (Switzerland); Causes Communes Suisse (Switzerland); Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy); Istrian Region (Croatia); the town of Verteneglio/Brtonigla (Croatia); Municipalities of Greve in Chianti, Portogruaro (Italy); the Communes of Duino Aurisina, Russi, Ravenna (Italy); Circolo di cultura Istro-Veneta, Istria-Trieste (Italy); Marevivo FVG (Italy).

## **LDA MOSTAR**

Region Puglia, lead partner (Italy); City of Mostar (BiH); Municipality of Vejle (Denmark); Province of Venice (Italy); Province Brindisi (Italy), City of Monfalcone (Italy); Municipalities of Orkdal and Sund (Norway); City of Kragujevac (Serbia), NGO “IPSIA” (Italy).

## **LDA PRIJEDOR**

Association Program Prijedor, lead partner (Italy); Municipality of Prijedor (BiH); Cities of Trento, Aldeno, Baselga di Pinè, Borgo Valsugana, Caderzone, Caldonazzo, Cavalese, Grumes, Lavis, Levico, Massimeno, Pergine, Pinzolo, Predazzo, Ronzo Chienis, Spiazza Rendena, Tassullo, Varena (Italy); Association l’Ancora, Cultural Association Mosaico Trento, Cultural Association il l’Allegria, Privates, Pensioners’ Trade Union Spi-CGIL Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy); “Comprensorio”, Alta Valsugana C4, “Comprensorio” Valle Dell’Adige C5, Association CISV Trento, Association Yugo 94 Trento (Italy); Diputación of Cordoba (Spain).

## **LDA ZAVIDOVICI**

Association for the Local Democracy Agency in Zavidovici, lead partner (Italy); Municipality of Zavidovici (BiH); Associazione Comuni Bresciani (Italy); Province of Cremona, Comunes of Albam Torre de Picenardi, Roncadelle, Torbole, Botticino and Nave (Italy); MU&AP, UISP, CINSA, Liberation Carpendolo, Teatro Ass. Culturale, Gruppo CA Naviganti, Associazione Mediatori linguistico culturali “il riccio y le mele”, Parco Oglio Sud, SPI-CGIL, CGIL, ARCI Nuova, Amici di Emmaus, Peace Office of Alba, Donne in nero Progetto “Donne” (Italy).

## **LDA GEORGIA**

City of Newport, lead partner (UK); Cities of Nantes and Strasbourg (France); City of Monfalcone (Italy); Institute of Social Ethics, Kaunas (Lithuania); the cities of Kutaisi and Tbilisi (Georgia); the National Association of Local Authorities (NALAG); the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association; Kutaisi-Newport International Association (Georgia); Newport-Kutaisi Association (Wales, UK); Partners-Georgia.

## **LDA ALBANIA**

Municipality of Brindisi (Italy); Municipality of Shkodra (Albania); Municipality of Fraize (France); Municipality of Yverdon-les-Bains (Switzerland); Region Puglia (Italy); Formez Institute (Italy); IPRES (Italy); Association of Albanian Municipalities (Albania); Municipality of Fierze (Albania).

	Capacity Building for Local Authorities and NGOs	Local Economic and Sustainable Development and Environmental Issues	Transborder Co-operation	Sensitive Groups (disabled, women, youth)	Interethnic Dialogue and Minorities	European Integration	Media Issues, Cultural Projects
Subotica	X	X	X		X		
Central and Southern Serbia	X	X	X	X (disabled)	X		X
Montenegro	X	X	X	X	X		
Osijek	X	X	X	X (youth)		X	
Sisak	X	X		X (youth, women)	X	X	X
Verteneglio/Brtonigla	X	X	X	X (youth)	X	X	
Mostar	X	X		X (youth)	X	X	X
Prijedor	X	X		X (youth)	X	X	X (media, cultural projects)
Zavidovici	X	X		X (youth, women)	X		X (cultural projects)
Georgia	X			X (youth, women)			
Albania	X			X (youth)			

Demining: Osijek, Sisak. Reconciliation: Subotica

### 1.4.3 Role of ALDA to promote the LDA-s

Bearing in mind the scope of activities developed by the Local Democracy Agencies, in 1999, LDA were determined as a programme registered locally as an independent legal structure in order to help consolidate the LDA's social and financial grounds. Following a consultation process with the LDA partners, the Delegates and the Council of Europe's bodies, the creation of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) was initiated, governed by Alsatian-Moselle law, in December 1999. Its statute provides that the Association will manage and co-ordinate the LDA programmes.

The Association - as far as the LDAs are concerned - has the objectives:

- to manage relations between the LDAs, their partners (municipalities, regions or NGOs, including the host town or region) and the international organizations, ensuring their consistency as part of an overall project;
- to establish priorities for the preservation of existing LDAs and the creation of new ones;
- to favour partnerships between local and regional authorities in greater Europe;
- to build up a network of LDAs capable of meeting the requirements of local partners and acting as a relay for a number of the international community's activities, in particular those of the European institutions;
- to train the Delegates and the senior local staff in management and local project leadership techniques;
- to monitor the work done by the Delegates and the LDA staff, including financial management;
- to promote contact, co-ordination and the dissemination of information between LDA partners, foundations, public and private bodies (national or international), appropriate governmental and non-governmental organisations and the LDAs;
- promote LDA activities in order to develop a new form of decentralised, international co-operation based on intermunicipal, interregional and intercommunity relations in Europe.

Since 2000, the Association has undertaken numerous activities to extend its geographical basis and increase the involvement of local and regional authorities or non-governmental organisations from different Council of Europe member States. The coordination provided by the LDA Association contributes to the search for LDA funding, and to logistical or administrative support for the LDAs and their partners. Through the work carried out over the past three years, the Association has established itself as a fully recognised partner of organisations working to strengthen institutions and the democratisation process in southern and eastern Europe, and is a reference for European towns and regions interested in on-the-ground activities.

The Association has made it possible to:

- have a legal structure that is separate from the Council of Europe and authorised to manage funds under the supervision of an accountant and an auditor;
- increase the visibility of the activities carried out by the Council of Europe and the LDAs, through appropriate communication tools;
- define a joint awareness-raising strategy for local and regional authorities;
- diversify the sponsors providing support for LDA activities;

- involve the partner local and regional authorities more closely in management of the “To be part of the LDA programme” (from 1999, when the Association of LDAs was established) means, either:

- being member of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (with fixed membership fees)

or/and

- supporting a Local Democracy Agency. The financial contribution is not fixed for all LDA-s.

The support system to LDA-s depends on the different composition of the partnership network, the needs, resources and the annual budget.

The partnership with an LDA is a complex and long-term commitment. It implies a) participatory planning process during the partner meetings b) contribution to the activities implemented by the LDA c) financial support d) sharing the same vision. Because of the “quality and quantity” of the contribution, the LDA partnership could be more or less demanding (depending on the will and the resources).

Beside the usual bilateral city-to-city co-operation, the Local Democracy Agencies introduce the concept of a **multilateral decentralised cooperation**. This is a valuable assessment of the programme which can be expressed in the medium to long term. Active partnership has been proven as extremely efficient in raising awareness and resources. That was the case, for instance, for emergencies or appeals for project proposals to different funding organizations and donors.

Another different aspect of the partnership in the Local Democracy Agency programme is the capacity to **bring together local and regional authorities and representatives of civil society**. Without doubt, this represents both a strength and one of the main difficulties of the programme. The decision-making processes are different and the objectives might be different. However, it is an LDA that provides a common ground for a practical and concrete co-operation.



*Participants of the Youth in action workshop, autumn 2007*



*Participants of the seminar on European Voluntary Service in Montenegro, 2009*

## 1.5 Activities: governance, local governments and civil society empowerment

The Association of Local Democracy Agencies combines the power of the membership in association, with the strength of representation and the size of its network, with the opportunity to implement projects. Indeed, these two aspects are part of the same perspective since the capacity to express interests, objectives, strategic and political targets are also the results of experiences “lived” through its initiatives. The project activities are incorporated in everyday communication and relationship with the members. As a matter of fact, ALDA choose to have low fees for members but enlarge as much as possible the network and the contacts. The report of projects attached is an evidence of a long standing and substantial experience in involving the members and in project management of ALDA, which has been developed and increased over the years, and in terms of financial capacity development has reached the amount of almost 10 million Euros.

### 1.5.1. Projects in South Eastern Europe and in Southern Caucasus with the Local Democracy Agencies

The initial mandate of ALDA was to support and coordinate the Local Democracy Agencies. Therefore it is fully reflected in the implementation of large number of activities during these 10 years.

In the initial stage before 2003, ALDA was mostly relying on the Congress contribution and voluntary contribution of the Council of Europe. In addition to this, some external funding and projects were allocated but almost only to support the projects mentioned above.

#### 1.5.1.1. Local Government and Civil Society Capacity Building

- **Summer School on local democracy and citizens’ participation (2002), Ohrid**

ALDA organised a summer school on local democracy and citizens’ participation with 30 people from all over Europe in Ohrid, FYROM.

- **Support to the network of the LDA-s: local government capacity building, citizen participation and partnership support (since 1999 to 2005)**

Through the so called programme LODE, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities promoted the Local Democracy Agencies through the programme of supporting local authorities, empowerment of civil society and active participation of the citizens in the decision-making process from 1999 to 2005. It regarded capacity building for local authorities on the issues where the Congress has a particular role such as the dissemination and information on practical implementation of the European Charter on Local Self Government or the Code on Ethics for local politicians. It supported also exchanges of best practices on local government issues and active citizenship.

From 2005 up to 2008, the Congress supported the important activities, in terms of networking and programmes, such as the partner meetings of the Local Democracy Agencies.

- **Waste Management and Sustainable Development (2005/2009)**

The cooperation between ALDA and the Canton of Geneva has been facilitated by the Foundation FEDRE ([www.fedre.org](http://www.fedre.org)), from 2005.

The objective of this project was to organise awareness-raising campaigns on environment protection and waste management strategies for local governments and civil society organisations in South East Europe. Several trainings were held in which the representatives of the host cities of the Local Democracy Agencies participated. In addition, a case study was conducted on environmental protection in South East Europe. Seminars and study visits were organized with the LDA-s to Switzerland.

In the next stage, the task was to identify the best project and after the selection procedure, the LDA Central and Southern Serbia and the city of Kragujevac were nominated. Activities consist of raising awareness on waste Management through education and implementation of measures for selection and recycling. The project is currently being implemented.

- **Supporting civil society and local governments in South Eastern Europe with the establishment of LDA-s in Montenegro, Central and Southern Serbia and Kosovo (2001/2003)**

Ireland contributed to the activities of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe within the framework of local democracy and civil society. The Council of Europe activities and ALDA's actions in South Eastern Europe were identified as their main focus of interest. In two years, they contributed to develop the partnership and activities of the Local Democracy Agency in Kosovo, the Local Democracy Agency in Montenegro and the Local Democracy Agency in Central and Southern Serbia. The project regarded the preparation phase of contacting the partners and the effective negotiation locally, of partners, supports and priorities. Several initiatives were organised to train civil society, women and youth groups as well as the capacity building for local authorities and best practices exchanges with local governments from Ireland, UK, Norway, France, Italy and other countries.

- **Empowerment of Youth in Kosovo (on going)**

The Council of Europe has financed the ALDA project “**Empowering the role of young people in Kosovo**”, with an aim to help empowering the young people living in Kosovo and to enhance their capacities to take up the role of “active citizens” in their local community. The main specific objectives of the project are the following:

1. To provide capacity building to young people and youth workers through trainings on project development and management and on active citizenship;
2. To develop and consolidate networks and partnerships, both at the local and at the international level, in order to strengthen cooperation in the field of youth
3. To create the basis for a long-lasting fruitful engagement of young people in the life of the local community through the “youth ambassadors” groups

- **Democratic Citizenship and best practices in Participation of civil society 2005)**

Enquiry on best practices on citizen participation in Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina, analysis and models.



- **Development of LDA-s (since 2005 )**

The voluntary contribution of the Council of Europe, helped in many occasions the start up phase of new LDA-s.

- a. support to the development of the LDA Mostar (2006): partnership identification, fact finding missions, definition of the priorities, fist initiative for the local government and civil society development. In the case of Mostar, the programmes were oriented to Youth Empowerment and also interethnic dialogue. (supported by Liechtenstein). The LDA Mostar was supported (Luxembourg) for a programme of empowerment for women in social and civic field. A house for victims of violence was supported.
- b. support to LDA Albania (2008/2009) (supported by Liechtenstein). The programme gave us the opportunity to look for partners, establish the LDA and the priorities of work and sign the local commitments. It was focused on capacity building activities for local authorities and civil society empowerment, citizens' participation and best practices exchanges. A special focus is given to Youth.
- c. Support to the development of the LDA Georgia (supported by Liechtenstein). It was possible to identify the partners, organise partner meetings and agree on priorities. Focus was given on women's rights and fight against human trafficking. Attention was given to local authorities and civil servants capacity building and best practices exchanges.

- **Support to Civil Society and local government leadership (2001/2003)**

A fruitful cooperation with LGI (Local Government and Public Reform Initiative, Budapest) was developed throughout all the years of activities of ALDA. This important partner of the network of trainers for local government from South and Eastern Europe called Working Together<sup>1</sup> (2001/2003)

For three years, LGI supported the capacity building initiatives for the network for the LDAs and its partners. The programmes run were Training of Trainers for LDA staff members and at the later stage for the trainings were held for hundreds of civil society groups and local governments who gained new competencies in a) leadership skills b) conflict management c) communication skills.

- **Good governance and capacities for local authorities and civil societies in SEE, Interreg Transadriatic programmes (2005/2007)**

Naturally, the platform of cooperation of the LDA-s in South Eastern Europe, was identified as potential and efficient partner for many Interreg Trans-Adriatic programme dealing with Local Governance and European Integration processes.

Mahlde.net (a two years project) 2005/2006 lead by the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, was a two year long programme involving number of partners (local authorities, regions and universities) from both side of the Adriatic.

Mahlde.net is the abbreviation for Mare Hadriaticum Local Democracy Cross-Border Network. The project lasted from 2005 - March 2007 and was supported by the Interreg Programme Transadriatic of the European Commission and Region Friuli Venezia. It was officially closed with an international conference in Bari, Italy.

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1 <http://www.fpdI.ro/regional.html>

The main focus of the project was to develop new social, cultural and economic links between various Italian regions and those in the countries of the former Yugoslavia which are based on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea. Region Friuli Venezia Giulia was the main project coordinator. Other partners involved included Region Puglia, Region Emilia Romagna, the Local Democracy Agency Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and various local and regional authorities, universities and NGOs. Thus, the project also supported the functioning of the LDA Mostar, in particular activities on interethnic dialogue. A film on the exchanges between Region Puglia and Bosnia and Herzegovina was produced in September 2007.

- **Pearl EU (2007/2009)**

The **Pearl EU project (Platform Enhancing Adriatic Region Links in Europe)** has been designed within the framework of the “Adriatic new neighbourhood programme” INTERREG/CARDS-PHARE, with the goal of creating an Adriatic Euro Region. The lead partner was the city of Lecce and it involved 25 partners from both sides of the Adriatic.

Through interactions between the local authorities of the Adriatic Basin, and dialogue between its citizens, European territorial cooperation in accordance with the objectives of the European Commission’s reform proposals for economic and social cohesion policies for 2007-2013 can be achieved.

Specifically, the strengthening of common competencies between the Italian and Balkan public administrations through this innovative project has been proven as a viable approach that helped increase the local capacities for economic and sustainable development, increase the communication of best practice exchanges and solutions, and in addition, as a tool for improvement of the communication between administration and citizens.

Within the framework of this new project numerous thematic conferences and seminars, exchange of best practices and study-visits have been organized. In addition, the project envisages the establishment of a technical assistance network, at the service of all the partners, for constant support from experts on the issues of project cycle management. Involvement of the civil society was an additional value achieved through conferences and seminars, participation in case studies and through public calls for participation to the citizens of the local communities included in the action.

- **Capacity building for Local authorities and civil society in South Eastern Europe, with the cooperation of ANCI and Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2003/2007)**

The programmes supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the cooperation of the National Association for Local Authorities of Italy have a special place in the report of activities, for the size of the action and for the importance in terms of impact and results and networking opportunities they offered to ALDA.

- **Italian cities for the cities of the Balkans (2003/2006)**

The programme identified cooperation possibilities in the area of public utilities and action planning between Italian towns and other local authorities from the Balkans with the objective to improve and modernise public services in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia (2003/2006).



*ALDA presentation in Bydgoszcz, Poland*



*EU Mayors in Carlow, Ireland, 2005*

ALDA as partner was in charge of supporting the organisation of all the project activities through offering contacts local authorities from Italy and stakeholders in the field in South East Europe.

The project was officially closed with an international conference in Rome on 3 and 4 May 2006. ALDA was the logistic support and the contact with many local authorities in South Eastern Europe. It also organized 4 training sessions on EU funding opportunities and lobbying in Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia.

- **Capacity Building for Local Authorities and Civil Society in Europe (2003/2007)**

The project lasted from 2004 - May 2007 and was supported by Cooperazione Italiana/the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI). Its objective was to foster the democratisation process in Southern and Eastern Europe by building up capacities and strengthening institutions as well as organisations through training of trainers for local authorities and NGOs. Furthermore, the programme aimed at addressing young people and to raise their participation in the decision-making process at the local level. Conflict prevention and solution as well as supporting measures for a peaceful reconciliation were also topics being dealt with during the project. The programme was coordinated by ALDA and implemented by the 11 Local Democracy Agencies in Croatia, Serbia including Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. It focused on decentralised areas where the democratic process needs to be built from the local level together with local authorities and civil society organisations, which were the main target groups of this project.

A planning initiative in Prijedor, was organized with Cresme<sup>2</sup>, from Rome.

- **Youth: the right direction youth, empowerment of youth groups in South Eastern Europe (on going since 2006)**

The overall objective of the project, supported by Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission, is to help enable young people to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies, focusing on the training of multipliers and on the development of networks and partnerships.

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2 <http://www.cresme.it/>

Targets		Results
LDA-s Operational	11	11
Representatives of Local authorities from Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Bosnia Herzegovina trained	990	1.040
Local Authorities engaged in the participatory planning process activities	121	122
Youth groups involved in the capacity building initiatives	220	488
Youth involved in the Info Points	7.920	About 330 months of activities (30 months for 11 ADL) 60 visits a month => 19.800 people
Website	1	1
Newsletter	6 issue	6 issue
Training of trainers	6	6 (issues were modified slightly according to the needs) - local government management - participatory planning process and advanced programme
Assessment of the training	3	3
Training for local authorities following the TOTs	66	66
Exercises of Participatory Planning Processes	11	11
Training for civil society groups following TOTs	11	11
Workshop for youth	11	11
Info for LDAs	11	11
	1.331	<b>1.528 Stakeholders trained</b>

The proposal combines co-operation, training and information aspects, through the implementation of different actions: information seminars, setting-up of specialized info-points, web-site and newsletters, youth ambassador groups, trainings of peer educators (multipliers), job shadowing, trainings on the European Volunteer Service, itinerant crossing youth fair and the setting-up of 4 different networks of stakeholders (networks of info-points, of youth ambassadors, of EVS organizations and network of peer educators-multipliers) working in the field of youth in SEE and in Georgia. The main direct target groups are: young people, aged 15-25 (involving also people up to 30, according to the new guidelines of the “Youth in Action Programme”), youth leaders and youth workers, NGOs, local and regional authorities. The proposal relies on 20 partners, representing ten different countries in Western Europe, South-East Europe and the Southern Caucasus.

- **Added value of the Programme Youth in Action: Youth Info point in LDA Central Serbia, LDA-s accreditation for EVS Programme**

Since it's founding, youth empowerment was one of main fields of activity for LDACSS. Following the recent research we conducted on the needs of the local community, the focus is on the initiatives and programmes targeting young people in Nis area. Over the past year a team of dedicated, young but experienced people was formed who started further researches on youth and developed a respective strategy and activity plan. Part of this strategy was to obtain accreditation from the EVS. We are now happy to announce that LDACSS now has been accredited as hosting, sending and coordinating organisation within the European Voluntary Service programme strand of the European Union's Youth in Action programme, LDACSS entered into the database of EVS organisations in Europe on the website of the European Commission on [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm).

With currently on going three youth programmes, this accreditation is positioning LDACSS as one of leading organizations working in the field of youth. Furthermore, we are now the only EVS organization in this region of Serbia.

In the meantime, other LDA-s have also been accredited as EVS sending, receiving and coordinating local organizations taking up the youth work as an important component of their overall activities.

- **Decentralized cooperation programme between the Region Lower-Normandy (France) and the “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (Leader Region Lower Normandie) (since 2007)**

Six years after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” remains one of the least known countries of South East Europe. Despite the brief armed conflict of 2001, it is presented frequently as a model of overcoming crisis and interethnic tensions.

As a result, it was officially granted the status of a Candidate country for EU membership. Being a rural region, Lower Normandy has the will as well as the need to open itself up to the world and to encourage its civil society in an endeavor for European integration and globalization.

This is the context in which the French Region Lower Normandy engaged in cooperation with the Macedonian state. This institutional cooperation is strongly supported by the French Ministry of foreign affairs. It is based on a program action between stakeholders from both territories that started in November 2007. Formally conceived as a three-year project (2007-2009), this cooperation is planned to extend beyond this period.

This cooperation will be the product of a joint effort of the two partner entities to open themselves up to the world and to incite their population to engage in active citizenship at local and European levels in the spirit of reciprocity and change.

The project leads the establishment of a platform for continuous change and will contribute to the creation of long-lasting relations among the populations of the two entities. It will strengthen the aspect of “francophonie” and local governance in all areas of co-operation, as each action will aim to develop the capacity of the local populations (in both Lower Normandy and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”) and disseminate good practices and values.

In terms of specific objectives, the project is highly ambitious, with the main objectives being to reinforce the capacity of local authorities to implement decentralisation, to mobilize citizens, to help ensure sustainable development strategies; to exchange good practices (on managing public services, participation, sustainable development); to improve the use of ICTs and to use them to bring citizens and institutions closer together; to help Macedonia in preparing for EU accession by providing support in adopting the aquis communautaire; to promote francophonie and the francophone values, to open the Lower Normandy to the world, to give a new perspective to youth and to train them to become active European citizens; to contribute to the reduction of negative stereotypes, intolerance and racism; to improve the quality of the media and to facilitate the creation of public opinion based on the value of citizenship; to involve a variety of categories of individuals and organisations in the process, and to reinforce the links between the two territories on a long-lasting basis.

### **ACTION 1: Local governance and new information and communication technologies**

- **Action 1.1:** Active citizenship: partners for the development
- **Action 1.2:** Internet access and open source software for the citizens

Coordination in France: Centre des Technologies Nouvelles (CTN)

Coordination in Macedonia: Metamorphosis

Partners in Macedonia: ZELS, Ministry of Local Government, FOSIM, public digital clubs, Partners in Lower Normandy: Espace publics numériques bas normands

### **ACTION 2: Youth, education and local and European citizenship**

- **Action 2.1:** Support to local authorities for the definition and implementation of sustainable youth policies
- **Action 2.2:** Youth in Europe: education, job opportunities and mobility
- **Action 2.3:** Francophonie as a tool for the empowerment of humanist and universal values

Coordination in France: Maison de l'Europe Caen-Lower Normandy

Coordination in Macedonia: Coalition of youth organizations “SEGA”

Partners in Macedonia: bilingual classes from high schools, French Embassy in Skopje, French Cultural Centre, local authorities, SALTO Youth,, French alliance from Tetovo and Gostivar, Macedonian Agency for youth and sport, ZELS, local authorities Partners in Lower Normandy: local authorities, University of Caen, French Ministry for youth.

### **ACTION 3: Media and free access to information**

- **Action 3.1:** Local information close to the citizens
- **Action 3.2:** Development of a Norman-Macedonian resources cluster

Coordination in France: *Courrier des Balkans* Coordination in Macedonia: *Courrier de la Macédoine* Partners in Macedonia: journalists' associations, *Osservatorio sui Balcani*, local newspapers *Bitolski Vesnik* and *Monitor*, local radios

Partners in Lower Normandy: regional newspaper *Ouest-France*, association *Ouest-Fraternité*

### **ACTION 4: Cultural Policy**

- **Action 4.1:** Support to local authorities for the definition and implementation of sustainable cultural policies
- **Action 4.2:** Setting up of a platform for the dialogue, invention and artistic mobility

Coordination in France: Regional Center for Literature from Lower Normandy

Coordination Macedonia: Association *Lokomotiva* - Centre for New initiatives in Arts and culture Partners in Macedonian: French Cultural Centre, Macedonian National Theatre, *Skopje City Museum*, Macedonian National Gallery, *Nomad dense academy*

Partners in Lower Normandy: Association *Balkan Transit*, *Dense Center* from Caen, local authorities

### **ACTION 5: Cultural Heritage and sustainable tourism**

- **Action 5.1:** Identification and protection of cultural heritage
- **Action 5.2:** Support and promotion of sustainable tourism

Coordination in France: *Savoir-Faire et Decouverte*

Coordination in Macedonia: *CIRa* (Centre for institutional development)

Partners in Macedonia: local authorities, Ministry of economy (tourist section), Faculty of architecture, Chamber of tourism

Partners in Lower Normandy: Service for heritage inventory from the Regional Council of Lower Normandy

- **Stability Pact Office in Thessaloniki (2007/2008), local democracy and trans-border cooperation**

The Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe Office in Thessaloniki (SPOT) agreed to work in synergy to promote local democracy and cross border co-operation in South Eastern Europe. ALDA and its network of Local Democracy Agencies implemented part of the Cross Border Cooperation Task Force 2007 action plan through a series of joint events. The kick off event was a conference on "Active Citizenship in the Balkans: How regional and cross-border cooperation can promote active citizenship" took place in Sarajevo on 25th May 2007.

The overall goal of the Cross Border Cooperation Task Force (CBC TF) that was coordinated by the Stability Pact Office in Thessaloniki (SPOT) and in 2007 the aim was to strengthen regional co-operation and links between local authorities, their associations and citizens groups, particularly in border areas. Emphasis was given to activities to enhance the role of the civil society in cross bor-

der cooperation processes in the region, and programmes that strengthen democracy at grass-root level. Taking into consideration that effective Euro-Atlantic integration process was accompanied by a speedy economic development of the region; an additional aim of the CBC TF is to complement activities in the field of democracy promotion with activities in the economic area.

The activities of the project between ALDA and SPOT included: Partner meetings of the 11 existing LDA-s in South East Europe, the first one took place in April 2007 in Zavidovici (BiH), Conference "Active Citizenship in the Balkans: How regional and cross-border cooperation can promote active citizenship", Sarajevo (BiH), 25 May 2007., Information event within the framework of the project "Youth: The Right Direction", Thessaloniki, June 2007. ALDA moderated the working group during a meeting on decentralised cooperation for French local authorities organised by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Thessaloniki on 5 July 2007., the partner meeting for the future LDA in Albania, Capacity building activities with small and medium-sized enterprises within the project "Local Economic Development, part II" sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in France, other trans-border activities dealing with local democracy and civil society in South Eastern Europe, diffusion of information on the Stability Pact through the ALDA network.

- **Project for Disabled People in Montenegro (lead by LDA Montenegro) (2004)**

Support to initiative of visibility and awareness on issues of concern for the disabled people and their associations in Montenegro, supported by Region Friuli Venezia Giulia.

- **Support for capacity building for local authorities in South Eastern Europe(2006/2007)**

Supported by ANCI Veneto, Region Veneto and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, ALDA developed in the whole region and in Croatia in particular as a set of initiatives dealing with capacity building for local authorities, based on the exchanges with local governments of the Veneto Region and involving the LDA Sisak and its partnership with Mogliano Veneto.

- **Georgian day and South Eastern European Day, in Strasbourg**

In 2005/2006, the city of Strasbourg and the Conseil Régional d'Alsace supported two initiative to discuss and present to the students and population of the region the work of ALDA and the countries presented. The programme was organised also with the cooperation of ENA.

### **1.5.2. Interethnic dialogue**

- **Trans-border cooperation and interethnic dialogue in South Eastern Europe (2001-2003)**

Some years after the end of the war, which affected the whole region of the Balkans, ALDA proposed for three years a networking programme called Trans-border cooperation and Interethnic Dialogue. It focused on local government issues and civil society empowerment and regarded all the Local Democracy Agencies in South Eastern Europe. The opportunity work in an annual perspective and with the interaction of the LDAs<sup>3</sup> definitively created the sense of network and im-

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3 At that time Central and Southern Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, were not existing. But Tuzla implemented the project.



proved substantially also the trans-border cooperation between the LDA-s and regions, belonging to different States. The programme particularly welcomed by all the LDA-s since it gave them the opportunity to follow interests and need of their own communication:

The three year programme was supported by the Swiss Agency for Development, The Principality of Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Finland.

These are some examples:

1. **Osijek** (Croatia) Establishment of a Youth City Council in Osijek (Croatia), now a regular structure of the community
2. **Verteneglio** (Croatia): Transborder co-operation - International Congress held in 1995. The first time that the LDA Verteneglio (Croatia) organized a high level event and perhaps the first time in the new Croatian state that the local authorities dealt with international relations with the participation of internationally renowned European politicians
3. **Zavidovici** (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Establishment of cultural-political-human exchanges between local communities of western Europe and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mediation in a post conflict environment (open space of meeting; promotion of interethnic dialogue)
4. **Prijedor**: to provide a neutral space of dialog among the ethnic groups of Prijedor and to promote youth activities in the municipalities and a network of youth associations of different ethnic groups, involving youth associations of Trentino and Trieste
5. **Tuzla** (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Establishment of first contacts among Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Associations of Municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Signature of a Protocol of Cooperation between the two Associations in Strasbourg (2000)
6. **Subotica**: Training Programme for young political leaders, public debates to help the promotion of independent intellectuals, free movement of people and ideas and reconciliation in post-war countries of former Yugoslavia
7. **Ohrid** (FRYOM) Provide and facilitate provision of relevant information concerning the new Laws on Local self- government and get acquainted the citizens with their right for direct participation in the decision-making process
8. **Sisak** (Croatia): Establishment and support to local youth NGOs Establishment of the first Aid line (SOS phone) for the victims of family violence and social exclusion

- **Confidence Building Measures and interethnic dialogue**

ALDA coordinated the LDAs, in the first years of activities, the support of the Directorate of Political Affairs under the programme Confidence Building Measures, all supported by Voluntary Contributions of the member states. The LDA-s were natural implementing agencies of programme facilitating the integration of minority groups in the local community, either from the point of view of the civil society or in the local government issues.

Often, the Local Democracy Agencies were the first, only, “international” or “neutral” place of the community. And it offered a space for negotiation and meeting. In difficult areas, in Bosnia (Sarajevo) and (Prijedor), the LDA-s promoted public forum for debates, negotiation, support to minorities, under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

- **Confidence Building Measures in South East Europe and Mediterranean area**

Training and support for youth groups in conflict mediation and intercultural dialogue, in the context of Euromed programme. Training and international workshop in San Servolo (Venice).

- **Together: The Balkans in Europe, Europe in the Balkans (lead by LDA Central and Southern Serbia) (2006/2008)**

After the war in the Balkans, contacts between journalists remain difficult, stereotypes are widespread and many journalists lack a fundamental education. The aim of the project “Together: the Balkans in Europe, Europe in the Balkans” therefore was to improve the quality of journalism in South East Europe and to foster co-productions between the different countries/entities. This was achieved with the help of three renowned and well-experienced ARTE journalists who accompanied four journalists from South East Europe in the production of four 20-minute documentaries.

The typical ARTE methodology of the cross-cultural view was employed, i.e. the journalists did not or not only work in their country of origin to have a fresh view on the topics and to avoid stereotypes. The results of the project were shown in different visibility events in South East Europe, Brussels and Strasbourg.

The project was finished off by the distribution of a DVD among schools of journalism in the Balkans containing the four documentaries and practical information on co-productions in South East Europe.

The documentaries dealt with the following topics:

- Nationalism and culinary issues in the Balkans
- Environmental issues around the Ohrid Lake
- The Resolution SCR UN 1325 concerning women, peace and security
- Dance as a habit in Serb and Kosovar society

### **1.5.3. Local Economic Development in South Eastern Europe**

The Position Paper approved during the Zagreb General Assembly of ALDA, identified the sustainable local economic development of the areas where the LDA-s are based as one of the main targets of the activities initiated by the Association. To this purpose, numerous projects have been put in place. They were all directed to:

- develop citizens and local authorities capacities to address the local economic development issue in a sustainable and long term manner
- a full involvement of the community in the process
- give an opportunity to women and youth to be part of active live
- focus on the interethnic dialogue in the local economic development
- help prevent the brain drain from the local communities
- promote sustainable and environment friendly development

- **Gender Equality in Local Economic Development (2007/2008)**

The Association of the Local Democracy Agencies and three LDAs (LDA Central and Southern Serbia, LDA Osijek, LDA Zavidovici) are taking part in a new project called CO.AR.PA - Cooperativa Artigianana di Parità-. This project is promoted within the “Adriatic new neighbourhood programme” INTERREG/ CARDS-PHARE with the goal of promoting women’s employment and entrepreneurship in three Balkan countries (Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina). The main aim was to support the social and economic integration of women by improving their education, qualification and training mainly in the handicraft sector. The final objective was the creation of an Ethic Label to guarantee that handicraft production respects the European rights of women workers. Partners: Region Abruzzo (Italy), the Comunity Montana Valle Roveto (Italy), Gal Marsica by ALDA and the LDAs. Gal Abruzzo Italice; Comunità Montana. Catria e Cesano; SmileAgain.

- **Youth entrepreneurship in SEE (2004/2006)**

The youth entrepreneurship programme was implemented throughout the network of the LDA-s, supported by Norway. We developed awareness and capacities for groups of young people to be able to promote and put in place economic ideas. Hundreds of young people were trained and supported in this programme which finally ended up with the opportunity of the programme on Microcredit, agreed with Intesa San Paolo and the Bank of the Council of Europe.

- **Microcredit Scheme for South Eastern Europe (2006/2009)**

The Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) and Intesa/San Paolo have launched an innovative microcredit scheme for the Balkans through public-private sector cooperation. Young entrepreneurs will receive microcredits for their innovative business ideas - traditional concepts such as the opening of cafés will not be supported and the standards have to apply certain ethical standards. Through this, ALDA and Intesa/San Paolo seek to help the region on their way to EU integration and to foster sustainable economic development through start-up businesses. The project will last for three years.

The project is composed of two pillars: Non-financial services provided by the Local Democracy Agencies: thanks to their profound knowledge of the territory, the Local Democracy Agencies are informing the potential borrowers, training them in business plan drafting and supporting them along the duration of the project. This part of the project is sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. Financial services are provided by Intesa/San Paolo subsidies: evaluation of the loans applications and disbursing the loans. This part of the project is sponsored by the Bank of the Council of Europe.

The programme is now operational with Privredna Banka in Croatia, UPI in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Banka Intesa Belgrade in Serbia. Activities are in progress to make the programme operational in Albania in 2009.

- **Local Economic Development in South Eastern Europe (I,II) (2003/2008)**

Supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ALDA and the LDA-s developed many activities in the field of economic development, with trainings and start up of enterprises.

During the first phase, four training seminars on local economic development were organised for the LDA staff, and 11 development projects were identified that received the support of the local host authorities of the LDAs. In the second phase,

The aims of the project are:

- To support local economic development through 9 micro-projects
- Training animators on local economic development
- Identification of economic partners from France

The micro projects on the field are

In Bosnia Herzegovina:

- **LDA Mostar:** “Your Herzegovina”: creation of a tourist package for the economic development of the region through the creation of the “Road of flavour” (cheese producers and wine producers), promotion of the local products, development of promotional material for the “Road of flavour.
- **LDA Zavidovici:** “Fostering local development through agricultural training and greenhouses production”: theoretical and practical training for small farmers, young unemployed and vulnerable people on biological production, assistance in business planning and greenhouses production
- **LDA Prijedor:** “Become an entrepreneur” this project aims at promoting local development through financial and non financial support to start up businesses and already existing enterprises

In Croatia:

- **LDA Verteneglio:** “Promotion of Verteneglio during the four season”: promotion of sustainable tourism through: a brochure of the tourist and agritourist offer of the territory, updating of the website, opening of an online point of sale which will offer products from the association of farmers.
- **LDA Sisak:** Fostering Ethno Tourism and Employment of Women in Hrvatska Dubica”: to support the employment of women through handicraft production, trainings and reconstruction of 1 room of the Ethno House where the women could sell the products to the tourists.
- **LDA Osijek:** “Advisory Centre for Local Development Issues”: establishment of a centre for local development, animation of local stakeholders to start local development programmes, trainings and education, advisory.

In Montenegro:

- **LDA Montenegro:** “Rozaje - The Unique Tourist Product” Definition and promotion of Rozaje tourist offer. Promotion of summer and winter tourism in Rozaje, sports, skiing, mountain climbing, alpinism, hiking, rural and scientific tourism.

In Serbia

- **LDA Central and South Serbia:**

Leskovac: “First step to socio-economic cohesion”: Strengthening the business support service, promoted economic potentials and strategic defined common market approach of two border regions (Jablanica and Pernik) in new and existing markets.

Kragujevac: “Let’s grow together”: Establishment of the first social cooperative base in Kragujevac for the care of children between 2 and 6 parent/employed

## **1.5.4 Citizen participation and open the dialogue between civil society and local authorities in Europe**

After several years of existence, the Association of the LDAs, its members and the LDAs have developed a long lasting experience in term of citizens' participation. In particular, the numerous projects and success in the LDAs naturally brought us towards the new challenge present in the European context, namely how to fill the gap between the local authorities and the citizens in the decision making process, innovative way of consultations, negotiation and conflict management processes. For this, ALDA applied and was granted successfully many projects of the European Commission and became one of its important partner, in particular these last years, as lead applicant or partner.

### **1.5.4.1 Active Citizenship initiative regularly run with the ALDA members**

#### **Country meetings with the ALDA members**

ALDA organises on yearly basis, country meetings of members (where we reach a certain level of members) to plan, discuss and engage with them the programme of activities of the Association.

#### **Working Groups**

The members of ALDA are proposed to subscribe for thematic Working Groups with the objectives: to offer a platform of debate, information and further understanding on specific topics to the ALDA Member, to develop and deepen identified topics common and shared by the ALDA members and by the LDA-s, to be able to produce qualified project ideas involving members of ALDA on certain issues, to be able to produce shared position papers on specific topics with members

The working groups are considered to be practical instruments to develop ideas, projects and relevant paper to be submitted to different actors in Europe and in the areas of cooperation where we are active. The themes of the working groups are:

- Local government issues, good governance, decentralisation
- Participation of civil society and civil society empowerment
- Human rights protection and awareness, including women's rights
- Situation in South East Europe
- Situation in the Caucasus
- Local economic development
- European Union enlargement and active citizenship

#### **Module on Active Citizenship**

Nowadays, while the EU is experiencing a constant evolution and new challenges, ALDA believes that European citizens have a key and primary role in building Europe. For this reason, ALDA has been promoting and implementing projects, actions and debates regarding the future of Europe, the necessity to get Europe closer to its citizens and the importance of a wider involvement of citizens in the life of the community, both at the local and at the European level, with the aim to promote good governance throughout Europe.

There is also a need of further thinking over the concept of European active citizenship and it is important to develop new instruments and innovative “tools” to promote citizens’ participation, at all levels, in the construction of the future Europe.

Thus, ALDA addresses these European priorities through the promotion of a pilot training action which is supported by the European Commission and involves the main actors appointed to the development of the themes connected to citizenship, participation and democracy: local authorities and civil society organizations.

The interest for the development of a pilot training action on the topic of active citizenship may also be defined as a “natural” step for ALDA, which is now committed, after more than a decade of field-work, to “transfer” its knowledge based on its experiences.

The pilot training aims at strengthening knowledge and skills of local authorities and civil society organizations which are interested in the topic of active citizenship and in the European citizenship in particular. Nowadays, local authorities and civil society play a key role both at the European and at the local level: it is therefore necessary and crucial to get ready for this challenge in order to be better equipped as local actors in the development of active citizenship.

Cooperation between local authorities and civil society allows the growths of synergies and the promotion of “multiplier effects” which ensure a remarkable impetus for the local community, for its development and for the setting up of participative and democratic processes.

Partner of the call for 2008:

- Comune di Russi, Italy ([www.comune.russi.ra.it](http://www.comune.russi.ra.it))
- Buon Samaritano, Campobasso, Italy ([www.buonsamaritano.org](http://www.buonsamaritano.org))
- ASael, Spain ([www.asael.es](http://www.asael.es))
- Municipal Training Center, Kaunas, Lithuania ([www.savivalda.lt](http://www.savivalda.lt))
- National Forum API, Bulgaria ([www.apiplovdiv.tripod.com](http://www.apiplovdiv.tripod.com))
- LDA Osijek, Croatia ([www.lda-osijek.hr](http://www.lda-osijek.hr))
- CRPRC Studiorum, Macedonia ([www.studiorum.org.mk/en/](http://www.studiorum.org.mk/en/))
- NGO Horizont, Albania, and DIUC, Azerbaijan.

### **Call for partner to develop innovative and creative activities to raise citizens’ awareness on the European elections 2009.**

ALDA launches a Call for Partners to develop innovative and creative activities to raise citizens’ awareness on the European elections 2009.

The purpose of this Call for Partners is to support projects which promote information and communication actions aimed at citizens of EU Member States in order to encourage them to vote in the 2009 European Parliament elections and to inform them of the importance of this ballot.

### **Partnership meetings for the LDA-s**

The programme on Active Citizenship includes the regular partner meetings of the 12 operational LDA-s.

### **Training activities and project drafting on Active Citizenship**

Regular active citizenship training and project drafting for members.

For the Province of Vicenza and Codess Mestre, ALDA implemented a follow up activities of their programmes with the European Union and funding opportunities, in the field of Active Citizenship.

### **1.5.4.2 Active citizenship initiatives supported by the European Commission – Directorate General for Education and Culture**

#### **EU Mayors: involvement of local governments and civil society in the Eu Enlargement**

One year-long “EU Mayors” project, which was officially launched in Strasbourg in December 2003, aimed at making local communities in the old and new EU member states aware of the benefits and challenges of the EU enlargement process which was completed for the first ten new member states in May 2004. During four seminars on different local governance topics - relation with citizens, public utilities, environmental issues and decision-making - the core partners of the project from England, Ireland, Italy, France, Poland and Lithuania and experts from outside this core network exchanged best and “worst” practices. This also helped the participants - all in all more than 150 representatives of local governments and NGOs from across Europe - to understand local government structures in their neighbouring countries in a better way.

The results of the exchanges of best practices as well as information on all the partner organisations of the EU Mayors project and some key information on local government structures in the six core countries England, Ireland, Italy, France, Lithuania and Poland are made available on a CD-ROM and final handbook which can be obtained by contacting the ALDA headquarter in Strasbourg.

The best practice exchanges were accompanied by an extensive promotional campaign in the six partner countries with posters and leaflets in five languages having been distributed by our main partners. Two study visits to Poland and Lithuania followed the four seminars and gave the participants the opportunity to discover how local democracy is organised in the new EU member states.

#### **EURAction – citizens’ panel**

From December 2006 - August 2007, ALDA implemented a very interesting and challenging project called EURAction - Citizens acting for Europe, with the support of the European Commission. The objective was to promote the participation of citizens through their implication in “citizens’ panels”, in particular groups of “ordinary” people who hardly have the opportunity to be in touch with the European institutions. The innovative “open space” methodology was used to trigger discussions among the citizens and to find out which are the most burning issues for them at stake in today’s Europe.

In the framework of this project, together with our partners Partners Polska (Poland), the Municipal Training Centre (Lithuania), Index (Cyprus), the municipalities of Mogliano Veneto and Rovigo (Italy) five citizens’ panels were set up in these countries which organised several debates, workshops and local conferences between March and July 2007. They selected key citizens to help them recruit panel participants and to function as “spokespersons” of the project.

A trans-national meeting of citizens’ panels was held in Rovigo, Italy, on 14 and 15 June 2007 to give the key citizens of the five panels the opportunity to exchange best and “worst” practice.

Officially opened with the international conference in Strasbourg on 27 February 2007, the EU-Raction project finished off with an international closing conference in Nicosia, Cyprus on 5 and 6 July 2007. ALDA is currently compiling all the panel results in a handbook which will be sent to European stakeholders, in particular representatives of the European Commission and European Parliament.

### **Cities for Peace and Democracy in Europe**

Europe is currently experiencing an unprecedented period of stability and peace. 60 years after the end of the Second World War, 27 European countries are constructing their common future based on the values of peace, democracy and human rights. However, democracy is a fragile construct which needs continuous strengthening. Local authorities are closest to the citizens and have a particular role to play in this process. In addition, it is important to include young people in the debates since they have never experienced any war directly. The project "Cities acting for Peace and Democracy in Europe" which lasted from June 2006 - February 2007 therefore intended to bring local authorities and young people together to evaluate and debate their role in the construction of a peaceful and democratic Europe.

Objectives of the project: to improve and understand the role of local authorities as actors for peace and democracy in Europe, to involve citizens, in particular young people in the debate, to participate in the European Union building process with an additional added value brought by the active role of the local governments and the participation of their own community.

Activities: international opening conference on the role of minorities in today's peaceful Europe (Budapest, June 2006), 3 workshops with the main partners, - 50 debates on peace, democracy and the role of local governments all over Europe linking City Councils and civil society in 15 European countries, 1 Peace School for young people, Information campaign including brochures, a TV spot and a final handbook.

**Partners:** Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA), applicant Cités Unies Franc, Warmian and Mazurian Association of Communities (Poland), Association of Italian Local Governments (ANCI), Coordinamento Enti Locali per la Pace "Local Authorities for Peace" (Italy), Local Association of Municipalities and Communes of the Karditsa Prefecture (Greece), Partner organisations (NGOs, youth groups and local authorities) from all over Europe.

### **Meeting in Nevers, 2007**

#### **Participation of civil society in the decision-making process at the local level. A common added value for local authorities in Europe (2004)**

The project consisted in an inquiry circulated among all the members and partners of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies.

The questions and methodology were inspired by our experience in supporting the participation of civil society in the decision-making process at the local level, through the activities in the field of the Local Democracy Agencies. Local authorities and NGOs alike were the two target groups of the inquiry. Their approach to the issues and problems and various roles in local governance bring a unique perspective to our understanding of these processes.

In addition, the inquiry was not restricted to European Union countries only, but included opinions from across the continent including the Balkans and the Caucasus. Our objectives are to go further in the understanding of a European identity beyond its formal and technical boundaries.



### **The role of local authorities in the implementation of the values of the European Constitution (2005)**

The aim of this project was to assess in how far local authorities support the values of the European Constitution and how they implement them. The project was a follow-up of the project “Participation of civil society in the decision-making process at the local level. A common added value for local authorities in Europe”, which had been implemented in 2004.

The project consisted of a survey conducted among the ALDA member and partner network throughout Europe and a final international conference in Kaunas (Lithuania) in November 2005.

Partners: Cités Unies France? Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, Local Government International (UK) Municipal Training Centre, Kaunas (Lithuania), ANCI, the Italian Association of Municipalities, Fundacja Rozowju Demokracji Lokalnej (Poland).

### **The impact of the European Union in the local governments policies dealing with civil society participation (2006)**

The project last from September 2006 - April 2007. Eight cities and their civil society out of the ALDA network participated in the project which mainly consisted in workshops on active European citizenship. In addition, two international meetings were organised.

#### **Objectives:**

1. to strengthen the dialogue between the European Union and its citizens with a view to encouraging the emergence of an active and participatory European citizenship;
2. to promote and disseminate the values and objectives of the European Union;
3. to bring citizens closer to the European Union and its institutions and to encourage them to engage more frequently with its institutions;
4. to involve citizens closely in the debate and discussions on the construction of the European Union;
5. to stimulate initiatives by the bodies engaged in the promotion of active and participatory citizenship.

#### **Partners:**

- **Italy:** The cities of Lecce, Ravenna, Mogliano Veneto, Reggio del Mondo (through their Agency Reggio nel Mondo), and the Province of Trento;
- **France:** City of Suresnes;
- **Lithuania:** City of Kaunas and the Municipal Training Centre (SMC).

### **Europe in Dialogue with its Citizens- Active Citizenship Project (2007)**

The project entitled “Active citizenship 2007” aims at promoting public participation in the “construction” of the future Europe, mainly by promoting public debates and workshops to analyze - starting from real “case studies” - and improve methods and tools employed by the European Institutions to interact with its citizens, in order to enhance and foster citizens’ awareness and participation.

The action also aimed at facilitating and enhancing the “matching” between Europe and citizens, especially focusing on the multiplying role played by civil society groups in the promotion of the European values and European Institutions. The activities were implemented in 9 different EU Mem-

ber States, involving citizens and civil society organizations belonging both to the “old” and the “new” Europe (countries who joined the EU both on the 1st of May 2004 and on the 1st of January 2007).

The foreseen activities followed a “3 steps” process which included nine workshops at the local level, an international workshop and the production and the dissemination Europe-wide of the DVD. Through the development of this process, the proposal aimed at providing a long-lasting unbiased platform for obtaining information and expressing opinion. While running the different actions, special focus was given to the “two way process”, granting both information and listening to people’s opinions about Europe.

With this project, ALDA created an opportunity for citizens and civil society groups to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, developing a sense of European identity, through the promotion of workshops and debates, both local and transnational ones, focusing on interaction and communication between citizens and the European Union at the local level.

Index (Cyprus), Más Democracia (Spain), Kommunernes Landsforening (Denmark), YEN (France) Balkan Assist Association for Partnership and Citizens’ Activity Support (Bulgaria), Open Society Institute Budapest (Hungary), Aid Program Advisory Center (Poland), Insieme (Italy), Association of Municipalities from Romania Action plan of the project, Blog (in French) of the debates in Strasbourg.

### **Training for active citizenship in the EU enlargement process (2008)**

(on going) The TACEP project aims at providing capacity building to Croatian civil society organizations in order to promote their role as “active citizens” in the enlargement process and to provide them new information, knowledge and competencies in the field of active citizenship. The main idea is to train “multipliers” to be engaged at the local and regional level in the promotion of new and innovative actions in the field of active citizenship, taking into consideration the forthcoming status of EU Member State of Croatia.

At least 57 civil society organisations representatives and citizens, including 15 EU participants, will be trained through a training session lasting 7 days in each LDA (Sisak, Osijek, Verteneglio) between January and March 2009. Then, regional meetings of these “multipliers” will be held to foster their cooperation and invite them to elaborate projects for further action in the field of active citizenship. Finally, on the 9th May 2009, the “Day of Europe”, information points on the programme ‘Europe for citizens’ will be open by each LDAs. The projects results will be gathered in a final publication and a CD-ROM.

Due to its large experience both in the Balkans and in the field of active citizenship, ALDA has been naturally willing to support and assist its LDAs in Croatia in applying for the first time to the European Commission programme “Europe for citizens”, Croatia being fully eligible since November 2007.

Thanks to this first project within the ‘Europe for citizens’ programme in Croatia, ALDA intends to mobilise its local expertise acquired in the region and to share it with the LDA-s and the Croatian citizens, to support them in their way to the EU. ALDA will also invite the Croatian civil society not only to learn from these trainings, but also to actively contribute to the reflection on the European active citizenship and the building of a European identity.

**Partners:** ALDA (coordinator), LDA Verteneglio, LDA Sisak, LDA Osijek.

#### **All 4 EU: citizens for Europe (leader Region Istria, Croatia) (ongoing)**

The project ALL.4.EU is designed to contribute addressing how to bridge the gap between citizens and the European Union. This challenge of the EU today represents a key priority for all the stakeholders acting both at the local and at the international level, both in the EU Member States and in the pre-accession countries which need to promote the “European Project” among their citizens to develop, from the very beginning, a sense of European identity and of ownership of the European Union.

Through this project, the Region Istria seeks to develop - on the basis of the achievements of the pilot project entitled “Eur-action” implemented by ALDA whose network the Region Istria belongs to - and to further promote the use of the “citizens’ panels” to assure interaction between citizens and decision makers at all levels, fostering at the same time their active participation in the life of their communities and in Europe.

The aims of the project are threefold:

- first of all, it aims at further developing and consolidating - on the basis of the pilot project implemented by ALDA in 2006 and 2007 - the “tool” and the methodology of the citizens panels, adding some steps (i.e. the initial training) which may grant a stronger impact and better results;
- secondly, it seeks to widen the number of partners and the number of countries where to establish “citizens’ panels” in order to create the basis for a relevant and significant European platform of citizens panels;
- finally, taking into consideration the new institutional developments at the European level and the difficulties the European Union is facing nowadays in the relation with its citizens, the present proposal adopts a thematic approach focused to generate discussion and deliver citizens reflection on citizens participation and active European citizenship, also in the light of the forthcoming European elections in 2009, which represent a culmination of an important EU-wide process of representative democracy.

#### **Bandiar (leader ASAEI) (Ongoing)**

The aim of BANDIAR project is to raise awareness about participation of woman in political life in the local level. European Union needs also to be built from a bottom-up perspective, involving local authorities. We would like to stress this point as a way to make local civil servants, local politicians and public in general to feel part of the EU. BANDIAR project pretends to put a wide range of ideas, experiences and modalities about gender issues in common to stimulate their active participation in the processes of representative democracy at local, national and even international level. It works in a European perspective, rooted in the diversity of local realities.

That is why BANDIAR project relies in an interactive dialogue through citizens panels in each region involved, a methodology that we will like to consolidate. Target group will be woman, making a balance between urban and rural areas. Topic debate will be the participation of women in public life. Political woman at local level (the closest politicians for women) will encourage others to participate. For these which continue in silence we will use ICT (through e-participation) to allow them to express themselves. We want to give the floor to women.

BANDIAR project will identify set of recommendations about gender equality in all levels of administration. Moreover, it will use dissemination of Good Practices of Equal Opportunities and

the conclusions in the International Seminar in Brussels as one of the main activities to produce a Change of Mentality in favour of the values promoted by the European Union. In this way, participants will receive a feed back of their contribution to the construction of the European Union: this material could be one of the best ways to arise-awareness of European citizenship.

Lead partner: ASael, ALDA, Province of Reggio Emilia, City of Bydgoszcz, BalticFem.

### **ECLAU: tackling climate change through integration of the youth and e-participation (lead by ASael) (ongoing project)**

The objective of the eCLAU project is, to raise the awareness of young people of the European Union's action in the field of environment and hence, to bring the EU closer to the youth and improve their role within the democratic system of the EU in strengthening their participation. The inclusion of young people in the process of tackling climate change is of utmost importance for its success, as young people care about sustainable development and environmental protection. Thus, young people give the necessity for action a strong voice. Furthermore the eCLAU project wishes to build upon the youth's strong capacities in IT technologies and to promote the use of them to broaden and deepen political participation. The added value of the project consists of focusing on both of these potentials of young people and helping them via the provision of necessary information to make use of their potentials to become active citizens in fighting climate change.

The eCLAU project basis on this fact and fosters to reinforce the role of local authorities, civil society organizations in the field of youth to promote European cooperation in the field of environment. Hence, the project focuses on civil servants of the various local authorities, local decision makers in the field of youth, members of association and nonprofit organizations, youth associations, academics and the general young public. The central tool of the project will be the creation of a website, which provides information about the project, relevant information on climate change and according actions of the EU and serves above all at the promotion of e-participation. Hosting links to youth blogs, a forum for discussion, opinion polls, questionnaires the website will encourage young people to participate in discussions, networking activities and in local action and will thus strengthen their role in fighting climate change and in the political process on local level.

To ensure an active use of the website, the eCLAU project organizes local workshops in each participating countries, to inform the invited experts of the above mentioned target groups about e-participation and the functioning of the eCLAU website. With the publication of a magazine and diffusion campaigns on local level, the eCLAU projects fosters the dissemination of the results of the project and to inform a larger public about it.

Partners: ASael, ALDA, ADMMRB, Institute of Entrepreneurship Development, Province of Reggio Emilia.

### **Emanzipar (lead by ASael, 2008)**

The project **Emanzipar** was developed by the Network Liedra against gender violence to raise young people's awareness on European issues. The initiative wants to reach young Europeans living in rural areas and make them feel European citizens. This will be done at the example of fighting domestic violence and promoting equal opportunities. The objectives of the project were: to promote active

European citizenship of young people in rural areas through equal opportunities and the fight against domestic violence; to spread the existing initiatives into the partner countries; to favour European cooperation in the field of youth; to facilitate the participation of disabled young people in the programme.

### **Istria Communicating Europe (Leader Region Istria) (ongoing)**

The project ICE (Istria communicating Europe) is supported by the European Commission programme “Europe for citizens”. It will highlight and enhance the role of civil society in Croatia, as promoter of European integration. Different workshops will be held in the region with a special focus on young people. A large communication campaign is also foreseen.

The project Istria Communicating Europe has as overall objective to broaden the knowledge and understanding of the European Union and the process of European integration in general among Croatian citizens.

Partners:

1. Foundation for partnership and civil society development as the main institution for the development of Civil society in the Istrian region;
2. Suncokret - regional NGO for community development with a long-lasting experience in activities from high schools and Youth;
3. Zum - regional NGO for promotion of employment and professional improvement;
4. Association of Local Democracy Agencies - an international NGO at EU level;
5. Informo - regional NGO for fostering employment, professional improvement and education;
6. As Partner it is included also the Region of Istria as it is the key institution in Istria dealing with EU issues and projects and the most active and competent Croatian region in international cooperation and European integration.

These workshops are part of the project “Istria communicating Europe”, supported by the European Commission « Europe for citizens » programme. This project aims at highlighting and enhancing the role of civil society and young people in Croatia, as promoters of European integration.

### **Town twinning: a vehicle for European Integration (ongoing)**

The project starting in 2009 aims at promoting town-twinning, focusing in particular on the multilateral decentralized cooperation approach, as a vehicle to foster European Integration and to promote, develop and strengthen twinning agreements relations amongst local authorities in the enlarged Europe.

More specifically, the project will aim at:

- a. promoting the concept of town twinning;
- b. starting, revitalising, and developing town twinning relationships;
- c. improving the quality of the activities within existing twinning relationships, especially by means of developing thematic cooperation;
- d. developing new skills amongst those who are responsible for twinning activities at a local level.

The proposal seeks to reach a large number of municipalities (around 110 institutions directly involved in the events) and will therefore have an important multiplier effect. The present action is structured in 7 different steps grouped in 3 main phases and a transversal action, as shown in the following chart:

The variety of forms of the activities proposed seek to provide municipalities a “full” support, providing them: a. new information and knowledge on the concept of town twinning, through all the activities foreseen; b. capacity building, through the training addressed to those responsible for twinning activities; c. consultancy, through the training and the On-line Advisory Service; d. tools facilitating partner search and networking, especially through the international workshop; e. the opportunity to exchange best practices and experiences, through the training, the international workshop and especially the final publication.

### **1.5.4.3. Women’s participation in the decision making process**

#### **Civil Society for Democracy and Equal Opportunities in Europe**

Implemented with the organisation Identità e Dialogo (Bari, Italy), inquiry and best practices exchanges (Europe for Dialogue programme)

#### **Women’s rights initiative in Mostar**

Support to Women’s rights and empowerment and support to a house for violence against women.

#### **Women’s rights in Georgia**

Support to a project of the Young Lawyers Association of Kutaisi Georgia for the strengthening of the curricula of the young lawyers in terms of women rights and court trial simulation.

### **1.5.5 Pilot projects in local government issues**

- **Technical assistance to Region Puglia and Region Sicily for the Italian Semester during Chairmanship of Italy**

Assistance to organize and identify participants in two major events and debates in Bari and in Palermo (2003). Participation in the scientific committee and follow up.

- **Technical assistance for the support to the implementation of the law on general principles of organisation of local self government in Russian Federation**

In consortium with SOGES Spa and Progeco Srl, ALDA implemented part of the project on local government development related issues in Russia, supported by the European Commission and the programme TACIS. Our task was to bring to the Russia partners and extensive knowledge of best practices, legislation and procedure in different topics of local self government, in particular citizen’s participation instruments, organisation of the local government, public property management, staff management. A study tour for representatives from the target areas selected for the project, was organised in 2007.

- **Actions of ALDA in Belarus**

Since 2005, ALDA and its members are present in Belarus to support civil society groups and assisting local democracy and cooperation between local authorities and citizens. The situation is the country is difficult in terms of international cooperation since Belarus is a State with suspended

membership at the Council of Europe. There are restriction in operating and running activities in these field in the country. However, reliable partners and appropriate actions could bring some relevant results and brought ALDA among the very few organisation in Europe dealing with Democracy and Civil Society matters in that country. Several projects have been implemented so far.

- a. **Acsobe: Acting for Social and Economic Rights in Belarus** (Supported by the European Commission 2007/2008). The action aimed at strengthening the dialogue between civil society groups and local governments in Belarus through the improvement of their capacities and offering opportunities and tools of communication. The action focused on the following priorities:
1. developing social dialogue between local government and civil society organizations
  2. strengthening of the capacity of local NGOs and local governments
  3. civil society strengthening and democratic development with the emphasis on raising awareness about social and cultural rights and empowering the citizens for their realisation. Particular attention is paid to younger generation (NGO leaders) and vulnerable groups.

- b. **REACT: Reinforcing Actions of capacity building for civil society (supported by the European Commission 2009/2010)**

The programme fosters the role of Non State Actors (NSA) as promoters of democracy, social justice and human rights, promoting and favouring a structured dialogue within and among all types of NSA and LA and between European Institutions. A specific role in this framework is assigned to civil society organizations. Indeed, strengthening the role of NSA and LA in the field of poverty reduction in the context of sustainable development, the present proposals aims to enlarge the knowledge about development main issues, especially about the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed targets. Therefore in Belarus, there is a quite low percentage of citizens who have sufficient knowledge and capacities in participation to decision making processes concerning sustainable regional development. The reasons are connected to the repressive attitude by Belarusian authorities towards NGOs and local activists. In this context, the present proposals targets civil society organizations in Belarus, aiming at fostering citizens' active engagements in local development and strengthening their capacities to take actions in defining and implementing sustainable development strategies. At the end of this project, there will be a larger cooperation between local authorities and non-state actors, implementing concrete actions to improve accessibility and quality of basic public utilities and services too. This is a consequence but a necessary precondition of a more equitable, open and democratic society.

- c. **Strengthening the local activism in Belarus trough development of communal property management skills, and strengthening of local communities trough involvement in regional development strategy preparation (2005/2007) (supported by Italy, via voluntary contributions of the Council of Europe).**

Both projects were implemented by the Municipal Training Centre (MTC) of the Kaunas University of Technology and the Association of Local Democracy Agencies in Belarus. The activities were designed to strengthen community activism in Belarus through establishment of housing associations; transfer best experience of running home associations in Lithuania and in other EU states.

## 1.6. A membership oriented organization: local government and civil society groups

In 1999, the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies started its activities with no more than ten founding members, necessary to sign the Statutes. The only budget available was the dedicated funding of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. However, the role of the members organization were clearly identified since the beginning. Indeed, all of them were already involved and active in the Local Democracy Agencies network and they claimed for more participation in the general strategy of the programme. The development of the membership started immediately since considered as the strongest and most important asset of the whole organization.

Today, the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies reached the objective to be a real **European Association with 160 members from 27 States**. It involves both **Local Governments** (different levels, like Regions, cities and municipalities), **Associations of Local Authorities and Civil society groups dedicated to participation and civil society participation** (in the annexes is presented the list of the members).

### Sarajevo, General Assembly 2007

#### Development oriented to membership

The membership network grew from the experience of the Local Democracy Agencies and involvement of their partners. Indeed, in the first year of its existence, ALDA was known almost only as a coordinating organization of the LDA-s. The strategy for membership was to have a large number of organization and local government involved. The fees were set relatively low to allow those interested to be involved without too many problems. The decision of becoming a member should then be only related with the topics and commitment to the main mandate of the organization, and not be too heavy as for the fees are concerned. Of course, this strategy implies a demanding networking exercise to keep all of them involved and informed.

After some years, the membership of ALDA developed towards the actors of active citizenship programmes in Europe. All these programme opened new windows for cooperation.

The concept of membership and the fact that ALDA is membership oriented organization relies on the awareness that none of the members can be committed forever and that any interest and motivation should be cherished every year, every day. There is an awareness that all the members of ALDA are involved in many activities and that they need to find a particular added value and meaning in the partnership with the Association.

This is clearly expressed through a persistent proactive approach towards the members with proposals, attention and active listening of their interests and needs.

#### *Proactive approach towards members*

In different ways and on daily basis ALDA demonstrates that it is at the services of its members and not just passively waiting for their proposals, ideas and funding.

- The Governing Board and the Bureau of ALDA involves regularly the members in developing



the strategies for the programme, in implementing them and in collaborative defining of multi-annual position papers.

- Despite the difficulty and the costs, ALDA tries to have a multilingual approach in communication of its activities and to have the basic documentation translated in different languages.
- Services and project proposals. The membership of ALDA assures a set of services proposed to all the members.

The members receive every week several project proposal on the topics which involve ALDA and they can take part in the initiative according to their interest.

ALDA has supported many members to apply and to organize successful programmes on active citizenship.

- Country meetings. Every year, ALDA organizes country meetings in the countries where we have a relevant number of members. This allow us to pick up comments and feedback on our actions and to assess their commitment for the future, interests and strategies.
- Individual attention: contacts and membership are the results of a special attention to all the members. Each staff member of ALDA is “in charge” of a part of the membership or a country approach. The approach is considered individual and dedicated more to the substance and quality of cooperation rather than only on the “seize” of the partnership. For instance, for a specific programme or strategy, much attention can be given to a less active member, NGO or Local Government rather than only focus on the most active ones. The staff members of ALDA and the Governing Board members are in charge to promote and look for partnership, friendship and support for ALDA and the LDA-s.



*Presentation of Mostar case in Israel, February 2009*



*Ms Toriello in a conference in Algeria, 2008*

<b>Membership Services</b>	
<b>Think tank, advisory and consulting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefings on EU Programmes, funds and procedures</li> <li>• Right to participate in working groups on different topics (local government issues, active citizenship, human rights protection and awareness, empowerment of civil society, etc.)</li> <li>• Right to have our “already issued” publications for free</li> <li>• Access to EU experts, professional and support networks, and academic organizations</li> <li>• Participation in international events (conferences, seminars, etc.) promoted by ALDA</li> </ul>
<b>Being the part of a European network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support in the relation with EU, CoE, UN, their related Agencies and other public and private International institutions</li> <li>• Support in the relation with National Governments in Italy and France and other countries</li> <li>• Support in communication at the European level</li> <li>• Organization of meetings with European Officials, MEPs and other relevant international and European Authorities</li> <li>• Visibility through a European network</li> <li>• Promotion of Members’ activities, initiatives and events at the European level (mainly through the website and the newsletter)</li> <li>• Free links of Members’ website to ALDA website</li> </ul>
<b>Project proposal development and fund-raising</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer of periodical opportunities to be partner of European projects or to join consortia built to apply for European tenders in various fields</li> <li>• Support of ALDA multilingual staff in the project proposal development phase</li> <li>• Identification of international partners for specific areas and support to the partnership building process</li> <li>• Support to the identification of potential donors</li> </ul>
<b>Project coordination and management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support of ALDA multilingual staff in the project management</li> <li>• Support of ALDA in sorting out of complex situations you might face during your autonomous management of your projects</li> </ul>
<b>Information, facilities and support services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subscription in the mailing list (periodical newsletters)</li> <li>• ALDA publications, EU publications, information materials</li> <li>• Access to the information points on EU and active citizenship (info-points based in Brussels and Vicenza)</li> <li>• Access to ALDA intranet especially dedicated to members</li> <li>• Free use of ALDA equipped offices and meeting rooms in Belgium (Brussels) and Italy (Vicenza), upon approval of the Council of Europe, possibility in Strasbourg</li> </ul>

- Working groups: The working groups are considered to be practical instruments to develop ideas, projects and relevant paper to be submitted to different actors in Europe and in the areas of cooperation where we are active. The themes of the working groups are:
  1. Local government issues, good governance, decentralisation
  2. Participation of civil society and civil society empowerment
  3. Human rights protection and awareness, including women's rights
  4. Situation in South East Europe
  5. Situation in the Caucasus
  6. Local economic development
  7. European Union enlargement and active citizenship

**Local ownership:** Most of the municipalities where the LDA-s are based are the members of ALDA, as well as many organizations from South East Europe and Southern Caucasus. It increases substantially the local ownership of our activities since the actions are defined in a global strategy where the members are involved in.

### **Memberships/partnership**

Not all the “global network” of ALDA is included in the members’ list. There is a large number of partner organizations that for some reasons are not members. The contact list of partner organization contains more than 5000 names all over Europe. The approach is always the same: active listening, concrete and active cooperation, sharing objectives and perspective.

### **Communication strategy**

The communication plan as agreed in 2009, is focusing on the following activities and criteria:

- linguistic facility and multilingual approach
- regularity
- interesting and relevant

Actions identified are:

1. Leaflet in different languages
2. Newsletter every quarterly in EN and abstract in FR/IT/Serbian/Russian
3. One page of top news every month EN and abstract in FR/IT/Serbian/Russian
4. Website with space and news from and to members
5. Working groups and involvement in activities
6. Annual report in EN and abstract in FR/IT/Serbian/Russian
7. Services to members in different languages

## **1.7 The Association of Local Democracy Agencies: Working towards the creation of a Wider Europe**

### **1.7.1. Introduction**

To some extent – as described earlier - ALDA initially would complement the overall political engagement of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, through direct work on the ground with local and regional authorities and grass root organisations in its areas of involvement. In these last years, a more autonomous decision making processes has been implemented, but still linked with political engagement of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Historically, ALDA was focusing on the region of the Western Balkans and the territories of the European member states. Later, in line with the new political developments in the field of strengthening links between the European Union and its neighbourhood, following the desire of its members, ALDA has extended its reach to the region of South Caucasus. Currently, the Association is looking to fully cover the European Neighbourhood Policy countries and extend its engagement to the area of Southern Mediterranean, through the development of projects in cooperation with local authorities and civil society organisations in this region. In this way, ALDA fulfils the role set by its founder and members, which is seeking to develop throughout Europe and its neighbourhood, common and democratic principles recognising the crucial importance for the fulfilment of its mission of developing democracy at local and regional level, as well as strengthening the interaction between local authorities and civil society organisations/citizens, always having in mind as its final goal a continuous progress in democratisation of Europe itself and its neighbourhood.

### **1.7.2. The Role of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies outside European Union**

ALDA's commitment to the European neighbourhood is twofold. Primarily, it derives from a genuine desire of its members to help the democratisation processes in the countries of involvement. Simultaneously, it comes from the realisation that the development and strengthening of the European core, both in the political and economic sense, to a large extent depends on the state of democracy in its neighbourhood. It is in this way that ALDA's work in the countries surrounding the European Union, perfectly fits the overall objectives of the Council of Europe and of the European Union, expressed through the latter's European Neighbourhood Policy in general, and Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean in particular.

Beyond reinforcing the feeling of belonging to Europe within the European Union, rendering tangible the meaning of European Citizenship to the European citizens through the active citizenship trainings, ALDA also renders possible to help make concrete the notion of "Europe" to the citizens who are not part of it. ALDA not only embodies the shared European values, but also shows to Europe's neighbourhood that Europe is not only an abstract concept, but is also a concrete reality, a source of innovation and opportunities and that, to put it simply, democratisation process starts at the local level. The process of co-development remains central to the Organisation's objective.

It is noteworthy that ALDA creates a wider Europe even in Western Europe, within its network of partners, as for example local authorities from Norway or Switzerland are deeply involved into ALDA's activities. To give a concrete illustration of this cooperation, ALDA is currently implementing

a micro credit project in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign affairs. But this is of course especially true in the East, the Balkan region and the Caucasus.

ALDA links Western, Eastern and Central Europe through its wide network of partners. This network helps local authorities or civil society organisations to get in touch with each other if they have subjects of interests in common despite the geographical distance. The Local Democracy Agencies and their method of multilateral decentralized cooperation is a very good example of this. The international partners are there to exchange their knowledge, best practices and know-how with the local agency and local partner-municipality, but also between themselves.

Why is the role of ALDA in the countries that are not part of the European Union so important? Being at the frontiers of Europe, these states are of outmost political and economic importance to the European Union. A crisis in its neighbourhood almost automatically affects the internal political developments within the Union. ALDA's engagement in the European neighbourhood is not necessarily linked with the country's European membership perspective. Some of the countries where ALDA is traditionally involved (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and UNMIK/Kosovo) are engaged in the EU's Stabilisation and Association Process and have thus started the necessary steps to join the Union. Others are hoping to enter the Union on a long-term perspective (like for example Georgia) even though for the moment a clear membership perspective remains beyond the horizon. ALDA addresses even those countries that are not necessarily wishing to become part of this supranational body, but their geographical location makes it important for them to have good relations with the EU as the factor facilitating the stability and development of these countries.

### **1.7.3. The European Neighbourhood Policy and ALDA's role**

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was first outlined in a Commission Communication on Wider Europe in March 2003, followed by a more developed Strategy Paper on the European Neighbourhood Policy published in May 2004. These documents were developed with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all concerned; it sets out in concrete terms how the EU proposes to work more closely with these countries. It comprises primarily developing countries, which seek to become either component states of the European Union itself, or more closely aligned to the economy of the European Union. As part of its report on implementation, in December 2006 and again in December 2007, the European Commission also made proposals as to how the policy could be further strengthened.

The EU offers its neighbours a privileged relationship, building upon a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development). The ENP goes beyond existing relationships to offer a deeper political relationship and economic integration. The level of ambition of the relationship will depend on the extent to which these values are shared. The ENP remains distinct from the process of enlargement although it does not prejudge, for European neighbours, how their relationship with the EU may develop in future, in accordance with Treaty provisions.

The central element of the European Neighbourhood Policy is the bilateral ENP Action Plans

agreed between the EU and each partner. These set out an agenda of political and economic reforms with short and medium-term priorities.

The European Union offers financial assistance under the EU External Relations to countries within the European Neighbourhood, so long as they meet the strict conditions of government reform, economic reform and other issues surrounding positive transformation. This process is normally underpinned by an Action Plan, as agreed by both Brussels and the target country.

The EU typically concludes Association Agreements in exchange for commitments to political, economic, trade, or human rights reform in a country. In exchange, the country may be offered tariff-free access to some or all EU markets (industrial goods, agricultural products, etc), and financial or technical assistance.

The European Neighbourhood Policy applies to the EU's immediate neighbours by land or sea, but it does not cover enlargement countries, which are in the process of joining the European Union and those covered by the Stabilisation and Association Process (South Eastern Europe); it also does not cover the EFTA states (European Free Trade Association – Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. The countries concerned are thus Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

Implementation of the ENP Action Plans (agreed in 2005 with Israel, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Ukraine, in 2006 with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, and in 2007 with Egypt and Lebanon) is underway.

Complemented by the Eastern Partnership (presented by the foreign minister of Poland with assistance from Sweden at a the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council in Brussels in May 2008 and formally launched on 20th of March 2009) and the Union for the Mediterranean (launched in July 2008 by the French presidency of the European Union), ENP presents the core of the European Union's policies towards its neighbourhood.

The role of ALDA with regards to the ENP is important, as several countries are inside the area of action of the Association.

The establishment of the Local Democracy Agency (LDA) in Kutaisi, Georgia, on 8 September 2006, is the best example of this engagement. This LDA focuses its work on the participation of citizens in the decision-making process, the strengthening of local democracy and the promotion of human and minority rights. LDA Georgia focused on several activities pertinent to the local reality in which the Agency operates. Just to offer a few examples, LDA Georgia is involved in following broadly speaking development projects: Active Georgia-Women's Academy - organized and conducted in frames of Polish Foreign Assistance; the Factory of Cultural Managers Project (in cooperation with Azeri partners); the "Trainings of Peer Educators" (ToP) a project which is a part of the "Youth: the Right Direction" programme"; organisation of the European Local Democracy Week in Kutaisi; a training program on Human Trafficking for Sexual and Labour Exploitation; Students for Women's rights project Implemented by Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) Kutaisi Branch etc. Moreover, adapting to the local realities caused by the recent armed conflict in the country, the LDA was actively involved in providing aid to the IDP-s from Abkhazia and South Ossetia that found refuge in Kutaisi.

Beyond Georgia, ALDA is currently engaged in the process of opening LDA-s in the remaining

two countries of the South Caucasus region: Armenia and Azerbaijan. To this effect, ALDA organised a fact-finding mission to the two countries with the aim to meet relevant stakeholders and explore the ground for future opening of Local Democracy Agencies. The purpose of the visit to Georgia was to demonstrate support for and strengthen the already existing programmes undertaken by the LDA in Kutaisi. The mission to South Caucasus started on 18 November 2008 and ended 23 November 2008. This mission served as a precursor to individual country visits to Azerbaijan (April 2009) and Armenia (autumn of 2009) of longer duration. The goal of the country visits is to meet local authorities and civil society organisation operating on the ground and present a recommendation to the Governing board and its membership to open the LDAs.

Recently, the governing board of ALDA has given a green light for the organisation's involvement in the implementation of activities and projects in Southern Mediterranean countries. Based on this decision, a first step was recently taken in Israel where a fact - finding mission was conducted from 21 to 27 February 2009. A separate mission was conducted in Algeria in November 2008 (from 6th to 8th). It was an excellent opportunity to start contact with ngos and local authorities and to develop new idea of future projects in Algeria. In Algeria there is a strong demand from civil society to improve participation of citizens and from local authorities to work on decentralization and international cooperation. ALDA can play a very important role in this process.

The mission in Israel was organised in cooperation with a local organisation: "Shatil", the New Israel Fund Capacity Building Centre for Social Change Organizations. The goal of the training was to promote the concept of active citizenship to our Israeli partners, local government representatives in Haifa, Akko and other towns, as well as civil society activists, and the information was enthusiastically received. However, the main objective was to establish links with Israeli municipalities and civil society organization with a view of extending the membership and activities of ALDA to Israel; the intention was to explore the possibilities for future cooperation through presentation of EU programs where both Israeli actors and EU actors across the Mediterranean are eligible to apply. The mission was a real success, and it presents a solid basis for an intensified cooperation and exchange of experiences between non-governmental organizations and local authorities across the Mediterranean.

ALDA is also actively developing projects in other countries of the Eastern Partnership. In Belarus the Association implemented a project "ACSOBE: Acting Social Rights in Belarus" that successfully ended in 2008 and as an immediate follow-up it started with the implementation of a new project in 2009. In Russia ALDA was part on a consortium of partners supported by European Commission that assisted the Russian Federation in the implementation of its administrative reform. In Ukraine, the Association has membership and a developed relationship with NGOs and local authorities.

#### **1.7.4. Conclusion: The future – ALDA in the European neighbourhood**

The engagement in the organisation of active citizenship pilot trainings with civil society organisations and municipalities beyond the frontiers of the EU represents to a certain extent a first step in the gradual process of disseminating the new culture of democratic participation in European neighbourhood. Opening of the Local Democracy Agencies is the next, more institutionalized step, which assures the follow-up at the local level implemented through activities assuring constant all-year-through engagement of both municipalities and grass root organisations operating at the local level..

## 2. What people say about us



### Nadia Cuk, Council of Europe office in Belgrade, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General in Serbia

*I was a delegate in 1993 of the first LDA established in Subotica. The whole idea of establishing Agencies of Local Democracy at that time was a unique and brave step initiated by several European cities and municipalities, NGO's and the Council of Europe during the war in Former Yugoslavia. The idea was not only to provide the humanitarian help but to create small centers in the number of host cities, showing solidarity with the local citizens and establishing an active cooperation with them. This was incredibly difficult period of time, not just because of the still present consequences of the conflicts (and war), but also because of a certain repugnance towards the international cooperation in this region. Overall situation was fragile and sensitive, wounds had not been healed yet, and the economy was destroyed. However, some cities preserved their multiculturalism, spirit of tolerance and perceived international cooperation as an exit strategy. That's why the LDAs established at early stage depended very much on understanding of the local governments in these countries. This was a solid ground for developing a real partnership with other European partners, later on.*

*The idea of creating an umbrella organization to coordinate the LDA-s was in the air quite early but it took some time to mature and finally came into being during 1999. In the first few years, Council of Europe provided institutional framework, and in fact the first LDA has been established by the agreement, between the CLRAE, several partners and the city of Subotica. It was however obvious that it should evolve into self-sustainable and a long-term network with its own structure. I do think that the networking is of utmost importance for any international initiative, especially when it aims to be functional and effective at the very local level, and recognizable to the citizens living there. ALDA has managed to build up a network and put together the partners from different European countries and it is still doing it.*

*I left the LDA in 2001, at the beginning of ALDA, but afterwards I was involved in a number of its activities, particularly those related to the capacity building, intercultural governance and civil society. Over the past 10 years, ALDA developed an impressive number of*



*projects, facilitating the partnerships between cities. This enabled a direct communication and resulted in a wide range of new joint programs. I must say that the partnership is the key or magic word for every single LDA and for ALDA as well, and is the core value of the whole concept. In other words I see this as a genuine city-to-city cooperation, based on the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience, motivated by the mutual interests and needs. A result is a successful European network of partners: cities, regions, associations, individuals, citizens, working together on the promotion of local democracy.*

*The work in the LDA is a challenging one but brings a lot of satisfaction. The school of civil society, launched by several LDA's between 1996 and 2000 is one of the most remarkable projects and is even today a very special to me. In Serbia this was a difficult period of time, when civil society has been suppressed by the former regime. The tensions were high and the waves of civic unrest were part of the everyday life. School was gathering a group of students, young activists and journalists, and many of them participated in the student protests either in Belgrade or Subotica. The school, led by the very prominent academics and guest lecturers was an opportunity for this young generation to widen their knowledge and freely express their views, despite the difficult circumstances. Several, international conferences from that period of time on: local democracy, citizen participation at local level, interethnic and inter-confessional dialogue, that gathered a number of well known international and local experts are worth to be mentioned as well. All these results have been achieved due to the enthusiasm of our partners, and the support of ALDA and the Council of Europe.*

*ALDA is today an impressive international network, but it started with very few resources. Moreover ALDA is today not just a framework or a formal structure, but an organization that is launching its own projects, shaping them in such a way to meet local needs, providing the tools to local governments to solve their problems.*

*It is very difficult to give a general assessment of local democracy today, since the situation differs from one part of the world to another. In any case the local democracy will remain as an essential prerequisite for building up the modern, democratic, self-confident society, capable of overcoming the challenges of the today's world. Decentralization is a long lasting process, which requires a lot of efforts, energy, appropriate methods of education and training, institutional and cultural adjustments. One of many issues to be resolved on this way is to establish trust based relations between the local self-governments and the state. The State should start to consider local self-governments as their main and genuine partners in developing the society. On the other hand, local self-governments need to be more pro-active in the international and trans-frontier cooperation and establish firm ties with their counterparts regardless of the borders. ALDA is exactly the necessary instrument to reach this goal. Active and vibrant cooperation among municipalities, cities, regions is the parallel avenue for the EU integration!*

*Today, after 10 years of ALDA's commitment, my wish is that ALDA should continue this successful work and I can easily imagine a wider network with even more members in the coming years. I believe that ALDA has a future because it has a very clear mission – to create bridges among the countries, at the level closest to the citizens, promoting European values and translating them into the concrete action.*



## Antoine Rozes, Delegate of the newly established LDA Albania, appointed in March 2009

*The first time I heard about ALDA was about 4 years ago when I met Mr. Per Vinther in Skhodra, who was then vice President of ALDA, and was heading an ALDA delegation in Albania in a visit to the northern part of the country where I had been posted since 2001. At the time, I used to receive delegations from various international organizations and diplomatic missions.*

*ALDA delegation was there in a fact finding mission in order to establish contacts with the local stakeholders and to perceive the reality of the situation in the local community. I was happy to see that their overall approach was strongly focused on profound understanding of the key and the most difficult issues ranging from human rights protection, inter-religious dialogue, security and political intricacies, showing particular interest in the role of local civil society and its capacities. In one word, I can say that my first meeting with the Association was a pleasant surprise. There was obviously a keen interest in gathering relevant, real-life kind of information to develop a comprehensive vision of the challenges ahead in terms of democratization perspectives in Albania.*

*So far, I cannot say much about the project implementation, but what for me is fundamental is ALDA's impressive scope activities aimed at strengthening civil society. This is also one, if not, the essential challenge Albania is facing at the moment. I am looking forward to work in this field together with ALDA and LDA partners network, being aware that meeting these challenges will be a long but meaningful process that requires persistent efforts and perseverance. However, as far as I am concerned, this is the only roadmap worth taking in order to improve the situation in this country on its way to democratic reforms. Over the past years I had only sporadic contacts with ALDA staff members. What I could see at early stage and now have high appreciation for, is their strong commitment and will to seek common solutions by building bridges of effective co-operation and partnerships between local authorities and civil society for a better future of democracy in Albania.*

*There is no doubt in my mind that ALDA's goals are at the core of Europe's values. ALDA is working for the future and its projects are focused on young generation as the future political and social elite in order to help them understand and share these values. For me what is particularly valuable is the overall goal of ALDA to implement practical local initiatives that contribute to realization to an overall objectives of democratization in its widest sense. These include actions promoting decentralization process, cross border co-operation and capacity building for different sections of civil society and for local authorities.*

*As for the future of local democracy and ALDA's contribution, in my opinion the strengthening of local democracy seems to have become an important precondition for overall empowerment of the civil society in Albania. When the new elites become an active part if not partners to civil society thus taking over their share of responsibilities, an important result will be accomplished. Therefore, the issues which should be addressed in the framework of my fu-*

ture work with ALDA and LDA Albania are: transparency, accountability and good governance.

*If I had a magic wand with the power to change just one thing at the local level in Europe, this would be a strong civil society capable of reducing the level of corruption and clientelism we may witness in some countries. Finally, today as it is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ALDA, I have a wish: to expand the perimeter of action and the geographical area of intervention to build local democracy in wider Europe, Caucasus and even further.*



## **Ana Vasilache, Director of FPDL – Partners Foundation for Local Development (Romania)**

*It was in 1997, that I heard about LDA-s for the first time, two years before ALDA establishment, when I met Antonella Valmorbida during an NGO Fair organized in Gorizia. FPDL stand was located near the LDA Sisak stand, at that time represented by Antonella. We enjoyed our discussions and I used the opportunity to invite her to attend the first International Meeting of Trainers from CEE/SEE we organized in the frame of the Regional Program “Working Together”. This was the beginning of our collaboration and friendship: Antonella and other ALDA representatives attended all the Trainers Meetings we organized each year, since 1997, and these events were great opportunities for exchanging ideas and for expanding our collaboration.*

*I witnessed ALDA establishment and during the last 10 years its great development. During these years I had the opportunity to meet many ALDA members and partners and I was always impressed by the association complexity and the diversity of its members.*

*The cooperation we had with ALDA was very rewarding: we were involved in the capacity building of ALDA members, by training for trainers in the fields crucial for a democratic local governance, fields promoted through the Regional Program “Working Together”: leadership, local government management, conflict management, participatory planning. In that way LDA-s capacity was improved to help make them offer these training services themselves.*

*Five years ago a special event marked me particularly: it was when I received, on FPDL behalf, a certificate of award acknowledging our partnership with ALDA. It was very emotional and nice to receive it. ALDA is a special partner for us thanks to the personal connections we have with its Director, with its staff and other ALDA members. A very nice memory comes to my mind: some years ago we organized a TOT in Romania, Sinaia attended also by Antonella. She arrived one day later, and our program manager waited for her at the airport and brought her to the train connecting Bucharest with Sinaia. After that she called me to announce the hour Antonella would arrive in Sinaia, so that we wait for her at the train station. But to my surprise she told me also that Antonella brought with her two more participants. The news worried us since we did not organize anything for these two extra people, moreover we did not have any budget foreseen for them. The mystery was clarified when Antonella arrived: she was pregnant with her twins... That is a symbol of how our personal lives are involved in our work and how personal relations make our cooperation interesting and deep.*

*I admire how ALDA grew in these 10 years and how ALDA makes itself visible through a very effective marketing strategy. ALDA is original and different from other organizations because of its effort to link Western and Eastern European local partners through know-how and experience transfer. This involves the management of complex relations and coordination. I do hope that ALDA will continue doing what it is doing at the moment, contributing to strengthen the local democracy in Europe, especially in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In particular if I had a magic wand, what I would like to see at local level are the effective local governments, trusted by citizens for their integrity and efficient use of public money.*

*Celebrating ALDA 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary my wish is to be asked for another interview 10 years from now... to talk about ALDA successful work in promoting and implementing the values of local democracy, as well as about our cooperation.*



## **Giovanni Camilleri, Coordinator of Art International Initiative - Hub for Innovative Partnerships - UNDP Geneva**

*It was the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1995, when I for first time discovered the LDA-s world. I was invited to the inauguration of the Embassy, as it was called at that time, today Agency of the Local Democracy of Tuzla, in Bosnia Herzegovina. As a UNDP office, we got in touch with the Local Democracy Agency in Tuzla in a moment when not all the information about the cooperation initiatives were easily circulated. It was very interesting for us, because ALDA seemed to have been committed to promote different angle and a way of looking at the cooperation that was something new at the time. Today, these ways of cooperation are well integrated, maybe not practiced but very well known.*

*The most interesting aspects of the work of the Local Democracy Agency were the reconstruction following a territorial approach, rather than an approach based on groups of inhabitants. This aspect seemed to us very important. At that time, there were numerous projects promoted by international organizations and NGOs: for women, refugees, ... etc. The Local Democracy Agency was based on the territory and local government: a difficult binomial for that time, but fundamental. The third element was interpreting the development from the point of the rights. This was an innovative aspect, a new way to consider the cooperation. There was a need of a new mechanism, a new organization structure, which would take into consideration all the above-mentioned elements.*

*Personally, I did not follow directly ALDA projects, as my colleagues did, but there were several activities, which flowed into concrete cooperation with UNDP. Nevertheless, I had the opportunity to go around these countries and indirectly I followed the LDAs' trail, which astonished me because of its consistency and pragmatic nature. A deep and realistic trail, in the sense that it requires comprehension of the complexities existing in reality. For example, the LDAs focus on local democracy either as strategy or as goal. Many stakeholders in the world of cooperation do not consider the idea that in order to support the processes of local democracy, it is also neces-*

sary to be in a dialogue with central governments. This is fundamental because the reducing it only to the local government does not facilitate the fulfilment of expected results. ALDA, as coordinating organization, demonstrated a strong capacity of co-operating with central governments. Moreover, I noticed that the fields of intervention are very concrete, such as the initiatives of promotion of local economic development. This is a strong element of coherence. Also the duration is a very important aspect. Often, some organizations are not sustainable, while ALDA revealed itself as a long-term experience. In my view, this is not something worthless.

As for the impact of ALDA on citizen's life at local level, I would like to underline two sides of the medal. Even though I was not involved in implementation, I am sure that all the implemented projects had a direct benefit to citizens. This is not an unusual fact, since one should suppose that every project should lead to a certain impact for citizens. What is peculiar in ALDA is that the citizens find a space enabling them to express themselves and to better organize themselves. Obviously we are talking about the countries where this concept is not given for granted. ALDA demonstrated a great professionalism and operational qualities. It is not easy to act in this field without being assimilated to those who create partial policies. ALDA demonstrated its capability to create development oriented policies and to harmonise the human rights principles with technical approach on different topics, among which the one concerning the improvement of relations among local administration and citizens, and how to put into practice the solutions acceptable for the citizens. Denunciation could be very unproductive. It would be difficult to denounce in an intelligent manner and through a dialogue with the entities of the country which themselves should guarantee the respect of human rights.

I do think that the positive aspects of ALDA are:

1. Participation, the place and space for meeting and expression in countries where this is not that easy;
2. The possibility to establish a dialogue with the local elected administrations. In the world of cooperation to development, without any doubt the administrative form constitutes a project, but the interesting thing is ALDA approach of promoting local services, public service and service of public interest. This vision seems to me another element, which makes the difference compared to other forms of cooperation.

A brief reflection on the future of local democracy and ALDA's role. It seems to me that the more we talk about local democracy, the less we see the expected results: real decentralization, genuine representation of associations etc... I see a distance between the debate and the practice of the decisions taken and less and less orientation to give concreteness to local democracy. In this context ALDA could reinforce its role of promoting these topics in Southern countries, but also in Northern countries, that need this kind of stimulus. The problem is complex, but if a magic wand would exist in order to solve the problem of local democracy, it would be necessary to focus it on the decentralization's product: local resources and ways to obtain resources from territories and from central governments. This is a big issue!... A magic wand should make sure that local government really get their resources!!

On the occasion of 10<sup>th</sup> ALDA Anniversary, I wish to the Association to establish an active and regular based cooperation with UNDP in the near future, since I think that these different activities are complementary and represent a potential we would like to develop further.



## Miljenko Doric, President of the Sub-Committee for Local and Regional Democracy of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE

*From the year 2000 I regularly followed the work of the three LDA-s in Croatia. In this way I soon heard of the ALDA. My first impression concerning the ALDA was more than positive. The people I meet in 2001/2002 were trying not only to introduce local democracy and help in building a civil society in the countries of South-Eastern Europe, but were finding the resources, partners and experts to fulfil all these projects in practice. They were simply covering all the gaps that the unexperienced local authorities could not do by themselves. I myself (at that time I was president of one of the Croatian regions) participated in the project of demining the territories that were contaminated during the war in the Balkans. I also transferred the idea (launched by the ALDA) of microcredits to my Region. In this way the people living in rural areas were able to use the demined land for agriculture which was an important moment for the development of these municipalities and for preventing the young people from migrating to the big towns. On the other side, the microcredits helped the self-employment of many young people and especially women. I was always impressed by the fact that ALDA, besides its basic activities in the field of local democracy, also recognized the specific additional needs of people living in certain areas and promptly reacted to reach out to these needs. Education and capacity building, employment, economic development, ecology and many other fields were of interest to ALDA and they always managed to find the right partners in fulfilling these goals.*

*All the above mentioned activities have helped the local authorities to improve their work, but more importantly, they now know „how to catch the fish“ and this will no doubt be of great use in the future during their accession to the EU and in preparing projects for the use of pre-accession funds, etc.*

*ALDA is special because of its ability to recognize the weaknesses of local authorities in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe and specifically react to eliminate them. Furthermore, with the partner towns and regions from Western Europe it enables transfer of know-how and best practices very much shortening the period needed to introduce good and effective local governance in the new democracies.*

*The wonderful book on “Democracy in Europe“ that has been written in the Council of Europe during the last several decades, has still five unfinished chapters: Firstly: the battle for subsidiarity must continue since the “European charter on Regional Democracy“ has still not been adopted; Secondly, “The Strategy on Innovation and Good Governance at local level“ and its 12 principles has to be implemented in everyday practice; Thirdly: Co-operation between the three levels of governance must be very much improved; Fourthly: Cross-border co-operation, in accordance with the Madrid Convention, is still not implemented in a satisfactory way; Finally: Citizen participation in decision making process has to be strengthened.*

*Therefore, I wish ALDA a happy birthday, and all the best in the following years. I also wish to thank all the wonderful people that are working or have been working with the ALDA during the last decade, for their great contribution to democracy in Europe.*



## **Keith Jones, Former secretary of ALDA**

I learned about ALDA first time about 6 years ago, in 2003. The UK local authority East Staffordshire Borough Council, I was working with at that time, was invited by ALDA to explore the potential for establishing an LDA in Montenegro. My first impression about ALDA was it was a professional organization with exceptional knowledge of the situation on South East Europe. Among the various projects, the most interesting for me was the creation of the LDA in Montenegro and the steps needed to create the Agency, including the research for international partners, appointing the staff, and the work with local partners to develop a work programme to meet the needs of that region.

During the whole experience I had with ALDA the moment which I recall most was having the honor of being secretary of ALDA. I would like to say that I saw and I see that thanks to ALDA there has been an absolutely tangible improvement for the citizens at a local level. I have seen visible improvement in human rights within South East Europe, the raising of the whole profile of human rights, the implementation of practical projects with tangible results that are tackling the difficult issues. These issues mean not only conflicts among people of different races and religions, but also other difficult issues being tackled across the whole of Europe including violence on women and discrimination of people with disabilities. ALDA and its Agencies have always been prepared to confront these difficult issues.

Moreover I esteem particularly valuable in ALDA the partnership approach with the international and local partners, coming together and to work together: the distinctive feature not only of the Association but also of the LDAs.

About the future, there is still a job for ALDA to do: even where ALDA has existing LDAs, there is work still to be done.

If I had a magic wand which has the power to change one thing on the local level in Europe, I would actually put in the mind of every political leader of every local authority in Europe that international cooperation is something valuable to do for their local community and for international partners.

I have often said to others that if ALDA was a football team it would be playing in the Champions League. The kind of work in international co-operation that ALDA is promoting in South East Europe is at the highest level and I hope ALDA will continue to play at that level and it will be given the necessary support from international institutions.

At ALDA's Tenth anniversary of its establishment, I wish ALDA another 10 years of success!



## Rafik-Elmrini Nawel, Deputy Mayor for European and international affairs - City of Strasbourg

I have been elected Vice-Mayor in charge of international and European affairs of the City of Strasbourg in March 2008. In June 2008 I met for the first time Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA, who outlined with enthusiasm all the activities ALDA is managing in the Balkans and in Georgia as well as their very positive results in strengthening of local democracy and citizenship. I have been very impressed by the efforts and the work done by ALDA in only a few years. I measure the conviction and tenacity which is necessary to federate very different partners in an innovative process in order to restore the meaning of local democracy and citizen engagement in countries where war and reconstruction of civil society leave their mark on local public life. In this respect, ALDA's 10th anniversary is an excellent opportunity to pay tribute to this engagement for peace and democracy.

The City of Strasbourg is partner of the LDA in Georgia since its creation in 2006. During a partner meeting held in Monfalcone in October 2008, I've become aware of the importance all partners pay to the fact not only to participate in activities but also and mainly to be part of a European network. I think that this feeling of belonging to a same Europe – the one which is building itself in the spirit of liberty, democracy and human rights – is the main essence of LDA's. ALDA contributes in its way to promote the fundamental values of Europe and the cohesion of our continent which is very important for us in Strasbourg as the European capital. It's a very important aspect for local partners but also for the international ones.

Being the Vice-Mayor in charge of international and European affairs, I see local democracy as a key element of good governance in democratic societies. The closeness between representatives and citizens makes it possible to have a constant and constructive dialogue based on mutual respect. . It's a question of political action's credibility and citizens' engagement for general interest. We are restructuring the local democracy life in Strasbourg in that way and are of course open to exchange in this field with our European partners. The demand for more citizen participation exists everywhere in Europe and everywhere it's perfectible. The work done by ALDA takes both into account, the different local contexts in each country as well as the added value of connections between the experiences in order to enhance them. This is where I see the main originality and its forthcoming issues.

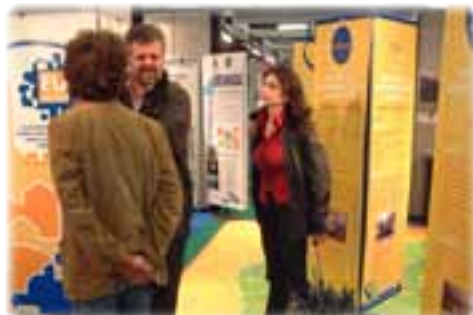
The local level is the one which is the nearest to the citizen. So it's also the most concrete one which has a real impact on their everyday life. It's also the place where all forms of solidarity and social links become reality, even if local authorities could not respond to all the needs expressed by the citizens. If I could change things by a magic wand, I would like to see all our societies live in a peaceful environment where everyone is able to integrate into the local community without any discrimination. It's the ideal of society I would like to achieve all together; it's also the meaning of my political engagement.



I wish that ALDA's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary is the moment to express the gratitude for the activities conducted by ALDA since its creation. And also that this gratitude appeals to new supports for many projects showing the association's vitality: Godspeed to ALDA, Godspeed to local democracy!



*ALDA at civitas event*



*ALDA at civitas event*



*Signature of the LDA Georgia, 2007*



*DDC conference, Lausanne, Switzerland, 2007*

# 3. Best practice

## 3.1 Methodology of citizens' consultation and participation

### Introduction: ALDA and Active citizenship

Since its foundation in 1999, ALDA has been working in the field of European programmes, promoting dialogue, cooperation and partnerships with the most relevant European Institutions (European Commission, Council of Europe, etc.) and with a wide number of local authorities (regions, provinces and municipalities) and civil society organizations in the “enlarged” Europe.

In the last few years, ALDA has been more and more committed to the promotion of the concept of active citizenship and civic participation all over Europe. Convinced that European citizens have a key and primary role in building Europe, ALDA has been promoting and implementing projects, actions and debates regarding the future of Europe, a necessity to get Europe closer to its citizens and the importance of a wider involvement of citizens in the life of the community, both at local and at European level, with the aim to promote good governance throughout the continent.

Since 2004 (see ALDA first activities), ALDA and its partners have thus implemented about ten important projects with the support of the European Commission in this field.

Aware of the need of further thinking over the concept of European active citizenship and the importance to develop new instruments and innovative «tools» to promote citizens' participation, ALDA has been testing new methodologies in close cooperation with the European Commission. Thus, ALDA has implemented and promoting the citizens' panels' methodology (best practice 1).

The importance of involving different stakeholders such as local authorities, civil society organizations, groups of citizens and also national and European institutions and authorities in order to improve citizens' participation and consultation has also been understood by ALDA, that has developed a pilot training action on active citizenship to address this need (best practice 2).

### Best practice 1. Citizens' panels: an innovative methodology to involve citizens

- **Philosophy of citizens' panels**

*What is the best way to involve people actively in the democratic process? Is it enough to say that once in every few years people can vote and then let go off the reins? If people do not feel as a part of the decision-making process, they can become sceptical and disillusioned. Policy-makers themselves can become isolated from the communities they serve if they do not actively seek out people's views on important issues...*

Over the past few years, an increasing number of democratic institutions have addressed these issues through the use of citizens' panels, particularly at the local government level. The panels give 'ordinary' people the chance to formulate and articulate the views on issues that matter to them, and help create a public space to channel their opinions to local decision-makers.

Most of the time, citizens are not consulted because they are no stakeholders, nor representatives of interest groups or NGOs, nor politicians. The consultative approach cannot reach them. Citizens' panels aim precisely at including ordinary citizens in the decision-making processes.

- **Testing the methodology in a European context: «EURaction: citizens' acting for Europe»**

After the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands in 2005, the questions posed by the enlargement, the decision-making process and the low participation rate at the Parliamentary elections, the European Union fell into an unprecedented crisis. It was felt that the European institutions had lost contact with their citizens and something needed to be done to overcome this communication gap. As a consequence, the European Commission launched the Plan D on democracy, dialogue and debate and opened numerous calls for proposals to foster active European Citizenship Programme. New programmes in this area have been launched for the period 2007 - 2013. In 2006, the European Union was looking at using citizens' panels in a number of new projects as a way of gauging public views about its work. These projects were designed to give people a chance to interact with EU institutions, and go some way to promoting active European citizenship. To prepare its new programme « Europe for citizens », the European Commission offered an opportunity to implement pilot project to test the methodology.

The pilot project "EURaction" was thus set in this context, supporting the active participation of citizens in European issues through their involvement in "citizens' panels". ALDA was one of the partners of the European Commission in filling this gap through its network of 140 local authorities and civil society groups in Europe, devoted to the promotion of human rights, local democracy and participation.

### **Objectives**

The main aim of the project was to include "ordinary people" in the debates and to give them a voice in European politics. The results of the citizens' panels meetings were reported back to the European institutions and other European stakeholders.

The specific objectives of the projects were:

- to promote the participation of citizens, involving directly citizens who would not have spontaneously participated in projects of a European nature, by employing the innovative method of "citizens' panels"
- to encourage a bottom-up approach to allow citizens to express their views on the EU
- to promote trans-national mobility opportunities among the citizens of the countries involved

### **Target groups**

The main partners of the project were from Italy, France, Poland, Lithuania and Cyprus. The citizens' panels were therefore mainly held in these countries. Nevertheless, citizens from other countries were also welcome to participate in the activities or even organise events in their towns. One of the main aims of the project is to include those citizens who normally do not participate in projects of a European nature and to involve people of different social, demographic and professional background.

## Partners

- Association of the Local Democracy Agencies, Strasbourg, France
- Municipal Training Centre, Kaunas, Lithuania
- INDEX – Centre for Research and Dialogue, Nicosia, Cyprus
- Partners Polska, Warsaw, Poland
- Municipality of Mogliano Veneto, Italy
- Municipality of Rovigo, Italy (added as partner in spring 2007)

## Methodology

The project's methodology was based on participatory methods which aim at involving citizens in the different steps of the project, from the conception to the evaluation, through citizens' panels, here understood as "*groups of ordinary citizens who would not have spontaneously participated in projects of a European nature by paying attention to involving people of different demographic, social and professional backgrounds*". For the selection of the participants, the partners were supported by "leading citizens" (key citizens acting as multipliers at the local level).

During the Steering Committee in Strasbourg, guidelines had been developed how the partners should select the participants. The objective was to recruit 60 people per panel. This was not possible in all cases. In addition, it was decided that first of all a number of leading citizens should be appointed who should then be responsible for the selection of further participants. This methodology proved to be working in some cases (Mogliano Veneto, Cyprus), however, the other partners adapted the selection process to their local situations (cf. details below).

In addition, the panels used the *Open Space Methodology*, enabling them to choose the topics of their debate and behave freely.

Four principles and a regulation governing the rules of participation in an Open Space event.

1. **"Whoever comes is the right person"**: this principle reminds the members of the group that in order to accomplish something it does not necessarily take a large number of participants and a leader, but a number of motivated individuals who are prepared and interested to participate.
2. **"Whatever happens, is the only thing that could have happened"**: this principle keeps the participants on the here-and-now and eliminates all the "who could have/ would have".
3. **"When it starts, is the right time"**: this principle reminds the participant that the inspiration and true creativity rarely keep track of the time. These come (or go) whenever they come (or go).
4. **"When it's over, it's over"**: you don't have to waste time. Do what you have to do, and when it's done, move on to something that's more important.

## Activities

### Step 1: International Opening Conference

An international conference was launched in Strasbourg (France) at the beginning of the project with the objectives to present the whole proposal to the general public and to the main stakeholders, to make partners know each others and to make them meet relevant stakeholders and to promote the action, especially through media on an extensive basis.

## **Step 2: EAC Days: European Active Citizenship Information Days**

5 “two-days trainings” on European issues, focusing on the concept of European Active Citizenship and on the interaction between citizens of the EU and the institutions of the EU were promoted by partners to encourage the participation at the local level and to provide information to citizens. Both selection of the themes and participants were done at this stage.

## **Step 3: Citizens’ panels**

Citizens selected at the local level formed the citizens’ panels, groups of ordinary citizens which will be the main actors of the whole process-action. The citizens’ panels represented the key actors to implement the whole action: through the panels, citizens were involved in the conception, the preparation and the implementation of the project, demonstrating thus a real bottom-up approach.

## **Step 4: Workshop: capacity building “Interacting with EU Institutions”**

Each citizens’ panels promoted a one-day workshop concerning the interaction between European citizens and the Institutions of the EU at the local level. Methods of building individual and collective opinions and on the way to address them to the Institutions of the EU are fundamental topics of the workshop.

## **Step 5: Trans-national Citizens’ panels meeting**

An international meeting of citizens panels was held in Rovigo (Italy) in the middle of the implementation of the action to mainly promote the exchange of ideas and good practices, to set-up a trans-national citizens’ panel and to develop partnerships among citizens’ panel.

## **Step 6: Final Conference at the local level**

Each citizens’ panel promoted, in cooperation with the project partners, a final conference whose main objective was to promote the activities run by the local citizens’ panel at the local level, as well as the main outcomes.

## **Step 7: International Final Conference**

An international final conference was organised in Nicosia (Cyprus) in order to communicate the results of the panels to decision makers at the European level, to present the final results of the proposal and promote its outcomes, to increase the visibility of the action and to strengthen the trans-national cooperation.

## **Step 8: Final Publication and website**

The final publication, realised at the European level by all the partners with the direct involvement of citizens’ panels, aimed at increasing the visibility of the action, raising awareness about the role of European citizens, disseminating information about the activities of citizens’ panels and promoting the method of “citizens’ panels”.

- **Results**

The project “EURaction: Citizens acting for Europe” was implemented to the full contentment of the ALDA and all the partners involved in the programme and can undoubtedly be considered as a good practice in the field of citizens’ consultation.

Most of the objectives of the programmes were reached:

- to encourage the participation of European citizens in the construction of Europe
- to encourage citizens in the debate about the further integration of Europe
- to encourage a bottom up approach to allow citizens to express their views
- to develop innovative methods to enhance participation
- to create “citizens’ panels” to promote active European citizenship at the local level
- to promote the extensive participation of citizens, involving directly citizens who would not have spontaneously participated in projects of a European nature
- to promote trans-national mobility opportunities among citizens of the countries involved
- to encourage the exchange of ideas and best practices
- to draft position papers and reports to be submitted to European decision-makers

The following objectives were only partially reached:

- to enhance the relation between European citizens and EU institutions
- to promote a “two-way process” (information and feedback) between EU institutions and citizens

Indeed, it was very difficult to create a direct relationship between the citizens and the European institutions. The presence of representatives from the European Commission in Strasbourg (international launch conference) and in Rovigo (trans-national meeting), as well as the active participation of a representative of the European Ombudsman (final local conference in Strasbourg) were very important and had a great impact, since the citizens had the feeling that the European institutions were listening to their opinions. However, ALDA deplored the fact that despite our numerous attempts and active research, no Members of the European Parliament could attend any of our events. Some EU representatives that came in the final conference could not stay longer to listen to the actual results of the citizens’ panels, nor take part in the round table debate. ALDA recommended to evaluate how in future projects the participation of representatives of EU institutions could be enhanced and how the results of the panels could be forwarded to them to be taken seriously into consideration. If the panel participants get the feeling that their opinions are not important for EU decision-makers, it could produce feelings of frustration and further alienation from the EU institutions. This should definitely be avoided. One of the crucial challenges was therefore to transfer the ideas and recommendations to the European institutions and other European stakeholders, so that they will be given an appropriate follow-up: giving the citizens the feeling that their opinion is valuable and worth listening is undoubtedly a step forward towards a united Europe of the citizens!

All in all, the projects’ outcome were positive and ALDA and its partners recommended to introduce the methodology of citizens’ panels to other European cities with the help of further EU funding in this area, since it proved to be more than successful to involve citizens.

**Positive comments on the project:**

- the project was an excellent idea
- the project helped to create a European identity

- the project helped to feel what it means to be an ACTIVE citizen
- international aspect (trans-national meeting in Rovigo and international conferences) was important
- spontaneity of the debates (Open Space Methodology)
- willingness to continue (strong motivation of some participants)
- starting point for further reflection and then long-term effects

**Negative comments on the project/improvements for future projects:**

- lack of time for the preparation / implementation
- difficulty to reach ordinary citizens, rather already active citizens involved
- low participation of citizens (not more than 40 usually)
- low participation of EU representatives
- budget

**Ideas for a follow-up:**

- The key citizens could directly present the results to the MEP-s or other EU institutions
- there should be a follow-up/it should be a long-term initiative and not only an ad hoc setting up of panels.
- Funding should be provided for the work of the panels, in particular the international exchanges
- debates should be more focused
- results of the panels could be compared with existing legislation/ institutions to raise the quality of the discussions
- A database of contacts of panels could be created for future projects.
- feedback should be provided in order to develop proposals to be put into action.

**Other recommendations:**

- to use the Open Space Methodology but explain it further (it was not so clear for some of the partners)
- to have local authorities involved (like in Italy)
- to involve more cities / countries
- to improve the definition of objectives and indicate how the results will be used
- to translate the results into practice
- to strengthen exchanges among the partners
- to adapt the budget to the local needs (e.g. in Cyprus)
- to allocate more resources for the recruitment process and the structure
- to invite experts
- to have closer contact between politicians and civil society

- to consider ordinary citizens as multipliers
- to include mass media
- to focus on reporting to keep the results
- to use simple terms (not big concepts like «European active citizenship, key citizens...»)
- to strengthen the role of the key citizens
  
- **Lessons learned and follow-up : the projects ALL.4.EU and Bandiar**

The good results of the pilot projects on citizens' panels lead the European Commission to include this methodology as a measure of the Programme Europe for citizens (2007-2013). ALDA used this opportunity to further promote the methodology among its members and create new citizen' panels.

In 2008-2009, ALDA is indeed involved with its members in two projects related to citizens' panels : ALL.4.EU and Bandiar.

## **ALL.4.EU: Citizens for Europe**

### **Objectives**

The project aims at:

- further developing and consolidating - on the basis of the pilot project implemented by ALDA in 2006 and 2007 – the “tool” and the methodology of the citizens panels, adding some steps (i.e. the initial training for citizens' panels activators ) which may grant a stronger impact and better results;
- increasing the number of partners and the number of countries where to establish “citizens' panels” in order to create the basis for a relevant and significant European platform of citizens panels;
- developing a thematic approach focused to generate discussion and deliver citizens reflection on citizens participation and active European citizenship, also in the light of the forthcoming European elections in 2009, which represent a culmination of an important EU-wide process of representative democracy, taking into consideration the new institutional developments at the European level and the difficulties the European Union is facing nowadays in the relation with its citizens.

### **Partners**

- Region Istria, Croatia
- Foundation for partnership and civil society development, Croatia
- Balkan Assist Association, Bulgaria
- Municipality of Vejle, Denmark
- Consvipo, Italy
- Local Councils Association Malta
- ASAEL, Spain
- Centrum komunitneho organizovania, Slovak Republic
- Obcianska Siet Strednej a Vychodnej Europy, Slovak Republic
- ALDA



## **Bandiar**

### **Objectives**

Most of the European citizens are unaware of the key role that EU plays in their daily life. One of the main problems that the European Union is facing refers to the limited participation of people in the politics. BANDIAR project pretends to stimulate participation in the processes of representative democracy at local, national and even international level. With our initiative, we want people to develop a full and a total feeling of European Citizenship and their commitment in acting in the mechanisms of representative democracy.

The aim of BANDIAR project is to **raise awareness about participation of women in political life at local level.**

The specific objectives of BANDIAR could be listed as it follows:

1. to promote European cooperation and active citizenship in the gender field, encouraging interactions between citizens and civil society organizations and promoting those projects implemented at a local level concerning Democratic participation.
2. to create exchanges between citizens and politicians through the development of citizen's panel initiative and the International Seminar in Brussels. We will contribute to promote learning and participation ways to incite and nurture the public debate in the local, regional, national and European level.
3. to promote the use of ICT to broaden and deepen political participation, especially for those people that are not used to take the floor in the debates. E-participation will be the secondary tool for encouraging people to explain their opinions, recommendations, expressing gender point of view.
4. to increase the provision of quality information about European Union and their role. To give the chance to ordinary citizens and also politicians that work in the local level to express their opinion, feeling that they contribute to the construction of the EU.
5. to encourage people to participate to 2009 European elections that will be present in all the information spreading by the project (i.e. special section in the web page).
6. to promote gender opportunities as European value for stimulating the feeling of being part of the EU.

Action will be conducted on two levels, regional and European:

1. Creation of around five regional citizen's panels made up of "ordinary citizens" chosen at random in line with the diversity of the population. Each panel will receive information through experts and resource people and will formulate proposals.
2. Delegates from various regional panels will meet to form a European panel and draw up an opinion and recommendations which will be sent to European institutions and diffused widely throughout the civil society.

### **Partners:**

- ASAEL, Spain
- Province of Reggio Emilia, Italy
- Balticfem, interregional organisation, Sweden
- Bydgoszcz, Poland
- ALDA

## **Best practice 2. Pilot training on active citizenship: common work of local authorities and civil society organisations for active citizens**

- **The concept: focusing on local authorities and civil society organisations**

The importance of involving different stakeholders such as local authorities, civil society organizations, groups of citizens and also national and European institutions and authorities in order to improve citizens' participation and consultation has been addressed by ALDA through the promotion of a Pilot Training on Active Citizenship for local authorities and civil society organisations, which is supported by the European Commission. The interest for the development of a pilot training action on the topic of active citizenship may also be defined as a “natural” step for ALDA, which is now committed, after more than a decade of field-work, to “transfer” its knowledge based on its experiences.

This pilot training involves the main actors appointed to the development of the themes connected to citizenship, participation and democracy: local authorities and civil society organizations.

This important focus on the two main actors of the governance at the local level represents one of the strongest point of the pilot training. The relevant and quick changes of the European Union make it more and more necessary to involve citizens in a process fostering the exchange and the debate on the future of the Europe.

Through the promotion of this process at the local level, local authorities and civil society play a key role and their joint commitment represent the condition sine qua non for the development of the local communities.

The cooperation between local authorities and civil society allows the growth of synergies and the promotion of “multiplier effects” which ensure a remarkable impetus for the local community, for its development and for the setting up of participative and democratic processes.

- **The pilot training: a comprehensive and innovative process**

### **Objectives**

The pilot training aims at strengthening knowledge and skills of local authorities and civil society organizations that are interested in the topic of active citizenship and in the European citizenship in particular.

The training action also aims at building new relationships and developing synergies in order to activate new participation and citizenship processes at the local level.

The training aims at giving the participants the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and competencies on:

- knowledge of the Europe for Citizens Programme
- understanding of the concept of informal learning for active European citizenship
- knowledge of participatory issues in different European countries
- intercultural competencies
- skills to gather, select and give information

- skills to present the specific relevant information and ideas to others
- skills to discover, analyse and adequately address needs of potential Programme users
- skills to motivate others
- skills to plan, run and evaluate multiplying projects
- knowledge of lobbying and networking mechanisms
- development of negotiation skills

### **Target group**

The training process is addressed both to representatives of local authorities (elected members, administrators, officers and public employees) and of civil society. Two groups of 10 to 15 people are expected.

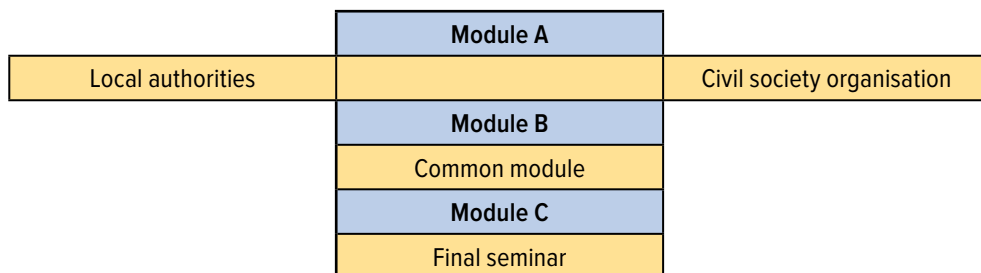
### **Training modules**

The pilot training is subdivided into three different modules.

The first one, module (A), foresees a differed session for local authorities and civil society, in order to encourage a tailor made approach and methodology for the two different targets. The main objective of the first module is to provide participants with the information and the competencies which are necessary to better understand the local context as well as the European one as regards the theme of citizenship, and to become aware of their role and of the instruments at their disposal to promote themselves as active subjects (promoters) at the local and at the European level. The first module also aims at preparing the different target groups for the “action” stage, in which they take part jointly.

Module (B), on the contrary, includes a session which is addressed to both categories, and it represents the «momentum» to discuss topics of common interest among the parties. The main objective is to promote and foster cooperation among the different actors involved at the local level. Module (B) basically represents an «citizenship exercise», namely a meeting where participants test - through debate and discussion - the start-up phase of a project work to be promoted and developed within the local community. The programme of the second module will be defined in details after the first module is concluded, being tailored both on the participants and on the results obtained after the first stage. The main contents of the second module are the following: project work, planning and project design, good practices and case-studies.

The first two stages end with a seminar - module (C) - entitled “Possible meetings” which aim at introducing - and fostering debate - possible situations and case-studies in the field of active citizenship and European citizenship through the involvement of different actors at the European level. It consists in an open meeting - structured and a round table - which involves different European actors (as well as other subjects) on the most important issues in the field of active citizenship and European citizenship. It aims at involving representatives of EU Institutions, mass-media, local and regional authorities, intergovernmental Institutions, National bodies, Non Governmental Organizations... representing the whole enlarged Europe. This ensures a large-scale public occasion aiming at discussing the main issues in the field of active citizenship and to offer to citizens an occasion to debate the themes which are more relevant for them.



- **Innovative elements**

The main innovations and qualifying elements included in the proposal concern the following aspects:

- it is a process and an exercise: the pilot training proposal is not characterized as a “classic” training course, but rather as a process, hypothetically lasting one year, where local authorities and the civil society work together to improve the local governance through the promotion and the development of new and innovative patterns of participation. Furthermore, the proposal represents a “citizenship exercise”, namely a process where participants test a real joint work;
- training methodology / trainers: the training process “Active Citizens” is based on a participatory methodology, where participants play both the role of learners and represent also a resource for the whole process. Trainers, experts at the European level, will cooperate with Officers and Managers of Institutions (European Commission, Council of Europe, etc.) or other important entities and organizations at the European level;
- focus on local authorities and civil society (cross-fertilization): the proposal assumes as priority targets both local authorities - starting from those which are closest to citizens (provinces, municipalities, districts, including consortia and unions of municipalities) – and civil society organizations active within the local community: the training process- initially different and, in the second stage, common for the two main target groups - valorises their peculiarities and encourage the development of synergies and concrete cooperation aimed to promote good governance;
- synergies among different subjects: the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies aims at strengthening and promoting synergies and collaborations among the subjects participating in the training process “Active citizens”; thanks to its network and to its system of relationships, ALDA intends to open this synergic network to other stakeholders at the European level;
- high profile public meetings: the last step of the training process is characterized as a workshop/seminar where the presence of high profile expert at the European level play a facilitating role in promoting dialogue among local authorities, civil society and citizens, in order to foster a debate on the issue of participation and to improve the relations between citizens and local authorities;
- follow-up: the proposal pays a particular attention to the follow-up: it considers the follow-up activity- whose format may vary according to the participants of the different trainings - as the necessary complement in order to encourage the transformation and the transition from the

pilot exercise to a shared and well-established practice at the local level.

- **Pilot training year 1: Partners in 2008-2009**

The first call for proposal was launched in July 2008. The following organisations and members of ALDA have been selected to implement the pilot training :

- Comune di Russi, Italy ([www.comune.russi.ra.it](http://www.comune.russi.ra.it))
- Buon Samaritano, Campobasso, Italy ([www.buonsamaritano.org](http://www.buonsamaritano.org))
- ASAEL, Spain ([www.asael.es](http://www.asael.es))
- Municipal Training Center, Kaunas, Lithuania ([www.savivalda.lt](http://www.savivalda.lt))
- National Forum API, Bulgaria ([www.apiplovdiv.tripod.com](http://www.apiplovdiv.tripod.com))
- LDA Osijek, Croatia ([www.lda-osijek.hr](http://www.lda-osijek.hr))
- CRPRC Studiorum, Macedonia ([www.studiorum.org.mk/en/](http://www.studiorum.org.mk/en/))
- NGO Horizont, Albania
- DIUC, Azerbaijan

## 3.2 ALDA Members and Partners: a growing joint experience

### Introduction

Partners and Members of the Association of Local democracy Agencies have been constantly growing its establishment in 1999. Many different projects and initiatives have been carried out in partnership with numerous stakeholders in the enlarged Europe – local and regional authorities, civil society organizations, etc. – contributing to the growth of the Association both in quantitative and in qualitative terms.

The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary offers us a possibility to have a look back in the past and to present some of the experiences implemented in cooperation with some members during different stages of the life of the Association, from its origins to the opening of the new horizons in Southern Caucasus and in the Mediterranean.

### From the origins...

The first memberships and partnerships of the Association have been developed in the South East Europe, where since the early nineties the Local Democracy Agencies have started their action in the field of active citizenship, democracy, human rights and European integration.

We present the experience of the City of Osijek in Croatia.

### *Osijek, Croatia*

The City of Osijek and many city institutions cooperate with Local Democracy Agency since its establishing in 1993. It was not only the time of building and strengthening of the young Croatian parliamentary democracy but also the time of building and strengthening of awareness about need to shape and implement local democracy as its counterpart. In that light cooperation with ALDA has been fruitful and we can state that the local authorities and their bodies are its natural allies when it comes to advocating the full idea and contents of local democracy as an integral part of democratic processes in mature democratic societies.

Thinking 16 years back on fruitful cooperation with Local Democracy Agency we can proudly name many common manifestations, international conferences and activities that improved cooperation between many of local communities in our region. We put our efforts together to establish the Youth City Council, connected the city of Osijek with the cities of Lausanne (Switzerland) and Tuzla (Bosnia and Herzegovina), organized visits of many European integrations and local democracy experts, and organized marking of the Day of Europe. In the context of Croatian accession to the European Union we consider cooperation with ALDA to be one of the open gates that can contribute to better understanding of local communities' experience in the European union and therefore to strengthening of democratic processes in our local community as well.

### The experience with the LDAs exported in Europe

Thanks to the experience of the Local Democracy Agencies, the Association has gained a relevant and significant knowledge and expertise on local governance, active citizenship and de-

mocracy which has “exported” from South East Europe to Europe.

Nowadays, the network encompasses more than 160 members of different status and size with which ALDA has developed different projects, initiatives and activities at the European level.

It is important to highlight the point of view of the “small” municipalities which succeed, through the cooperation with ALDA, to get engaged at the international level. Moreover, we wish to underline the cooperation established with Association of Local Authorities in Europe, having the specific role of “umbrella organizations” engaged in local governance and local governments issues.

Therefore, we present the experience of Porto Cesareo (province of Lecce, Region Puglia, Italy), a small municipality (5.000 inhabitants) located in Region Puglia, Southern Italy, the cooperation with the Local Councils’ Association of Malta and the Romanian Municipalities Association, bringing the peculiar point of view of local governments association of new Member States.

### ***Porto Cesareo, Italy***

Porto Cesareo is a small tourist centre of Salento, Region Puglia. We got in contact with ALDA when we decided to organize an event which could involve the entire population and give an opportunity’ to take a step forward towards Europe.

Therefore, ALDA supported us to present a “European project”, a citizens meeting together with the Slovak municipality of Jaslovske Bohunici which led to the establishment of a twinning agreement between the two communities.

After this first experience, the exchanges between the 2 communities have continued with success, multiplying thus the possibility for a small community like us to “stay in touch with Europe”.

In these initial meetings the topics discussed were identified among the most vivid topics of European interest: peace and mutual understanding among people, protection of environment, the future of young people and active citizenship in Europe.

There is still a long way to go before a full acceptance of these issues and concepts, but we are strongly determined to reach the important goal of a large multi-ethnic family.

Thanks to the cooperation of ALDA we are no longer on the borders of the world, even if we are situated in the “far” south of Italy. Being member of ALDA, we are every day involved to take part in initiatives and projects of European nature.

Our commitment is their commitment to build a future together!

### ***Association of municipalities, Malta***

The Association of municipalities was the first Maltese association to become a member of the ALDA network in the year 2007, and from then onwards we can say that we never looked back again. We saw ALDA as the ideal international alliance as it gave us an opportunity to have:

- an active participation in different thematic groups concerning different local governance issues
- participation in EU funded projects submitted by ALDA to the European commission and other donors

- a platform for debate in-between its 150 members from 25 different countries
- a direct link between with international organisations such as the Council of Europe and the European Union

Our membership in ALDA resulted in our participation in different projects, among those we wish to highlight two projects: Emanzipar and ALL.4.EU.

The EMANZIPAR project focused on the stimulation for an active participation of young people in the processes of representative democracy at local, national and international level.

ALL.4.EU will focus on the setting up of Citizens Panels, in order to encourage a higher participation at a local level and increase the level of awareness about the importance of actively participating in the construction of Europe.

Furthermore, ALDA gave us the opportunity to widen our horizons as regards partnerships. It enabled us to establish partnerships and alliances with over 150 members in 25 countries, a very important issue for us as an Association and for all the Maltese Local Councils.

### ***Association of Romanian Municipalities, Romania***

The purpose of Romanian Municipalities Association (AMR) consists in promoting and protecting the mutual interests of member municipalities in order to solve and manage the public needs to the benefit of their local communities. Starting with 2007, AMR has a representative office in Brussels. The European projects developed in partnership offered a good opportunity to AMR to connect with civil society and citizens to make their voice and needs being heard and to stress the importance of EU Institutions and values.

Knowing ALDA's activity, we were positively impressed by how the network developed and also in terms of projects that the network has achieved. Within last years AMR and ALDA had been cooperating in view of identifying and submitting for financing some initiatives/projects for the benefit of their members. In 2007-2008 we developed the project "Europe in dialogue with its citizens", having ALDA as a leading partner, under "Europe for Citizens" – "Support for the initiated projects by civil society organizations" financing, having 9 EU Member States partners.

AMR paid special attention to the "Europe in Dialogue with its Citizens" project objectives and implementation for improving the communication among the various actors at different levels to finally know more and participate in the consultation and decision making process concerning local communities' issues. Considering that it is an advantage to be part of such an international network, starting with the year 2009, AMR became a full member of ALDA and will take every opportunity to enhance cooperation within the on-going projects including taking part to the calls for proposals and trainings programs initiated and developed by ALDA.

### **Southern Caucasus: a new challenge**

In 2006 the Local Democracy Agency Georgia was set-up after having implemented many projects and activities in the area in the previous two years. Since 2006 the Southern Caucasus became a new challenge for the Association, in order to create a network of the Local Democracy Agencies in Southern Caucasus.



The first town hosting a Local Democracy Agency is Kutaisi, in the Region Imereti in Georgia. Within 2010, the goal is to open the Local Democracy Agency in Azerbaijan. We present the experience of the first pilot hosting town, Kutaisi, and of an NGO in Azerbaijan which is cooperating with ALDA to set up the new agency.

### ***Kutaisi, Georgia***

In 2003 supported by the Congress of the Council of Europe, the Governing Board of ALDA decides to open the Programme of the LDAs to regions outside the Balkans. In 2004 two fact-finding missions to Georgia takes place including visits to Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Based on the results of missions on 29th of January 2005, ALDA Governing Board accepts a formal approval for the opening of the LDA Georgia and started follow-up contacts with potential partners. 8th of September 2006 LDA Georgia was established in Kutaisi

During a short period of cooperation with ALDA we understand that for small cities like Kutaisi and in general for countries which are in transition period, ALDA is the one of the best partner to be active on European level, to have new partners and be involved in the coalition projects. ALDA is the right way to the European institutions, which is one of the priorities of Georgia as well.

With the support of ALDA and LDA Georgia we implemented several projects in Kutaisi in the field of women's rights, local democracy, fighting against human trafficking, youth projects. One of the best practices was the to organize a fundraising in partnership with Newport-Kutaisi Association for purchasing the heaters for IDP arrived in Kutaisi after Russian-Georgian armed conflict. With their financial support, we provided 117 electric heaters for IDP families.

The added value that we got from the cooperation with ALDA and LDA Georgia is the ways of cooperation between state and non-state actors, how successful and beneficial it can be.

Future of our cooperation is the joint projects we should develop in partnership with ALDA and other partners of LDA Georgia. We hope that our joint efforts will be successful and we can implement many project to support developments in Kutaisi and in Georgia general, as well to support ALDA's enlargement in South Caucasus.

### ***Society of Democratic Reforms, Azerbaijan***

Society of Democratic Reforms (DIUC) started correspondence with ALDA in 2006 and got an encouraging letter from ALDA Director, Mrs. Antonella Valmorbidia to send an official letter of cooperation and ask for membership. Since then, DIUC started to build on its fruitful relationship with ALDA.

DIUC decided its partnership with ALDA to help the local governments and civil society to work together on building bridges between them. ALDA network can with participatory planning for local development to be involved in the strategies of the local governments, which can only be achieved by training more local government representatives and bringing them together with civil society sector.

Society of Democratic Reforms (DIUC) in partnership with local Digital Development NGO implemented a pilot European Citizenship project with ALDA. The first initiative brought together civil soci-

ety and local government in Imishly district of Azerbaijan, where ALDA representatives were present. This was first ever-European citizenship project in Azerbaijan, which was implemented successfully.

ALDA provided opportunities for us to being part of a European network, project proposal development and fund-raising, project coordination and management, Information, facilities and support services.

ALDA methodology of multilateral decentralized co-operation, namely partnerships between the Local Democracy Agencies with local and regional authorities as well as NGOs from all over Europe, really benefits Azerbaijan very much. This helps its integration into European level and learns the other experiences as well as best practices.

Now ALDA and Society of Democratic Reforms (DIUC) work hard to open a Local Democracy Agency in Azerbaijan, which may become a reality already in 2009-2010.

### **Going East: pilot projects**

Besides Southern Eastern Europe and Caucasus, ALDA is being developing pilot actions in Belarus and in the Russian Federation, tackling the institutional issues of the Association.

We present here the experience of the NGO “Lev Sapieha Foundation”, with which we are working in the field of civil society.

#### ***NGO “Lev Sapieha Foundation”, Belarus***

The fruitful cooperation between NGO “Lev Sapieha Foundation” and ALDA started in 2007 when the two organizations started the implementation of the project ASCOBE (“Acting Social Rights in Belarus”). European Commission funded this project. It started in 2007 and finished in March 2008.

We are interested in the establishment of international contacts; in the receiving of information about transformation processes and development in other countries; in studying the experience of development of civil society in other countries.

The overall objective of the ASCOBE project was to strengthen dialogue between civil society groups and local authorities in Belarus through the strengthening of capacities and the provision of opportunities and tools for communication between both stakeholders. More specifically, the project sought to develop the skills and capacities of local authorities representatives, NGO actors, and representatives of vulnerable groups in society. It fostered communication between these groups, in particular concerning the exercise of social and cultural rights. A further aim was to encourage the development of networks of NGOs and civil society groups working in this field in Belarus, thanks also to the exchanges of experiences with European partners. It also sought to encourage grassroots participation and democracy through concrete examples of the exercise of social and cultural rights, thus ensuring the long-term impact of the project.

NGO “Lev Sapieha Foundation” is based in Minsk, Belarus, and works in the field of self-government, civil education (including publishing activities). The Foundation has experience of co-operation with the Congress of Local and Regional authorities of the Council of Europe. This is the connection link to ALDA.

Cooperation with ALDA gives a possibility to establish new international contacts (Aid Programs Advisory Centre (APAC), Poland; the municipality of Monfalcone (Italy). Thanks to this cooperation we can receive qualified expert aid from Italian, Polish and Lithuanian experts. Such International network as ALDA gives possibility to come to a qualitatively new level of contacts, information and exchange of experience.

ASCOBE was realized thanks to the strong commitment of all the partners. ALDA was the leader of the project with the main partner NGO "Lev Sapieha Foundation", Belarus. The other partners were: the Municipal Training Centre (MTC), Lithuania; Aid Programs Advisory Centre (APAC), Poland; the municipality of Monfalcone, in Italy; the province of Trento, in Italy. MTC and APAC are ALDA partners for 10 years and implemented several projects in cooperation with ALDA. They have experience in Belarus and they have a geographical interest in cooperating with Belarus.

Our next joint project "Reinforcing Actions of capacity building for civil society (REACT)" started in March 2009. It is directed at the development and practical implementation of civic initiatives in Belarus. We are hoping that our cooperation will develop successfully. In further cooperation with ALDA we are hoping to implement a project aimed at the development of local self-government in our country.

### 3.3 Best practice from the LDA-s

Behind every partnership cooperation programme there are numerous people with their needs, expectations and interests. Since the establishment of the first LDA in Subotica, as early as in 1993, and successive establishment of LDA-s in the cities of Osijek, Sisak, Verteneglio, Prijedor, Zavidovici, Mostar, Niksic, Nis, Tbilisi, Gjilan, Nis, Shkodra, the projects that have been developed were the result of genuine needs, interests and expectations of at least three stakeholders:

- the local community
- host city authorities
- network of international partners

Connecting the three main stakeholders through partnership and twinning within international decentralized cooperation programmes has become the main strength of LDA-s that have evolved into an effective tool put at the disposal to the host city authorities. Over the past fifteen years hundreds of project portfolios have been developed, thousands of project activities implemented and countless people to people exchanges taken place all across Europe. In many ways, LDA-s have become a unique institutionalized model of a local registered organization connecting local authorities and civil society enabling pro-active approaches in meeting the challenges of modern European concept of good governance.

As ALDA statutory members, LDA-s have developed necessary administrative capacities for implementing multi-annual collaborative projects involving them all. However, a long standing expertise and practical experience at grass-root level enabled not only their sustainability, but also their ability to work together on country based, cross-border or action based level. Delegates are identified as NGO practitioners, actively participating in public and political life of their local communities. The network behind them makes their work distinctive from other NGO-s and provides every LDA with a true source of legitimacy.

Thematic issues covered reflect these specific needs and range from democratic citizen participation in policy and decision - making, intercultural governance, provision of municipal services, local economic development strategies, while here presented are some of the most successful best practice and case studies of co-operation programmes implemented. In many ways, each of the LDA-s has over the years attained its specific "local" identity, but all of them have been recognized as promoters of European values supporting the local self-governments and getting the citizens of the countries closer to EU integration perspective.

#### **LDA Albania**

##### ***A new member of the network to support local democracy development in Albania***

LDA Albania was launched in September 2008., as the result of an initiative of the host city authorities in Shkodra and ALDA network members. Collaborative action planning starts with organization of the international conference on decentralization in Western Balkans, comparative analysis and exchange of local practice on the experts' and practitioners' overviews of the present challenges and future perspectives of the process of decentralization in the region. Particular focus is on the role of local self-governments and the challenges they face within a wider framework of national legislative systems.

## LDA-s in Bosnia and Herzegovina

### *Post-conflict reconciliation, local sustainable development*

LDA Mostar, Prijedor and Zavidovici are mostly engaged in intercultural dialogue, good local governance in multiethnic local communities and traditionally in local sustainable development programmes.

Apart from creating The Mostar Resource center for Democratization mainly intended to support the intercultural dialogue among the secondary school students in city of divided ethnic communities, LDA is included in post-conflict reconciliation process through training and exchange activities. A comprehensive confident building measures programme has been developed aiming at improved quality teaching on human rights, capacity building for students' councils on intercultural education.

Integrated approach to post-conflict reconciliation in multiethnic local communities has been persistently implemented by LDA Prijedor and Zavidovici through developing intercultural competences for different local target groups. "Prijedor – past and present", "Circle of memories" are just examples of awareness raising activities carried out in collaboration with LDA Prijedor partner network.

Local Sustainable development programmes, such as "TAJAN - the monument of nature", developed and implemented in close collaboration of all LDA Zavidovici partners represents a comprehensive set of long-term activities that resulted in legislative regulation of one of the most beautiful protected nature's parks in Bosnia and Herzegovina today. Co-operation established with respective institutions in Brescia and based on strong involvement of local community in Zavidovici. In addition, the LDA Zavidovici is implementing a wide range of activities in support to local economic development through developing entrepreneurial skills for the local farmers.

LDA Prijedor has been active in urban regeneration programmes, including the infrastructure development of the city center in close collaboration with Italian partners.

## LDA-s in Croatia

### *Capacity building for EU integration, local sustainable development*

LDA-s in Croatia have implemented a wide range of capacity building activities for EU integration intended for local authorities and civil society. Local Democracy Agency Sisak has become known for its long standing gender equality programme, both through empowering women's groups for local economic development in rural areas and an SOS phone line against domestic violence in urban areas. Firm co-operation has been established with Sisak-Moslavina County, while women entrepreneurial skills developed for ethno tourism in Hrvatska Dubica municipality as early as from 1998. Project activities include also the reconstruction of an ethno house as **memorabilia**, with **handicrafts and the souvenirs**. The **Ethno House** has been restored into a **resource centre for ethno tourism** in Hrvatska Dubica and will serve as a business incubator for tourist development of the area. Beside that LDA Sisak will organize business and strategic **trainings** for the women, **educational glass painting workshop** and will conduct monitoring and consulting through all the fazes of the project.

LDA Verteneglio operates as a local sustainable development actor closely collaborating with Istria regional authorities contributing to exchange of best practices on local economic development issues with the focus on sustainability and environment protection. A comprehensive capacity

building for municipal administration has been implemented to strengthen institutional cooperation among local authorities in the countries of the Adriatic Basin. For the purpose of bringing to the territory some best practices for the benefit of a sustainable economic development of the area, the training workshops in Verteneglio gather the project partners from Italy, Croatia and Bosnia to develop common strategies of municipal authorities in valorization of local cultural heritage, of rural tourism and of sustainable growth.

EU Corner in the municipal library in Verteneglio was launched as a specific training and resource center.

In the frame of its project “From Synergy and Social Cohesion to Development of Rural Tourism” Local Democracy Agency Osijek organized a Fair of Old Customs and Crafts in Erdut municipality. This project funded by the National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, Croatia, is a part of the LDA Osijek’ programme of fostering of rural development. This year’s Fair is a third fair in a row initiated and organized by LDA Osijek in cooperation with Erdut municipality, Tourist Association of Erdut municipality and implemented thanks to a huge voluntary contribution of local inhabitants and local stakeholders. In addition, the activities are aimed at re-establishing of trust, communication and cooperation in a post-conflict society, largely composed of Croats, Serbs and Hungarians. Capacity building programme has been developed in support to local economic development through skills-clinics for proactive approach and diversification of income-generating activities through rural tourism initiatives.

Promoting the local cultural heritage resulted also in publishing activities of LDA Osijek: Legends from Erdut Region contains stories and customs preserved in family tradition of the communities in Aljmas, Erdut, Dalj, Bijelo Brdo.

## **LDA Montenegro**

### ***Promoting human/minority rights in local communities through intercultural dialogue***

Establishing the School for democracy and dialogue as well as the capacity building for human/minority rights in local communities are the core activity of LDA Montenegro. Local youth groups, experts, representatives of minority communities, local self-governments are included in training programmes on diversity management and leadership skills taking place on regular basis over the last several years. Publishing activities and the multilingual Handbook on minority rights in the Montenegrin Constitution was prepared in co-operation with local and international partners as an overview of good local practice.

## **LDA-s in Serbia**

### ***Capacity building for EU integration, intercultural competencies, local sustainable development strategies***

#### **LDA Central Serbia**

Working closely with its partners’ network and the host city of Nis, LDA Central Serbia has developed co-operation projects with cities of Kragujevac, Kraljevo and Leskovac with the focus on the capacity building and awareness raising for EU integration: Balkan in Europe programme was designed as a comprehensive set of training activities in support to exchange of good local practice

with newly acceded EU countries.

Capacity building for improved provision of municipal services in the sector of social welfare, participatory development planning process and implementing local environment protection strategies are the priority areas of activities agreed by the partners' network.

A multi-annual capacity building for local waste management strategy included a large scale research work, awareness raising campaign, technical support component implemented in close collaboration with Canton Geneva and city of Suresnes.

Youth Information Centre Nis – established in close co-operation with the host city authorities operates now as a Youth resource center intended for promotion of EU Youth in Action and EVS programmes. Youth groups actively involved in project development and contributing to their active participation in local public and political life.

EU in the Balkans – Balkans in EU – the media project designed to produce authentic documentaries, improve quality media reporting and struggle against stereotypes in inter-ethnic relations in a post-conflict society.

#### **LDA Subotica**

LDA Subotica has developed a wide range of capacity building activities in support to good intercultural governance:

Local partnerships for tolerance – capacity building for improved co-operation of local neighborhood communities and civil society in multicultural environment, connecting Subotica and the city of Wolverhampton. The Handbook on Tolerance was designed as a specific overview of recently established municipal institutions whose successful performances largely depend on participation of civil society and that are dealing with human/minority rights protection. This EU/EIDHR supported programme was intended for local elected and appointed councilors and local civil society organizations to help improve citizen participation at the tier of local-self-government closest to citizens.

The most important outcome – city Subotica joined the network of twelve European Intercultural cities, the joint Programme of the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

EU Information days – a series of public events, exhibitions, concerts, round tables, organized annually to mark the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, the Day of Europe in co-operation with the host city authorities, designed as an awareness raising campaign and an opportunity to promote EU integration process.

#### **LDA Georgia**

***Network of partners in action for improved participation of women and youth in public and political life, humanitarian actions and aid distribution***

LDA Georgia relies on a strong network of local and international partners committed to capacity building for democracy, human rights and rule of law. Networks established for implementing the programme Factory of cultural managers in support to improved women's participation in public and political life has become an exemplary long - standing activity of LDA Georgia.

### **ALDA actions for strengthening of LDA-s**

ALDA has invested parallel efforts in strengthening the network and every individual LDA. Different approaches have been applied ranging from enhancing the network communication, collaborative project development, training programmes for LDA Delegates or staff members, thematic groupings of LDA-s and the new partner search activities. In order to improve the grounds of each LDA sustainability, more recently two additional approaches have been applied: LDA external assessment process based on good governance comprehensive performance measurement system (Key lines of Enquiry – KLOE) used in UK, as well as the annual joint thematic trainings for the Delegates and Lead partners. In many ways, the sustainability of the network and of each and every LDA depends much on innovative capacity building approaches within ever changing circumstances of both local and regional context. Therefore, experimenting and innovations in managing the network for the benefit of both ALDA and the LDA-s have become a widely accepted approach for ensuring the sustainability.





*Conference on '10 years of democratisation process in South Eastern Europe', ENA, Strasbourg*



*TACEP first steering committee in Sisak, Croatia, November 2008*



*Module A of the pilot training on Active citizenship in Probishtip, Macedonia, February 2009*



*Interactive exercises among the participants during a training session, Belarus*



*Ms Lalumière and Mr Bohner during a EU MAYOR round table*



*Speakers from a EU MAYOR round table*

## 4. Lessons learned and wish for the future



Over the past ten years, we have learned a lot about the Balkans and its people. We have witnessed a lot through our personal experience and struggle. To the best of our capacities, we have succeeded to understand a lot about the past conflicts through documents, but even more while meeting the people all over the “wider Europe”. What we know for sure, is that citizens in their local communities are struggling today for peace and democracy and that they would like to see Europe lead the process towards this common goal.

We also learned that the global challenges are being met with a special consideration in respect with the local level, and that a worldwide peace is not possible if the mechanisms for its preservation are not effective in one’s own local community. Mutual respect and tolerance are sometimes an exercise much more difficult to be implemented with one’s fellow citizens and with those one knows very well, rather than with a sophisticated action plan overseas. Giving a real value to unique and local stories and experiences is one of the solution to help balance democratic challenges with different starting points and elements. Local issues imply a sense of direct responsibility which is not possible if the decision-making has no direct accountability in relation with citizens.

We learned that Europe is different and that it is a special place to live in the world. We understood that there is a very strong need of balance between public and private issues, market economy and welfare state, global plan and strong and effective local participation and involvement. Europe is for all of us an answer to conflict and war inside the border of Europe and, we do hope, outside the borders. European institutions do not have to be considered as ministries or top down organizations since, only the perception of being negotiators and facilitators of process of common living will make them function and respected by all the communities.

We learned that Europe needs to implement every day the extremely difficult task of being united in diversity. Diversity is part of our success and our existence: language, culture, religion, part of history. But, still, we feel we are European and not something else. We realized that Europe is us, every day and that each and every citizen must feel involved in this project.

We learned that participation and active involvement is a way of living and seeing politics. It is not just related to a single activity or hobby. It implies responsibility, interest, engagement, active listening and respect. Participation and sharing decision making process definitively lead to “better” solution in the long run for the whole community. We learned that the citizens are not just “consumers” of goods and news, but also actors of their own life and community, at the local level

and then also at the European and international level.

We learned that empowerment of civil society is the most powerful means against rigid and non democratic systems. Supporting the civil society is to helping a natural development of democracy, sense of responsibility and social welfare.

We learned that local governments, or cities, or “polis” are a fundamental “unit” of a society, while their existence go back in time and they lived through dreadful situations and wars. They are centers of identities and culture. They developed and continue to do so, the tools for common living, for improving economy and participation. They are natural actors of democracy.

We learned that a single group of motivated people (if not a single citizen) can raise an issue and, while being focused and concentrated on the target, can make a change in its community starting from a single best practice. These natural leaders need to be recognized and supported even though not in politics, *stricto sensu*, which usually does not recognize them, or even fights against them.

We often think that if the LDA-s had not existed, we should have invented them. Entire concept designed is still in action. It is self-sustainable, manageable and efficient. It relies on the strength of a large number of good and committed people. The need of participation, involvement of citizens and cooperation with local authorities is in constant demand all over the world and the responses given by the European actors seem to lead the process in terms of capacities and models. ALDA and the LDA-s tackle one of the most crucial theme to be addressed by the today’s system of politics : how to make democracy efficient and respectful of human rights and diversity in a changing and complex world.

The Association of the Local Democracy Agencies needs to face different challenges, but we have now the tools and experience to address them with a full awareness and understanding of the tasks : loose network, difficulties in providing resources, requests often not in balance with the capacities, long-term and therefore difficult commitment of political institutions, addressing new platforms and geographical areas. But, we learned that probably, we are really capable to make the difference and see how we have succeeded to change people’s life for better. It make us all motivated to continue.

Antonella Valmorbida  
*ALDA Director*

## List of ALDA projects

### For the 10 years of activities

102	projects
9.651.035	in Euro the ammount of the projects run
1.040.000	in Euro cofunding from parnters for activities
12	LDAs run nowadays
61.290	people directly addresses by the activities
5.820.000	in Euro estimated activities fundraised and managed by the LDAs
15.470.135	in euro the whole resources managed the whole network

PROJECT TITLE	Initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
1 Transborder cooperation and interethnic dialogue in SEE 3 years	2000	The programme promoted pilot activities for the support of transborder cooperation and interethnic dialogue in the LDAs of Verteneglio/Bronjga, Sisak, Osijek, Plijeđor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid	Finlande	State/via COE	200000		LDAs of Verteneglio/Bronjga, Sisak, Osijek, Plijeđor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid	young people, journalists, citizens	300
2 Support from Partners for the LDAs 2000	2000	Support from Partners	Partners	local authorities	1161		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
3 congress support staff (one dedicates staff for 10 years)	2000					200000			
4 Support from the Congress 2000	2000	Support from the Congress	Congress	COE	138000		ALDA and LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
5 Support from the Congress 2001	2001	Support from the Congress	Congress	COE	137000		ALDA and LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
6 Support from Partners for the LDAs 2001	2001	Support from Partners	Partners	local authorities	5000		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
7 Transborder cooperation and interethnic dialogue in SEE 3 years	2001	The programme promoted pilot activities for the support of transborder cooperation and interethnic dialogue in the LDAs of Verteneglio/Bronjga, Sisak, Osijek, Plijeđor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid	Switzerland	State/via COE	270000		LDAs of Verteneglio/Bronjga, Sisak, Osijek, Plijeđor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid	young people, journalists, citizens	300
8 Support to Civil Society Leadership Year I	2001	Leadership capacity for NGOs and local authorities	Local Government and Public Reform Initiative	Foundation	581000		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	400
9 Confidence Building Measures	2001	Interethnic dialogue LDAs	COE	COE	37440		LDAs of Verteneglio/Bronjga, Sisak, Osijek, Plijeđor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid	local authorities and civil society groups	500
10 Development of the LDA in CSS, Montenegro and Kosovo I	2001	The three-year programme supported various activities of the LDAs Central and Southern Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro, among them the opening of the three Agencies themselves	Ireland/Via COE	State	267000		Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo	local authorities and civil society groups	500
11 Summer school participants	2002	Advanced Training Seminar for Young Political Leaders	participants	Individuals	12000		FRYOM	Authorities, young people	30

PROJECT TITLE	initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
12 Confidence Building Measures	2002	Interethnic dialogue LDAs	COE	COE	25000		LDAs of Verteneglio/Brtonigla, Sisak, Osijek, Prijedor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid	local authorities and civil society	500
13 Contribution Congress for interpretations	2002		Congress	COE	20000				
14 Support to Civil Society leadership Year II	2002	Local government capacity building for Local authorities	Local Government and Public Reform Initiative	Foundation	68272		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	400
15 Transborder cooperation and interethnic dialogue in SEE 3 year	2002	The programme promoted pilot activities for the support of transborder cooperation and interethnic dialogue in the LDAs of Verteneglio/Brtonigla, Sisak, Osijek, Prijedor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid.	Liechtenstein	State/via COE	56000		LDAs of Verteneglio/Brtonigla, Sisak, Osijek, Prijedor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid	young people, journalists, citizens	300
16 Transborder cooperation and interethnic dialogue in SEE 3rd year 3 years	2002	The programme promoted pilot activities for the support of transborder cooperation and interethnic dialogue in the LDAs of Verteneglio/Brtonigla, Sisak, Osijek, Prijedor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid.	Basel Stadt	Local Authority	58000		LDAs of Verteneglio/Brtonigla, Sisak, Osijek, Prijedor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid	young people, journalists, citizens	100
17 Support from Partners for the LDAs 2002	2002	Support from Partners	Partners	local authorities	30000		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
18 Support from the Congress 2002	2002	Support from the Congress	Congress	COE	138000		ALDA and LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
19 Support from the Congress 2003	2003	Support from the Congress	Congress	COE	105000		ALDA and LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
20 Conference Bari	2003	The main focus of the event was the development of an active involvement and efficient cooperation in the Adriatic region between local authorities, universities, agencies, NGOs and associations which have been active for a long time in concrete initiatives of promotion of local democracy.	Region Puglia	Local authority	11000		Bari, Italy	local authorities, universities, agencies, NGOs and associations	550
21 Support from Partners for the LDAs 2003	2003	Support from Partners	Partners	local authorities	35000		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
22 contribution congress for publications	2003		Congress	COE	10000				

PROJECT TITLE	Initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
23 Support to Civil Society Leadership Year III	2003	Communications skills for local authorities and civil society	Local Government and Public Reform Initiative	Foundation	52580		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	400
24 EU Mayors	2003	The project aimed at making local communities in the old and new EU member states aware of the benefits and challenges of the EU enlargement process which was completed for the first ten new member states in May 2004.	European Commission	EC	283000	80000	England, Ireland, Italy, France, Poland and Lithuania	Mayors and local elected officers	150
25 Congress support premises (one room dedicated since 2003)	2003					225000			
26 Confidence Building Measures	2003	Interethnic dialogue LDAs	COE	COE	25000		LDAs of Verteneglio/Bronjiga, Sisak, Osijek, Pijedor, Zavidovici, Slobotica and Ohrid	local authorities and civil society	500
27 Local Economic Development in SEE I	2003	Training seminars on local economic development for the LDA staff. 11 development projects were identified that received the support of the local host authorities of the LDAs.	France	State	100000	30000	Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro	Young entrepreneurs, LDAs Staff	450
28 Italian Cities for the Cities of the Balkans	2003	The programme aims at identifying cooperation possibilities in the area of public utilities and action planning between Italian towns and other local authorities from the Balkans with the objective to improve and modernise public services in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro.	ANCI/Italy	State	450000		Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro	Local and regional authorities	1000

PROJECT TITLE	initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
29 Capacity Building for Local Authorities and Civil Society in SEE	2003	Foster the democratization process in Southern and Eastern Europe by building up capacities and strengthening institutions as well as organizations through training of trainers for local authorities and NGOs.	ANCI/Italy	State	1300000	158000	Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	Local elected officials of the Cities and Regions of Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo, FYROM; civil servants of local authorities; community leaders of youth groups; community leaders of civil society	2800
30 Confidence Building Measures	2004	Interethnic dialogue LDAs	COE	COE	2500		LDAs of Verteneglio/Britonigla, Sisak, Osijek, Prijedor, Zavidovići, Subotica and Ohrid	local authorities and civil society	500
31 Waste management and sustainable environment capacity building 1st year	2004	The project aims at raising awareness among local authorities through education of pupils and citizens on waste and its adequate treatment and, initiating of household and packaging waste selective separation process in neighbourhood communities and schools.	Geneva Canton/ City	Local Authorities	48100	15000	Serbia	local administrations, young people and students, teachers, media	300
32 Support from Partners for the LDAs 2004	2004	Support from Partners	Partners	local authorities	46700		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
33 Training for local authorities and NGOs	2004	It aimed to build up capacities and to strengthen institutions as well as organisations through training for local authorities and NGOs. Furthermore, the training programme at addressing young people and to raise their participation in the decision-making process at the local level. Conflict prevention and solution as well as supporting measures for a peaceful reconciliation are also topics dealt with during the training session.	NGOs different	NGO	6000		LDAs, NGOs, Authorities	Future trainers	150
34 Youth Entrepreneurship in SEE	2004	The programme intends to foster local economic development and youth entrepreneurship, topics which were chosen as priorities by the LDAs.	Norway	State	200000		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro) and Italy	young entrepreneurs	450



PROJECT TITLE	Initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
35 Support from the Congress 2004	2004	Support from the Congress	Congress	COE	1000000		ALDA and LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
36 Contribution for General Assembly in Barcelona	2004	ALDA annual General Assembly	Barcelona Municipality	Local authority	4000		Barcelona	ALDA Members	200
37 Project for Disable people in Montenegro	2004	Initiative in disability field because of the discrimination faced by disabled people. The aim of planned activities was promotion of equal opportunities, awareness of rights of disabled and prevention of risk of exclusion.	Region Friuli Venezia Giulia	Local authority	9000		MONTENEGRO	Civil society, disabled people	150
38 Active Citizenship in Europe - 2004 - The participation of Civil society in the decision making process at the local level- A european added value	2004	To conduct further research among partners and members in how far the participation of citizens in local decision-making is a common European value, what they do to promote it and what kind of differences exists between the countries.	European Commission	EC	35000	5000	EU Countries, Balkans and Caucasus	Local authorities and NGOs	300
39 Active Citizenship in Europe - 2005. The role of local authorities to promote the European Constitution values	2005	To assess in how far local authorities support the values of the European Constitution and how they implement them.	European Commission	EC	35000	2000	EU Countries, Balkans and Caucasus	Local authorities and NGOs	300
40 Event in Berlin	2005	The implementation of activities of the project on the impact of the EU in local governments policies dealing with civil society participation. Event in collaboration with RGRF Germany.	Staatelag	NGO	3000		Berlin	NGOs, LDAs, local authorities, civil society	30
41 Support from the Congress 2005	2005	Support from the Congress	Congress	COE	1000000		ALDA and LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
42 Support from Partners for the LDAs 2005	2005	Support from Partners	Partners	local authorities	80188		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500

PROJECT TITLE	initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
43 «Development of local communities through their involvement in regional development strategies » et « Strengthening of communities in Belarus through their involvement in initiatives of communal management of communal properties	2005	The main objective of this project is to strengthen the dialogue among civil society groups and local governments in Belarus through the improvement of their capacities and training on communication tools.	Italy	State/Via COE	54000		belarus	Civil society organisations	150
44 Waste management and sustainable environment capacity building 1st year	2005	The project aims at raising awareness among local authorities through education of pupils and citizens on waste and its adequate treatment and, initiating of household and packaging waste selective separation process in neighbourhood communities and schools.	Geneva Canton	Local Authorities	80000	10000	Serbia	local administrations, young people and students, teachers, media	300
45 Democratic Citizenship and best practices in Participation of civil society	2005	support the consolidation of local democracy in South-Eastern Europe and improve the overall environment for civil society development	COE	COE	36000		SEE Countries	Young people, civil society organisations, citizens, media	150
46 SEE day in SBG	2005	The information day took place at the Ecole National d'Administration/Centre des Etudes Européennes in Strasbourg . The aim was to take stock of the developments in the Balkans 10 years after the Dayton Agreement in the presence of large international audience.	Congress	COE	5000		Italian, Croatian and Bosnian Municipalities, LDA Sisak, Mostar, Prijedor, Britonjglj, Verteneglio, Osijek, Zavidovici	International Audience	150
47 Local Economic Development in SEE II	2005	To support local economic development through 9 micro-projects, by training animators on local economic development and by the identification of economic partners from France.	France	State	150000	30000	Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro	Young entrepreneurs, LDAs Staff	450
48 MALDHET NET	2005	The aim was to develop new social, cultural and economic links between various Italian regions and those in the countries of the former Yugoslavia which are based on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea.	Regione Puglia	Local Authority	190000		LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro) and Italy	Local and regional authorities, universities and NGOs.	1000
49 MAHLDE NET	2005	The aim was to develop new social, cultural and economic links between various Italian regions and those in the countries of the former Yugoslavia which are based on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea.	Regione Friuli Venezia Giulia	Local Authority	80000		LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro) and Italy	Local and regional authorities, universities and NGOs.	1000

PROJECT TITLE	Initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
50 EUReaction	2006	To promote the participation of citizens through their implication in "citizens' panels", in particular groups of "ordinary" people who hardly have the opportunity to be in touch with the European institutions. The innovative "open space" methodology was used to trigger discussions among the citizens and to find out which are the most burning issues for them at stake in today's Europe.	European Commission	EC	150000	80000	Poland, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania	EU Citizens	2000
51 Cities for Peace and Democracy in Europe	2006	To bring local authorities and young people together to evaluate and debate their role in the construction of a peaceful and democratic Europe.	European Commission	EC	182000	90000	France, Poland, Italy, Greece	EU citizens, NGOs, local authorities	20000
52 Active Citizenship in Europe - 2006- The impact of the European Union in the local governments policies dealing with civil society participation	2006	Workshops on active European citizenship: to strengthen the dialogue between EU and its citizens with a view to encouraging the emergence of an active and participatory European citizenship; to promote and disseminate the values and objectives of the European Union; to bring citizens closer to the European Union and its institutions and to encourage them to engage more frequently with its institutions; to involve citizens closely in the debate and discussions on the construction of the European Union; to stimulate initiatives by the bodies engaged in the promotion of active and participatory citizenship.	European Commission	EC	350000	2000	EU Countries	EU Citizens, NGOs, local authorities	300
53 MALDHET NET	2006	The aim was to develop new social, cultural and economic links between various Italian regions and those in the countries of the former Yugoslavia which are based on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea.	Regione Emilia Romagna	Local Authority	17000		LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro) and Italy	Local and regional authorities, universities and NGOs	1000
54 Support to the development of the LDA Mostar	2006	convention for the implementation of the LDA Mostar	Liechtenstein	State/Via COE	45000		LDA Mostar	civil society organizations	120
55 Women's rights in Mostar	2006	workshop for tourist guides and creation of MARENJA, a women association that worked on the realization of leaflets on Mostar and his attractions. The aim was to contribute to the employment opportunities in the region and to the self sustained return of a number of returnees	Luxembourg	State/Via COE	27000		LDA Mostar	Women's organization	130
56 Private sponsor for LDA Georgia	2006		Private sponsor	Company	100000		Kutaisi, Georgia	local authorities and civil society	150
57 Support from Partners for the LDAs 2006	2006	Support from Partners	Partners	local authorities	105189		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500

PROJECT TITLE	initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
58 Consultancy	2006		Sviluppo globale	company	1500				
59 Georgia partner meeting	2006		Congress	COE	9000		France, Italy, UK and Georgia	local authorities and civil society	25
60 Young Lawyers Association for women's rights in Georgia	2006	It aimed at organizing one year studying course for Law students in order to teach Women's rights according to national and international legislation.	Switzerland	State	5500		Kutaisi, Georgia	law students	150
61 Support of Local authorities capacity building in Croatia	2006	The project supported the democratization process in Southern and Eastern Europe. The main objectives were to build up capacities and to strengthen institutions. Furthermore, the programme aimed at addressing young people and to raise their participation in the decision-making process at the local level.	ANCI Veneto/ Italy	State	53000	10000	LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro) and Italy	Local and regional authorities	500
62 Le Coppel (price)	2006	The "European Prize Coppel 2006" which awards persons or institutions are honored that are in line with the ideals and visions of supporting a European identity. ALDA received the prize for its long-term involvement in South East Europe and other European regions to support local democracy, human rights and sustainable development.	Foundation Le Coppel	Foundation	12000		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro) and Germany	NGOs, LDAs, local authorities, civil society	150
63 Development LDA Albania	2006	Opening of LDA Albania	Congress	COE	5500		Albania	civil society organizations	50
64 Pear. EU	2006	To strengthen common competencies between the Italian and Balkan public administrations to increase local economic and sustainable development, increase the communication of best practice exchanges and solutions, and in addition, aid in the improvement of communication between administration and citizens.	City of Lecce	Local Authority	95000		Italian, Croatian and Bosnian Municipalities, LDA Sisak, Mostar, Prijedor, Brtonjga-Verteneglio, Osijek, Zavidovici	public administrations	700
65 Youth the Right Direction	2006	It aims at enhancing the promotion and visibility of the Youth programme in SEE and the Southern Caucasus (Georgia). The overall objective is to allow young people to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies, focusing on the training of multipliers and on the development of networks and partnerships.	European Commission	EC	300000	85000	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Montenegro and Serbia, Georgia.	Young people, community leaders of youth groups, LDAs' staff	2500
66 Together - the Balkans in Europe, Europe in the Balkans	2006	To improve the quality of journalism in South East Europe and to foster co-productions between the different countries/entities.	LDACSS	NGO	14000		Serbia, Kosovo and Macedonia	Journalists	550

PROJECT TITLE	Initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
67 Microcredit programme (three years)	2006	Innovative microcredit scheme for the Balkans through public-private sector cooperation to help the region on their way to EU integration and to foster sustainable economic development through start-up businesses. Young entrepreneurs will receive microcredits for their innovative business ideas.	Norway	State	600000		Balkans	Young entrepreneurs	1000
68 Support from the Congress 2006	2006	Support from the Congress	Congress	COE	50000		ALDA and LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro	local authorities and civil society groups	500
69 Support from the Congress 2006	2006	Support from the Congress	Congress	COE	50000		ALDA and LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro	local authorities and civil society groups	500
70 Active Citizenship in Europe - 2007- Europe in Dialogue with its Citizens	2007	To promote public participation in the "construction" of the future Europe, mainly by promoting public debates and workshops to analyse and improve methods and tools employed by the European Institutions to interact with its citizens, in order to enhance and foster citizens' awareness and participation. The action also aims at facilitating and enhancing the "matching" between Europe and citizens, especially focusing on the multiplying role played by civil society groups in the promotion of the European values and European Institutions.	European Commission	EC	22500	5000	Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, France, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania	Eu Citizens, NGOs, local authorities	300
71 Support from the Congress 2007	2007	Support from the Congress	Congress	COE	50000		ALDA and LDAs Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro	local authorities and civil society groups	500

	PROJECT TITLE	initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
72	Decentralised Cooperation Region Lower Normandie and FRYOM (year I and II)	2007	The project aims are: to reinforce the capacity of local authorities to implement decentralisation, to mobilize citizens, to ensure that the development is sustainable; to exchange good practices (on managing public services, participation, sustainable development); to improve the use of ICTs and to use them to bring citizens and institutions closer together; to help Macedonia in preparing for EU accession by providing support in adopting the acquis communautaire; to give a new perspective to youth and to train them to become active European citizens; to contribute to the reduction of negative stereotypes, intolerance and racism; to improve the quality of the media and to facilitate the creation of public opinion based on the value of citizenship; to involve a variety of categories of individuals and organisations in the process, and to reinforce the links between the two territories on a long-lasting basis.	Region Lower Normandie	Local Authority	400000		Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	citizens of FRYOM	1000
73	SPOT/ALDA cooperation	2007	To promote local democracy and cross border co-operation in South Eastern Europe and to strengthen regional cooperation and links between local authorities, their associations and citizens groups, particularly in border areas.	SPOT	International organisation	30000		LDA's Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro) and Italy	local authorities, associations and citizens	300
74	Development LDA Albania I	2007	Opening of LDA Albania	Liechtenstein/Wia COE	State	22500		Albania	civil society organisations	250
75	Preparation programme Lower Normandie	2007	Preparation and implementation of the project	Le Courrier des Balkans	NGO	12000		France, FRYOM	NGOs	120
76	Support from Partners for the LDAs 2007	2007	Support from Partners	Partners	local authorities	144000		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
77	Euromed I	2007	Organisation of the training course "Education and Civilisation". This course aimed at reflecting on Euro-Mediterranean civilisations and the mutual influences they had upon each other and at realising and concretising the links between education and civilisation to check whether they are a driving force or a brake to the qualitative development of a Euro-Mediterranean voluntary service.	Euromed	EC	7000		Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Portugal, Spain, France, Norway, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Sweden, UK	youth workers coming from member states and Mediterranean countries	30

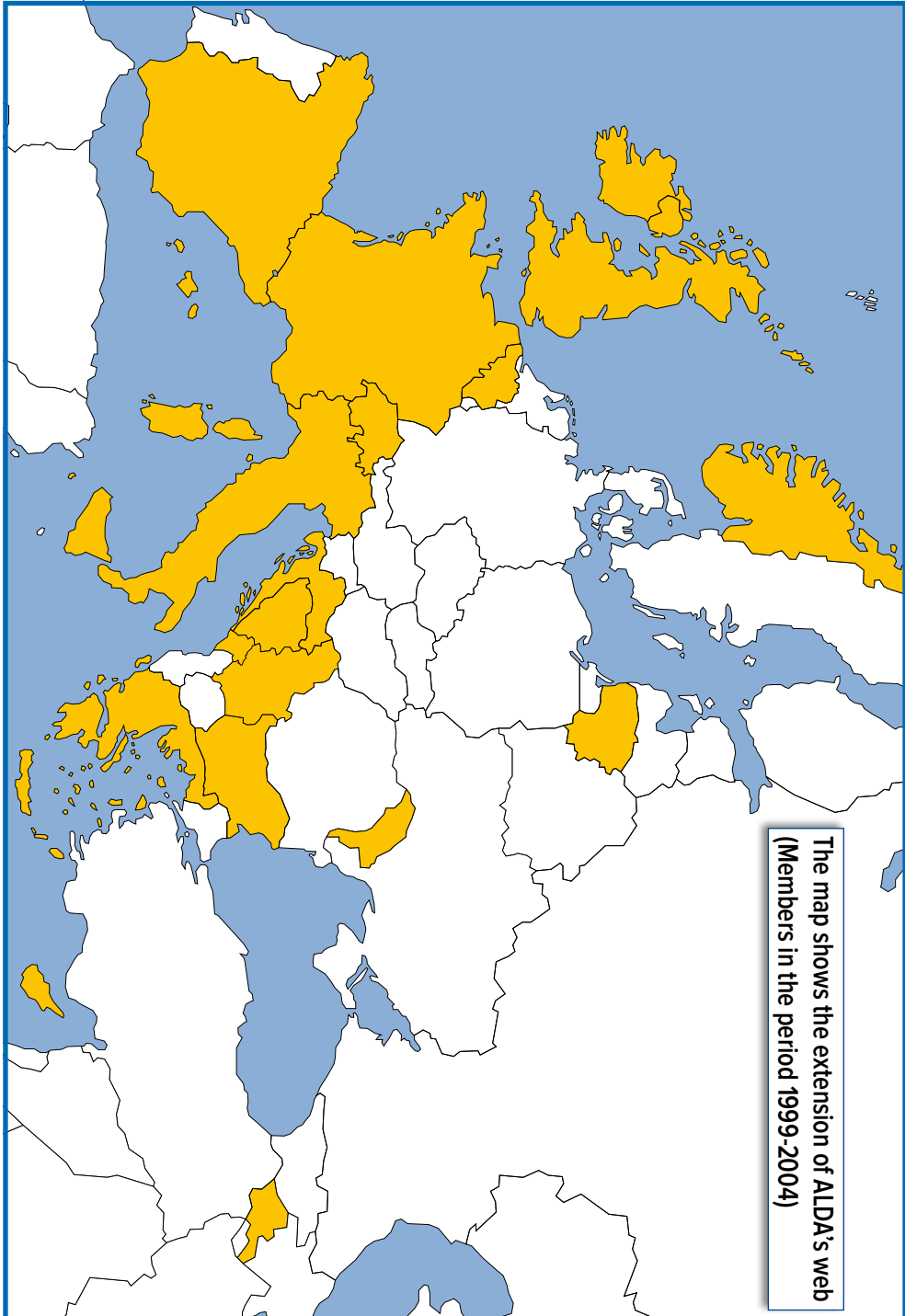
	PROJECT TITLE	Initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
78	ACSOBE - Belarus	2007	The main objective is to strengthen the dialogue among civil society groups and local governments in Belarus through the improvement of their capacities and training on communication tools. In general the project aimed at training and developing capacities of local authorities representatives, NGO groups and representatives of vulnerable groups in Belarus about social and cultural rights, enhancing the capacity of the target groups to encourage grassroots democracy through the concrete promotion of the same rights.	European Commission	EC	89000	4000	Belarus, in particular in the region of Brest, Grodno and Minsk	Civil society organisations	130
79	ACSOBE - Belarus	2007	The main objective is to strengthen the dialogue among civil society groups and local governments in Belarus through the improvement of their capacities and training on communication tools. In general the project aimed at training and developing capacities of local authorities representatives, NGO groups and representatives of vulnerable groups in Belarus about social and cultural rights, enhancing the capacity of the target groups to encourage grassroots democracy through the concrete promotion of the same rights.	Italy	State/via COE	45180		Belarus	Civil society organisations	130
80	Support to the implementation of the law on general principles of organisation of local self government in Russian Federation	2007	The objective of the project is to contribute to the process of enhancing legal, territorial, organizational and economic foundations of local self-government. In the framework of the implemented reform at the federal, regional as well as at the local levels, and to support the Russian Federation Presidential Administration in implementing the new federal law on the new organization of the local self government.	Soges	Company	130000		Russian Federation, Italy	local authorities	200
81	Support for functioning costs	2007		Fornez	NGO	100000				
82	Setting up LDA Georgia - women's rights	2007	This project gives an opportunity to train and exercise representatives of local government and municipalities, newly selected school directors and local mass media representatives for increasing their knowledge in women's rights and to be able to protect not only their own rights but in case of its violation, to supply women with appropriate support and assistance.	Liechtenstein/via COE	State	77000		Kutaisi, Georgia	Women's organization	200
83	Operating grant DGEAC/2008	2008	Support for bodies active at European level in the field of Citizenship	European Commission	EC	2000000		All Alda network	local authorities and civil society groups	1500

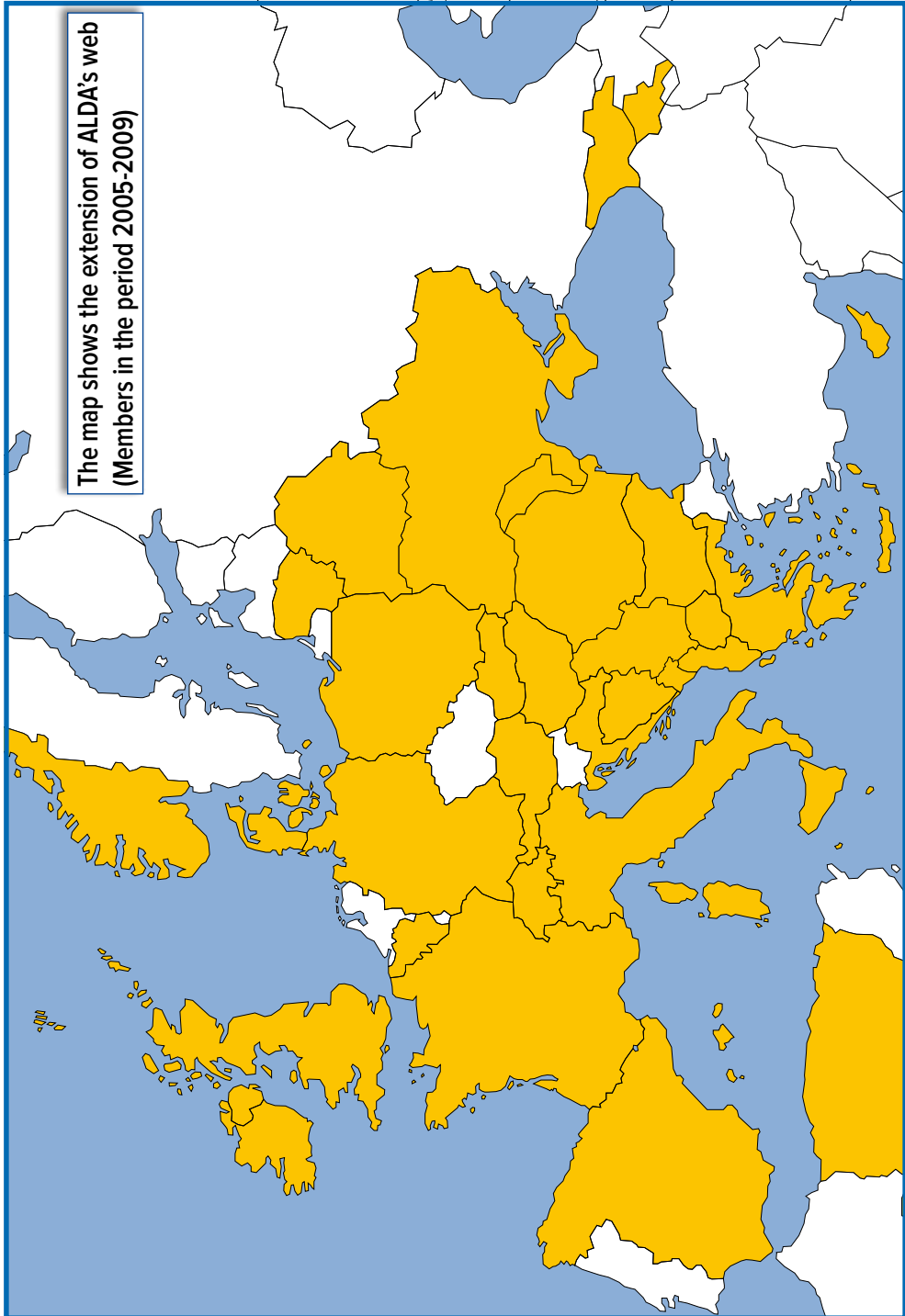
	PROJECT TITLE	initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
84	Pearl Eu	2008	To strengthen common competencies between the Italian and Balkan public administrations to increase local economic and sustainable development, increase the communication of best practice exchanges and solutions, and in addition, aid in the improvement of communication between administration and citizens.	Gorizia	Local Authority	5000		Italian, Croatian and Bosnian Municipalities, LDA Sisak, Mostar, Prijedor, Brtonjga-Verteneglijo, Osijek, Zavidovici	public administrations	70
85	Civil Society for Democracy and Equal Opportunities in Europe	2008	Important legislative tools prevent people in the European Union from being discriminated against on grounds of race and ethnic origin (i.e. Racial Equality Directive), and on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (i.e. Employment Framework Directive). This project is designed to create a forum where the dissemination and debate about issues related to protective legislation in the European Union can be popularized. This project will create several moments of reflection and debate on: 1.European tools to prevent discrimination (policies, directives, campaigns); 2.the impact of European anti-discrimination policies and legislation in civil societies of 3 Member States; 3.the role of civil society organizations in spreading and promoting European values such as democracy and equality for all; 4.Exchange of best practices.	Identità e Dialogo	NGO	6000		Italy, France, Slovakia	Citizens, civil society organisations	120
86	COARPA	2008	This project has the goal of promoting women's employment and entrepreneurship in three Balkan countries (Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina). The main aim is to support the social and economic integration of women by improving their education, qualification and training mainly in the manual sector. The final objective is the creation of an Ethic Label to guarantee that handicraft production respects the European rights of women workers. The products will bear the "CO.AR.PA" label, too.	Comunità Montana Monte Zoveto	Local Authority	14000		Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Italy, France	women's entrepreneurship organisations	200



PROJECT TITLE	Initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
87 Empowering Young People in Kosovo	2008	The project aims at empowering young people living in Kosovo in order to foster their capacities to play the role of "active citizens" in their local community. The main specific objectives of the project are the following: To provide capacity building to young people and youthworkers through trainings on project development and management and on active citizenship; to develop and consolidate networks and partnerships, both at the local and at the international level; in order to strengthen cooperation in the field of youth; to create the basis for a long-lasting fruitful engagement of young people in the life of the local community through the "youth ambassadors' groups".	Directorate General of Political Affairs	COE	28500		Kosovo	Young people, mainly aged 15-25, living in the area of Gjiçan; youth leaders; youth workers; youth organisation and NGOs.	20
88 Euromed II	2008	Organisation of the training course "Education and Civilisation". This course aimed at reflecting on Euro-Mediterranean civilisations and the mutual influences they had upon each other and at realising and concretising the links between education and civilisation to check whether they are a driving force or a brake to the qualitative development of a Euro-Mediterranean voluntary service.	Euromed	EC ?	10000		Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Portugal, Spain, France, Norway, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Sweden, UK	youth workers coming from member states and Mediterranean countries	35
89 EU office	2008		Codess	Company	12000		Italy	local authorities and civil society	150
90 Training for schools	2008	Organisation of training courses on active citizenship for students	Province of Vicenza	local authority	10000		Vicenza, Italy	schools	100
91 Support from Partners for the LDAs 2008 (to be finalized=	2008	Support from Partners	Partners	local authorities	100150		LDAs (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro)	local authorities and civil society groups	500
92 Active Citizenship in Europe - 2008 - Training for Active Citizenship in the EU Enlargement process TACEP	2008	To provide capacity building to Croatian civil society organizations in order to promote their role as "active citizens" in the enlargement process and to provide them new information, knowledge and competences in the field of active citizenship.	European Commission	EC	17200	3000	Croatia	Civil society organisations	50
93 Emanzipar	2008	To reach young Europeans living in rural areas and make them feel European citizens; to promote active European citizenship of young people in rural areas through equal opportunities and the fight against domestic violence; to spread the existing initiatives into the partner countries; to favour European cooperation in the field of youth; to facilitate the participation of disabled young people in the programme.	Asael	Local Authority	11500		EU Countries	Women, disabled young people, citizens	200

PROJECT TITLE	initial year	content	donor	kind of donor	total amount	co-funding	coverage	type of participants	estimated people directly addressed
94 Pearl Eu	2008	To strengthen common competencies between the Italian and Balkan public administrations to increase local economic and sustainable development, increase the communication of best practice exchanges and solutions, and in addition, aid in the improvement of communication between administration and citizens.	Tavagnacco	local authority	13500		Italian, Croatian and Bosnian Municipalities, LDA Sisak, Mostar, Prijedor, Brtonigla-Verteneglijo, Osijek, Zavidovici	public administrations	50
95 All 4 EU/On going	2009	to contribute addressing how to bridge the gap between citizens and the European Union.	Region Istria	Local Authority	20000		Croatia	Citizens	100
96 Bandiar /On going	2009	The aim is to raise awareness about participation of woman in political life in the local level.	A sael	NGO	17000		Italy, France, Poland, Spain, Sweden	young people, ordinary citizens	1000
97 Eclau/On going	2009	To raise the awareness of young people of the EU's action in the field of environment and hence, to bring the EU closer to the youth and improve their role within the democratic system of the EU in strengthening their participation.	A sael	NGO	10000		Italy, France, Spain, Greece, Bulgaria	Young people	50
98 Istria Communicating Europe	2009	Highlight and enhance the role of civil society in Croatia, as promoter of European integration and to broaden the knowledge and understanding of the European Union and the process of European integration in general among Croatian citizens.	Region Istria	Local Authority	5500		Croatia	Civil society organisations	200
99 Development LDA Albania II	2009	Opening of LDA Albania	Liechtenstein/Wa COE	State	22500		Albania	civil society organisations	150
100 Operating grant DGEAC/2009	2009	Support for bodies active at European level in the field of Citizenship	European Commission	EC	220500		All Alda network	local authorities and civil society groups	1500
101 REACT /on going	2009	The overall objective of this project is strengthening the role of NSA and LA in the field of poverty reduction in the context of sustainable development, according to Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed targets	European Commission	EC	177000		Belarus	Non State Actor and Local authorities	25
102 Supporting measures for AC in SEE (on going)	2009	The project aims at promoting town-twinning, focusing in particular on the multilateral decentralized cooperation approach, as a vehicle to foster European integration and to promote, develop and strengthen twinning agreements relations amongst local authorities in the enlarged Europe.	European Commission	EC	45000	6000	Croatia	local authorities and civil society	25





## MEMBERS OF ALDA (2009)

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES

#### Albania

1. Shkodra Municipality

#### Bosnia and Herzegovina

2. Prijedor Municipality
3. Zavidovici Municipality

#### Croatia

4. Brtonigla- Verteneglio Municipality
5. Osijek Municipality
6. Sisak Municipality
7. Zagreb Municipality
8. Istria Region

#### Denmark

9. Odense Municipality
10. Vejle Municipality

#### France

11. Nevers Municipality
12. Sainte Foy-lès-Lyon Municipality
13. Strasbourg Municipality
14. Suresnes Municipality

#### Greece

15. Karditsa Municipality

#### Italy

16. Arese Municipality
17. Bari Municipality
18. Borgo Valsugana Municipality
19. Brindisi Municipality
20. Carovigno Municipality
21. Erchie Municipality
22. Ferrara Municipality
23. Lainate Municipality
24. Lavis Municipality
25. Lecce Municipality
26. Marcon Municipality
27. Mogliano Veneto Municipality
28. Monfalcone Municipality
29. Porto Cesareo Municipality
30. Portogruaro Municipality
31. Preganziol Municipality
32. Ravenna Municipality
33. Reggio Emilia Municipality
34. Rimini Municipality
35. Roma Municipality
36. Roncade Municipality

37. Russi Municipality
38. San Vito dei Normanni Municipality
39. Schio Municipality
40. Thiene Municipality
41. Trento Municipality
42. Trieste Municipality
43. Vicenza Municipality
44. Province of Bari
45. Province of Milano
46. Province of Venezia
47. Province of Vicenza
48. Province of Trento
49. Friuli Venezia Giulia Region
50. Puglia Region
51. Sicily Region
52. Veneto Region

#### Lithuania

53. Kaunas Municipality

#### Norway

54. Buskerud County
55. Nordland County
56. Fauske Municipality
57. Hemnes Municipality
58. Levanger Municipality
59. Saltdal Municipality
60. Sund Municipality
61. Vefsen Municipality

#### Poland

62. Bydgoszcz Municipality

#### Rumania

63. Prahova County
64. Oradea Municipality

#### Serbia

65. Nis Municipality
66. Kragujevac Municipality
67. Subotica Municipality

#### Spain

68. Diputació of Barcelona

#### Switzerland

69. Bellinzona Municipality
70. Lausanne Municipality
71. Lugano Municipality
72. Neuchâtel Municipality

#### United Kingdom

73. Walsall Municipality
74. Wolverhampton City Council

## **INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

- 75. Assembly of European Regions (Belgium)
- 76. CCRE (Belgium)

## **NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

### **Denmark**

- 77. Local Government Denmark

### **France**

- 78. AFCCRE
- 79. Cités Unies France

### **Italy**

- 80. Association of the cities of the Province of Treviso
- 81. AICCRE
- 82. Consorzio dei Comuni Trentini
- 83. CONSVIPO
- 84. TECLA

### **Malta**

- 85. Local Councils Association

### **Norway**

- 86. Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities

### **Poland**

- 87. Warmia e Mazuria Communities Association

### **Rumania**

- 88. Romanian Association of Municipalities

### **Serbia**

- 89. Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities

### **Spain**

- 90. ASAEL (Association Aragonesa of Local authorities)

### **Switzerland**

- 91. Causes communes Ticino

### **United Kingdom**

- 92. Local Government Association

## **NGOS AND ASSOCIATIONS**

### **Albania**

- 93. Help of Children “Focus Center”
- 94. Children in need
- 95. NGO HORIZONT

### **Algeria**

- 96. Algerian Forum for Citizenship and modernisation

### **Armenia**

- 97. Federation of Youth Clubs

### **Austria**

- 98. Europazentrum Wien (EZW)

### **Belarus**

- 99. Lev Sapieha Foundation

### **Bulgaria**

- 100. Balkan Assist Association

### **Croatia**

- 101. Europe House

### **France**

- 102. ALFA Formation
- 103. CIDEFE

### **Georgia**

- 104. Youth Union of “Multinational Georgia”

### **Greece**

- 105. ANKA Karditsa

### **Hungary**

- 106. International centre of European Training – NETE

### **Italy**

- 107. Association for the Zavidovici LDA
- 108. Association Project for Prijedor
- 109. Association Solo Uguali Diritti “S.U.D.”
- 110. Fondazione Opera Campana dei caduti- Progetto Osservatorio sui Balcani
- 111. Progettarte
- 112. Istituto Euromediterraneo – Trieste
- 113. Tavolo Trentino per Kraljevo

### **Lithuania**

- 114. Municipal Training Centre, Kaunas
- 115. Garliava District Community Centre

### **Mexico**

- 116. INICIA

### **Slovakia**

- 117. Professional women

### **FYROM**

- 118. Centre for Regional Policy Research and Cooperation “Studiorum” CRPRC

### **UK**

- 119. Newport Kutaisi Association, Wales UK

## Ukraine

120. Ukrainian Agency for Democracy and Local Self-Government

## OTHERS

### Italy

121. IAL FVG Agenzia Formativa
122. IPRES
123. IUAV - University of Venice
124. University of Padova

### Greece

125. Institute of Entrepreneurship Development

### UK

126. International School for peace studies

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

### Albania

127. Kucana Elda

### Belgium

128. Van Damme Lukas
129. Vinther Per

### France

130. Affholder Sylvie
131. Beck Colette
132. Bohner Ulrich
133. Friederich François
134. Fouconnier Alain
135. Locatelli Rinaldo
136. Vulcano Luigi

### Germany

137. Schley Michael Sebastian

### Italy

138. Bottacin Diego
139. Crastolla Danilo
140. Rizzo Sebastiano

### UK

141. Boorer Malcom
142. Mayer David
143. Masters Owen

### Ukraine

144. Khomra Ivan
145. Zaychykova Vitalina

## STATUTORY MEMBERS

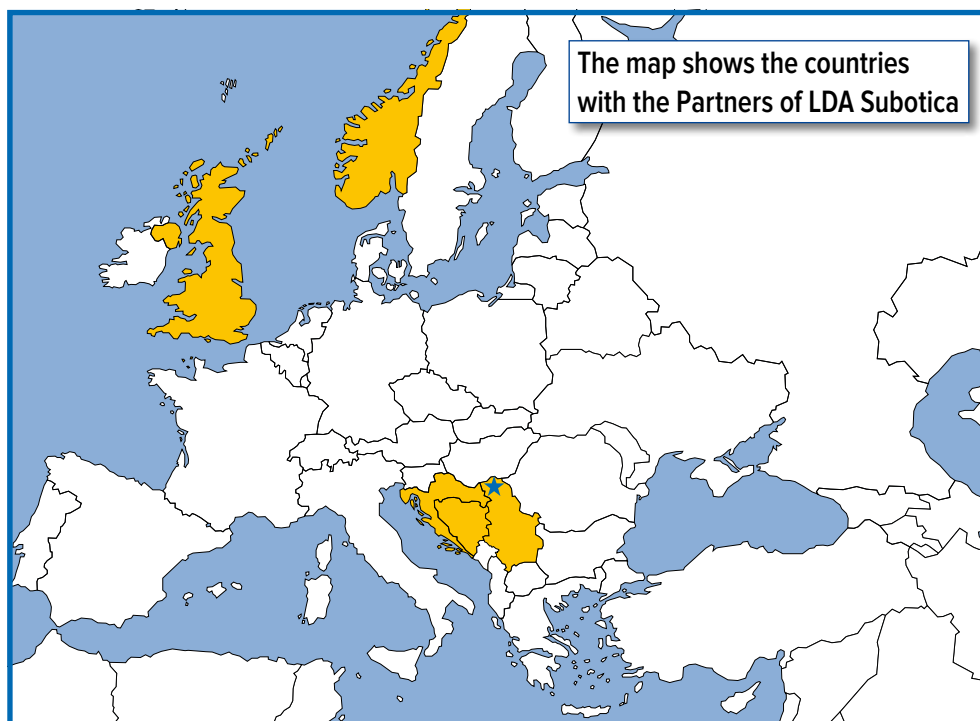
146. LDA CSS
147. LDA Kosovo
148. LDA Georgia
149. LDA Montenegro
150. LDA Mostar
151. LDA Osijek
152. LDA Prijedor
153. LDA Sisak
154. LDA Subotica
155. LDA Verteneglio
156. LDA Zavidovici

## HONORARY MEMBERS

157. ENTO
158. Causes Communes Switzerland
159. NALAS (Network of Associations of Local Authorities in South-East Europe)

## FOUNDING MEMBERS

- Pasche François  
Saur Léon  
Cornaccia Ernesto  
Tullio Fernetich  
Refik Catic  
Diego Bottacin  
Ekrem Sehic  
Imre Kern  
Larissa Kireeva

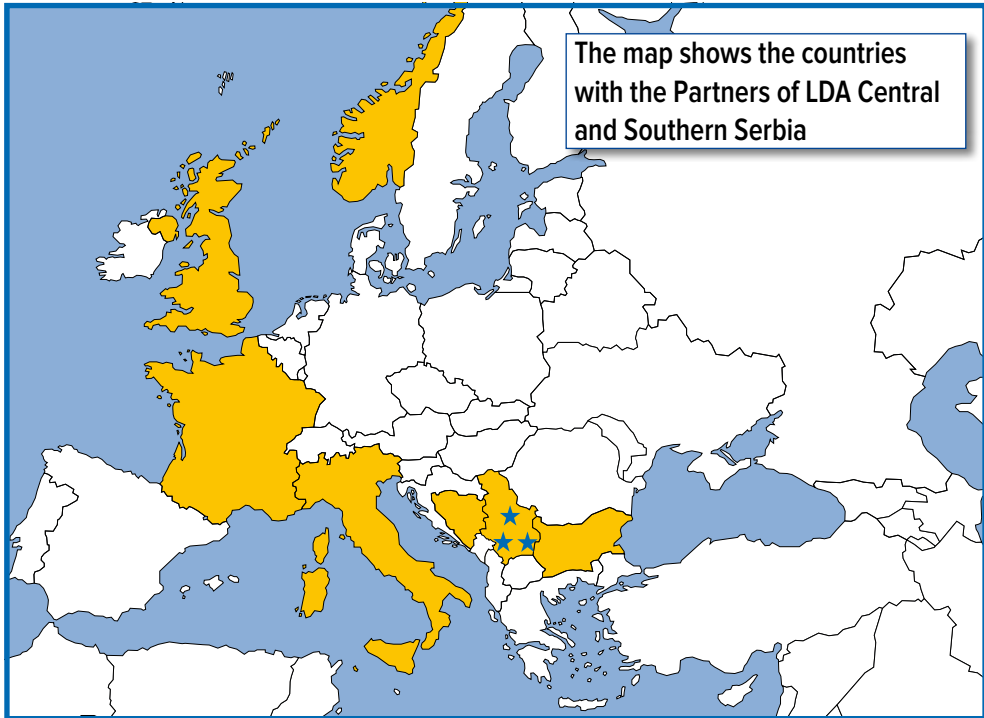


## LDA Subotica

### Partners:

- Wolverhampton City Council – Wolverhampton, West Midlands, UK
- Host city of Subotica – Subotica, Batcka Setentrionale, Serbia
- Minority Rights Group International – London, UK
- Buskerud County Council (Norway), Drammen, Buskerud County, Norway
- Dalmation Solidarity Committee, Split (Croatia), Split, Dalmazia, Croazia
- Centre for Minorities' Rights Protection, Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina

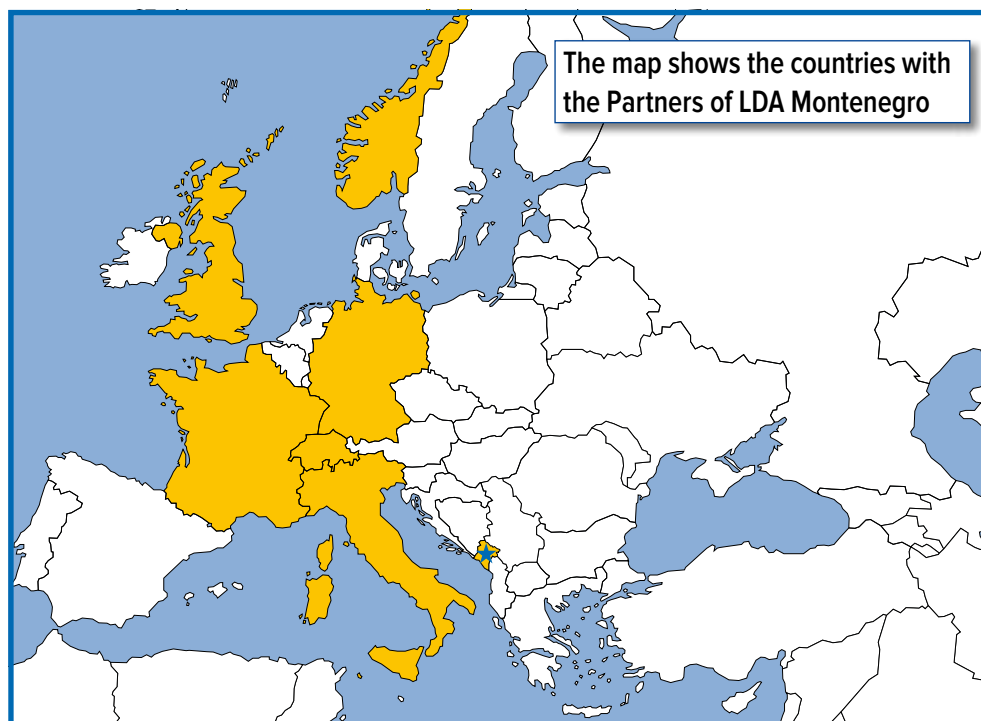




## LDA Central and Southern Serbia

### Partners

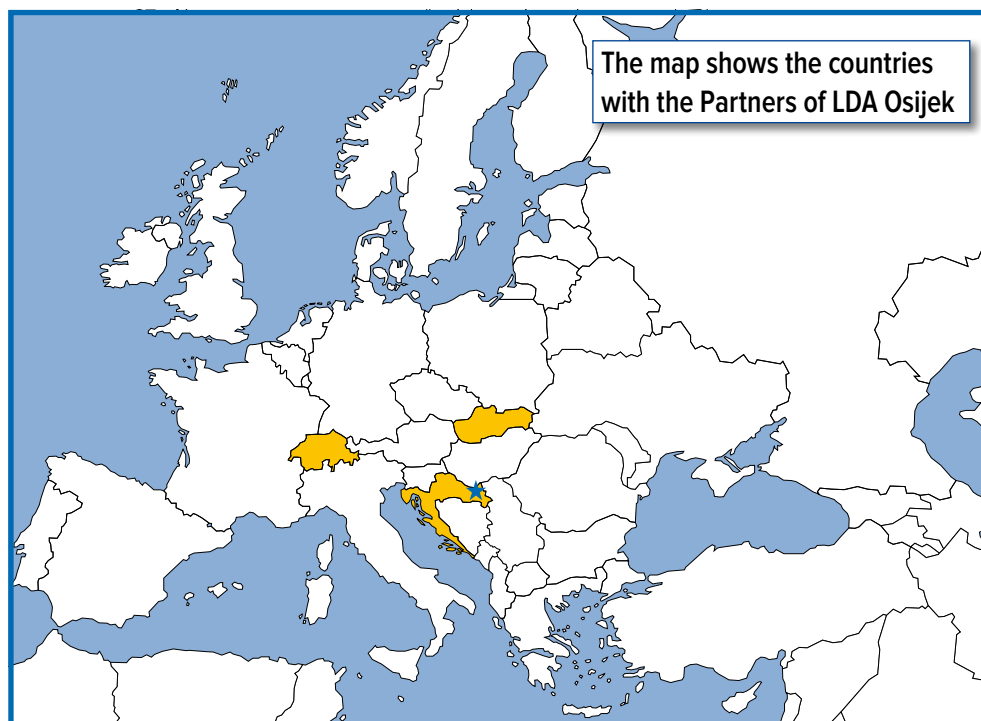
- Suresnes, lead partners (France) - Suresnes, Hauts-de-Seine, Île-de-France, France
- Reggio nel Mondo (Italy) - Reggio Emilia, Emilia Romagna, Italy
- Municipalities of Vefsen and Saltdal - Saltdal, Nordland County, Norway
- Commune of Hemnes - Hemnes, Nordland County, Norway
- Italian Consortium of Solidarity - ICS - Roma, Lazio, Italy (until 2007)
- Kent County Council (UK) - Maidstone, Kent, UK
- Tavolo Trentino con la Serbia - Trento, Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- Codess Sociale Venezia - Venezia, Veneto, Italy
- Cités Unies France; Paris, Ile de France, France
- Balkan Assist Association - Sofia, Sofia County, Bulgaria
- East West Institute - New York, NY, Usa (out of map)
- Cities of Nis, Kragujevac, Kraljevo and Leskovac, Serbia
- Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities - Belgrado, Serbia
- Local Democracy Agency Zavidovici - Zavidovici, Bosnia Herzegovina



## LDA Montenegro

### Partners

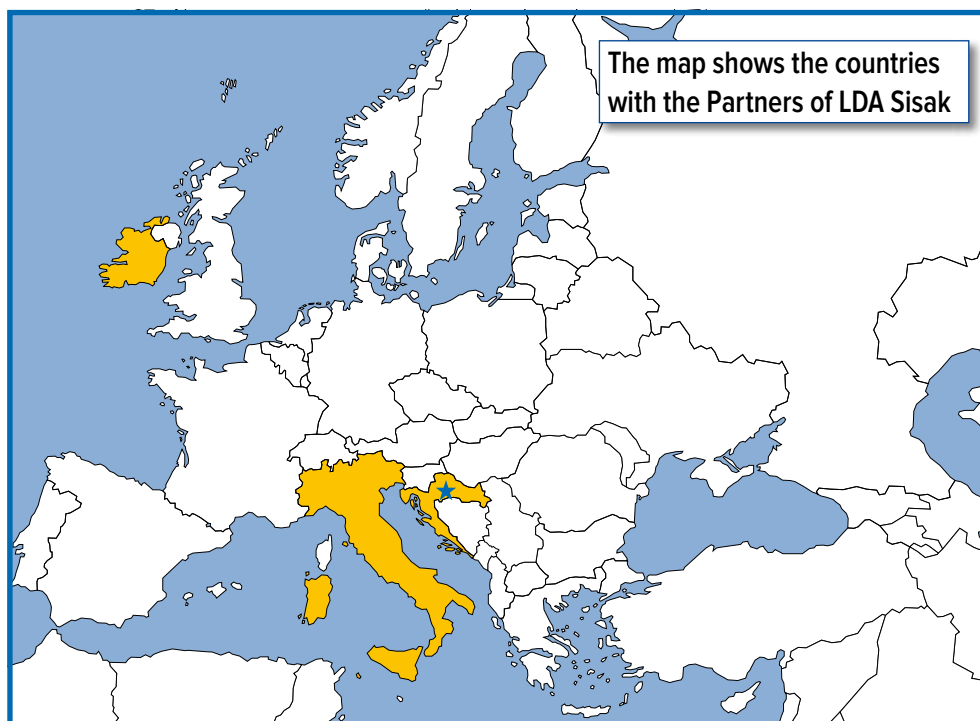
- Region Friuli-Venezia Giulia - Trieste, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy
- East Staffordshire Borough Council - Burton upon Trent, East Staffordshire, UK
- Association Betton- Association Betton-Montenegro, Betton, Bretagne, France
- City of Neuchatel - Neuchatel, Canton Neuchâtel, Switzerland
- City of Ancona, Ancona, Marche, Italy
- City of Lingen - Lingen, Lower Saxony, Germany
- City of Levanger - Levanger, Nord-Trøndelag, Norway
- Cities of Niksic, Kotor and Rozaje - Montenegro
- Union of Municipalities of Montenegro - Podgorica, Montenegro
- Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Montenegro, Podgorica, Montenegro



## LDA Osijek

### Partners

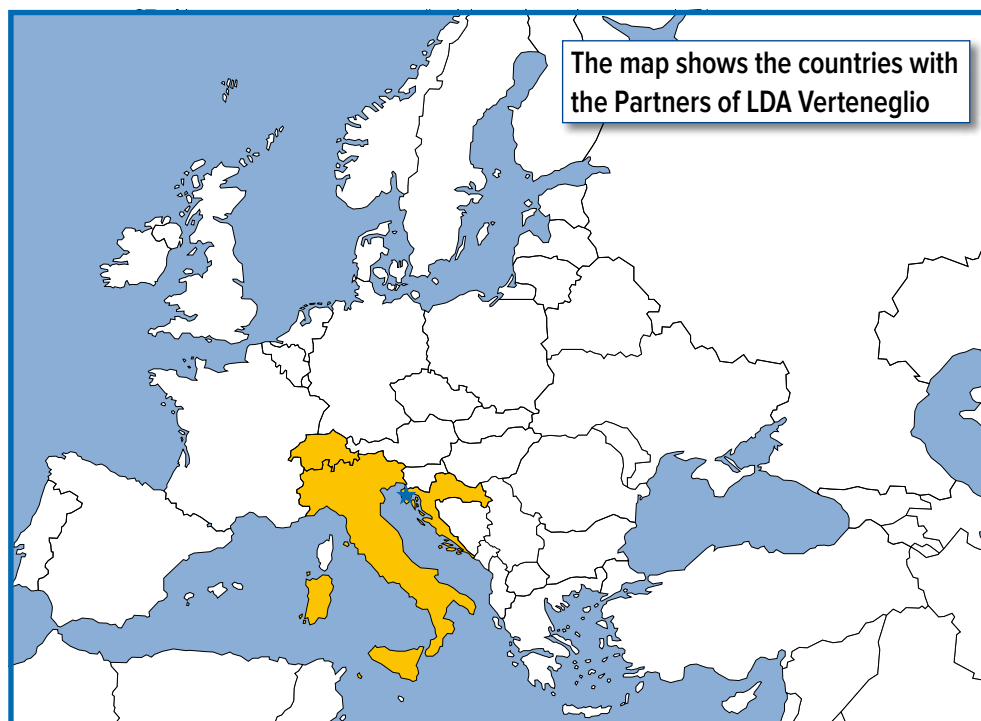
- City of Lausanne - Lausanne, Vaud, Switzerland
- City of Osijek - Baranja County, Croatia
- Causes Communes Vaud, Lausanne, Vaud, Switzerland
- Croatian Chamber of Commerce/County Chamber Osijek - Baranja County, Croatia
- SLAP Association for Creative Development - Osijek, Baranja County, Croatia
- STINA News Agency - Split, Dalmazia, Croatia
- Association of Regional Training Centres - Nitra, Regione di Nitra, Slovakia



## LDA Sisak

### Partners

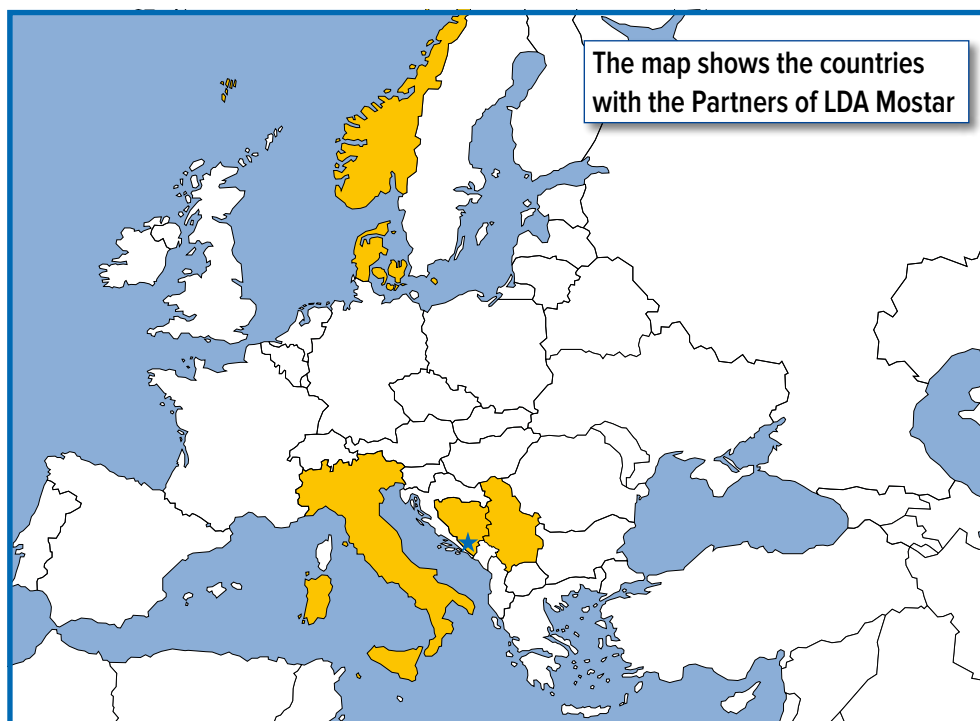
- City of Mogliano Veneto (TV), Veneto, Italy
- City of Lainate (MI), Lombardia, Italy
- City of Arese (MI), Lombardia, Italy
- City of Roncade (TV), Veneto, Italy
- City of Noale (VE), Veneto, Italy
- City of Preganziol (TV), Veneto, Italy
- City of Casale Monferrato (AL), Piemonte, Italy
- Province of Venice, Veneto, Italy
- City of Sisak, Hrvatska Kostajnica, Petrinja, Dvor, Kutina, Croazia
- NGO "Going to Europe", Modena, Emilia Romagna, Italy
- International School for Peace Studies, Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland



## LDA Verteneglio

### Partners

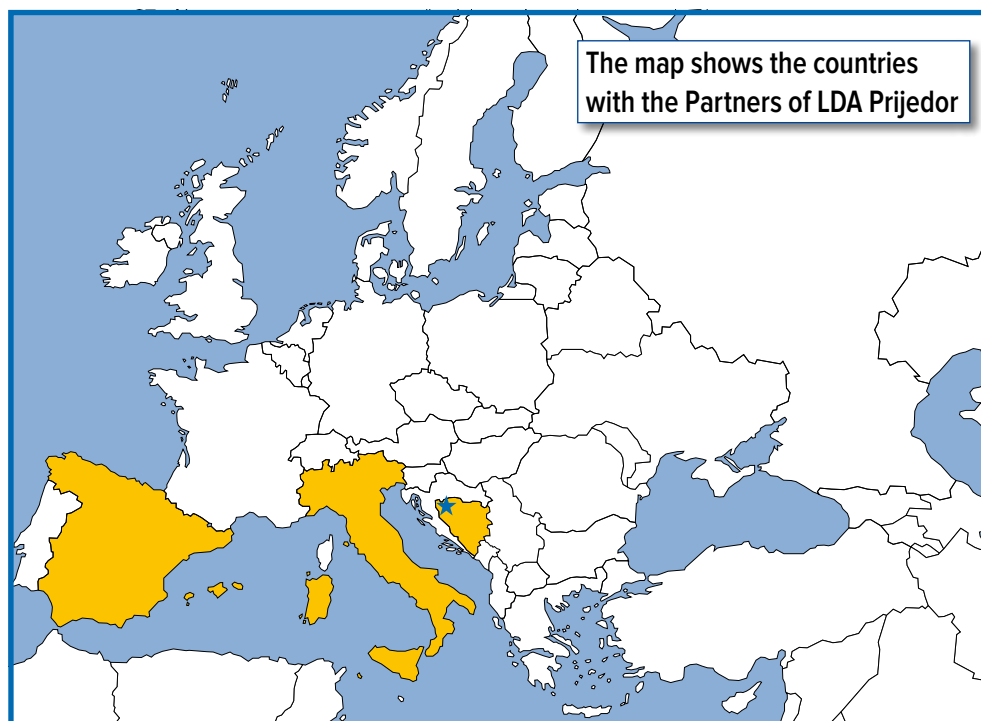
- City of Bellinzona, Canton Ticino, Switzerland
- Causes Communes Suisse, Lenzburg, Canton Aargovia, Switzerland
- Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy
- Istrian Region, Croazia
- the town of Verteneglio/Brtonigla, Croazia
- Municipality of Greve in Chianti, (FI), Toscana, Italy
- Municipality of Portogruaro, (VE); Veneto, Italy
- City of Duino Aurisina, (TS), Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy
- City of Russi, (RA), Emilia Romagna, Italy
- Circolo di cultura Istro-Veneta, Triere, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy
- Istria-Trieste, Trieste, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy
- Marevivo FVG, Trieste, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy



## LDA Mostar

### Partners

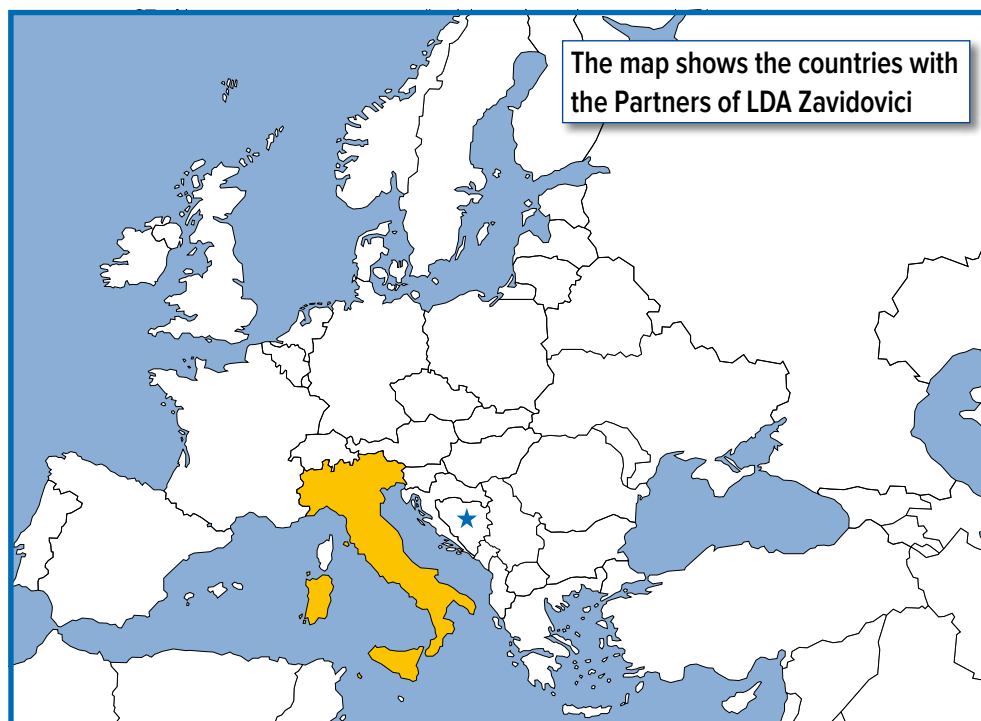
- Region Puglia, Italy
- City of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Municipality of Vejle, Region Syddanmark, Denmark
- Province of Venice, Veneto, Italy
- City of Monfalcone, (GO), Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy
- Municipality of Orkdal, Sør-Trøndelag county, Norway
- Municipalità of Sund, county of Hordaland, Norway
- City of Kragujevac, Serbia
- NGO "IPSIA", Roma, Lazio, Italy



## LDA Prijedor

### Partners

- Association Program Prijedor, Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Municipality of Prijedor, Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- City of Trento, Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Aldeno, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Baselga di Pinè, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Borgo Valsugana, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Caderzone, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Caldonazzo, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Cavalese, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Grumes, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Lavis, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Levico, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Massimeno, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Pergine, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Pinzolo, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Predazzo, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Ronzo Chienis, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Spiazzo Rendena, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Tassullo, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- City of Varena, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- Association l'Ancora, Arezzo, Toscana, Italy
- Cultural Association Mosaico Trento, Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- Pensioners' Trade Union Spi-CGIL Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy
- "Comprensorio", Alta Valsugana C4, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- "Comprensorio" Valle Dell'Adige C5, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- Association CISV Trento, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- Association Yugo 94 Trento, (TN) Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- Diputación of Cordoba, Spain

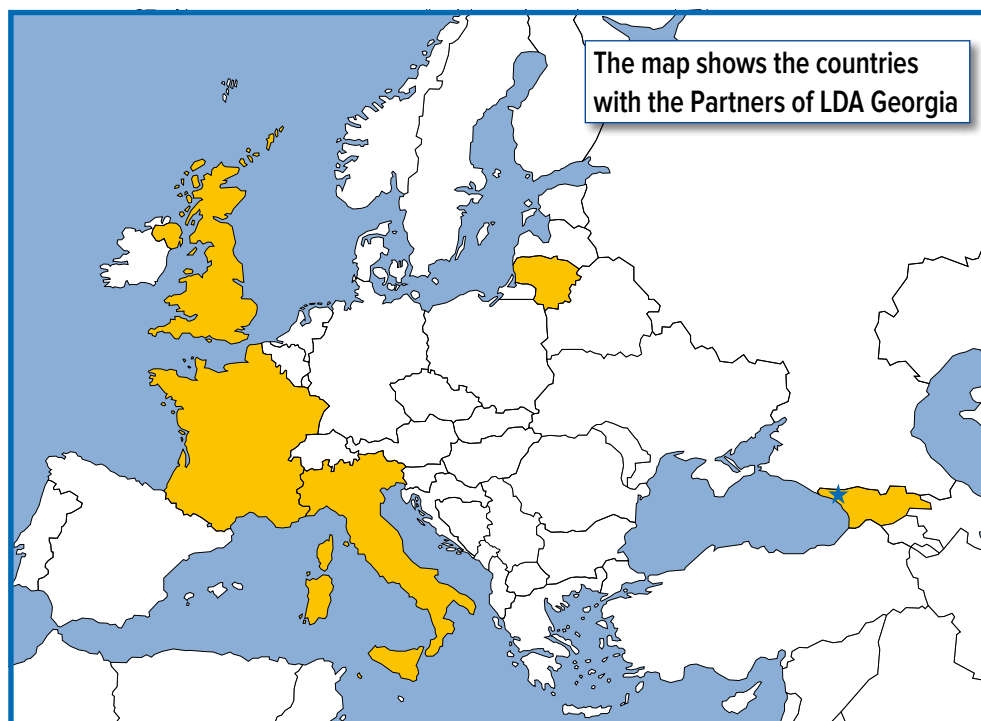


## LDA Zavidovici

### Partners

- Association for the Local Democracy Agency in Zavidovici, Brescia, Lombardia, Italy
- Municipality of Zavidovici, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Associazione Comuni Bresciani, Brescia, Lombardia, Italy
- Province of Cremona, Lombardia, Italy
- Comune of Torre de Pinenardi, (CR), Lombardia, Italy
- Comune of Roncadelle, (BS) Lombardia, Italy
- Comune of Torbole, (TN), Trentino Alto Adige, Italy
- Comune of Botticino (BS) Lombardia, Italy
- Comune of Nave (BS) Lombardia, Italy
- MU&AP, (BS) Lombardia, Italy
- UISP, Roma, Lazio, Italy
- CINSA, Italy
- Liberacion Carpendolo, (BS) Lombardia, Italy
- Teatro Ass. Culturale
- Gruppo CA Naviganti, Cagliari, Sardegna, Italy
- Associazione Mediatori linguistico culturali "il riccio y le mele", (BS) Lombardia, Italy
- Parco Oglio Sud, Lombardia, Italy
- SPI-CGIL
- ARCI Nuova
- Amici di Emmaus
- Peace Office of Alba
- Donne in nero Progetto "Donne" (Italy)

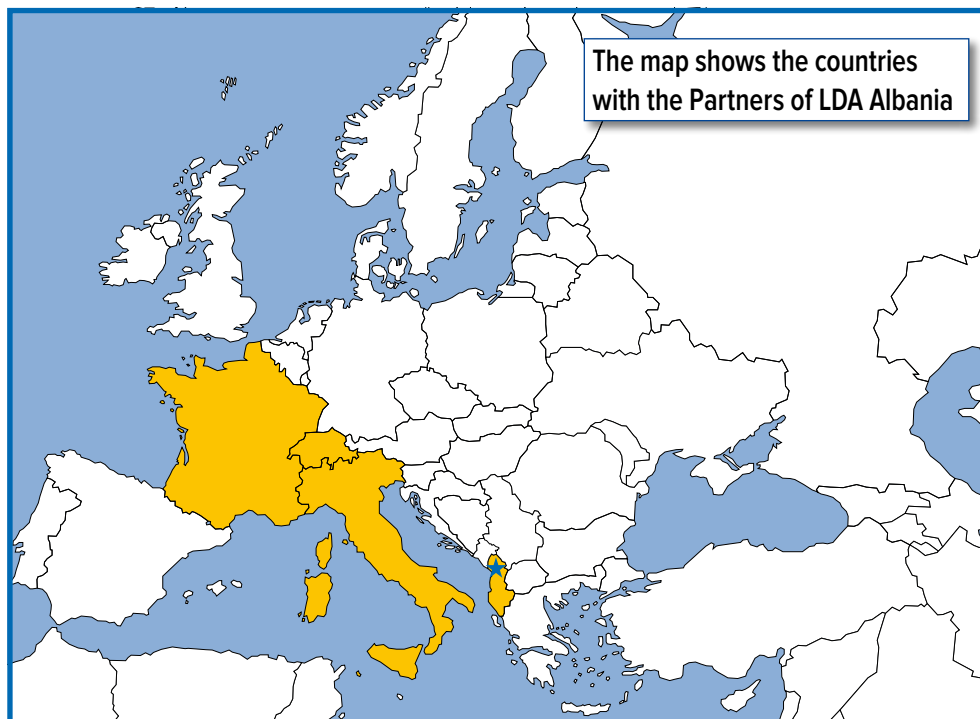




## LDA Georgia

### Partners

- City of Newport, lead partner (UK)
- Cities of Nantes and Strasbourg (France)
- City of Monfalcone (Italy)
- Institute of Social Ethics, Kaunas (Lithuania)
- Cities of Kutaisi and Tbilisi (Georgia)
- National Association of Local Authorities (NALAG)
- Georgian Young Lawyers' Association
- Kutaisi-Newport International Association (Georgia)
- Newport-Kutaisi Association (Wales, UK)
- Partners-Georgia



## LDA Albania

### Partners

- Municipality of Brindisi (Italy)
- Municipality of Shkodra (Albania)
- Municipality of Fraize (France)
- Municipality of Yverdon-les-Bains (Switzerland)
- Region Puglia (Italy)
- Formez Institute (Italy)
- IPRES (Italy)
- Association of Albanian Municipalities (Albania)
- Municipality of Fierze (Albania)





DONOR 1999-2009	amount	%	
Others (All those who have less than 1%)	690.100	7,15	
ANCI/Italy	1.803.000	18,68	
European Commission	1.791.200	18,56	
Congress	917.500	9,51	
Norway	800.000	8,29	
Local Government and Public Reform Initiative	701.852	7,27	
Partners	547.388	5,67	
Members	459.875	4,77	
Region Lower Normandie	400.000	4,14	
Switzerland	275.500	2,85	
Ireland/Via COE	267.000	2,77	
France	250.000	2,59	
Region Puglia	201.000	2,08	
Liechtenstein	163.000	1,69	
COE	154.440	1,60	
Soges	130.000	1,35	
Italy	99.180	1,03	
City of Lecce	95.000	0,98	
Region Friuli Venezic Guilia	89.000	0,92	
Geneva Canton/City	80.000	0,83	
Basel Stadt	58.000	0,60	
Geneva Canton	48.100	0,50	
Asael	38.500	0,40	
SPOT	30.000	0,31	
Luxembourg	27.000	0,28	
Region Istria	25.500	0,26	
Finlande	20000	0,21	
Euromed	17.000	0,18	
Regione Emilia Romagna	17.000	0,18	
Comunità Montana Monte Zoveto	14.000	0,15	
LDACSS	14.000	0,15	
Tavagnacco	13.500	0,14	
Codess	12.000	0,12	
Foundation Le Coppet	12.000	0,12	
Le Courier des Balkans	12.000	0,12	
participants	12.000	0,12	
Formez	10.000	0,10	
Private sponsor	10.000	0,10	
Province of Vicenza	10.000	0,10	
Identità e Dialogo	6.000	0,06	
NGOs different	6.000	0,06	
Gorizia	5.000	0,05	
Barcelona Municipality	4.000	0,04	
Staetetag	3.000	0,03	
Sviluppo globale	1.500	0,02	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.651.035</b>		

## Strategic network and partnership

- Member of the network: Working Together (coordinated by FPD Romania) (trainers for local authorities in all Eastern Europe)  
[www.fpd.ro](http://www.fpd.ro)
- Partner of the UCLG United Cities and Local Government as for decentralisation issues  
[www.cities-localgovernments.org](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org)
- Observer at the congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
- Member of the Structured Dialogue of the European Commission on Active Citizenship programme
- Member of the intercultural dialogue platform of the European Commission on Active Citizenship programme
- Member of the Conference of the International Non Governmental Organisations of the Council of Europe  
[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)
- Strategic partner of the Regional Cooperation Council for South Eastern Europe
- Member of the European Civic Forum

## Members of the Bureau of ALDA (2000-2004)

FUNCTION	NAME	ADDRESS
President	<b>Mr. Gianfranco Martini</b>	Member of the Congress AICCRE Piazza dei Trevi 86 00187 Roma (Italy) Tel. (39) 06 699 40 461 Chambre des Pouvoirs Locaux Fax (39) 06 67 93 275 <a href="mailto:gemellaggi@aiccre.it">gemellaggi@aiccre.it</a>
Deputy President	<b>Mr. Dario Ghisletta</b>	Deputy Mayor of the City of Bellinzona Via Belsoggiorno 12 CH-6500 Bellinzona Tél +41/91/821 85 11 - Fax +41/91/821 85 45
Deputy President	<b>Mrs. Norma Benoni</b>	Association Project for Prijedor Via Mattioli 6 - I- 38100 Trento Tel/Fax 9939-0461-912937 <a href="mailto:casaperlapace.trento@iol.it">casaperlapace.trento@iol.it</a> <a href="mailto:Norma.Benoni@ftcoop.it">Norma.Benoni@ftcoop.it</a>
Treasurer	<b>Mr. Diego Bottacin</b>	Mayor of Mogliano Veneto Piazza Caduti 8 31021 Mogliano Veneto TV tel. +39 041 5930278 - fax +39 041 59 30 297 <a href="mailto:sindaco@comune.mogliano-veneto.tv.it">sindaco@comune.mogliano-veneto.tv.it</a>
Secretary	<b>Mr. Keith Jones</b>	City Hall Town Burton upon Trent Staffordshire, England DE14 2EB tel. +44 1283 508302 - fax +44 1283 508459 <a href="mailto:keith.jones@eaststffsbc.gov.uk">keith.jones@eaststffsbc.gov.uk</a>
Appointed member of the Congress	<b>Mr. Dario Ghisletta</b>	Deputy Mayor of the City of Bellinzona Via Belsoggiorno 12 CH-6500 Bellinzona tel. +41/91/821 85 11 - fax +41/91/821 85 45
Member appointed by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers	<b>Ambassador Athanassios Theodoracopoulos</b>	Permanent Representative of Greece to the Council of Europe 21, Place Broglie 67000 Strasbourg tel. 03 88 32 88 18 - fax 03 88 75 53 30

## Members of the Governing Board of ALDA (2000-2004)

STATUTORY MEMBERS	NAME AND ADDRESS
Representative of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe	<b>Mr. Martinez Casan</b> President of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs of the Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe - 67000 Strasbourg <a href="mailto:antonella.cagnolati@coe.int">antonella.cagnolati@coe.int</a>
Representative of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe	<b>Ambassador Athanassios Theodoracopoulos</b> 21, Place Broglie - 67000 Strasbourg Tel. 03 88 32 88 18 - Fax 03 88 75 53 30
Representative of Secretary General of the Council of Europe	<b>Mrs. Jutta Gützkow</b> Head of the Division of NGOs and Civil Society Directorate of External Relations - Directorate General of Political Affairs Council of Europe - 67000 Strasbourg <a href="mailto:jutta.gutzkow@coe.int">jutta.gutzkow@coe.int</a>
Representative appointed by the European Commission	Subject to confirmation
President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE)	<b>Dr. Herwig van Staa</b> Mitglied, Gemeinderat Innsbruck CLRAE political Group: PPE/DC, Landeshauptmann Tyrol <a href="mailto:a.greiter@magibk.at">a.greiter@magibk.at</a> Stadtmagistrat Innsbruck - Stabstelle Bürgermeister Maria-Theresien-Strasse 18 - A-6020-Innsbruck (Italie/Austria) Tel. (43) 512 5360 3338 Chambre des Pouvoirs Locaux - Fax (43) 512 5360 1753 <a href="mailto:a.greiter@magibk.at">a.greiter@magibk.at</a>
Member appointed by the CLRAE Bureau	<b>Mr. Gianfranco Martini</b> Piazza dei Trevi 86 - 00187-Roma (Italie/Italy) Tel. (39) 06 699 40 461 Chambre des Pouvoirs Locaux - Fax (39) 06 67 93 275 <a href="mailto:Gemellaggi@aiccre.it">Gemellaggi@aiccre.it</a>
Member appointed by the CLRAE Bureau	<b>Mr. Enda Nolan</b> Councillor, Carlow County Council - Fianna Fail - PARK, CLRAE political Group GILD - TINRY LAND, Co. Carlow (Irlande/Ireland) <a href="mailto:endanolan@oceanfree.net.ie">endanolan@oceanfree.net.ie</a> Tel. (353) 503 41 184hm Chambre des Régions - Fax (353) 503 41 503hm <a href="mailto:endanolan@oceanfree.net.ie">endanolan@oceanfree.net.ie</a>
Member appointed by the CLRAE Bureau	<b>Mr. Miljenko Doric</b> President, Primorje and Gorski Kotar County Assembly Primorsko Goranska County - Adamiceva 10 - 51000 Rijeka (Croatia) Tel. (385) 98 368 444 Chambre des Pouvoirs Locaux - Fax (385) 51 354 433



## Members of the Governing Board of ALDA (2000-2004)

ELECTED MEMBERS	NAME	ADDRESS
City of Bellinzona	<b>Mr. Dario Ghisletta</b>	Deputy Mayor Via Belsoggiorno 12 - CH-6500 Bellinzona tél. +41/91/821 85 11 - fax +41/91/8253281 <a href="mailto:cancelleria@bellinzona.ch">cancelleria@bellinzona.ch</a>
Mogliano Veneto	<b>Mr. Diego Bottacin</b>	Mayor Piazza Caduti 8 - 31021 Mogliano Veneto TV tel. +39 041 5930278-5930111 fax +39 041 59 30 297 <a href="mailto:sindaco@comune.mogliano-veneto.tv.it">sindaco@comune.mogliano-veneto.tv.it</a>
East Staffordshire Borough Council	<b>Mr. Keith Jones</b>	City Hall Town Burton upon Trent Staffordshire, England DE14 2EB tel. +44 1283 508302 - fax +44 1283 508459 <a href="mailto:keith.jones@eaststaffsbcc.gov.uk">keith.jones@eaststaffsbcc.gov.uk</a>
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Special Guest	<b>Mr. Per Vinther</b>	Jezus Eiklaan 30 - Tervuren, Belgium 3080 tel. 00322 767 75 90 - <a href="mailto:kp.vinther@belgacom.net">kp.vinther@belgacom.net</a>
Special Guest	<b>Mr. Rinaldo Locatelli</b>	<a href="mailto:r.d.locatelli@wanadoo.fr">r.d.locatelli@wanadoo.fr</a>

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## Members of the Governing Board of ALDA (2004)

NAME	PROFESSION	FUNCTION	NATIONALITY	ON THE BOARD SINCE
Mr. Gianfranco Martini	Lawyer	ALDA President	Italian	1999
Mr. Per Vinther	Retired- Former senior officer EC	ALDA Executive President	Danish	2004
Mr. Dobrica Milovanovic	President City Council Kragujevac – University professor	Vice President	Serbian	2004
Mr. Jean-Louis Testud	Deputy Mayor of Suresnes	Treasurer	French	2004
Mr. Imre Kern	Staff Member Province Vojvodina	Member appointed by the Congress	Serbian	2004
Mr. Neris Germanas	Ambassador Lithuania	Representative of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers	Lithuanian	2006
Mr. Miljenko Dorić	Member of	Statutory Member - Representative of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe	Croatian	2006
Mrs. Jutta Gützkow	Staff Member CoE	Statutory Member - Representative of Secretary General of the Council of Europe	German	2004
Mr. Halvdan Skard	President of the Association of Norwegian Municipalities	Statutory Member - President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe of the Council of Europe	Norwegian	2006
Mr. Pascal Mangin	Deputy Mayor	Statutory Member - Full member appointed by the Congress	French	2004

NAME	PROFESSION	FUNCTION	NATIONALITY	ON THE BOARD SINCE
<b>M.me Violeta Alarova</b>	Mayor of Skopje	Statutory Member - Substitute member appointed by the Congress	Macedonian	2006
<b>Ms. Line Vennesland</b>	Member of Vest-Agder County Council	Statutory Member - Substitute member appointed by the Congress	Norwegian	2008
<b>Ms. Jana Fischerova</b>	Mayor	Statutory Member - Substitute member appointed by the Congress	Czech	2008
<b>Mr. Dario Ghisletta</b>	Member of Causes Communes Ticino	Elected Member	Switzerland	2000
<b>Ms. Paula Rauzan</b>	Delegate LDA Sisak	Elected Member	Bosnian	2008
<b>Mr. Rinaldo Locatelli</b>	Retired- Former Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the CoE	Elected Member	Switzerland	2004
<b>Mr. Marko Pavic</b>	Mayor of Prijedor	Elected Member	Bosnian	2005
<b>Mr. Giovanni Azzolini</b>	Mayor of Mogliano Veneto	Elected Member	Italian	1999
<b>Mr. Franco Iacop</b>	Member of the Government of Region Friuli Venezia Giulia	Elected Member	Italian	2004
<b>Mrs. Rosita Viola</b>	Director Italian Consortium of Solidarity	Elected Member	Italian	2004

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Claudia Montevecchi  
Caroline Martin  
LukasVan Damme  
Michel Rivollier  
Laurence Weber

Currently  
Nichola Howsen

## ALDA Staff

NAME	SURNAME	POSITION	IN POST
Antonella	Valmorbida	Director	1999 up to now
Stefania	Toriello	External Relations officer	2003 up to now
Dorothee	Fischer	Communication officer	2004/2008
Marco	Boaria	Project Development officer	2006
Martial	Paris	Field officer	2004/2008
Srdjan	Cvijic	EU Policies and field officer	2008 up to now
Barbara	Elia	Financial officer	2005 up to now
Stanka	Parac	Partnership officer	2008 up to now
Gregoire	Fanniere	Project manager	2008
Ivana	Dimitrovska	Project manager	2008
Michela	Moro	Financial officer	2009 up to now
Camille	Gangloff	Active Citizenship manager	2008 up to now
Alexandre	Balyanga	Accountant	2008 up to now
Chiara	Strano	Assistant Director	2008/2009
Gianpaolo	Giacon	Financial officer	2002/2005
Cinzia	Spinazzè	Assistant Director	2009 ut to now

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Alessandro Coduto

Jessica Bondiani

Alexandra Petcu

Benedikt Herges

Michela Lievore

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Jasmina Risteska

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Noemie Forlano

Alessandra Piercciante

## Delegate's LDAs (only from 1999)

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Osijek	<b>Milijenko Turniski</b>
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Albania	<b>Antoine Rozes</b>
Montenegro	Dragutin Djekovic <b>Kerim Medjedovic</b>
Kutaisi	<b>Josef Khakhaleishvili</b>

## Berlin Declaration, of the German Presidency of the European Union on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the signature of the Treaties of Rome (2007)

*For centuries Europe has been an idea, holding out hope of peace and understanding. That hope has been fulfilled. European unification has made peace and prosperity possible. It has brought about a sense of community and overcome differences. Each Member State has helped to unite Europe and to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. Thanks to the yearning for freedom of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe the unnatural division of Europe is now consigned to the past. European integration shows that we have learnt the painful lessons of a history marked by bloody conflict. Today we live together as was never possible before.*

*We, the citizens of the European Union, have united for the better.*

### *I.*

*In the European Union, we are turning our common ideals into reality: for us, the individual is paramount. His dignity is inviolable. His rights are inalienable. Women and men enjoy equal rights.*

*We are striving for peace and freedom, for democracy and the rule of law, for mutual respect and shared responsibility, for prosperity and security, for tolerance and participation, for justice and solidarity.*

*We have a unique way of living and working together in the European Union. This is expressed through the democratic interaction of the Member States and the European institutions. The European Union is founded on equal rights and mutually supportive cooperation. This enables us to strike a fair balance between Member States' interests.*

*We preserve in the European Union the identities and diverse traditions of its Member States. We are enriched by open borders and a lively variety of languages, cultures and regions. There are many goals which we cannot achieve on our own, but only in concert. Tasks are shared between the European Union, the Member States and their regions and local authorities.*

### *II.*

*We are facing major challenges which do not stop at national borders. The European Union is our response to these challenges. Only together can we continue to preserve our ideal of European society in future for the good of all European Union citizens. This European model combines economic success and social responsibility. The common market and the euro make us strong. We can thus shape the increasing interdependence of the global economy and evergrowing competition on international markets according to our values. Europe's wealth lies in the knowledge and ability of its people; that is the key to growth, employment and social cohesion.*

*We will fight terrorism, organised crime and illegal immigration together. We stand up for liberties and civil rights also in the struggle against those who oppose them. Racism and xenophobia must never again be given any rein.*

*We are committed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the world and to ensuring that people do not become victims of war, terrorism and violence. The European Union wants to promote*

*freedom and development in the world. We want to drive back poverty, hunger and disease. We want to continue to take a leading role in that fight.*

*We intend jointly to lead the way in energy policy and climate protection and make our contribution to averting the global threat of climate change.*

*III.*

*The European Union will continue to thrive both on openness and on the will of its Member States to consolidate the Union's internal development. The European Union will continue to promote democracy, stability and prosperity beyond its borders.*

*With European unification a dream of earlier generations has become a reality. Our history reminds us that we must protect this for the good of future generations. For that reason we must always renew the political shape of Europe in keeping with the times. That is why today, 50 years after the signing of the Treaties of Rome, we are united in our aim of placing the European Union on a renewed common basis before the European Parliament elections in 2009.*

*For we know, Europe is our common future.*



*Mr Chauvet at the EURaction conference, Strasbourg, February 2007*



*Mr Martini and Mr Bohner at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg*



*Mr Martini at the Council of Europe*



*Signature of the convention between ALDA and the Council of Europe General Secretary*



*Mr Martini and Mr Di Stasi at the Council of Europe, Strasbourg*



*EURaction citizens' panel, 2007*





*EURaction final conference in Nicosia, Cyprus, July 2007*



*EURaction citizens' panel in Strasbourg, France, 2007*



*EURaction transnational meeting in Rovigo, Italy, 2007*



*EURaction transnational meeting in Rovigo, Italy, 2007*



*Info day on Europe for citizens in Skopje, Macedonia, January 2008*



*Conference on the role of local authorities in promoting the European values, Lithuania, 2005*



*Module A of the pilot training on Active citizenship in Gironkaster, Albania, March 2009*



*Module A of the pilot training on Active citizenship in Gironkaster, Albania, March 2009*



*Partner meeting LDA Sisak in Mogliano Veneto, 2006*



*ALDA Bureau in Zaragoza, December 2008*



*ALDA Bureau in Brussels 2007*



*ALDA governing board in Venice. 2007*



*LDA Delegates at ALDA general assembly in Barcelona, 2004*



*ALDA general assembly in Barcelona, 2004*



*ALDA general assembly in Vienna, 2008*



*ALDA governing board in Vienna, 2008*



*ALDA general assembly in Budapest, 2007*



*ALDA meeting with the Croatian President, Mr Mesic, General Assembly 2006*



*ALDA general assembly in Sarajevo, 2008*



*ALDA general assembly in Sarajevo, 2008*



*ALDA general assembly in Subotica, 2003*



*Meeting of ALDA and Congress with representatives of Shkodra (Albania)*



*Study visit on waste management in Geneva (Switzerland)*



*Aid from Newport Kutaisi Twinning Association for IDPs in Kutaisi, autumn 2008*



*LDA Georgia partners' meeting in Strasbourg, 2007*



*LDA Georgia partners' meeting in Strasbourg, 2007*



*LDA Georgia partners*



*Conference on Kosovo organised by Osservatorio sui Balkani, 2006*



*Stève Duchene, former delegate of LDA Kosovo*



*Training in Kosovo*



*Opening of LDA Albania, October 2008*



*LDA Central and Southern Serbia partners' meeting in Brussels, 2008*



*LDA Montenegro partners' meeting*



*Lead partners' meeting in Maison Jean Monnet, France, November 2008*



*Seminar in Macedonia*



*Famous bridge of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina*



*Meeting in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina*



*LDA Zavidovici, Bosnia and Herzegovina*



*Inauguration of the condominium in Gomel, Belarus*



*Junior Association of Louvigny, Macedonia/  
Lower Normandy project, 2008*



*Technical assistance to Russian local authorities*



*Technical assistance to Russian local authorities*



*Ms Storzynska and Ms Fischer at a EU MAYOR conference*



*Participants of a EU MAYOR round table conference*



*EU MAYOR seminar in Reggio Emilia*



*EU MAYOR workshop in Lithuania*



*PEARL.EU activity in Mostar, 2007*



*PEARL.EU activity in Osijek*



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