



Association of Local Democracy Agencies

Activity Report 2009



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Foreword by ALDA President



Mr. Per Vinther

Per Vinther, ALDA President

Dear Readers,

In 2009, ALDA could celebrate 10 years of existence and in spite of the global financial crisis the activity level remained high. The main event of the year was no doubt the celebration of the anniversary with a fabulous birthday cake donated by our Polish member, the City of Bydgoszcz. However, many of our members among local authorities have felt the effects of the crisis and have had to reduce their involvement in our projects or with individual Local Democracy Agencies. Similarly, member or partner NGOs have unfortunately experienced difficulties in finding donors for worthwhile projects. Hopefully, this situation will soon be a thing of the past so that financial worries do not distract us from our prime objectives.

The LDAs continue their activities on the ground depending on the local needs while remaining part of the ALDA network, being involved in larger projects. Cutting across the activities in the Western Balkans is still the support for the preparation of the countries in their aspirations towards

membership of the European Union.

Our Micro Credit scheme for South Eastern Europe, supported by the Norwegian Government, finally moved into the operational phase in 2009, having also suffered from the worsening financial climate. It has proven particularly successful in Croatia and Serbia whereas the existence of a multitude of competing schemes in Bosnia and Herzegovina has meant that no loans under our scheme have been disbursed there. The Micro Credit scheme will shortly be extended to Albania and we will have to deploy efforts towards making the scheme self-sustainable.

In the course of the year, ALDA has become involved in the civil society part of the Eastern Partnership which within the framework of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy places extra focus on six of its eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. ALDA is already involved in projects in all of these countries and the Governing Board has consequently adopted a forward-looking policy paper on enlargement of the LDA network that opens the way for establishing LDAs in these countries over the coming years. An LDA was of course established in Kutaisi, Georgia already in 2006.

In cooperation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe ALDA organised a conference in Kutaisi last October, bringing together the Associations of Local Authorities from the three countries of Southern Caucasus with a view to furthering their cooperation. Such cooperation could help promote cooperation on the national level in the region and thereby contribute to more firmly rooted peace, stability and security on our continent.

Active citizenship remains – thanks to extensive support from the EU - one of the cornerstones of ALDA activities with our members and also wider a field. ALDA has even carried out training courses on the subject in Azerbaijan and Israel and we plan to extend this activity in the future,

lobbying to have all the countries of South Eastern Europe become eligible to participate in the EU programme: Europe for Citizens.

ALDA has continued and will continue to work closely with the Council of Europe and the Congress. The appointment of new Secretary Generals for both of these bodies gives fresh impetus to our relationship and cooperation with them.

For the past couple of years, ALDA has enjoyed structural support from European Commission against the background of our involvement in the programme Europe for Citizens. This support also carries responsibilities which we will have to fulfil in the coming years, but I am convinced that ALDA is in good shape to rise to the challenge of the next ten years.

This, however, should not lead to complacency. ALDA Staff and Board members are constantly searching for new partners/members as everywhere people and priorities change. On behalf of all of us involved in the daily running of the Association I want to thank wholeheartedly all those members and partners who support and encourage us to achieve more in terms of quality and quantity in meeting our objectives of promoting local democracy, good governance, rule of law and fundamental rights.

Last not least, I wish to congratulate all ALDA Staff under the leadership of Antonella Valmorbida as well as LDA Delegates and staff for the remarkable results generated in 2009, of which this annual report is a testimony.

Per Vinther
President


Introduction by ALDA Director



Antonella Valmorbida,
ALDA Director

The past year was both difficult and very motivating.

The substantial and articulated partnership with the European Commission, with its programmes and the Structured Dialogue on Active Citizenship gave a strong support to our organisation. We managed to bring to South Eastern Europe many activities of the programme Europe for Citizens and we are convinced that we are there operating both for peace and stability and for a future integration to the European Union. Our strong relationship with the Council of Europe (both the Congress and the Conference of the INGOs) helped us to plan and implement strategic programmes in Southern Caucasus and to work in the field of civil society participation in decision-making. Personally, I find the engagement in the Civil Society Forum for Eastern Partnership a very brilliant and motivating experience with a great political impact.

The other opportunity came from our 10th anniversary and from the fact that we are now a grown up organization that must fulfil its commitments and respond to its responsibility. We tried to address this with an enlarged and more

consolidated group of members from all over Europe composed of Local Governments and Civil Society. We also developed projects and ideas to put in practice our principle of a Europe from Below, where local governance between civil society and local authorities represents the milestone of stability and welfare. The Governing Board asked us to spread our horizons towards Southern Caucasus and some countries in the MED area for elaborating a new accompanying strategy of ALDA In ENPI Countries.

I also underline the strong involvement of ALDA with French partners and in particular the three years programme between region Basse Normandie and Republic of Macedonia and the promising decentralised cooperation programme between France and the Balkans.

A difficulty for us was the large coverage of our activities and members followed hopefully by our very motivated staff. And the departure of some experienced staff member provoked a natural reassessment of the roles and structure. Difficulties came also from the evident constrains that our partners are going through. Resources are limited and carefully spent. But, the most problematic issues is the depressing atmosphere all around which is often above the reality and facts. ALDA and all of us have the duty of being promoter of positive energy and dynamism to re-launch cooperation and exchanges, development and strategy for our new Europe. We still strongly think that Europe is a still a very special place, where we all struggle to live, decide together and understand each other, a possible model of democracy and balance of powers for the rest of the world. And despite the daily problems, we just know that development and respect for human rights can only go along with the a strong, motivated and engaged civil society and a functioning decentralised system.

Antonella Valmorbida
Director

1. CHAPTER ONE: ALDA's activities

1.1 The 10th Anniversary celebration of ALDA

On the 27 of May 2009, ALDA celebrated its 10th Anniversary with an event jointly promoted with the Committee of Regions. International keynote speaker attended such as Mr. Ian Micallef, President ad Interim of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities; M. Jean Marie Heydt, President Conference of INGOs; Mr Risto Raivio, Head of DGEAC, Europe for Citizens, Unit of the European Commission, Mr. Francesco JORI, Editorialist of the Espresso Group and Professor of Political Communication of the University of Padova (Italy).

ALDA staff, LDAs and ALDA members and partner came from all over Europe. It was a very nice chance to look at the 10 past years of intense work and to plan the upcoming years of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies.



Mr. Vinther (ALDA's President) with the Anniversary cake from Bydgoszcz Municipality (PL), Brussels



Waiting for the badge at the CoE in Brussels (Belgium), 10th ALDA Anniversary, the 27th of May 2009

1.2 The Role of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies in Local Governance and Active Citizenship in Europe

Position Paper 2009-2011

Introduction and achievements

With its Position Paper approved by the General Assembly held in Budapest in June 2006, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) established guidelines for the Association up to 2009:

- a. To support the enlargement of the European Union in South Eastern Europe based on the active participation of civil society and local authorities, with the support of the Local Democracy Agencies (LDA);
- b. To increase the role of the LDAs in local economic development in the region;
- c. To develop and further elaborate the methodology of multilateral decentralised cooperation of the LDAs;
- d. To develop and strengthen ALDA activities in the field of European Active Citizenship and Civic Participation;
- e. To open the LDA programme to other regions of Eastern Europe;
- f. To be of assistance to local authorities in building a Europe from below.

A lot happened in Europe and in South Eastern Europe, and consequently for ALDA as well, in these last three years and the present Position Paper is needed to assess and identify guidelines for the future activities, in a new perspective.

The objectives identified in the previous Position Paper were achieved as far as the commitments of ALDA and the LDAs are concerned. A substantial report of activities is now ready for the 10th anniversary celebration of ALDA.

In South Eastern Europe, the enlargement of the European Union does not depend only on local actions and achievements. The process has suffered from some stops and goes in these last years. However, even if the political enlargement is not yet achieved, most of the countries of



The celebrations for the 10th Anniversary of ALDA, Brussels (Belgium), May 2009

the region have signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU. Croatia has reached an advanced level of accession negotiations and the process of joining will hopefully be finalized soon. Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and soon Albania are eligible for the EU funded programme "Europe for Citizens". Another

EU funded programme, the IPA programme (Instruments for Pre Accession) is now in place in the whole region and will support, from inside, the integration of the region into the European Union. However, despite these initiatives and their results, support to local authorities and civil society is still needed in order to reach the objectives, as will be described in the present Position Paper.

Since 2003, the programme of the LDAs in South Eastern Europe focused also on local economic development – with several programmes to support youth entrepreneurship, micro economic start up activities, self sustainable economy. The LDAs created – as a follow up of these regional programmes proposed by the ALDA, their own activities to support economic development..

The multilateral decentralised cooperation, which is the basis of the Local Democracy Agencies is now a well established methodology recognised in several European Fora. The process is comprising several projects to support in a long term perspective local democracy in areas where it needs to be strengthened further. A specific focus has developed in the field of local governance and good practices and methodologies of consultation and participation of civil society in the decision making process at the local level.

Over the last three years, ALDA has become one of the major actors in promoting European Active Citizenship focusing on the local dynamics between civil society and local authorities. Several projects have been implemented in Europe and in neighbouring countries. We have further developed methodologies and innovative instruments of consultation, trying to bridge the gap between the European Institutions and decision making process and the civil society. ALDA and its members have contributed to a better understanding of the objectives and instruments offered by the European Union and the Council of Europe to promote local democracy and civic participation. However, it has also proved to be a useful instrument of consultation of

citizens, raising the issues and the needs to be addressed to European Local authorities

The enlargement of the LDA network progressed with the opening of the first LDA in Georgia, now active and progressively more involved in the field of local democracy and civic participation. The development of a network in Southern Caucasus will be advanced with further actions in Azerbaijan and in Armenia. Moreover, in 2008, the opening of the LDA Albania finally completed the picture of our presence in South Eastern Europe. A number of pilot projects took place in Belarus and Russia and now contacts have been established for civil society and active citizenship participation in other countries and areas of Europe and even beyond.

The system established by the LDAs has worked and is still working. It is sustainable, manageable, light and efficient. It is based on the strength of a large number of experienced 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



Speakers at the General Assembly in Brussels (Belgium), May 2009

the LDAs tackle one of the most crucial challenges addressed at 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 has to face different challenges but has now the tools and experience to address them with full awareness and understanding of the tasks. Today, ALDA has proven itself capable of making a difference and changing people's life for the better.

Objectives

The terms of the Position Paper have been identified during different brainstorming sessions of ALDA during its activities, with the staff and with the members. However, decisive was the Governing Board in Zaragoza, which reflected on the lines of action for the next few years, the objective being to consolidate the results achieved so far and to progress further in the direction of promotion of local democracy and governance and participation of civil society.

In the coming years the Association will address the development of local governance and civic participation as a major instrument for peace and development in Europe and in its neighbouring countries. The intention is with the present Position Paper to place ALDA at the forefront of this challenging task.

Areas of activity

To achieve these objectives emphasis will be put on the following areas of activity:

- A. Support to the Local Democracy Agencies
- B. Conceptualisation of methodologies
- C. Development of activities in civic participation
- D. Pilot projects in local governance and civic participation
- E. Consolidate membership orientation and support to members

Cutting across these priority areas of activity ALDA will develop its strategy of communication, insufficient so far, among the elements of the network and towards the outside in order to gain further political and financial support and improve visibility in general.

A. Support to the Local Democracy Agencies

The network of the Local Democracy Agencies shall be further consolidated. It will imply constant research and support to the partnership network. Each of the LDAs must respect the fundamental criteria for their existence such as partnership, programme and activities related to the main mission of promoting local democracy and citizens' participation and sustainability. There is a need to pay particular and constant attention to the assessment and the evaluation of the results achieved.

The methodology of the LDAs would continue to operate in South Eastern Europe to address the issues pending on decentralisation, citizens' participation, functioning of local authorities and strengthening of civil society.

In South Eastern Europe the LDAs offer a natural platform for the implementation of the IPA programmes and the continuing support for the integration of the countries of the region into the European Union.

It is among the priorities to develop and consolidate a network in Southern Caucasus and maybe further elaborate a precise model of multilateral decentralised cooperation in that region, which would be different yet incorporate essential and proven elements of the model followed in South Eastern Europe.

The further enlargement of the network of the Local Democracy Agencies must correspond to a capacity to carry out quality actions and to follow the different programmes and processes proposed. The possibility of "exporting" the

LDA concept to other areas where decentralised cooperation is already an instrument of international cooperation (such as the Magreb countries and the Middle East) is currently under evaluation and could be implemented gradually, based upon clear conditions.

The Local Democracy Agencies would support the programme and development of the programme “Europe for Citizens” in the region by addressing the support and strengthening of civil society and the twinning opportunities.

In the context of the programme of the Council of Europe, in coordination with the different programmes dedicated to Active Citizenship, the LDAs could implement the strategies proposed and coordinated with the Council of Europe regarding local democracy and civil society groups.

The present network of LDAs.



B. Conceptualisation of methodologies for the LDAs

The LDAs have developed a certain experience and would need now to find an assessment procedure and way to improve not only qualitatively their activities but also how they could reach wider target groups. They would help the entire Association to identify best practices in citizens’ participation and to implement new and innovative ways of consultation of citizens.

A specific effort will be deployed towards identifying the best way to improve LDA and ALDA activities in terms of efficiency and sustainability.

C. Development of activities in civic participation

ALDA will be strongly involved in the future in implementing activities on Active Citizenship and citizens’ participation in particular in the cooperation between civil society and local authorities, by:

- Collecting and taking stock of the best practices in this field and establishing models and replicable concepts;
- Identifying with partners and members the most efficient and innovative way of consultation through different methodologies such as
 - the module on active citizenship
 - European Active Citizenship dedicated to the rights and duties of every citizen in Europe (with a specific focus on immigration issue)
 - the citizens’ panels
 - the promotion of voluntarism and participation.
- Providing a constant interface between the LDAs and the members and the European institutions working in this field in order to create a better dialogue between citizens and the European Union decision making process.

D. Pilot projects in local governance and civic participation

With its background and experience, ALDA could propose to offer support and assistance to pilot projects in the area of citizens' participation and local democracy, involving local authorities. Pilot projects in areas of Europe, which are not a first priority of ALDA, would also stimulate the interest and new ideas among partners and members. It would also feed the methodological aspect and pave the way for new contacts. It could regard and focus on Eastern European countries, the Middle East and the Magreb countries.

In this case, ALDA could support technical assistance and share methods and consultancy approaches.

E. Consolidate membership orientation and support to members

More than ever, ALDA could be considered a membership oriented organisation. The strong involvement of the members, the decision making with their participation, the forum proposed, is a special asset of the Association.

Therefore, the activities will be further directed at informing and including the members in our activities. The membership network should be further developed and diversified keeping in mind the fundamental importance of a balance between local authorities and civil society groups from all over Europe.

The membership drive should be further intensified in countries of Europe under-represented now, in order to have them included to the largest possible extent in ALDA activities and decision making.

In this task, ALDA would further develop:

- thematic working groups offering the opportunity to study in detail the concepts, tasks and leadership
- country meetings with members



The hall of ALDA's General Assembly at Committee of the Regions in Brussels (Belgium), May 2009

- regular communication with the members
- services and technical assistance.

Conclusion

This brief Position Paper is meant to be a strategic tool for the development of ALDA, the LDAs and their activities in the next three years. It will remain work in progress allowing necessary revision in the light of results and external developments.

Against this background the overall objective of the Association shall be to firmly support the principle that citizens' participation stay at the basis of political culture of Europe. In these difficult times, affected by the global crisis and by a new definition of the values of the European project, ALDA remains convinced of the need to work on the European identity also through the involvement of citizens in the decision making process.

1.3 Enlargement of ALDA

Historically, ALDA has been focusing on the region of the Western Balkans and the territories of the European Union 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, in the period 2004-2006, ALDA has extended its reach to the region of South Caucasus.

Growing process that needs to be accompanied and piloted

In the last few years, the level of activities as well as the reputation and credibility of ALDA have increased a lot and they are readily recognised in international *fora* and also at the local level where we work. We can understand it by the fact that ALDA is not only considered as a supporting project of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe but it is a real network and organisation in its own right, with its own policy and dynamics. Another evidence of its strength is the constant growing consideration afforded us by other international stakeholders, first among them the different institutions of the European Union.

The European Commission has recognised ALDA as one of the main organisations in Europe dealing with active citizenship and local governance. This is visible in the constant and growing funding for our organisation but also in the fact that we are consulted on policy issues (like the Structured Dialogue of the *Europe for Citizens* programme). We also have a role in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. Furthermore, the process of Enlargement of the EU towards SEE is looking for reliable partners in the Civil Society sector and ALDA is among them (our assessment on the European for Citizens programme in Croatia, Macedonia and Albania will be presented in the next Structured Dialogue

in January). We are now a recognised and visible partner also of the Committee of the Regions, in particular in this growing process like the Eastern Partnership. The LDAs locally have also grown up and they are now seen and actively involved as supporting programmes for civil society and local democracy. ALDA managed in these 10 years to create an organised and focused network out a group of Agencies who were almost independent and non-coherent one towards the others. The networking on projects and policies are more and more evident.

These changes are the result of the growth of ALDA. On the other hand, they are also the stimulus for further steps, which can bring us forward. ALDA is a very vivid organisation and – because of its structure and the means for its existence – project oriented. In ALDA's case, the projects' dynamics is compensated by an also very active life of the Association and participation of members who are all engaged in projects, activities, exchanges and meetings. This growing feeling of success and participation is only possible if there is a sense that growth and better work is at stake.

ALDA wants to respond to the expectations

ALDA wants to respond to this expectation by taking the necessary steps to reach the objectives ahead of us : using the methodology of the Local Democracy Agencies and their experience in local governance and citizens participation all over Europe and possibly in the ENP region.

The cross cutting importance of local governance in development and stability

One can also understand the reason for the strength of ALDA and the LDAs' methodology through the fact that local governance seems to be the key for development – or exit of economic crisis – and stabilisation and democratisation. Wherever we look, through every guideline and policy paper, the question of how to make the local level of gover-

nance work and interact with civil society is expressed as one of the means for change.

Not only that. ALDA and the LDAs experience every day the importance of the work at the local level, the progresses made in the community – in the medium term – of the improvement of local government and its cooperation with civil society. We are able to demonstrate that what we do produces a change. In a word, we just do the right things at the right moment. The main topics of ALDA and LDAs seem to be requested, needed, used as essential and cross cutting element for development and stability. This means, that it is possible to look at a positive development of our activities.

Our experience tells us that it is also essential to develop further our methodology of action and see it recognised in different fora (in the EU, UNDP and other contexts working in local governance).

More LDAs

At the moment there are 11 active LDAs and 1 is in process of relaunch. Looking ahead, it seems possible thanks to an enlargement in Southern Caucasus, to open one LDA



Participants of ALDA's General Assembly 2009, Committee of the Regions, Brussels (Belgium), May 2009

in Armenia and one in Azerbaijan. Probably, the project of Basse Normandie/Macedonia, will provide the basis for opening an LDA in Macedonia again, soon, which would make a total of 16 LDAs.

More areas to be covered

At this moment, ALDA is collecting relevant information with a view to opening LDAs in the remaining two countries of the South Caucasus – Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as to reinforcing its network of LDAs in the Western Balkans and Georgia. Currently, on the basis of discussions in the Governing Board in 2008, the Association, is looking to fully cover the European Neighbourhood Policy (hereinafter ENP) countries and extend its engagement to the area of the Southern Mediterranean, through the development of projects in cooperation with local authorities and civil society organisations in these regions.

In this direction, ALDA pursues the objectives of its initiator (the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe) and members who are seeking to develop throughout Europe and its neighbourhood, common and democratic principles of crucial importance for the fulfilment of its mission of developing democracy at the local and regional level. This endeavour goes hand in hand with strengthening the interaction between local authorities and civil society organisations/citizens, always having in mind as a final goal continuous progress in the democratisation of Europe itself and of its neighbourhood.

The Role of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies outside the 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 European Union and of the Council of Europe, expressed through the former's ENP 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 citizens of Europe through the active citizenship training, ALDA also endeavours to make concrete the notion of "Europe" and Democracy (with special attention to local democracy development) to the citizens who are not part of it. ALDA not



ALDA's 10th Anniversary celebration and General Assembly at the COR, Brussels (Belgium), May 2009

only embodies the shared European values, but also seeks to demonstrate to Europe's neighbourhood that Europe is not only an abstract concept, but is also a concrete reality, source of innovation and opportunities and that, to put it simply, the democratisation process starts at the local level.

The process of co-development remains central to the Association's mission.

ALDA links Western, Eastern and Central Europe through its wide network of partners. This network helps local authorities or civil society organisations to engage 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 host 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 utmost political and economic importance to the European Union. A crisis in its neighbourhood almost automatically affects the political developments within the Union. However, ALDA's engagement in the European neighbourhood is not necessarily linked with the respective country's European membership perspective.

Some of the countries where ALDA is traditionally involved (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and UNMIK/Kosovo) are covered by 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 in a longer-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 supernational body, but their geographical location makes it important for them to have good relations with the EU as a key factor facilitating the stability and development of the country.

Giving an institutional framework to ALDA's actions in the ENPI region and Russia

ALDA's engagement in the region beyond Western Balkans and the South Caucasus, namely the Southern Mediterranean (the Magreb countries, Israel, Jordan etc.) and Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, etc.) is progressing at different speeds depending on the countries and local context. Yet, there is a sense in which engagement in projects only, does not provide the opportunity to assure a steady follow-up to the actions implemented within the scope of these projects. The need for a more formalised framework for ALDA's partnership with local actors (municipalities and civil society organisations), through the establishment of an LDA, need to be carefully evaluated, however should not be excluded.

Indeed, according to what is described above, following political decisions of the Governing Board, future steps in LDAs setting up, could be considered. Meanwhile, two projects in the Med countries have been granted : UNDP Algeria (with City of Lecce, Coppem and the Region Sicily and two Algerian partners) and City of Aix and Oudja (Marocco), assistance for citizens' negotiation.

An attention could be also given to the integration of Turkey with specific actions.

Final words

Is therefore the intention to continue the enlargement of the LDAs network. The development of the LDAs would need careful reorganization of the internal management and staff and a possible diversification (or further specialization) of the staff by region of interest.

This is a road map proposed towards enlargement:

- In particular, it is of fundamental importance to relaunch the **LDA Kosovo**, first (by February 2010). This specific LDA is of paramount importance and the need of the

local authorities and civil society are to be supported by the Association. Moreover, we have received the support for the relaunch (DGAP congress and Switzerland). In this case no own resources of ALDA requested because the initial resources are assured by the projects.

- A new **LDA in Southern Caucasus** should be also finalized in **2010-2011** (either in Azerbaijan or in Armenia). In this case, we are expecting the funds from Liechtenstein. In case the funds are not secured, we could think of allocate 15.000 Euro from the ALDA budget to finalize the initial phase for launching this second LDA in Azerbaijan in 2010-2011.
- Further evaluation for a third **LDA in Southern Caucasus** should be planned in 2010 and possibly finalized in 2011.
- In 2010, it is proposed to evaluate a development in other countries of Eastern Europe like **Ukraine, Moldova** in the following years.
- In the next couple of years, it will be necessary also to identify an exit strategy for the SEE countries, and in particular Croatia. The LDAs need to plan what will be their future and need to receive clear indications from the Governing Board.
- The assessment of the LDA network in the Med countries was supposed to be organised in 2009 but could not take place. The event will take place in 2010.

The objectives to be reached, will then be in 2010:

- Relaunch of the LDA Kosovo
- Planning LDA Azerbaijan or Armenia and possibly opening
- Plan for the LDA Macedonia
- Identification of exit strategy for the LDAs in Croatia
- Operational strategy for other East European Countries
- Operational strategy for the Med countries (and Turkey)
- Development of methodological approach

1.4 ALDA as international stakeholder

During the past years ALDA was very active in position itself as a relevant international stakeholder in many platform and networks. Its role was strongly consolidated in 2009 thanks also to several meeting where ALDA attended with active commitment and participation.

Here below are the main meeting of ALDA staff members, Governing board representatives participated:

- Mission in Israel, 23/28th of February 2009
- BIT Milano, stand Regione Puglia, 19th of February
- Meeting in Thiene , 20th of February
- UNDP Art Gold, Geneva, 26/02/09, with Region Auvergne
- Black Sea conference , 2nd of March, Brussels
- Intercultural Cities in Strasbourg , 3rd of March 2009
- Meeting with VINE, project in SEE, agency of Region Veneto, in Vicenza, 9th of March 2009
- Meeting DGEAC, Structured dialogue Europe for Citizens, 10th of March 2009
- Meeting with the EC in Milano , 11th of March 2009
- 12 March– Bruxelles – Rencontre avec Marc Thoulén, Association des villes Bruxelloises
- Meeting Association Alexander Langer in Strasbourg, Hosted by ALDA and the Council of Europe, 9th of March 2009
- Balkan Festival, Brussels, 18th and 19th of April 2009
- Conference INGO, Moscow, 20th, 21st of April 2009
- Meeting with Trieste, 22nd of April 2009
- NGO legislation expert groups, Moscow, April 2009
- Meeting with French Embassy in Russia for decentralised cooperation activities when April 2009
- Participation to the Session of the conference of the IONG – Council of Europe 27th – 29th of April 2009
- Congress Session in Strasbourg, 3rd to 5th of March 2009
- European Local Democracy Week steering committee, 14th and 15th of April 2009 in Strasbourg,
- Cités Unies France, Meeting Group Serbia, 20th of April 2009
- Meeting CEMR and ALDA in Sarajevo, Twinning activities, 27th of March 2009, Rhone Alpes Region, Contact for Armenia
- Meeting Polesella, Active citizenship, 18th of May 2009
- Meeting with Province of Vicenza, 30th of April 2009
- Mission Maroc with Aix en Provence, technical assistance, 4/7 – 05-2009
- Committee of the Regions, Preparation of the Workshop in the Open days
- Registration as lobbyies at the EC
- Valencia, Meeting with region, 14th of May 2009
- Conference on Eastern Partnership, Brussels, 27th of May 2009
- Meeting with Sergio Bassoli, Solidar, 27th of May 2009
- Per Vinther, CoR event on Eastner partnership, Kosice, 3rd of June 2009
- Country meeting Lithuania, 5th of June 2009
- Structured dialogue, DGEAC, 11th of June 2009
- Meeting representatives of Baden Wurtenberg, in Brussels, 11 of June 2009
- Meeting on the Eastern Partnership on the 16th of June, Committee of the Regions
- Anti corruption course in Istanbul with FPDL, 18th to 22nd of June 2009
- Meeting in Puglia, IPA and ENPI, 15th of June 2009
- Meeting Mme Levieux, Ville de Paris, 23rd of June 2009

- Conference on Enlargement in Belgrade, 19th of June 2009
- Meeting with Belarusian group, INGO conference, 24th of June 2009
- Coordination France Bosnie, Clermond Ferrand, 25th of June 2009
- INGO, Forum on the future of Democracy, Strasbourg, 26th of June 2009
- Meeting with Trento, city, 1st of July 2009
- Preparation Forum for the Future of Democracy, preparation of the candidates
- Meeting Sicilian Region for conference on Mediterrean strategy, 3rd of July, 2009,

- Eastern Partnership Brussels, at CoR, 14th of July 2009
- Participation in the publication of the European Year of Volunteering campaign
- European week on local democracy, circulation to members and website
- Meeting with the European Commission, DGEAC, Risto Raivio and Cecile Leclerc, 23 July 2009
- Meeting with Paolo Raffone, CIPI, 23 juillet 2009
- Meeting François Friederich, DGAP COE, Vicenza, 26 August 2009 – School of Political Studies
- Meeting with Rovigo, membership, 2nd of September 2009
- Meeting with Portogruaro, follow up Master on Balkans, 2nd of September 2009
- Tours, Rencontre AFFCRE, Jumellages, 11/12 September 2009
- 15th of September, meeting with Notarangelo, Regione Puglia
- Political Schools Azerbaijan and Armenia, Budapest COE centre, 19/20th of September 2009,
- Rimini for initiatives on Civil Society, 24th of September 2009
- L'Acquila e Valle Roveto, 24th of September
- INGO conference, 28-30 September 2009
- Rencontre MAE France, Koetscher, 27 September 2009
- Meeting France and Serbia, Belgrade 28/28th of September 2009
- Meeting with Ambassador Osplet, Liechtenstein, 30th of September for project Azerbaijan
- Meeting with Ambassador Busetto, Italy for project Azerbaijan, 30th of September 2009
- Meeting with Carver, representative USA at COE, 30th of September 2009
- Meeting with UNDP, 6th of October 2009



The European Parliament building in Strasbourg (France)

- Meeting with ZELS in Macedonia for Project Basse Normandie and Active Citizenship, 8th of July 2009
- Participation at the Exit festival, Novi Sad, 9th and 10th of July 2009
- Meeting with Studiorum Macedonia, 8th of July 2009, in Skopje
- Slovenia, Youth Salto Europe, 13th of July 2009

- Codess: meeting in Mestre, 17th of July 2009
- Open Days, in Bruxelles, 7/9 October 2009
- Energetic.it, Rome, 8th of October 2009
- Meeting Commission Culture at the city of Vicenza, 12th of October 2009
- Congress Plenary, Stand, 13/15th of October 2009
- Local Democracy Week, 12th/16th of October 2009, Conference with the city of Strasbourg, 12th of October 2009
- Meeting with finances, Council of Europe, 14th of October 2009
- Rencontre avec Kingsheim, Strasbourg, 14th of October 2009
- Meeting with Ospelt, ambassador Liechtenstein, for Azerbaijan, 15th of October 2009
- Eurocities, meeting in Strasbourg, 15th of October 2009
- Presentation with the City of Strasbourg with the Local Democracy Week, 15th of October 2009 on transborder cooperation
- Meeting in Vojvodina, 13th October 2009
- Meeting for projects FP7, 16th of October 2009
- Workshop on Citizens participation within the EU, organised by Pour la Solidarité, 16th of October 2009
- Zadar, Eacas meeting, 20th of October 2009
- Structured dialogue, EC, 20th of October 2009
- Meeting with Dalla Pozza, Province of Vicenza, 19th of October 2009
- Meeting in Kiev, forum for the future of democracy, electoral systems, 22nd and 23th of October, as chair of the committee on democracy and civil society of conference of the INGOs
- St. Petersburg, 20/22 October 2009, Assise France/Russie
- Meljnik, Ukraine, for contacts 24th of October 2009
- Preparation semaine de la démocratie Locale with Association des villes de Bruxelles OK
- Meeting Afccre and CUF in Paris, 10/11/09
- Meeting with Cidem and European Civic Forum, Paris 10th of November 2009
- Conference participation in Lublijana conference of International NGOs, 12th of Nov 2009
- Meeting with Intesa San Paolo, 21 October 2009
- Il Lung 89, Trento 14th of November 2009
- Eastern Partnership civil society forum, 16/17th of November 2009, Brussels,
- Salto Med in Malta, 19/21st of Nov 2009
- Youth programme in Budapest on End of Berlin Wall 20th of November. 2009
- Consultation White book of the CoR on Multilevel governance
- Nalas General Assembly, 11th of Dec 2009
- Participation to the UNDP Governance Forum in Siviglia 26/27 Nov
- General Assembly ARE Belfort
- Rencontre Marc Thoulen, villes de la region de Bruxelles, 2 December
- Forum civic européen 4 December
- European Forum for Urban Safety, 3 December Budapest
- Programme immigration Bologna – 4th of December 2009
- Alliance volontaire, 2 December 2009
- FP7 programme, meeting in Venice 3rd of December 2009
- Med Cities for intercultural dialogue, 11th of December
- Consultation NGOs neighbouring countries, Brussels, 14th of Dec 2009
- Meeting Friends of Europe, in Brussels, 8th of December 2009
- Forum Europe for Citizens, Brussels, 16th December 2009
- Alliance for voluntarism, 17th of December 2009
- Meeting with Association of Norwegian Municipalities for the follow up, 15th of December 2009

1.5 ALDA working in networks

- Member of the network: **Working Together** (coordinated by FPD Romania), www.fpd.ro (trainers for local authorities in all Eastern Europe)
 - Partner of the **UCLG** United Cities and Local Government as for decentralisation issues 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 **Conference of the International Non Governmental Organisations** of the Council of Europe www.coe.int and Chair (Antonella Valmorbida) of the Commission Civil Society and Democracy
- Strategic partner of the **Regional Cooperation Council for South Eastern Europe**
 - Member of the **European Civic Forum**
 - Member of the **Civil Society Forum for Eastern Partnership**, (Antonella Valmorbida) Elected member of the Steering Committee
 - Regular contributor to the Policies of the **Committee of Regions** on Citizens' participation and governance
 - Member of the **Alliance** organizing the European Year of Voluntarism



The Congress hall of the European Parliament in Strasbourg (France)

1.6 ALDA members in 2009

MUNICIPALITIES

Albania

Shkodra Municipality

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Prijedor Municipality

Zavidovici Municipality

Croatia

Osijek Municipality

Sisak Municipality

Verteneglio Municipality

Zagreb Municipality

Denmark

Odense Municipality

Vejle Municipality

France

Kingersheim Municipality

Nevers Municipality

Strasbourg Municipality

Sainte Foy Lés Lyon Municipality

Italy

Bari Municipality

Borgo Valsugana Municipality

Brindisi Municipality

Erchie Municipality

Lainate Municipality

Lavis Municipality

Lecce Municipality

Monfalcone Municipality

Porto Cesareo Municipality

Portogruaro Municipality

Preganziol Municipality

Ravenna Municipality

Reggio Emilia Municipality

Rimini Municipality

Russi Municipality

Schio Municipality

Thiene Municipality

Trento Municipality

Trieste Municipality

Vicenza Municipality

Norway

Levanger Municipality

Saltdal Municipality

Sund Municipality

Vefsen Municipality

Poland

Bydgoszcz Municipality

Rumania

Oradea Municipality

Serbia

Kragujevac Municipality

Nis Municipality

Subotica Municipality

Switzerland

Bellinzona Municipality

Lausanne Municipality

Lugano Municipality

Neuchâtel Municipality

Yverdon-les-Bains Municipality

UK

Walsall Municipality

Wolverhampton Municipality

PROVINCES OR COUNTIES

Italy

- Bari Province
- Milano Province
- Trento Autonomous Province
- Vicenza Province

Rumania

- Prahova County

Spain

- Barcelona County

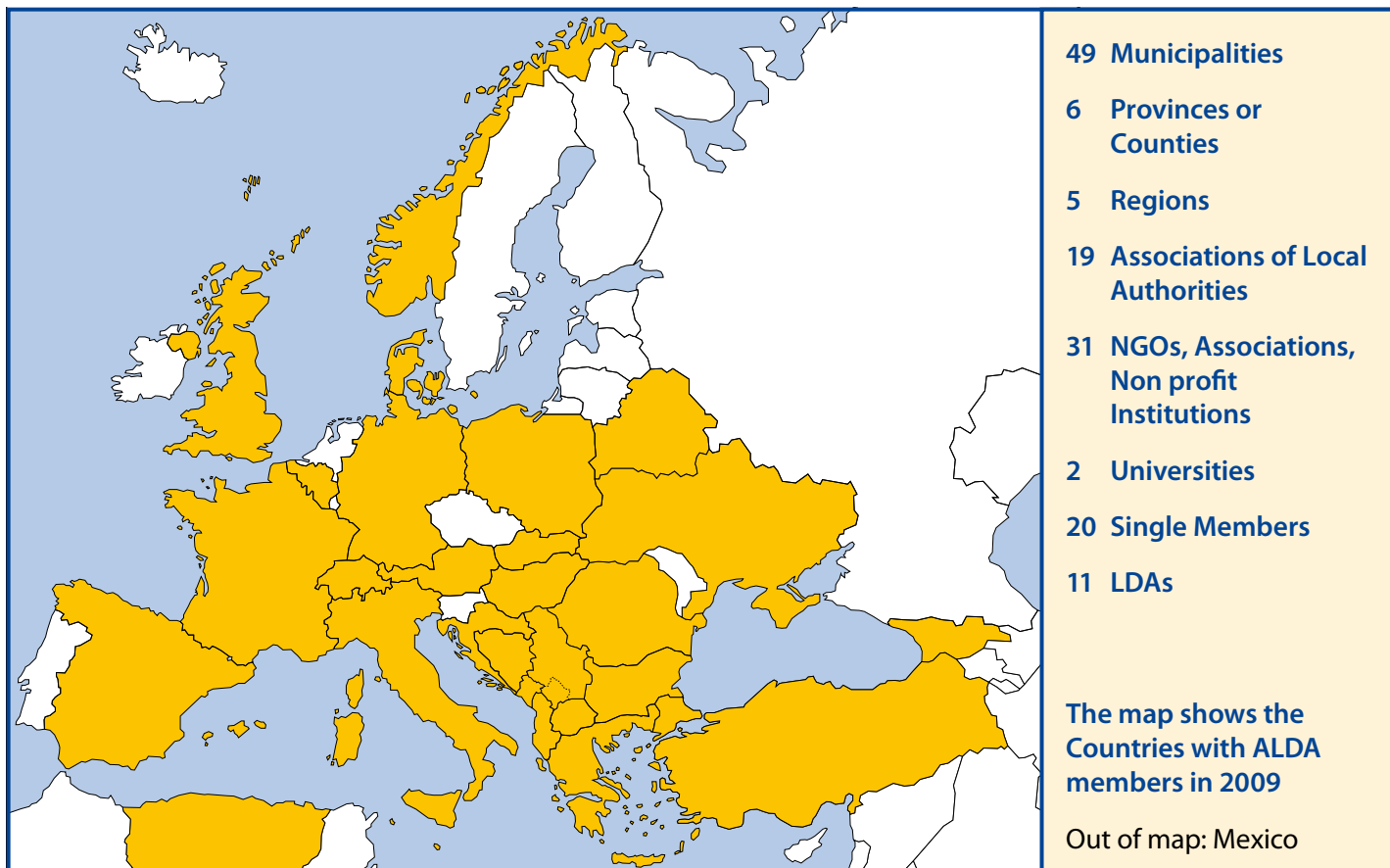
REGIONS

Croatia

- Istria Region

Italy

- Friuli Venezia Giulia Region
- Puglia Region
- Sicily Region
- Veneto Region



ASSOCIATIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Belgium

ARE
CCRE

France

AFCCRE
ENTO

Denmark

Local Government Denmark

Italy

AICCRE
Associazione dei Comuni della Marca Trevigiana
Consorzio dei Comuni trentini
CONSVIPO
Tecla

Malta

Local Councils Association

Norway

Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities

Poland

Douzelage association
Warmia and Mazuria Communitas Association

Republic of Macedonia

NALAS Secretariat
ZELS

Rumania

AMR

Serbia

Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities

Switzerland

Causes Communes Suisse

NGOS, ASSOCIATIONS, NON PROFIT INSTITUTIONS

Albania

Horizont NGO

Algeria

FACM

Austria

Europazentrum Wien (EZW)

Belarus

Lev Sapieha Foundation

Bulgaria

Association for European Partnership - AEP
Balkan Assist Association
National Forum API

France

ALFA Formation
CIDEFE
Maison de l'Europe

Greece

AKRO NGO
Institute of Entrepreneurship Development
KMOP (Kendro Merimnas Oikoyenias kai Pediou)

Hungary

NeTe, Centre Internationale de Formation Européenne

Italy

Associazione per l'Ambasciata della Democrazia Locale
Associazione Progetto Prijedor
Fondazione Opera Campana dei Caduti
Identità e Dialogo
IPRES
Istituto Euromediterraneo
Progettarte
Putignanonelmondo
Solo Uguali Diritti
Tavolo Trentino con Kraljevo

Mexico

INICIA

Republic of Macedonia

CRPRC, Centre for Regional Policy Research
and Cooperation Studiorum

Slovakia

Professional Women - Zeny

Switzerland

Causes Communes Ticino

UK

LGIB - Local Government International Bureau

UK - South Wales

Newport Kutaisi Association

Ukraine

Ukrainian Agency for Democracy and Local
Self-Government

UNIVERSITIES

Italy

IUAV Venezia University
Padova University

SINGLE MEMBERS

Belgium

Van Damme Lukas
Vinther Per

France

Affholder Sylvie
Beck Colette
Bohner Ulrich
Fouconnier Alain
Friederich François
Locatelli Rinaldo
Vulcano Luigi

Germany

Schley Michael

Italy

Bottacin Diego
Cuonzo Maria Teresa
Martini Gianfranco
Rizzo Sebastiano

Serbia

Kern Imre

Spain

Fischer Dorothee

UK

Boorer Malcom
Master Owen

UK, Wales

Mayer David

Ukraine

Zaychykova Vitalina

LDAs

Albania

LDA Albania

Bosnia and Herzegovina

LDA Prijedor
LDA Zavidovici
LDA Mostar

Croatia

LDA Osijek
LDA Sisak
LDA Verteneglio

Georgia

LDA Georgia

Montenegro

LDA Montenegro

Serbia

LDA Center South Serbia
LDA Subotica

ALDA MEMBERS WHO JOINED IN 2010**France**

Brischoux Maud (single member)
Lower Normandie Region
Auvergne Region
Zehra Dreca Sikias (single member)

Italy

Franco Lara (single member)
Isbem
Rovigo Municipality
Unisco

Greece

Patras

Kosovo

Association of Municipalities of Kosovo

Republic of Macedonia

Sega
Skopje Municipality



European youths: one of the main targets of ALDA's political strategies

1.7 ALDA'S PROJECTS IN 2009

Projects on Active Citizenship

1.7.1 Pilot trainings 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. The 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.

The pilot trainings were implemented with the following partners:

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

The pilot trainings were very successful and the partner expressed the intention to reiterate the initiative in the following year.



Participants attending the Module on Active Citizenship in Russi (Italy), February 2009

Projects on Active Citizenship

1.7.2 “Training for active citizenship in the EU enlargement process” (TACEP)

Supported by: European Commission (DG EAC, Europe for Citizens Programme)

Local partners: Croatia: LDA Verteneglio, LDA Sisak; LDA Osijek

International Partners: in Hungary: PRONI Osijek Baranya Ifjúságáért Nonprofit Kft – Pecz, Europe Direct Information Network Info Point Europe of Baranya County – Pez, Nemezetcozi Segetreg er Baratsag Egyesulet- Pecz, in Italy: Going to Europe, Modena

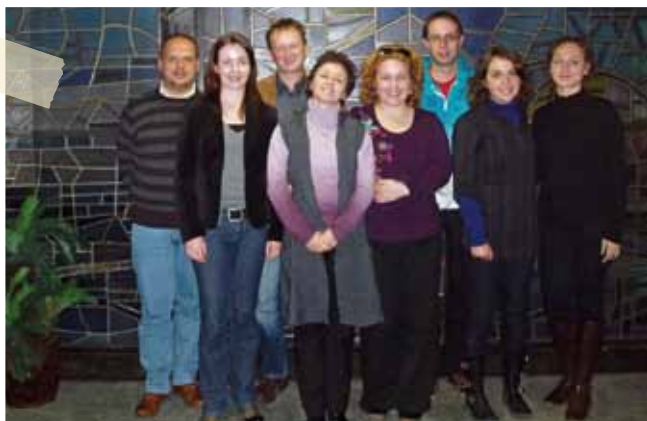
The Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) was the coordinating organization of this project and involved, as regional coordinators and implementing units, the three Croatian Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) based in Verteneglio, Sisak and Osijek (Croatia) which are active on citizens' participation and European integration.

The project was implemented between September 2008 and June 2009 and focused especially on the need to provide capacity building to Croatian civil society organizations in the context of the EU Enlargement Process, taking into consideration the candidate status of Croatia. The objectives of the project were to train Croatian citizens and civil society organizations to act as “multipliers” at the local level in the field of active citizenship. This project aimed also at promoting partnerships both at the European and

at the local level in the field of active citizenship. The core activity consisted in two seminars, based on the concept of informal learning, in each of the three communities, titled “Trainings of Multipliers”. They were organized in Croatia: in Osijek on the 5-8th March 2009 and 20-22nd March 2009, in Sisak on the 26-29th March 2009 and 17-19th April 2009 and in Verteneglio on the 2-5th April 2009 and 8-10th May 2009. The active and interactive method allowed participants to learn not only from theories but also from practical examples. In particular, participants developed their knowledge and competences on “Europe for Citizens” programme, on active European citizenship participatory issues, on intercultural issues on running and evaluating multiplying projects.

As a follow-up of the trainings, on the 9th May 2009, celebrating the Day of Europe, three Info Point “Europe for Citizens” were opened in the three LDAs, to increase the visibility of the project and its sustainable base for future cooperation at the local level as well as for the development of future joint projects.

It is worth mentioning especially the “pilot” cooperation between the participating organisations. A concrete follow up came from Verteneglio (Croatia): a young female multiplier, together with other young people, nowadays are promoting the set up of Youth Councils in some municipalities of Istria Region (Croatia), where this kind of advisory body was still missing despite a law dated 2008. Together with the support of the LDA Verteneglio, she organized meetings with the international partner youth NGO “Exist” (Italy), and collected some local young people to participate to activities organized in Italy by the NGO. The active role of local youth it is a clear sign that through informal and non-formal learning, they gained competences, which enabled them to develop their commitment to active and democratic participation. Volunteering is indeed an essential element of active citizenship and the young multipliers are in fact offering their spare time for the benefit of their community.



Participants at the 1st Steering Committee of TACEP, Sisak (Croatia), November 2009

mentation. The project was successful since it contributed to create a new space of democracy in Croatia, through the debate on the active involvement of citizens in the social and political life, and in particular the enlargement process.

The Celebration of Europe Day in Sisak may also be seen as a joint project of local NGOs developed as a follow-up of the training session: it was a pilot cooperation between 6 NGOs in 3 towns, Sisak, Petrinja and Gvozd, in which the celebration of the 9th of May offered an opportunity for citizens to receive information and answers about the EU integration.

An important outcome of the project is the trans-nationality, which was achieved through the cooperation with international partners, mainly Italian and Hungarian, who invited few young multipliers to join them in their activities, focused on active youth participation in society. The experience was an efficient way to raise awareness on the richness of cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe and outside Europe.

Finally a useful handbook about “Enlargement and Active citizenship” was published, in order to increase the visibility of the project’s results and its innovative practices and to show the important role played by NGOs in the reinforcement of democracy. The realization of a CD-ROM as well as the evaluation meeting completed the project imple-

Projects on Active Citizenship

1.7.3 ALL.4.EU – Active citizenship and citizens' panel

Lead Partner: Region Istria

Partners: Balkan Assist Association (Bulgaria), Centrum Komunitneho Organizovania – CKO (Slovak Republic), Municipality of Vejle (Denmark), Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (France), Local Councils Association (Malta), Consortium for Development of Polesine – CONSVIPO (Italy)

ALL.4.EU is a project consisting in the setting-up of citizens' panels (groups of ordinary citizens, not spontaneously involved in European issues) in six different countries in Europe: Bulgaria, Slovak Republic, Denmark, France, Malta and Italy. The employed methodology of the citizens' panels was characterized by an active interaction between all the actors involved (citizens, local authorities, EU Institutions, etc.), to encourage and facilitate interaction and participation. This specific methodology's main goal was the opportunity to people to be involved and play an active role in the construction of Europe and to contribute to bridge the gap between citizens and the European Union. The citizens had the opportunity to gain new information and competencies to formulate and submit to local, regional and European decision makers their opinion in the form of recommendations. This is a major challenge also for the Region Istria, which ideally represents a bridge between Europe and pre-accession countries. Through this project, ALDA together with the Region Istria, sought to consolidate the innovative active methodology of "citizens' panels" to promote the full involvement of all European citizens in the decision making processes and aimed at

giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing a more democratic and world-oriented Europe. The overall objective was to develop a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture and enriched through its cultural and linguistic diversity.

The Partners selected the participants for the citizens' panels' during two phases: at a first stage they choose three "leading citizens among civil society and local authorities representatives who are already active at local level, paying attention a gender-balanced representation. In the second phase, the "activators" selected ten participants among local authorities and civil society representatives who applied on voluntary basis. Politicians were also involved in citizens' panels meetings as resource people. In addition EU institutions representatives were informed and invited to participate both in local and trans-national activities, in order to allow citizens to directly interact with them.

Through an international meeting of citizens' panels and several info-days at local level, the project aimed at explaining the methods for guiding the process of building individual and collective opinions and recommendations to be submitted to the European institutions.

Citizens' panels directly promoted and organised the info-days at local level, involving citizens of the local community on an extensive basis.

At the beginning of the project each partner run at the local level a SWOT analysis (analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) to assess identify, at the local level, the existing practices, tools and models in the field of citizens' participation in order to "profit" of the best practices and to promote synergies between the project and the on-going experiences. The analysis was run by the representatives of each partner with the technical support of experts of ALDA.

On 20-24 April 2009 an international training for the "citizen panel activators", titled "New institutional developments: a new momentum for active European citizenship" was held in Strasbourg. It aimed at providing to participants

knowledge, skills and competencies concerning: the concepts of “active citizenship” and “active European citizenship”, the concept of non-formal education, fostering their intercultural competences and skills to gather, select and give information. The training also aimed at enhancing their skills to draft recommendations and position papers to be addressed to decision makers at all levels.

In addition to the international training, each partner promoted a one-day event with the aims to encourage the participation at local level and to raise awareness about the importance of actively participating in the construction of Europe and to launch the citizens’ panels building process. Moreover, the local events aimed at presenting the “tasks” of citizens’ panels, focusing particularly on the research to be developed at local level providing relevant inputs guidelines for this purpose. The local events were very successful and had the following topics: “Youth Activism in Istria on the way to the EU” held on 3rd June 2009 in Pazin (Croatia); “Europe for citizens: Promotion of Active European Citizenship” on 14th May 2009 in Stara Zagora (Bulgaria); “Europe for us, we for Europe” held on 26th May 2009 in Zvolen (Slovakia); “EU-citizens’ panel – ALL.4.EU”, held on June 11th 2009 at the Vejle Business College (Denmark); “ALL.4.EU” Public Seminar, held on May 30th 2009 in Valletta (Malta); “Citizens for Europe: To promote an active citizenship” – Set-up of Local Citizens’ Panels, organized in Arquà Polesine – Rovigo (Italy) on June 11th 2009.

On the 7th-8th July 2009, representatives from the different citizens’ panels met in Sofia (Bulgaria) in order to present the first results of the panels’ work and to elaborate common opinions and recommendations through the constitution of a trans-national citizens’ panel.

This meeting aimed also at drafting common “position papers” to be submitted to European decision makers as well as coordinating common activities-outputs among partners. Three working groups were created to discuss the following topics: participation of youth, mechanisms – how to be an active EU citizen and communication/Information.



**All.4.EU, participants at the citizens’ panel
Stara Zagora (Bulgaria), May 2009**

At the local level, each citizens’ panel, in strict cooperation with the local partner, promoted 3-days workshops (Rovigo, Italy: 25th September, 2nd October and 8th October 2009; Region of Istria, Croatia: 18th September, 13th October 2009) aiming at sharing and providing information to the citizens, new knowledge, skills and competencies to better interact with local and regional decision makers, with the European Institutions and thus to better play the role of active European citizens.

At the end of the project, an international final conference (“Development of European active citizenship through the citizens’ panels’ methodology”) was held in Pula (Croatia) on the 4th of November 2009. The final conference, which was promoted and organized with the direct involvement of citizens’ panels – in cooperation with project partners – in all its phases, mainly focused on the submission of the recommendations to European decision makers. Proposals, opinions and position papers drafted by the citizens’ panels, both at the national and at the European level, were submitted to the European Commission, also through the involvement of Euro-MPs. This final stage was very interesting and was a concrete way to make citizens’ voice heard by the EU institutions at high level.

Projects on Active Citizenship

1.7.4 Innovative and creative activities to raise citizens' awareness on the European elections 2009

Donor: Association of Local democracy Agencies

Partners: Italy: the municipality of Monfalcone; the municipality of Ravenna; the association Putignanonelmondo; France: Maison de l'Europe of the municipality of Caen

Accompanying the efforts of the European Union intuitions to promote the vote for the elections of the EU Parliament, in spring of 2009, ALDA launched a call for proposals to its members to organise activities to raise awareness about the upcoming elections of the European Parliament, to improve citizens' understanding of the role and the functioning of the European Institutions, and increasing citizens' participation at the European level through voting, fostering debates between citizens and local authorities and advocate to bring European decision makers and citizens closer together.

The overall objective of this initiative was twofold: first, to organise events to encourage people to vote for the European Parliament elections in May 2009. Second, to use the occasion of the elections to bring the debate of citizens' participation and the importance of a better understanding of the European Union to the forefront.

The first objective of encouraging voting was reached

through the promotion of the important role of the European Parliament, and the increased understanding of the scope of citizen's participation in the European Union for an increased democracy.

The second objective to raise awareness and understanding about the European Union was reached through various activities with a focus on the role of the schools and local authorities in providing knowledge, adequate information and engaging fruitful debates at the local level.

ALDA selected 4 partners, which have been selected to implements 5 sets of activities in France and Italy. The implementing partners are:

- the municipality of Monfalcone (Italy)
- the municipality of Ravenna (Italy)
- the association Putignanonelmondo (Italy)
- Maison de l'Europe of the municipality of Caen (France)

The common approach and method were participatory initiatives that brings together actors from different sectors, and to run both activities targeting a particular group (for example the youth) and activities that brought together categories of people that do not usually meet (for instance foster a debate between students and politicians). Participatory approach allowed actors from different sectors to work together towards a common goal.

The overall outcome of the project was an increased awareness among citizens, in particular youth, who were new to voting or voting for the first time for the European elections and a building of capacities of the actors able to provide information about Europe to the citizens (local authorities, actors in the civil society, teachers). Partners' endeavour to diversify different sorts of events showed the importance to engage the society at all levels, and through different means. The variety of initiatives taken testifies the numerous opportunities that exist to engage the debate on citizens' participation in Europe.

Activities:

1. Debate on “The future of European citizens in the heart of the next European elections” with Catherine Lalumière, former minister and vice-president of the European Parliament, on the 24th of April 2009, Maison de l’Europe, Caen, (France)

Partners: Movement Européen Basse Normandie and Maisons de l’Europe (France)

This debate was integrated into a wider project to promote Europe, the importance of citizens’ participation, and the crucial role of the Parliament in providing democratic control over other European institutions. It aimed at reflecting upon the adequacy between information and the purpose of voting as well as it aimed at sharing actions and encouraging cooperation in innovative projects.

The event successfully brought together local elected representatives, local authorities, young people involved in the local life and representatives of associations.



An interview at the seminar in Ravenna (Italy)

2. The European Week, 5th to 15th of May 2009, Basse Normandie region, by Maison de l’Europe, (France)

In May 2009 “Maison de l’Europe” (Caen, France), together with the “Jean Rostand” high school (Caen, France), municipal council of Colombelles (France), Maison du Citoyen (Hérouville Saint Clair, France) and “Mémorial pour la Paix” (Caen, France), organised a series of event to raise awareness on the European elections and the importance of citizens participation.

The events were organised in four different sets of activities: the “Semaine de l’Europe”, an open debate with two candidates to the European elections, the Conference-debate “Europe: many preconceptions”: exchange on the institutions, the economy, education and the debate meeting and exhibition around the “Fête de l’Europe”: “What opportunities can Europe offer to the Youth?”.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the impact of this event, “Maison de l’Europe” implemented a holistic programme around the priority of European citizenship and awareness raising on democratic participation. The “Maison de l’Europe” aims at being the place for different actors to gather, discuss, and work together. It aims at attracting in particular youth, actors of civil society, and institutions working for European democracy.

3. “Festa dell’ Europa”, 4th of May 2009, in Monfalcone by the municipality of Monfalcone (Italy)

The municipality of Monfalcone (Italy) decided to run a project “Festa dell’Europa” (Europe’s party) in partnership with schools of Monfalcone and “United World College” of Duino (Italy) to promote the knowledge of the European Parliament and to raise citizens awareness on the European Elections 2009 essentially through schools, targeting mainly



Mr. Notarangelo (in the centre) from Region Puglia, conference "Use your vote" in Putignano (Italy)

young people, and indirectly, their families. A special focus was given to eighteen years olds who were voting for the first time.

Prior to the implementation of the project, a working group was set up with schools of Monfalcone composed of principals and teachers who coordinated the programme activities. The municipality of Monfalcone run also training activities for the involved staff.

The main objective of the event was to raise awareness among the youth about the history and evolution of the European Union and promote the importance of citizens' participation through voting for the European Parliament elections.

4. "Diventa Cittadino europeo", Municipality of Ravenna, (Italy)

Partners: Province of Ravenna (Italy), Flaminia Foundation (Italy), Europe Direct– European Carrefour Romagna (Italy)

The Municipality of Ravenna (Italy) implemented the project "Diventa Cittadino europeo" (Become a European

Citizen) in partnership with the province of Ravenna, "Flaminia Foundation" and Europe Direct– European Carrefour Romagna (Italy).

This initiative aimed at encouraging and developing citizens' participation through voting at the recent European Parliament elections. The seminar targeted young people who were experiencing European elections for the first time and needed a comprehensive explanation on Europe, its institutions and programmes. The information campaign on the event reached about 2.000 individuals from schools, universities and civil society.

5. Events and campaigns, Putignanonelmondo, Putignano (Italy)

Association "Putignanonelmondo" (Italy), following its statutory mission, promotes and produces entertainment activities and active citizenship projects, develops cultural resources and supports local associations. Putignanonelmondo implemented a project to raise citizen's awareness on the European elections 2009 in partnership with ATS "I MAKE" - the local expression of associations - which allowed to reach a very broad public through a series of seminars, mostly targeting young people and Third Age people. That strategy broadened the audience to citizens usually more reluctant to participate actively in political life.

The overall objective was to raise awareness of local citizens on the key role they could play in European integration, understood not as a purely political and economic team, but as an entity composed of individuals who choose to be active towards common goals.

The project substantially raised awareness in the local community on the theme of citizens' participation in order to involve people in the promotion of a single European identity, beyond the diversity of national and individual cultures.

Projects on Active Citizenship

1.7.5 The Elections of the European Parliament '09 ...a challenge for our common future!

A joint initiative by ALDA and the European Commission Delegation in Milan, Italy.

On May 21 2009, ALDA in partnership with the Universities of Padua and Venice (which are ALDA members since 2008), organized a Conference: "The Elections of the European Parliament - a challenge for our common future!". The initiative was sponsored by the Representation of the European Commission in Milan, by the Office of the European Parliament in Milan, Italy. The event aimed at encouraging Italian citizens to go to vote to the European elections, which took place on the 6 and 7 June.

The conference took place at the University, a place where mainly young people, the future decision takers in Europe, come together. It is also a traditional place for human sciences and political discussion, which influenced Europe as we know it today to a tremendous extent. Involving the university allowed ALDA to attract a large number of participants, excellent academic speakers and also speakers from a professional field. Two members of the European Parliament attended as well.

The conference provided basic information on the role of the European Parliament within the European Union, on its functioning, on its history and on its main policies promoted at European level and focused on the importance



Promotion of EP election, 21st May 2009 in Padova (Italy)

of being an active citizen through the vote in order to participate to the decision making processes at EU level. The event was a great success since many students, ordinary citizens, University teachers and journalists from Veneto area attended. The debate was lively and offered a great occasion for the promotion of EU values and of EU citizenship.

Projects on Active Citizenship

1.7.6 Town Twinning: a vehicle for European integration

Donor: European Commission, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

Partner leader: ALDA

“Town Twinning: a vehicle for European integration” was a project aimed at promoting town-twinning, focusing in particular on the multilateral decentralized cooperation approach, as a vehicle to foster European Integration and to strengthen twinning agreements relations amongst local authorities in the enlarged Europe. It sought to provide new knowledge, skills and capacities of the responsible people for twinning activities at local level.

The project targeted a large number of municipalities, namely 110 institutions directly involved in the events, and had therefore an important multiplier effect. ALDA was the coordinated the preparatory phase and involved the supporting partners from the very beginning on order to favour and promote their full commitment to the project.

A training “Capacity building for Local Authorities in the field of twinning” was implemented with success on the 8th and the 11th of June 2009 in Shkodra (Albania). It was addressed to local authorities, especially to those in charge of twinning activities, and to other organizations having a specific knowledge and experience of the topic like twinning associations. The training focused on three different aspects: information of the concept of town twinning in

an European perspective, competencies on twinning methodologies, cooperation providing tools to promote and support networking and cooperation in the field of twinning. The training course as a whole was conceived as an “ad-hoc space” to establish and foster relations and cooperation. During the training, the participants were requested to work concretely on project development both on town twinning and on thematic networking activities of twinned towns, in cooperation with other interested and motivated institutions of the enlarged Europe.

An On line Advisory Service, run by ALDA, supported the preparation and the implementation of good quality projects. It represented a new “output” since it had the characteristics of a pilot action and it was improved according to the needs and the requests of the beneficiaries and the most relevant stakeholders. The service opened immediately after the training and it was conceived as a long-lasting facility offered to the members of ALDA and thus, thanks to the sustainability conditions offered by ALDA network, it continued to work after the conclusion of the project. Thanks to ALDA deep knowledge and expertise on the to-



International workshop “Building Europe through town-twinning”, 4th of December 2009, Skopje



Workshop on "Town twinning" with Marta Petrova and Antonella Valmorbida, Skopje, 4th December 2009

This project revealed how important improving day by day the promotion of the cooperation between NGOs and local authorities in order to make sure that the civil society is both representative and represented. Town twinning represents an activity that should involve the entire community, through the encouragement of the participation at all levels and fostering all citizens to take an active part in it. Town twinning is definitely a "tool" to promote and foster citizens' participation in the construction of a united Europe!

pics addressed, On line Advisory Service's consultancy and advisory actions promoted (and still promoting) the establishment of new relationships and the development of good quality projects.

An International workshop, titled "Building Europe through town-twinning" was held on the 4th of December 2009 in Skopje (Macedonia). It mainly aimed at promoting the different forms and concept of town-twinning amongst local authorities and networking, gathering local authorities and civil society representatives from Europe and the Balkans to discuss the contribution of town-twinning and civil society networking to the European integration process and the building of a European identity.

At the end of the project a final publication was issued: it was a handbook in order to promote further multiplying effects, which was disseminated through ALDA network and through the networks of the associations of Local Authorities, which are members of ALDA.

All the activities were promoted through the Applicant website where supporting partners and ALDA members had a link to their own websites.

Projects on Active Citizenship

1.7.7 “ALDA – Your partner in Europe to foster citizens’ participation!”

Supported by: Council of Europe, Education and Culture DG “Europe for Citizens’ Programme

In 2009 the Association of Local Democracy Agencies celebrated its 10 years of commitment of human rights and democracy. On this occurrence two communication issues were issued: a publication “ALDA – 10 years in the making of a new Europe” and a video titled “Your partner in Europe to foster citizens’ participation!”. It traced all projects implemented by the Association and its Agencies during these ten years of activities, aiming at raising specific awareness on a new idea of “Active Citizenship”, one of ALDA’s main fields of expertise. The video was distributed not only during the celebrations for the tenth-anniversary but also spread in ALDA network all over Europe.



Active Citizenship Video issued by ALDA for its 10th Anniversary, May 2009

Projects on Women's empowerment and related issues

1.7.8 "Bandiar, switch on Europe" – "Active citizenship, women participation"

Lead Partner: ASAEL (Association of Aragonese Local Authorities) in Spain

Partners: ALDA (France), BalticFem (Sweden), Municipality of Bydgoszcz (Poland) and Reggio Emilia Province (Italy)

BANDIAR project aimed at raising awareness about participation of women in political life in the local level and to spread the idea that European Union needs also to be built from a bottom-up perspective, involving local authorities. It aimed at fostering exchanges of ideas, experiences and strategies on gender issues, between citizens and politicians, to stimulate the active participation of women in the processes of representative democracy at local, national and international level. The project was based on an interactive dialogue through the principle of citizens' panels, gathering ordinary citizens to discuss and debate about certain issues. The objectives of the project focused also on promoting 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 an excellent tool for encouraging people to explain their opinions, recommendations with the final purpose of promoting gender opportunities as a European value and of fostering the feeling of being part of the EU. ALDA was very active in involving local authorities in order to

encourage local civil servants, local politicians and public in general to feel part of the EU. Moreover ALDA, as an international association, focused on women participation in politics in Europe, organising two workshops, gathering the panel.

The first workshop took place on 3rd July 2009, gathering 25 participants, mostly women, with discussions around conciliation of public and private life, women poverty in terms of lower salaries, female representation imposed by the society, education in schools. The participants elaborated ideas to reduce obstacles that prevent women participation in the public life, such as: a quality information campaign at the European level, accompanying measures in the legislation of gender equality, coordinating the different existing networks of women.

The second workshop took place on 2nd October 2009, focused on the role that schools could play to enhance women participation in politics. 18 women involved in scholar and social actions were present and discussed about young girls and women discrimination at school. The project will be completed in January 2010 with a final conference in Brussels, which will gather representatives of the citizens' panels, who will present their results across Europe.



Debate on women participation in politics, Strasbourg (France), July 2009

Projects on Women's empowerment and related issues

1.7.9 Emanzipar

Donor: European Commission

Lead Partner: Asael (Aragonese Association of Local Authorities), Spain, OTHER Partners: ALDA, Province of Reggio Emilia in Italy, Auxilium in Austria, BD Center in Poland, Local Councils' Association in Malta, Bauska District Council in Latvia, Harrow Council in London, UK and Larnaca District Development Agency in Cyprus.

Citizen' participation in the local decision-making processes can be traced as far back as Plato with his concepts of freedom of speech, assembly, voting, and equal representation. Today, these concepts form the basic pillars of modern democracies. But in today's society citizen' participation means much more than going to the polls. An ever growing number of interest groups and civil society organisations stand up for their beliefs, while a decreasing number of people participate in elections. Is it correct to speak of a passive, indifferent youth versus active adults? What kind of forms can participation take today? These were the main topic addressed by the project "Emanzipar", lasting from May 2008 till 2009, which was developed by Asael together with ALDA and Network Liedra, in the framework of the overall "Youth in Action Programme" and, of the "Youth for Europe – Youth exchanges" programme. This project was implemented to raise young people's awareness on gender domestic violence and European issues. Special care was given to the participation of disabled young people in the programme.

ALDA members were active in activities aiming at reaching the young Europeans living in the rural areas in order to promote their active participation. The project addressed also civil servants of local authorities working in the field of



Study visit in Strasbourg (France) for the "Emanzipar" project

youth, local youth decision makers, members of associations and non-profit organizations, school teachers in rural areas, youth associations and the general young public. The participation in the project of ALDA members and partners was high, among which the following took part: United Games International (Austria), Province of Venice (Italy) and City of Osijek (Croatia). Relevant activities were implemented also by the City of Portogruaro (Italy) which is member of ALDA, in the framework of this overall project implemented specific activities like the one titled: "Young Ideas in Portogruaro" which gave the exceptional possibility to young students of the third and fourth year of a high school to plan and develop their social, cultural, environmental, sportive and creative initiatives and activities in the area of their community. In addition, the activity "Uno sguardo all'universo" consisted in the organization and the creation of a planetarium where people of all ages will have the opportunity to comprehend and examine closely the planets and the mysteries of the universe. This activity was completed in April 2009 by the opening of the planetarium, prepared by a group of amateurs from Ferrara (Italy). This activity was also an opportunity to reward the winning class who will participate in the competition aimed to achieve a model on "The planets and the University".

Projects on Youth

1.7.10 eCLAU project - Young Europeans in Action: participating against climate change - approved under the European Programme “Youth in Action”

Donor: European Commission

Lead partner: ASAEL (Association of Aragonese Municipalities)

Partners: France: ALDA, Italy: Reggio Emilia Province, Republic of Bulgaria: Association for development of mountain municipalities, Greece: Institute of Entrepreneurship Development.

The project was led by ASAEL (Association of Aragonese Municipalities), in partnership with ALDA. The objective was to encourage youth participation across Europe through an independent website, designed by the Greek partners, www.e-clau.net, and to get them to debate among their own nationality and with each nationality about climate change issues. Each country had its website section, in its own language, and moderated a forum about an environmental theme.

ALDA leaded the communication of the whole project, drafting the newsletter and the promotional brochures and



Mrs. Schwoob from ALDA staff, opening the “eCLAU” workshop at the CoE, Strasbourg (France)

evaluating the communication among all the partners.

As the other partners, ALDA organised an international workshop in Strasbourg on 25th June 2009, promoting the importance of the debate among youth on climate change and encouraging online forums and the use of interactive website to spread information about this important issue. The workshop was dedicated to deal with the international environmental policies and to e-participation. 24 youngsters, representatives of local authorities, NGOs and private sector participated actively. The workshop led to the conclusion that the European Union should keep concentrating on environmental and climate change issues and strengthen its action to protect environment.

Projects on Youth

1.7.11 “Civil Society and Local Authorities: Working Together for the EU integration”

Partners: Citizens Pact for South Eastern Europe – Association of the Local Democracy Agencies

During the EXIT Festival, which is an annual summer music festival in the Petrovaradin Fortress of Novi Sad (Serbia), ALDA and the Citizens’ Pact for SEE jointly organised a Panel Discussion on “Civil Society and Local Authorities: Working Together for the EU integrations” which took place on the AGORA stage of the Festival on the 9th of July. Such initiatives need financial resources that are scarcely available in the current period of global economic crisis.

Municipalities are not always able to provide financial support for such initiatives even where there is a political will to do so. Yet financial instruments designed to support strengthening links between local authorities and civil society across Europe are available. The intention of this debate will be also to discuss the costs and benefits of the Europe for Citizens Program. In fact The European Commission, has a variety of financial instruments designed for the purpose of strengthening the cooperation between local authorities and civil society, among which the most prominent is the “Europe for Citizens Program”.

This program supports a wide range of activities and organisations promoting “active European citizenship”, especially the involvement of citizens and civil society organisa-

tions in the process of European integration. Action 1 of the Program has a special concentration on the development of cross-border cooperation initiatives and links between local authorities and civil society in different European countries.

The debate focused on the role of local authorities in the process of EU integration of the countries in the Western Balkans, with a special focus on the cooperation between local governments, grass root organisations across borders and the development of the participative democracy in the region. Positive examples such as the triangular cooperation between the towns of Osijek-Novi Sad-Tuzla, and the experience of the twelve Local Democracy Agencies of ALDA were considered and discussed, as examples of best practices in the field of regional cooperation between local authorities and civil society organizations. The participation to the event was high and the topic raised the interest of the participants more than expected.



Mr. Vinther, ALDA President, at the “Exit Festival” stage, Novi Sad (Serbia), July 2009

Projects on Youth

1.7.12 Youth: the right direction

Donor: European Commission

Partner leader: ALDA

Partners: youth organisations "SEGA" (Macedonia), Ligue d'enseignement de Calvados, (France), the LDAs of Osijek, Prijedor, Verteneglio, Montenegro, Sisak, Mostar, Subotica, Zavidovići and Niš.

With the project "Youth: the right direction" ALDA enhanced the promotion and visibility of the European Youth programme in South Eastern Europe and Caucasus. The project included several activities combining co-operation, training and information aspects.

The local partners were in charge to select young participants, mainly aged from 15 to 25, among representatives from youth councils and youth organisations as well as young people working in local and regional authorities. The purpose was to let young people get familiar with the EU Youth program, to encourage them to exchange information especially thanks to the peer-to-peer innovative approach. It is based on the involvement of young people and youth workers both as learners and as resource persons to act at the local level as "multipliers" to promote the youth programme and the development of youth projects and initiatives. The peer education methodology had a very high impact for the involvement of young people. Other methods used were participatory with bottom-up approach: working groups, role-plays and open-space methods. All the participants were not only listeners but also contributors in the events.

In each activity ALDA kept balance among the participants in terms of social, gender, geographical criteria.

The "Job shadowing" activity from April to July 2009 gathered 10 young people from SEE that are actively involved in the youth projects of the LDAs (Osijek, Prijedor, Verteneglio, Montenegro, Sisak, Mostar, Subotica, Zavidovići, Niš and the youth organization SEGA from Macedonia). They had a chance to have a short stay with a partner organisation in another country with the aim of exchanging good practices, acquiring skills and knowledge and building long-term partnerships through participative observation.



EVS training in Kotor (Montenegro), February 2009

These "job shadowing" practices provided the youth officers a training opportunity with "learning by doing" methodology. These experiences included meeting with actors involved in youth projects, observation of the functioning of the youth organisation, the communication and the regular activities of the hosting organisation. Three information seminars were organized in 3 different countries in order to involve as much as possible young people from the countries involved. Their aim was to

promote the visibility of the new Youth in Action program (2007-2013) in South Eastern Europe and Caucasus. With these seminars, ALDA provided training on Youth in action program, especially information, setting up specialized info points, to more than 50 youngsters and youth workers from SEE and Caucasus.

Besides the training activities, an important moment on this event was the accreditation of the LDAs by SALTO SEE resource centre. All the LDAs involved were accredited and became "Sending, Hosting and Coordinating Organisations" for EVS. The LDAs benefited from the presence of the SALTO staff for SEE to ask questions and share some ideas of how to develop high quality EVS projects and to promote this programme among the youth on local level. Finally, this activity focused on the future cooperation by creation of an EVS network that will include all the LDAs and other European partners. These young people are now youth ambassadors among their peers and are willing to continue working in the youth field on local level. This result will finally benefit the youth from the Region who will have a possibility to live and work as a volunteer in EU, as well as the youngsters from all around Europe that will come to discover the Balkans by working in one of the LDAs. At the end, these young people directly participated in the evaluation of the events by giving general overlook of the past events.

Four networks were set up as logical outcome of the implementation of the project, such as a **network of specialized info-points for youth** aiming at exchanging information between specialized info-points at the LDAs. A special **network of Youth ambassadors** was the outcome of the information training. The aim was to contribute in the cooperation and exchange of experiences of young people in the region about youth issues. In addition a **network of peer-educators** was established as an outcome of the specific training of peer educators-multipliers, last but not least a **network of EVS organisations** was the outcome of the EVS training. These exchanges and networks contribu-



ted in the creation and consolidation of strong and long-lasting partnership between youth organisations and local and regional authorities.

During the three years of implementation (2006-2009) this project was successful also thanks to the implementation of several other actions such as: a dissemination campaign through website and newsletters and the itinerant crossing youth fair.

Projects in Caucasus

1.7.13 Support to Local and Regional Democracy in the South Caucasus

Donor: Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Lead partner: ALDA; Partner: Local Democracy Agency Georgia

This project was conceived by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and ALDA in order to strengthen local and regional democracy in the South Caucasus and support the work of the LDA Georgia, as a direct follow-up action to Resolution 272 (2008) on "Local consequences in the conflict zone in the South Caucasus: support from European local and regional authorities", adopted by the Congress.

The project focused on encouraging further cooperation and networking between the Local Authorities Associations in the South Caucasus and civil society, strengthening their knowledge and skills and set a base to enlarge Local Democracy Agencies in the region. In order to achieve these objectives two activities were implemented.

1. Conference of Local Authorities Associations of South Caucasus, Kutaisi (Georgia)

On the 29th-30th of October a successful seminar was held in Kutaisi to generate a debate and an exchange of knowledge and expertise in specific areas of good local governance such as: state models of decentralisation and the role of local self-governments, importance of the European Charter of local Self-Government, local governments'

efficiency in service provision and delivery, local sustainable development strategies, local government financing and fiscal decentralisation as well as citizen participation in local policy/decision making and international decentralised and inter-municipal co-operation.

The core topics of the Conference were discussed with the authorities who took part at the event, such as the Association of Communities of Armenia, the Association of Settlement Municipalities of Azerbaijan, the Association of City Municipalities of Azerbaijan and the Association of Villages of Azerbaijan. In addition some members of the Congress delegation of Georgia took part at the seminar, as well as representatives from Georgian local authorities, and two representatives of the Network of Local Authority Associations of South-East Europe (NALAS) invited as experts, who discussed on the benefits of networking for Local Authorities Associations. Besides, representatives from the Council of Europe office in Georgia and representatives from the Congress secretariat referred about the Congress support to ALDA and to the Network of Local Associations of Local Authorities in South East Europe, (NALAS).



Mr. Milovanovic, member of ALDA GG, and Mr. Vinther, ALDA President, in Kutaisi (Georgia) October 2009



**“Support for the Local and Regional democracy”
a conference in Kutaisi (Georgia), October 2009**

Last but not least representatives from ALDA presented LDA Georgia’s and its role in the South Caucasus. LDAs are credible and strong tools to support the development of local democracy and can therefore play a role in the region. The opening of an LDA in Azerbaijan and in Armenia was discussed. The representatives from Azerbaijan were rather sceptical about the opportunity of opening an Agency in the coming year. However, they invited ALDA and the Congress to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the added value of such a process.

The participants of the conference underlined also that there is a clear need to further support local and regional democracy in the South Caucasus. In this regard, they stressed that National Associations of Local Authorities have a key role to play, as their core aim is the decentralisation of the state powers and the development of local self-governmental institutions. These tasks should nevertheless be carried out in cooperation with central authorities and other local and international stakeholders.

The National Associations of Local Authorities of the South Caucasus had a beneficial exchange of information

and agreed to look for ways of further cooperation in the future, with due consideration of existing impediments, but with the full support of the Congress. The Governments of the South Caucasus countries need to commit themselves to further reforms towards stronger local government and identified key priorities, with a view to encouraging targeted, demand-driven support by the international community. Several key priorities, crucial for the local democracy reform in the region, were pointed out as fundamental: capacity building for elected officials; reinforcing democracy at the grass-roots level through increased participation of citizens and civil society in local public life and providing local authorities with resources adequate to the tasks allocated to them.

Moreover, it was agreed that special attention should be paid to preparing the units of local self-government to be ready to apply for and manage Eastern Partnership and other available European Union funds. The participation of South Caucasus countries in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) of the European Union provides an additional framework for advancing the common causes in the local democracy area. Cooperation activities to be carried out within the EaP Platform for “Democracy, good governance and stability” will offer extended opportunities to consolidate the positive results achieved so far. In this regard, the participants of the conference underlined the need for closer coordination between the Council of Europe and the European Union with a view to avoiding unnecessary duplication and effective use of available resources.

Finally, it was pointed out that there is a need to strengthen the role of the LDA Kutaisi in the region as one of the key actors to promote local democracy and cooperation between local authorities and civil society, as well as to conduct a feasibility study on the enlargement of LDAs network with special focus on the added value that the possible opening of LDAs in Armenia and in Azerbaijan can bring to already existing local democracy mechanisms and tools.

2. Training on Active Citizenship for Kutaisi local self-government and civil society

The training on active citizenship for the representatives of Kutaisi Local Self-government and civil society organizations was organized in Kutaisi (Georgia) between the 1st and the 4th of December 2009, as a follow-up of the previous Conference. The training aimed at strengthening knowledge and skills of local authorities and civil society organizations, which are interested in the topic of Active/European citizenship as well as aimed at building new relationships and developing synergies between local authorities and civil society organizations in order to activate new participation and citizenship processes at local level. Therefore, the participants, which were mainly governmental and non-governmental organizations, developed a joint action plan for future cooperation in the field of active citizenship. This topic was proposed to be implemented through strengthening of NGO sector Development of partnership groups, introduction of strategic approach and improvement of project management skills.

Despite the lack of information about current financial funds and development opportunities revealed by the participants, and the fact that there is a missed participation of management level among Local Government participants as well as a lack of involvement of Business sector in local development activity, there was a very high level of motivation, participation and activity among all participants. The training showed also that both NGOs and Local Government are working actively already on dealing with very important and practical issues, based on current needs and that they are eager to cooperate with each other on Active citizenship development and tackling the current problems. At the end, this activity pointed out that there is space for improvement on project management issues, especially on action planning, project monitoring and impact evaluation and development of indicators.



**“Support for the Local and Regional democracy”
a conference in Kutaisi (Georgia), October 2009**

Future projects will follow the recommendations adopted during the conference and will include the organization of a Congress/ALDA joint missions in Azerbaijan and Armenia to evaluate the added value of the opening of an LDA and to launch the process. The proposal for the organization of a regional conference in the South Caucasus on local and regional democracy came out also, in order to gather representatives of Local Associations Authorities but also international partners (including potential partners for LDAs in Azerbaijan and Armenia) and experts. The opportunity of working on cross-border projects, following the example of the Euro-region Caucasus, will be taken into consideration and various activities, like exchanges of best practices or workshops, will be organised. This project launched a successful dynamic that ALDA and the Congress will jointly use to develop and strengthen their strategic action in the South Caucasus.

Projects in Caucasus

1.7.14 Paving the way to open an LDA in Azerbaijan

Donor: funded by ALDA internal resources

From 28 June till the first of July 2009 a fact finding mission was realized by ALDA in Azerbaijan. The purpose was to meet all the relevant stakeholders, to get a better knowledge of the country and to evaluate the situation of the country in relation to a potential LDA in Azerbaijan. The mission was organized by ALDA in partnership with the Baku Political Studies – School of Political Studies Programme, under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Mr. Oriano Otocan, from Region Istria (Croatia), member of ALDA Governing Board, together with ALDA staff members attended the mission.

They met several representatives of the government and of non-governmental organizations from the Baku area and from Quba region, 170 km north from the capital Baku, region, which is the potential seat of the local democracy agency. They also attended the yearly Alumni Conference of Baku Political Studies Programme, which is a programme operating in the framework of the Centre for Economic and Political research (FAR centre) with the objective of educating young socially active citizens on various themes affecting the current local and international political processes and of a better understanding of the European political culture. The participants come from the non-governmental sector, the public administrations, the political and business world or the media.

Mr. Oriano Otocan addressed a speech on the international experiences of local governments including a presentation of what ALDA is and what its activities are, an explanation of the European Charter on local self-governments, a description of the different organizational models and structures in the various European states, the current trends, the principles of the Council of Europe for a effective democratic governance on the local level. One of the impressions the members of the mission got during their visit was that many people are critical of the current government regar-



Mr. Otocan (ALDA GB/Istria Region), in the centre in Baku (Azerbaijan) to open a new LDA

ding the state of democracy in the country. A lot of people are socially very active and actually carry out various relevant functions within the economic and social life of the country and do not really belong to the country's national political establishment.

The ALDA staff who joined the mission had a strong impression from Azerbaijan, as an extremely peculiar country, which, with regard to the current state of the democratic processes, reminds the Croatia of the mid and end 90ies of



Baku (Azerbaijan), souvenir market, October 2009

the past century, at the time of President Tuđman's mandate. Thus, there is a great potential of democratically oriented and socially active people who, on their part, still cannot manage to create a critical mass for democratic changes of the society. They are trying to find support in the cooperation and the contacts with foreign countries institutions. On the other hand, because of the past economic situation, a great importance is granted first of all to the creation of material wealth, with the expansion of the consumer society (e.g. luxury automobiles in the streets).

Azerbaijan is certainly a highly centralized state with a powerful political apparatus that does not leave much room for initiatives especially on the local level. Many things depend on connections, resourcefulness and good relations with the government. The need to develop local democracies is certainly one of the crucial points and one of the things in common with the activities of ALDA. There is cadre potential in the sector of civil society and politics (often overlapping as those who have not succeeded to realize their initiatives through the political process are active in the civil sector). There is the potential to participate in

projects with the objective of local democracy promotion but also projects of all the other fields of work that local governments come across.

In its future activities ALDA, provided that its Governing Board's political lines will tend towards that, will take into account that while supporting the civil sector and democratization, it should also try to promote those activities which have an impact on local development (for example the know how on communal problem solving, the sanitary conditions for instance of markets, the tourism standards and similar), therefore tackle more specific questions and problems which will find the support of the state government (ex-com).

For sure, a new LDA in Azerbaijan, thanks to multilateral cooperation of local and international partners, could be an excellent instrument to promote human rights, local development and local democracy in a country, such as Azerbaijan, which really deserves it.

Projects in Caucasus

1.7.15 REACT: Reinforcing ACTions of capacity building for civil society

Donor: European Commission

Partner leader: ALDA

Partners: in Belarus: Lev Sapieha Foundation, BOTZH, BOZP;
in Italy: Municipality of Monfalcone

The objective of this project is strengthening the role of Non State Actors and Local authorities in the field of poverty reduction in the context of sustainable development, according to Millennium Development Goals:

- strengthening capacity of civil society organizations to be engaged in local development processes and in implementing sustainable development strategies;
- foster social dialogue and cooperation between civil society organizations and local authorities in the field of development;
- to support joint actions between Non State Actors and Local authorities in order to reduce poverty and foster sustainable development;
- to support civic initiatives, realized jointly with Local authorities, aiming at improving citizens' participation in fostering sustainable development in Belarus.

The first activity was a kick-off international conference in Brussels on 25th, 26th and 27th May 2009. This conference launched a process aiming at raising the civil society awareness in Belarus. It was very useful to make a 20 people Belarusian delegation who went to Brussels, actively informed about Millennium Development Goals, EU institutions and democratic values, and to confront Western and Eastern Europe opinions about Belarus. One of the main activities was a Training ses-

sion on "Local Self-government in Belarus as prerequisite for civil society development: present condition and perspectives" in Minsk on 24th October. The day event addressed the following topics: sustainable development, Local Agenda 21, a Project of Law on Local self-government in Belarus, Local Self-Government in Bydgoszcz (Poland), as an example of local democracy in Eastern Europe. Two round-tables on the themes "Experiences of interaction between NGOs and local authorities: forms and methods" and "The forms of participation of citizens in decision-making process on local level" gathered thirty participants, among local NGO representatives, who found the day very interesting and enriching. Their participation to this training was not so obvious considered the political situation in Belarus. Their commitment and their strong shows how important it is to contribute to set democracy in the country. Such initiatives should be multiplied in the whole country, to raise people's awareness and make things change more effectively. This project includes a re-granting scheme, in which ALDA, supported by Lev Sapieha Foundation, will be funding in 2010 ten pilot projects focused on sustainable development and enhancement of civil society. It will be fore sure a way to support grass-root organizations and to sustain the promotion of human rights and democracy from below in Belarus.



People from Belarus at the "REACT" conference in Brussels (Belgium), May 2009

Projects on Migration

1.7.16 Legal Aid Center for Moldovan Women Migrants in Italy

Donor: EC-UN Joint Migration & Development Initiative (Jm&Di)

Partner leader: Public Association "Europa TIME"/Moldova

Partners: ALDA

In the Framework of Ec-Un Joint Migration & Development Initiative (Jm&Di) ALDA, in cooperation with the Public Association "Europa TIME" (Moldova), was granted for a project aiming at running a Legal Aid Center for Moldovan Women Migrants in Italy. The general objective of the programme was the empowerment of Moldovan Migrant Women in Italy by providing them real and effective free informational and legal assistance.

This project foresaw the establishment of a centre for assisting Moldovan migrants, specifically women and children, in Italy on legal issues. The assistance had to be provided in the host country (Italy) and also in their home country (Moldova) providing them free legal counselling and defending their human rights. Aim of the project was also the creation of an effective mechanism for empowering Moldovan migrant women in Italy through an infrastructure comprising civil society organizations, local and central public authorities from Moldova and Italy.

ALDA played the role of coordinating all the activities which took place on the territory of Italy, and which were implemented by the joint efforts of all the partner-organizations.

Other steps of the project were the creation of a data base about the legal and socio-economic profiles of the beneficiaries who profit of the services of the Legal Aid Center in Rome. Moreover a "Know your rights" brochure was widely disseminated through the Italian Consulate in Moldova and through the local public authorities in Moldova with the purpose of improving the comprehension of immigrants' rights in the host country and to inform them about the services provided by the Legal Aid Center for Women Migrants in Italy. It was expected to have over 10.000 migrant women informed about their rights on the basis of the activities performed within this centre, such as distribution of brochures and leaflets, elaboration of the website, delivering of free informational and legal support.

ALDA started researching on migration issues and taking part in several relevant training activities in Italy giving added value and support to the project. ALDA got in contact with several lawyers and was very active in order to find an efficient and available lawyer to be dedicated to the project and in order to establish an operational office for the legal counselling. Despite ALDA's and other partners commitment, unfortunately, due to serious internal problems affecting Europa TIME, the project implementation has been definitively stopped in December 2009 with no possibility to pursue the fixed objectives. Nevertheless ALDA consolidated its experience on human rights namely, immigrants' rights and is ready to start new projects in this field with more reliable partners.

Pilot Projects in Med Area

1.7.17 Capitalize on Migrant Capacities

Donor: EG-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative

Partner leader: ALDA

Partners: Region Sicily and Lecce Municipality in Italy and FACM, the Algerian Forum for Citizenship and Modernity, in Algeria.

Capitalize on Migrant Capacities was a project aiming at transforming brain waste into brain gain, and thus: to strengthen the dialogue between migrant associations and local authorities in Algeria on issues related to migration and their role in capitalizing on migrant capacities; to develop strategies to channel the capacities of prospective migrants and returnees also by orienting the pre-departure and exploring their potential of after pre-departure orientation;

to facilitate the professional reintegration of returnees and prospective migrants; to encourage high skilled Algerian emigrants, in France and Italy, to contribute to the socio-economic development of Algeria. The expected results are: a strengthened dialogue between migrant associations and local authorities effectively avoiding brain waste and de-skilling, well informed prospective Algerian migrants, facilitated integration of prospective migrants and Algerian emigrants in France and Italy in the labor-market, strengthened capacities of prospective migrants and returnees, strengthened links with Algerian emigrants in France and Italy, contributing to local socio-economic development and sustainability.

The project started in December 2009 with a first steering committee meeting, which defined the role of each partner and the agenda. It took place in Lecce Municipality, partner of the project. The meeting was very successful since it gave the opportunity to the partners of the project to get to know each other and exchange views about the actual situation of Algerian migrants, thanks to the presentation of the main Algerian partner, FACM. The future activities were planned and a common strategy was defined for the whole project.

The project is still ongoing and will end in Autumn 2010. It is the first pilot activity in the Med area and it was an excellent opportunity to strengthen existing relations with Algerian ALDA members and contacts and to start up new relations and work for future activities and strategies in the Med area.



Steering Committee meeting in Lecce (Italy), "Capitalize on Migrant Capacities", December 2009

Pilot Projects in Med Area

1.7.18 ALDA lands in Morocco!

The Association of Local Democracy Agencies took part in a mission organized by Aix en Provence in Oujda, in Morocco from the 24th till the 29 November 2009. The mission clashed with a technical mission of Aix en Provence, which had the purpose of making the point on a project concerning the urban displacement of the town of Oujda. ALDA's participation had the purpose of offering its expertise on the associative context and on reinforcement of decentralization.

During the mission, the representatives from Aix en Provence and ALDA had the opportunity to meet the new municipal staff and to start a new cooperation and also to meet many stakeholders of the non profit sector. The meeting was successful since it allowed to collect information and define the further steps of the action. It was highlighted the action in Oujda of other French municipalities such as Lille, Champagne/Ardenne, Valenciennes and of Belgian ones: Forest et Mullbeck. The main mission's results were: deep knowledge of association sector and identified ways of cooperation with local authorities in Morocco, identified themes for a training for local authorities, identified potential means for the concertation and Citizen participation.

A second mission is foreseen for 2010, which will be dedicated to put in place the decisions undertaken in 2009. ALDA will have a strategic role as for the topics of decentralization of local governments and active citizenship.

The pilot mission in Morocco was definitely very useful to strengthen ALDA's commitment in the countries of the



Panorama of Oujda (Morocco) during the mission for the project, November 2009

Mediterranean area, where the Association is more and more active especially in the field of good governance and participation of citizens.

Projects on Decentralized Cooperation

1.7.19 Decentralized cooperation programme between the Region Lower-Normandy (France) and the Republic of Macedonia

Donor: Region Lower Normandy and the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

Partner leader: ALDA

The aim of the programme is to create and develop links between different stakeholders from Lower Normandy Region and the Republic of Macedonia and create a sustainable long-lasting cooperation by exchange of best practices. In order to assure this sustainability, the program includes variety of actors such as local authorities, associations, universities, public institutions and citizens. In terms of specific objectives, the project is highly ambitious and its main purposes focused on: developing opportunities for international cooperation for both territories involved promoting also the local governance by reinforcement of local authorities' capacities to implement decentralization.

The promotion of active local and European citizenship by mobilization of citizens in local initiatives and decision-making processes was also among the main aims, as well as help preparing the republic of Macedonia for EU accession by providing support in adopting the *aquis communautaire*.

It worth to mention that the cooperation between the French Region of Lower Normandy and Republic of Macedonia started already in 2007 and involved a wide range of activities and partners from both territories in several themes of the cooperation, such as: Information and communication technologies (ICT), the Youth sector involving education about local and European citizenship, Medias, Culture, Cultural heritage in the promotion of sustainable tourism and Agriculture and Economic Development.

In 2009 several activities were implemented, such as the study visit of Macedonian's mayors in Lower Normandy in June 2009 and an inventory of cultural heritage in Berovo, (Macedonia) in July 2009. A training on "Youth information" took place in Ohrid (Macedonia) in August 2009, followed by a Conference on cultural decentralization in Skopje (Macedonia) in September 2009. Another training was organized on renovation of old traditional houses in Mavrovo (Macedonia) and an international conference on new technology and media was held in Skopje (Macedonia), both in December 2009. In addition several study visits, debates, round tables and seminars in the topics related to the project were also successfully implemented.



The President of the Basse-Normandie Region, Mr. Beauvais, visits Macedonia, 6-8 July 2009

Projects on Decentralized Cooperation

1.7.20 Decentralised cooperation France-Balkans 2009-2010

Donor: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (France)

Lead Partners: Auvergne Regional Council (France)

Partners: in France: ALDA; Lower Normandy Regional Council, Belfort General Council, CRET Hautes-Alpes, SICALA Haute-Loire, Pays Vichy Auvergne and the cities of Nevers, Dijon, Epinal, Saint-Ouen and Saint Denis

The project on “Decentralised cooperation between France and the Balkans” is an interesting project of decentralised cooperation among local and regional authorities in a EU State and in the region of the Balkans. The French local authorities, led by the Auvergne Regional Council, decided to strengthen their cooperation with their respective partners in South-East Europe. ALDA’s task was to ensure the coordination of the partners and the project implementation on the ground.

The project supported the democratic processes in the Balkans aimed at leading to a stabilisation and pacification of the region. The project focused also on European integration processes for the Balkan states and encouraged the French local and regional authorities towards a neighbouring region in Europe. Those objectives were reached by, on one hand, networking actions such as conferences and workshops, and on the other with joint actions in fields of particular importance to the partners, either at multilateral or bilateral level.

A launching conference was held in Sarajevo on the 24th of September 2009, which was followed by three workshops. The first one, held in September focused on sustainable tourism and rural development. The second workshop held in November, addressed the topics of youth, citizenship and francophonie. The final one was held in December 2009 and aimed at raising awareness on medias and new technologies.



Visit to a network of model farms, Fojnica (Bosnia and Herzegovina), September 2009

An evaluation conference will be organized in 2010 about a potential renewal of the partners’ commitment to continue working on multilateral decentralised cooperation with a new project.

Other Projects

1.7.21 Reconciling for the future – European perspective for the Western Balkans

Supported by: EU Commission, Instrument for Stability

Lead Partner: ALDA

Partners: LDA Central Serbia, LDA Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), LDA Osijek (Croatia), Centre for peace and non-violence, Osijek (Croatia), Centre for regionalism, Novi Sad (Serbia)

This project supported the post-conflict reconciliation process between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia with particular emphasis on assessing the achieved level and quality of inter-state relations towards EU integration. Based on participation of a widest possible range of key actors, the activities addressed several issues burdening the relations between Croat, Serb and Bosnian Muslim communities at different tiers of government within the respective countries, at bilateral/cross-border and multilateral level. Through a comprehensive set of activities, the project is intended both to improve the capacity of non-state actors operating at local and regional level for facilitating the post-conflict reconciliation on one hand, and to support their networking and co-ordination on the other hand.

Several activities were implemented and after the first steering committee group, which was gathered in Novi Sad (Serbia) to adopt the Action plan, a Country based panel discussion was held in Niš (Serbia) on the 4th of December. Around forty participants gathered at the first country ba-



Mrs Stanka Parac, ALDA Staff in charge for "Reconciling for the future", Subotica (Serbia), August 2009

sed panel on the role of state and non-state actors in Serbia in the post-conflict reconciliation process of the Western Balkans. Representatives of the Serbian government bodies, EU integration Office, Special Court for the war crimes, and a number of NGOs and local governments participated in the debate on this important regional process as one of the major preconditions for further EU integration of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the thematic panels part of the participants presented the work of different local initiatives aimed to support the process of reconciliation, involving local communities, experts and NGO networks. Particular mention was made of the "Igman" peace initiative (Serbia) connecting local governments and NGO-s from the war-affected regions, the on-going activities of the joint REKOM initiative connecting NGO-s and experts from Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the need for establishing new co-operation networks connecting young people and youth groups to contribute to more effective reconciliation and inter-ethnic confidence building process.

An international call for written contributions for the publication will be prepared for the final regional conference that will take place in Zagreb in 2010.

Other Projects

1.7.22 Regional Partnerships for Intercultural Exchange

Supported by: The European Commission, DG Enlargement – Regional Programmes

Lead Partner: Municipality of Subotica (Serbia)

Partners: France: ALDA, UK: Light House, Media Center, Wolverhampton, Serbia: LDA Subotica, Croatia: LDA Osijek, Bosnia and Herzegovina: LDA Mostar

Regional Partnerships for Intercultural Exchange was a two-year project, designed to involve local authorities and civil society organisations to supporting good local intercultural governance through more effective participation of civil society and minority communities. It aimed also



Mrs. Stanka Parac at the first Steering group for the CARDS project, Novi Sad (Serbia), September 2009

at strengthening networking among local NGOs involved in minority rights protection and at fostering exchange of good local practice in managing multiethnic local communities in the region. Finally the activities intended to promote innovative local practices in support to intercultural dialogue and tolerance.

A call for proposals “Support to civil society dialogue -‘People to people actions’: Consolidating partnerships between civil society organisations and public authorities for raising minority rights in the region” was launched in order to select the best projects, which were presented during the opening conference of the projects, which took place in July 2009, in Brussels, Belgium.

A project Steering group met the 6th August in Subotica, Serbia and gathered all the project partners in order to adopt the action plan and coordinate the activities at regional level. Among the activities implemented, the first round table was held in Subotica, Serbia on the 7th of August, titled: “Cherishing cultural heritage of national minorities” and gathered NGOs and local governments from Osijek (Croatia), Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Szeged (Hungary) and was organized during the traditional celebration of harvest days in Subotica (Serbia).

An interactive debate was held on preservation of cultural heritage of national minorities and on their role in intercultural dialogue and understanding both at local and cross-border level, with particular emphasis on promoting cultural diversity, good practices in intercultural governance and on initiating new co-operation links between local communities in the region. In August 2009 a study visit was organized for thirty participants of the round table, during the cultural programme marking the harvest days.

To promote the project a webpage was created and an international call for written contributions on good local practice in intercultural governance, electronic newsletters was prepared and disseminated.

Other Projects

1.7.23 Decentralisation and Local Governance in South Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus

Supported by: Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Municipality of Shkodra (Albania), Albanian Association of Municipalities (AAM) and Local Democracy Agency Albania

A seminar on decentralisation and local governance in South Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus took place in Shkodra on 2 and 3 November 2009 organised by the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) and the Barcelona Provincial Council, promoted by the UCLG Decentralisation and Local Self-Government Committee. The event envisaged to focus on the role of local governments and the challenges they face within a wider framework of national legislative systems.

The two-day seminar included a series of thematic workshops to present comparative analyses and local practice as well as case studies based on the experts' and practitioners' overviews. The main topic was the future perspectives of the process of decentralization in the regions, which are undergoing profound reforms of the self-government system. In particular the following issues were debated: state models of decentralisation and the role of local governments; local government's efficiency in service provision and delivery; local sustainable development strategies; local government finances and fiscal decentralisation; citizen



Mr. Ciullo, Councillor of Brindisi (Italy), at the International seminar in Shkodra

participation in local policy and decision making; international decentralised and inter-municipal co-operation. Participants were invited to submit written contributions that will be published in a seminar publication together with the conclusions of the four thematic workshops.

Local elected representatives and representatives of associations of local governments, central government representatives, international experts and practitioners and partner organisations from South Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus countries attended.

The final conclusions of the conference demonstrated that the example of South Eastern Europe also revealed mistakes in the implementation of the decentralisation reform that might be avoided in future in other region such as in the case of South Caucasus. The example of importing the model of small municipalities of some European Union Member States has not proven successful in some South Eastern Europe countries. Some of these countries, after a certain period of implementing the aforementioned model, reverted to the experience of the Communist period of relatively large basic units of self-government. Often,

ethnic factors and other elements rather than the efficiency principle, played a role in shaping the main units of decentralisation.

With regard to the situation in South Caucasus, the discussion at the conference revealed a certain improvement, especially in Georgia, although much remains to be done in the process of applying the European (including South European) standards of decentralisation. The participants of the representatives from Southern Caucasus highlighted the importance of exchanges of experiences and common capacity building processes in terms of local democracy and citizen participation.

The participants underlined the need of the governments of the SEE and Caucasus countries to commit themselves to further reforms towards better local government and identified key priorities, with a view to encouraging targeted, demand-driven support by the international community.

The participants highlighted the need to translate into concrete actions the principles adopted in international fora like the Council of Europe, with a particular reference to the Council of Europe Strategy on Innovation and Good Governance at the Local Level and the full implementation of the provisions of the European Charter on Local Self Government. Several key priorities crucial for local democracy reform in the region were singled out as important: capacity building of civil servants working in local government institutions; reinforcing democracy at the grass-roots level through increased participation of citizens in local public life and providing local authorities with resources adequate to the tasks which are allocated to them.

The Mayors and other participants of the conference committed themselves politically to the implementation of the "Work Programmes for Better Local Government" which were presented by the Stability Pact and the Council of Europe. ALDA declared its readiness to regularly review these

Work Programmes, in co-operation with the representatives of local authorities and the main international partners. The experience of European partners, present at the conference, was singled out as crucial for the development of solid and efficient local self-government in the two regions. In this context the crucial importance of decentralised international cooperation, underlying the experience of the LDAs, was recognized.

Other Projects

1.7.24 ALDA: official partner of the Council of Europe for the Local Democracy Week

Since 2008 ALDA is official partner of the Council of Europe for the promotion of the Local Democracy Week throughout Europe. The Association was very committed in promoting the Week among its International network and encouraging its members to organize events at local level in their towns.

In particular ALDA itself contributed to organize a conference titled "Local democracy and participation of citizens" at the Youth Centre of Strasbourg, promoted by the City of

Strasbourg in cooperation with Inet, the Council of Europe. The aim of the meeting was to analyse the instruments of the Council of Europe in order to foster citizens' participation at local level and civic participation in general.

The event was very successful and gave the chance to the participants to exchange experiences about the steps undertaken by local authorities, included the town of Strasbourg, about methodologies of strengthening local democracy.

Another debate followed on the 15 October on the theme "Local democracy and citizen participation in Europe: why and for which goals? Which challenges for building Europe?". This round table was very useful in order to develop a common reflection about the twelve principles of the Strategy of innovation and good governance of the Council of Europe, among which the citizen participation is fundamental.



Round table on local democracy and citizens participation, Strasbourg, 15th October 2009

Other Projects

1.7.25 Istria Communicating Europe

Donor: European Commission

Partner leader: Foundation for Partnership and civil society development, Croatia

Partners: Croatia: Region Istria, Suncokret, Zum, and Informo; France: Association of Local Democracy Agencies

The project **Istria Communicating Europe** aimed at broadening the knowledge and understanding of the European Union and the process of European integration in general among Croatian citizens. The project I.C.E. intended to contribute to achieve this goal through several actions: widening the knowledge and information of the target groups about the EU and the understanding of European integration process; promoting European priority themes - European Citizenship, Intercultural dialogue and Volunteering; arising citizens' interest in and need for information about the EU through activities of facilitation of the access to the existing sources of information and creation of new ones; familiarize the target groups with available EU programmes and pre-accession funds for Croatia; analyzing the opinion of the citizens about the EU issues to address correctly the future regional policies.

The partnership includes the most relevant stakeholders of the civil society in the Istria region and a transnational partner. It promoted an open-minded approach to all the target groups and joint efforts for combating any anti-EU attitudes. The partners were: Foundation for partnership and civil society development as the main institution for the development of Civil society in the Istria region; Suncokret, a regional NGO for community development with a long-lasting experience in activities from high schools and Youth; Zum, a regional NGO for promotion of employment



ICE Project, study visit of young students in Vicenza (Italy), 15th-16th June 2009

and professional improvement; the Association of Local Democracy Agencies in its capacity of international NGO at EU level; Informo, a regional NGO for fostering employment, professional improvement and education.

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. The main results of the project were: an enhanced citizens, in particular youngsters, knowledge about EU values and opportunities; arisen citizens' interest in EU policies and need for EU related news and events Increased awareness of the citizens of the Region Istria about the results of EU policies on the territory; promoted EU priority themes in Croatia; citizens familiarized with available programmes of international assistance and cooperation in particular way the EU programs that are available to Croatian citizens.

Among many activities implemented by the partners, Alda was in charge of organizing on 15 and 16 June a study visit in Vicenza, Italy, which gave the participants the opportunity to meet local stakeholders active in EU issues, e.g. Vicenza municipality and the Association Eurocultura.

Other Projects

1.7.26 IPA Adriatic CBC programme: a database for ALDA members and partners

The IPA Adriatic CBC, financed by the European Union, presents great opportunities for ALDA, since it promotes integration of Western Balkans countries into the EU, especially through linking the communities around the Adriatic. It is the result of a joint programming work carried out by the relevant participating countries and is part of the cooperation process in the Adriatic area.

The Programme draws its strength and incisiveness from the wide experience, gained during the previous Programme period producing concrete results from the studies and

analysis financed in the past. During 2009, following the first call for proposals launched by the Programme, ALDA and the Adriatic Euroregion have been in touch and gathered several project proposals, ideas and drafted projects from different organizations and institutions.

For this purpose ALDA and the Adriatic Euroregion built a database on ALDA website as a service aiming at fostering cooperation and quality of actions. The site gathered several project proposals, ideas and drafted projects from different organizations and institutions, to be submitted within the IPA CBC programme. In this way, those working on the same topics and with the same partners had the opportunity of merging their efforts and create synergies on specific areas. The database is still on ALDA website and offers an interesting opportunity for ALDA members and partners to networking in order to develop joint projects.



The map shows the eligible programme area of IPA Adriatic CBC Programme.

Other Projects

1.7.27 Microcredit – a supporting scheme for South Eastern Europe

Donor: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign affairs

Partner Leader: ALDA

Partners: LDAs



 **Banca Intesa**

INTESA  **SANPAOLO**

 **INTESA SANPAOLO BANKA**

 **PRIVREDNA
BANKA
ZAGREB**


**NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Microcredit project has the goal to introduce an integrated approach to microcredit with a goal of promotion of start-up businesses, job-creation, promoting local economic development in the countries of South Eastern Europe, starting with Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to contribute to the creation of new employment opportunities in these countries and to help the overall economic and social recovery of the region.

The first two years have been devoted to working out the legal framework, creating working plans, liaising with local authorities, banks, conducting preliminary market surveys, training of the dedicated LDA staff. In the third year, material advancement was made towards execution.

Now being in the phase of implementation of the third year, it can be said that it has entered the execution stage. The progress reached in the three target countries varies, for objective reasons, while it is on track everywhere.

The agreements have been signed between the three regional offices (Zagreb, Belgrade and Sarajevo) of Intesa bank and all the LDAs.. Lending conditions do vary between the banks, and this is due to the diversity of the target markets.

None of the competitive microfinance projects can offer such long tenors as the ALDA's one do (including the very recently launched program of the Serbian government), grace periods as we do, and our interest rate is also below the market level. This has been possible due the funding obtained from the Council of Europe Development Bank, and the good knowledge of the local market by the LDAs and by the Intesa bank. Notably, the LDAs are located in direct proximity to the local markets and have daily contacts with the customers.

As results, the project in Serbia started operating at the end of 2008, and is already well advanced with sufficient amount of customers, which will allow ALDA soon to look into the ways to make it self-sustainable. In Croatia the project is still merely at the marketing stage but results are to

be very promising. During the summer LDAs and ALDA have visited a number of Croatian municipalities to obtain their support and interest in the project, with positive results. In the municipality of Verteneglio and Umag, a 2% subvention has been granted to the project by the local authorities.

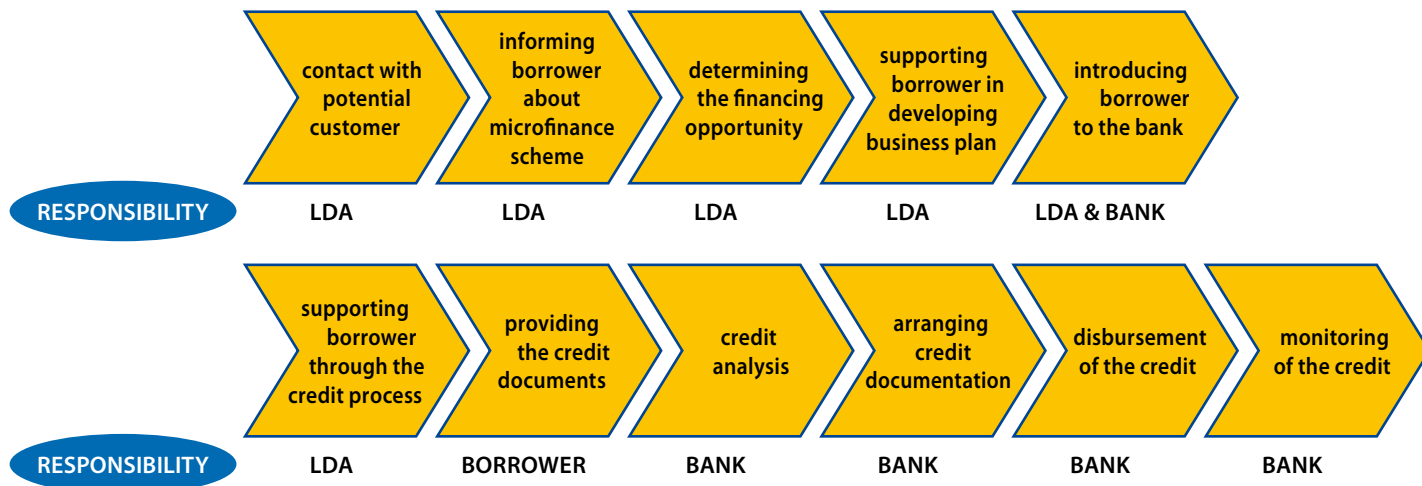
LDAs are holding information meetings with the entrepreneurs and local authorities, while the financial results are still to come. In turn, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as this market is the most saturated with various microcredit programs, it took time to work out the competitive conditions for the project. From another point of view, full-scale launch of our project was delayed due to financial crisis, as when the crisis hit, it took times for the bank to evaluate their financial situation and review their retail lending policies. Now that the economies are projected to pick up in 2010, banks' interest is returning, and ALDA considers its project well positioned for the growth.

Overall process is based on very close link between the LDAs and the local branches of the bank. This is the flowchart of the process:

The whole process is structured in a way that LDAs take care of the borrowers from the beginning till the moment

when they become regular clients of the bank. This process is very complex since it involves lots of operational and logistic work: looking for the borrowers, explaining the way the project can be useful to them, which includes often nurturing their basic financial skills, helping to develop their business plan, helping to fill in the credit documentation, and accompanying them to the bank to present them to the loan officers. As evident from the scheme above, the whole process takes substantial efforts from the LDA staff - it requires lots of meetings, both general, when general information is given simultaneously to up to 50 entrepreneurs and bilateral, when possibilities of each potential borrower is discussed.

Many potential borrowers have never had experience with financial projects and this opportunity is very challenging for them and for the benefit of the involved countries. It is worth to say that in Subotica, out of total 37 applications, 12 have been submitted by women, which speak positively as to whether ALDA is on the way its goal of achieving social equality in the regional entrepreneurship. Together they have processed applications for ca Euro 2 millions. These are really good results and they bring optimism as to what to expect from the project in Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina.



Other Projects

1.7.28 E-FoR: Education for Remembrance

Donor: European Commission

Leader Partner: ALDA

Partners: Jasenovac memorial site and Local Democracy agency Sisak from Croatia, Mémorial Cité de l'Histoire Caen Normandie from France, Municipality of Nardo from Italy, the Institute for National History –Macedonia, the Junction – from Northern Ireland.

In the framework of *Europe for Citizens Programme*, Action 4, ALDA is implementing, as a leader, the project E-FoR: Education for Remembrance. The project involves several partners from different countries, which all contributed to create a multi-faceted approach to education for remembrance.



Jasenovac Memorial Site (Croatia) hosted a five-days seminar on E-FoR project, February 2010

The project, started in October 2009 will last 12 months. It aims to serve a double purpose: on one side to foster the education on human rights and active European citizenship and, on the other side, to increase the knowledge about the events of the Second World War. The project aims to emphasize the importance of historical sites that are fundamental from a remembrance perspective but that are not so well-known by the general public and to give a wider and deeper overview into the Nazi-fascist page in European history.

The first three months of the project were dedicated to the preparation phase: scheduling the activities, networking, communication among the partners. The first event will be a five-days Seminar, planned for February 2010, which will be hosted by Jasenovac Memorial Site. It will be addressed to educators, teachers, youth workers, researchers, experts and will focus on the elaboration of new strategies for remembrance education. Other events at local level will follow, as the production of an educational booklet.

All these initiatives are expected to lead to an increased capability in the organization of events by the partners as well as a network for sharing experiences and resources in the field of memorial sites preservation. The goal is also to generate a wider debate on remembrance, human rights and solidarity across the whole Europe.

Other Projects

1.7.29 Seenet 2: a trans local network for cooperation between Italy and South East Europe

Institutional actors: Italy: Region Emilia Romagna and ERVET; Region Friuli Venezia Giulia and INFORMEST; Region Marche; Region Piedmont; Region Veneto; Autonomous Province of Trento;

Non-institutional actors: Italy: CeSPI; Balkans Observatory; France; ALDA

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PROVINCIA
AUTONOMA
DI TRENTO



REGIONE
PIEMONTE



REGIONE AUTONOMA
FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

 Regione Emilia-Romagna

Local partners: Albania: Skadar district, municipalities of Skadar, Elbasan and Valona; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Cantons of Sarajevo, Tuzla, Herzegovina Neretva, Zenica-Doboj; municipalities of Livno, Nevesinje, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Trebinje, Tuzla, Zavidovići, Hadžići, Pale, Travnik, Trnovo, Rep. Srpska Trnovo, Zenica, Stari Grad (Sarajevo); cities of Sarajevo and Mostar; Serbia: Cities of Kragujevac, Nis and Novi Sad; Municipalities of Vozdovac and Lazarevac (Belgrade), Pančevo, Smederevo; Autonomous Province of Vojvodina; Croatia: Regions Istria, Vukovarsko-srijemska, Osiječko-baranjska, Dubrovačko-neretvanska; cities of Pazin, Rovinj, Varaždin, town of Brtonigla/Verteneglio, Kosovo: Municipalities of Pec/Peja and Pristina; Macedonia: City of Skopje; Montenegro: Municipalities of Niksic, Budva, Kotor.

From 2009 till 2013, ALDA will be a strategic partner of the Seenet programme on the topic of governance and participatory democracy.

In 2007, the Region of Tuscany has promoted an initiative named Seenet Bridge – A network of cooperation among local governments for development and dialogue in South Eastern Europe with the aim to follow the important results obtained with the first phase of the Seenet program, finished in the summer of 2006. The successful conclusion of Seenet, in fact, has highlighted the contribution that the decentralized cooperation can give to post-conflict reconstruction and peace processes. The project has been able to create moments of dialogue and aggregation, in a network among communities separated by war, through the involvement of local authorities in concrete actions for the development. These results and developments that may arise are now more than ever, an important starting point for achieving an effective integration of the Balkan countries in the European Union.

Through the initiative Seenet Bridge it was possible to identify the present project, named Seenet 2, which was approved and financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This

Other Projects

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Through the initiative Seenet Bridge it was possible to identify the present project, named Seenet 2, which was approved and financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This

Proposal has seen the involvement of many Italian institutions (Regions Emilia Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Piedmont, Marche, Veneto, the Autonomous Province of Trento, ANCI, ERVET, INFORMEST, CeSPI, Observatory on the Balkans, ALDA, UCODEP) and local authorities from South-Eastern Europe (47 authorities from 7 different countries). The core strategy of this new Program is to give continuity to the territorial partnerships built by one part of the Italian system of decentralized cooperation with the aim to support the Western Balkans countries' integration into European Union.

In particular the Program aims at fostering dialogue among states, institutions and local communities in the South East Europe for the effective development of the territories involved in the Programme and in a long-term partnership at regional level and with the Italian system of decentralized cooperation. Within the new partnership, actors in the network will be asked to try on the evolution of administrative decentralization to support local development, offering concrete opportunities to work on specific areas of intervention in line with European standards.

The support to Balkan partners will decline in a double-headed action:

1. Favour the South East European Programme partners' territories access to European Union pre-accession funds and to national and international funds for local development;
2. Encourage the adoption and development of innovative programs and services on territorial valorisation and management, economic development and social and territorial and social planning by the institutional and territorial subjects from South East Europe as Programme partners.

The programme working strategy is based on the network work among Italian and Balkan institutions in the complex process of South Eastern Europe countries integration

into European Union. In particular, the network will focus on supporting the government capacities of partner public administrations, offering concrete opportunities to work on specific topics following the EU standards.

At the same time, initiative aims to create a permanent system of cooperation between Italian regional cooperation subjects trying to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of interventions, increase their ability to impact the local priorities and make sustainable the territorial partnerships.

This process will be developed through two different types of actions, which are complementary and synergic:

- **Horizontal actions**, that are a set of activities, closely integrated with the other actions of the Program, which will a benefit for all local partners who are going to work on components such as:
 - Action A - Institutional Building to promote the use of EU funds through technical assistance in the project designing and development of multilevel governance processes, active citizenship and public-private partnership.



"Seenet II", a seminar in Gjirokastra (Albania), March 2009

- Action B - Information and dissemination for carrying out and deepening information on the programme thematic areas
- Action C - Research to implement policy oriented action-research activities, to disseminate knowledge and to valorise experiences of governance for local development.
- Action D - Partnerships between South East Europe Local Authorities to strengthen the role of municipalities' associations in the Balkans looking at the ongoing decentralization process and the European integration.
- **Vertical actions**, organized in main thematic sectors to develop networking between many partners / territories with direct effect in the areas of Southeast Europe. The vertical actions constitute a tool available to partners in order to affect the dynamics of the territory, focusing on the work in the network with other subjects on a priority topic. Within these actions, Balkan partners, together with other actors of their own territory, will work on the formulation and implementation of local policies about specific issues. Interventions in territories will have a high integration with Programme horizontal actions.

Nine territorial initiatives have been identified that will focus on the following topics:

- Action 1 - Valorisation of cultural tourism;
- Action 2 - Valorisation of rural areas and natural environment;
- Action 3 – SME support and cross-border entrepreneurial cooperation;
- Action 4 – Territorial planning and social services.

ALDA is involved in the horizontal action A. The LDAs are the strategic partner at local level to offer a support for all the vertical actions.

The project started in 2009 with a preparation phase and will follow with concrete activities starting in mid 2010.

Other Projects

1.7.30 “Raising Awareness on Waste Management through Education and Implementation of Selective Compilation of Cardboard and PET Waste”

Donors: Geneva canton and Geneva municipality, Fedre association

Partner leader: ALDA

Partners: Serbia: City of Kragujevac; the public utility companies: “Čistoća” and “Zelenilo” of Kragujevac, the Polytechnic school ((former Technical School for Mechanics and Traffic) of Kragujevac, LDA CSS

The aim of this two-year project was to facilitate the establishment of the collecting process of secondary raw materials in primary schools, kindergartens and local communities. The project involved children, pupils and citizens in the source separation process through various activities and included an educational programme held in six primary schools and two kindergartens of Kragujevac (Serbia).

In February and October 2009 both public utility com-



Differentiated paper disposal for kindergartens and primary schools, Kragujevac, Jan.–Dec. 2009

panies (PUC) launched an awareness campaign in several Serbian local communities, about the importance of source separation of waste. PUC “Zelenilo” and PUC “Čistoća” placed specialised containers in local communities and disseminated leaflets promoting the project. PUC “Zelenilo” distributed special plastic bags for temporary storage of PET bottles. Once a week the residents were asked to place the bags in front of their buildings, which would have been then collected by the company. PUC “Čistoća” involved 800 households distributing garbage bags to collect paper and other dry waste. Pupils and volunteers talked with citizens about the importance and the procedure of source separation promoting the project.

A special Educational program, namely a TOT (training of trainers) was designed for teachers and members of the Ecology section of the Polytechnic school, enabling them to transfer knowledge to their pupils and colleagues. Two workshops took place at the premises of the Ministries of education regional department (Kragujevac, Serbia) in February and September 2009.

Another interesting activity was the seminar for pupil-

trainers, "young-environmental promoters", (Training of Trainers - TOT for pupils) of Technical Secondary School active in environmental protection aiming at making them able to teach to pre-school children and primary school children.

The school's ecology section organized also a seminar in March 2009 during which it was announced the winner of the previous first project phase: the Primary School "Mirko Jovanovic" of Kragujevac (Serbia). In April 2009, as part of the project campaign, pupils of two primary schools in Kragujevac planted flowers and cleaned up the schoolyard during the cleaning event realised by PUC "Zelenilo". This event comprised numerous actions to cleaning up the environment. A final conference and the reward for best schools and classes were organised by the City of Kragujevac. In addition, the ecology club of the Polytechnic School organized the sixth art competition marking the "Earths day".

A permanent promotion of the project was carried on through exhibitions of creative art works of pupils, preparation of lessons on environmental topics held by teachers in schools, competitions of pupils in schools and competitions in neighborhood communities in collecting secondary raw materials and other actions.

The City of Kragujevac initiated the establishment of the "Center for ecology education and sustainable development". This Centre will be located in the Polytechnic school in Kragujevac and pupils from all schools in Kragujevac will take part in its environmental activities during the entire school year. Pupils will be given the opportunity to increase the knowledge about the ecology and sustainable development by doing the individual researches using available literature, internet and group education. Within the Centre specialised workshops will take place (photography, journalism, presentations, internet, movies etc). Young ecologists will present their knowledge to fellow pupils from the primary schools.

A successful action of the project was a research, carri-

ed out to evaluate the current situation about the level of primary school children' awareness on the environmental problems. The results will be published at the end of the project.

The project will continue with some activities until the end of April 2010.

Other Projects

1.7.31 Lille (France) – Provision of technical assistance for INTERREG IVC



The INTERREG IVC Programme is an exchange and capitalisation programme, which aims at improving, through the exchange of experiences and good practices, the effectiveness of regional development policies. The Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) together with the Council of Europe's Centre for expertise for Local Government Reform are mobilising their experience and expertise both in the fields of European projects and performance to support the City of Lille in the process of building a relevant partnership and project proposal for the next INTERREG IVC call for proposals.

The city of Lille has assigned to ALDA through a tender procedure the role of provider of technical assistance to develop a project in the framework of the interregional programme INTERREG IV C on the exchange of best practices at the EU level tackling the issues of digital cities.

ALDA proposed a three-phases methodology comprising project feasibility, project development and negotiation. The first phase aims at elaborating a complete project-

sheet to introduce the basic structure of the European project, presenting an estimated statement of the chances of the project to be realised. At the end, a project draft will be elaborated, according to EU guidelines, after conducting researches with ICT tools, exchanges of ideas and revision among experts. The proposed second phase for ALDA support to the project implementation, is dedicated to its development. This phase aims at sharing a final proposal and the drafted project budget and models, organising and leading meetings maintaining regular contacts with the partners. The latter phase is the negotiation, which aims at supporting the City of Lille during the negotiation with the European Commission.

The scheduled call for proposals is forecasted at the end of 2010.

Membership Form

Name of the organization which asks to become member (or name of the person if it is an individual):

.....

Tick the cell which represent your organization

Municipality County Region NGO OTHER Mr. or Ms. (if individual member)

Contact person of the organization (name and surname):

.....

Address

Postal Code Town Country

Tel. Fax

E-mail

You can choose among 3 different options:

1. MEMBER OF ALDA

It gets for free all ALDA services destined to the members (for further information, see the enclosed document on Services to Members). It will pay the following contribution:

Number of inhabitants (Municipality*, County, Region)	10-10.000	10.000-50.000	50.000-200.000	200.000-1.000.000	>1.000.000
Contribution/year (Euros)	300	600	1.200	2.400	4.800
* For Municipality hosting an LDA half of the fees are requested					

NGO: 300 Euros - Individual: 60 Euros

2. MEMBER OF ALDA + PARTNER OF LDAs

It will be member of ALDA (see payment fees above) AND will also be really active and engaged on the field, by becoming partner of one or more LDAs (fees of LDAs identified by the LDAs).

3. FRIEND OF ALDA

It is an individual who wishes to support ALDA mission, by becoming part of an international network of people committed for active citizenship and human rights. The contribution per year is 60 Euros.

Bank details of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies:

Bank: Crédit Mutuel CCM Strasbourg Gutenberg - Address: 2, Rue des Hallebardes, 67000 Strasbourg – France

IBAN: FR76 1027 8010 8400 0201 7650 153 - BIC: CMCIFR2A

Form to be returned to: Secretariat of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies - c/o Council of Europe - F - 67075 Strasbourg
Tel. +33 3 90 21 45 93 - Fax +33 3 90 21 55 17 - E-mail antonella.valmorbida@aldaintranet.org

Thank you for your interest in the Programme of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies!

Membership Services

(included in the Membership fee)

Think tank, advisory and consulting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis, research and support on specialist topics (e.g. active citizenship, democracy and local governance, European integration, civil society, local economic development, etc.)
Relations with national, European and international Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full secretariat service for specific meeting with international and European Authorities
Project proposal development and fund-raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house project development: needs assessment, feasibility studies and visits, partnership building, preparation of project proposal, fundraising and negotiation with donors, preparation of project documentation
Project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house project management: action management, budget management, monitoring and control, reporting, evaluation Organization, management and facilitation of events, trainings, campaigns and activities at the local and European level Management of complex situations to be faced during the project implementation
Coordination of European/ International Units/ Offices of Local Authorities and Civil Society Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination of European and International Units/ Offices of Local Authorities and Civil Society Organizations: fundraising, partnership building, project drafting and project management, financial management and reporting, international relations and institutional contacts
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailor-shaped trainings on various topics: EU affairs, fundraising, human rights, civil society and local governance issues, etc. Permanent training module on active citizenship issues Organization of international conferences, seminars and workshops Organization of study tours for local government and civil society representatives
Promotion, visibility and editing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of communication strategies, documents and information materials Development of ad-hoc publications on European topics
Information, facilities and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full secretariat service for meeting promoted in ALDA offices

Services on payment

(based on ad-hoc budgets)

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

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LDA's activities

2.1 LDA Albania



Delegate: Antoine Rozes, Franco Menga will be the next delegate from 2010

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L. Qemal stafa Rr. 13 Dlyetori
Shkodra, Albania

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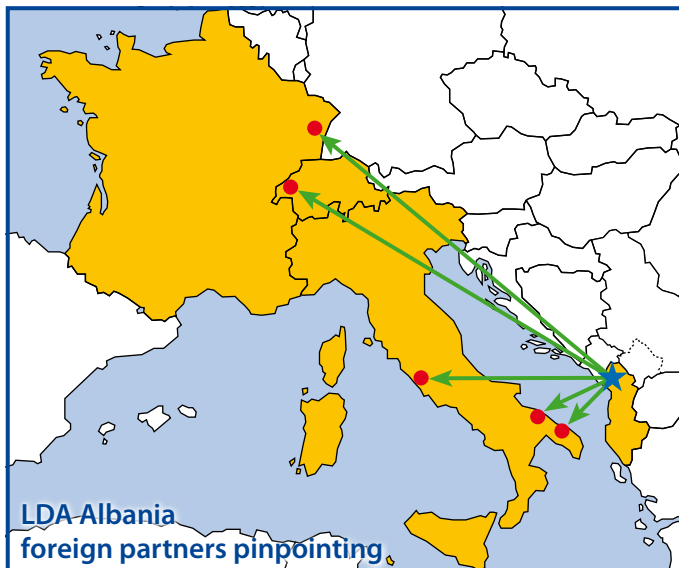
E-mail: Idaalbania@aldaintranet.org

The LDA Albania has been supported by Liechtenstein.

Lead Partner: Municipality of Brindisi (Italy)

Partners: Italy: Puglia Region, IPRES Puglia, Formez Institute, Albania: Municipality of Fierze, Association of Albanian Municipalities, Municipality of Shkodra, Municipality of Yverdon les Bains (Switzerland), Municipality of Fraize (France).

The Local Democracy Agency Albania was inaugurated on the 10th of October 2008 and this event played a role



of great importance after three years of preparation. The “start-up” phase, based on the decisions taken by the LDA partners during the meeting held in Shkodra on the 10th of October 2008, was particularly focused on the definition of the first action plan of the Agency, indeed the attention was stressed particularly on support local authorities’ development, civil society empowerment and active citizenship.

The main goal of the LDA is to favour a rewarding exchange among the partners in order to create long-lasting and strong basis for a fruitful cooperation. More specifically, the LDA aims at reaching the following objectives: supporting and reinforcing the process of decentralization, providing capacity building for civil society organizations and local authorities, promoting and strengthening cooperation between civil society and local authorities, favouring the exchange among stakeholders of the economic sector.

Within the start-up phase programme, LDA Albania began to implement several activities as Thematic Partners’ meeting (“Exchange of best practices and experience on active citizenship and citizens’ participation”), an International seminar, a study visit, but also two trainings.

1. Partners meetings

1.1 “Exchange of best practices and experience on active citizenship and citizens’ participation”

The meeting was held in Vicenza (Italy), in February 2009, in occasion of the settlement of the new Delegate of the LDA Albania. Representatives of the LDA’s partners and ALDA’s staff were involved in the meeting. The participants discussed one of the most vivid topic at the European level, namely active citizenship, one of the main field of intervention of the Local Democracy Agencies. It was underlined the role of citizens in the local and European processes aimed at improving nowadays societies especially in the context of a growing Europe, in particular for those countries which are nowadays in a transition process like Albania.

All the participants took this issue as a priority, and they presented their own vision on the addressed topics and exchanged their practices and experiences in order to define a common strategy for the LDA Albania. One of the sub-activity which was agreed during the partner meeting held in October 2008 was the “construction” of a common “glossary on participation” in order to foster the mutual understanding of the issue among the different partners, leading thus to the definition of a shared vocabulary which may contribute to a better cooperation within the LDA Albania action plan. Also in this respect, the meeting gave an important contribution. Indeed, a “glossary on participation” was drafted and on the following months it was enriched by the contribution of the partners that decided to upload it on a regular basis.

A result of the meeting was: deepen mutual understanding among all the partners on a crucial topic for the working of the LDA Albania, namely active citizenship, this raised awareness on the main international funds for the promotion of active citizenship projects. Other important outcomes of the meeting were: drafting of a “glossary on participation” to be uploaded on regular basis, a plan of action between the partners and the LDA Albania for the implementation of joint projects on the topics highlighted during the meeting, as well as strengthen cooperation among the partners.

At the end of the meeting all the participants expressed a vivid satisfaction for the activity and its usefulness. Moreover, they stressed the importance of implementing other partner meetings to discuss the common strategies for the cooperation of their own communities on a number of topics.

1.2 Partner’s Meeting in Yverdon-les-Bains (Switzerland)

Sponsored by: The Principality of Liechtenstein

The meeting took place in June 2009 in Yverdon-les-Bains (Switzerland).

The Town Hall of Yverdon-les-bains hosted the third partner’s meeting, which followed the one in Brindisi (Italy)



Public and local press at the International seminar on Decentralization in Shkodra, November 2009

and the LDA opening conference in Shkodra (Albania), both held in 2008. The Mayor of Yverdon, Mr. Daniel Von Siebentahl and seven other members of the Municipal administration and citizens of the city of Yverdon-les-Bains attended this event. As lead partner, Mr. Massimo Ciullo, councillor of the municipality of Brindisi (Italy) attended the meeting as well as Antonella Valmorbida, ALDA director.

Led by the Mayor of Yverdon-les-bains the meeting included various presentations and open discussions on several thematic subjects. Among the discussed issues, a very high importance had the unemployment, poverty and its several negative side-effects, such as legal or illegal immigration, brain drain, lack of competences in many institutions and frequently underpaid and unmotivated administrative staff. The partners showed concern about the apathy of the civil society used to accepting the absence of transparency and institutional failings in terms of good governance. In that specific context the Mayor Mr. Luka described the lack of human resources from his municipal administration. Mr. Ciullo suggested, based on a successful experience conducted in Brindisi (Italy), to draw a brochure in order to launch an awareness campaign to address the problem.

2. “International seminar on Decentralization”, Shkodra, November 2nd and 3rd

UCLG Decentralisation and Local Self-Government Committee, chaired by the Province of Barcelona (Spain), and the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA), decided to hold a seminar on awareness and capacity reinforcement, topics of decentralisation and local governance in Shkodra.

Shkodra is the largest city of North Albania, a location close to the border of Montenegro, which makes it a regional centre of cultural and economical trade. During the transition period, Albania moved from a highly centralized state towards decentralized independent local power systems, which brought a change into citizens' life, achieving measurable improvement in qualitative local services.

This seminar, specially supported by the Shkodra Municipality, was designed together with local governments. This aspect gave an added value to the event. Due to the scheduled Elections in Albania, the seminar was held in November 2009 in order to highlight the fact that decentralization process was an important issue both for Government and for the population in the country. Therefore the seminar boasted an international dimension and it met a very wide audience at local and national level. Seventy people, mainly key players from Local Government from about a dozen countries, took part in the seminar.

Many of the people present were Albanians as the conference attracted an impressively unusual number of local government officials in the country as well as representatives from the civil society. The attendance of so many Albanian key players and mayors, civil society members, confirmed the strategic relevance of the geographical location of the venue and of the chosen topic. In addition, local elected representatives, associations of local governments and partner organisations from South Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus countries attended the event.



Mr. Ciullo, Councillor of Brindisi (Italy), at the International seminar in Shkodra November 2009

There was a noteworthy presence of local civil society representatives and from neighbouring Montenegro. Several key players from abroad attended the seminar. International institutions active in the field of cooperation in the country, such as OSCE, USAID, Swiss Cooperation and Spanish cooperation sent high-ranking representatives to the seminar showing the relevance of the event about the decentralization process in Albania. Several of these international organisations offered significant contributions to the conference and gave clear assessment of their actions and goals in the sphere of decentralisation and good governance.

The conference was very successful as the speakers and the audience certainly had fruitful and intense exchanges on the decentralization process. Future partnerships cannot be excluded and enhanced cooperation between people and cities could reasonably be considered a result of the conference. Certainly such a conference offered the citizens the chance to know better their political representatives and the process of decentralization, and allowed the elected officials to know better the needs and desires of their constituents.

The conference was broadcasted on local and national television as great success. Also the majority of the parti-

Participants expressed their satisfaction regarding, the venue itself, the content, the topics, the level of the speakers, and the organization of the seminar held in four languages: Albanian, English, Italian, Russian and Serbo-Croatian.

3. Study visit

Within the start-up of the LDA, a study-visit was organised in the Municipality of Shkodra and in its region. The activity was implemented in the belief that the economic sphere plays a crucial role in the development of Albania, and in particular in the area of Shkodra. In accordance with what was planned during the inauguration of the LDA, with the priority individuated by the partners of the Agency and with what was foreseen in the original project proposal, a Study visit was organized to favour the exchange among stakeholders of the economic sector.

The main economic stakeholders working in the local communities of the LDA's partners attended the event. This action aimed at sharing experience among the economic actors belonging to different economic areas in order to improve their knowledge about different way of carrying on

business. Moreover, the LDA Albania played the important role of raising the awareness of the local economic stakeholders about the importance of exchanging best practice with their counterparts in other European countries.

The Agency was supported by the Association for the Development of the Northern Albania, which has many enterprises in the region. In addition, also the partners of the Agencies played the same role in their own local communities, encouraging the local economic stakeholder in attending such kind of study-visit in Albania.

The territorial background on which the activity was implemented is the Municipality of Shkodra that has a working population of about 107.000 people, out of which 40.000 are unemployed. The rate of unemployment is *de facto* a serious problem for the development of the country.

Nevertheless, the present economic activities are oriented towards the employment of «cheap workers» which should potentially be an attractive factor for the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). In particular in the textile sector, there are already some international enterprises, which ask the local firms to produce some of their products, which are lately commercialized in Europe. Indeed the Albanian economic sectors have a good potentiality of development.

This activity promoted contacts among some European enterprises with the local ones in order to promote joint economic cooperation. The visit lasted four days and involved both local and international entrepreneurs and as well as local and international political representatives (the Mayor of Shkodra, a representative of the Italian Consulate, the President of the Association for the Development of Northern Albania).

During the activity, the international hosts visited the local enterprises. Moreover, a round table among all the participants was organized in order to promote and facilitate the economic cooperation.



First row of authorities attending the "International seminar on Decentralization", November 2009

4. Town twinning

Two trainings titled “Town twinning: a vehicle for European integration” were held in Shkodra, at the “Peace village”, in May and June 2009. The project aimed at promoting town twinning, focusing in particular on the multilateral decentralized cooperation approach, as a vehicle to foster European Integration and to strengthen twinning agreements relations amongst local authorities in the enlarged Europe.

Moreover the main goals of these activities were to spread knowledge on town twinning, both on theoretical and practical basis, improving the quality of the activities within existing twinning relationships, especially by means of developing thematic cooperation.

The target groups were regional, national and international Associations of Local Authorities and Local Authorities (mainly municipalities).

The main objectives were the promotion of concrete initiatives to consolidate democracy at the local level, the development of institutions at the local level thanks to the exchange of know-how, the training of the local councillors

and territorial civil servants, as well as the development of a European network of citizens engaged for the protection of civil rights including those of minorities. In this perspective, the long-term goals the LDA intends to focus on are: the development of a pluralist civil society, the enhanced participation of all the components of the community and the respect of Human Rights.



“Town twinning: a vehicle for European integration”, training in Shkodra

2.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina



LDA Mostar

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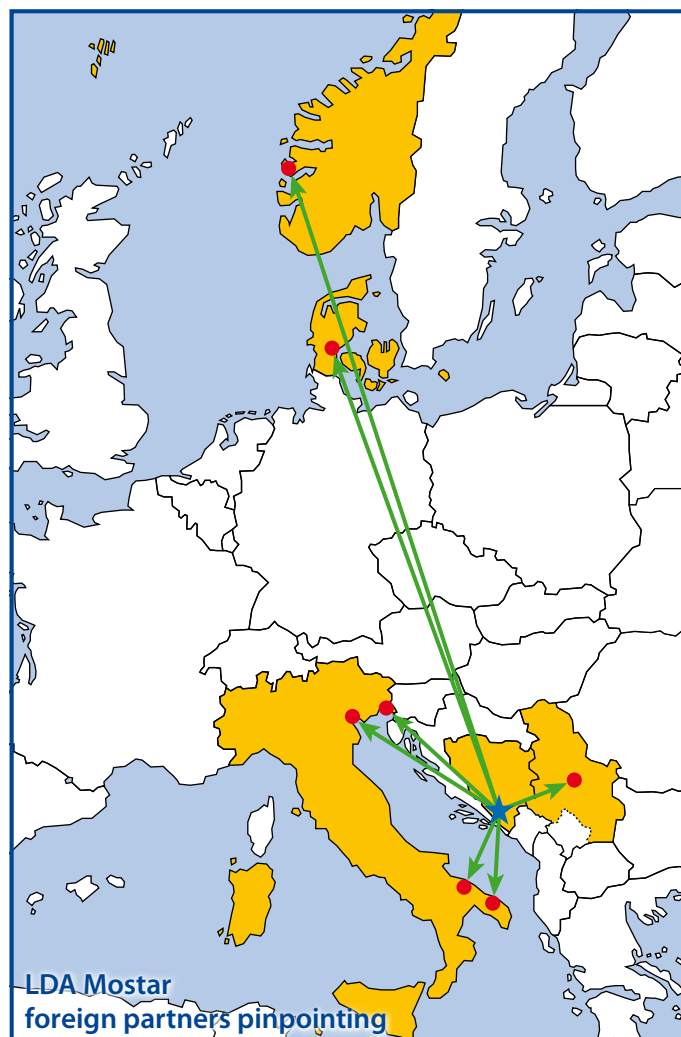
Partners: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Municipality of Mostar; Denmark: Municipality of Vejle; Italy: NGO "IPSIA" Milano, Province of Brindisi, Province of Venezia, Municipality of Monfalcone; Norway: Municipality of Sund; Serbia: Municipality of Kragujevac

Since 2004, the Local Democracy Agency of Mostar has been working to support local democratization by strengthening good governance and capacity building of local authorities and civil society, as well as by encouraging participation of citizens in public life. The aim of the Agency is to be a resource centre for institutions of the City Administration, Cantonal authorities, and civil society as well as a bridge between them, towards a better harmonization of BiH democratic standards with those of the European Union.

1.1 Resource Centre for Democratisation Mostar (RCD)

2007-2009 – Project implemented in co-operation with the city of Mostar and with funds from Puglia Region (Italy) and SOROS (Italy), Open Society Fund BiH.

The LDA Mostar completed this two-years project with successful results for the local community.



The Resource Centre for Democratisation (RCD) aims at strengthening local governance and civil society capacity building, by reinforcing the connection between the citizens and authorities of the City of Mostar and Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (Canton 7), but also at improving the dialogue among the citizens, among different ethnic groups. The central goal of the Centre is the creation of a stable democratic society based on direct citizens' participation in the decision making process and on dialogue between civil society and local political representatives.

Until May 2009, after a strong campaign among the local media, RCD focused its activities on the "Pro Bono Human Rights Counselling Centre". Active since the past year, this section provided legal advices in the field of labour and pension insurance, unemployment, health and social protection, implementation of social verdicts, instruments of appeal to the BiH Judiciary System, free access to information, legal aid, competences of Ombudsman and procedures in front of the BiH Constitutional Court.

Publications on Human Rights for Citizens and short guides on democratization were developed and delivered to citizens and city servants, as well as radio shows and TV pro-

gramme in co-operation with RTV Mostar and HTV Oscar C, were dedicated to raise awareness about the LDA Mostar among the local community.

In this framework on 26th February 2009 the Resource Centre for Democratisation, in co-operation with RTV Mostar and HTV Oscar C, broadcasted its fifth TV show on "The situation of Roma Population in the City of Mostar" and a TV documentary with the same title. The guest of the show was the President of "Roma Neretva Association" from Mostar, who had the opportunity to express the difficulties Roma population face in Mostar. Besides, the movie aimed at showing the real living conditions of Roma in the City of Mostar, pointing out their burning problems as well as raising awareness on the topic among the local community.

Another active section within the RCD was the implementation of 16 events among trainings workshops and roundtables.

The programme with the Kindergartens, already developed last year, was focused on the implementation of projects for children with special needs and trainings for educators. A treatment programme with a Speech Therapist at the Kindergarten "Jasmin" completed the activities of this project. Another successful training was the one titled "Communication and Public Relations" designed for the representatives of the Canton 7 Ministries and non-governmental organizations, to enhance the communication between authorities, NGOs and media. The LDA Mostar during this year was very active with schools and youth. One of the most successful workshops cycles was the one titled "Women's Rights in BiH – Gender Equality", dedicated to the representatives of High School Student Councils in Mostar. The same target of participants was also addressed by another workshop titled "Inter-cultural Dialogue II" whose core subject was conflict, dialogue and negotiation skills.

The representatives of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (Canton 7), the Ministries and Mostar City Administration were all involved in a two-day training on the subject "Im-



Children at the kindergarten performing "The European bear and the toy store" Mostar, March 2009



Diploma after a two-days training on “Communications and public relations”, Mostar, January 2009

portance and Techniques of the Planning Process with Citizen Participation”. This training focused on strategic and action planning, participation and conditions of good co-operation, participatory planning principles, problem identification and defining of objectives, as well as concrete mechanisms for citizen participation into the decision making process such as public debate, public opinion poll, *ad hoc* counselling boards and groups or educational programmes. One interesting point of discussion was the citizens as partners and not rivals of the representatives of the City and Cantonal institutions in the process of strategic planning.

The RCD implemented also several trainings, roundtables and workshops like the one on journalism titled “Communication of Media with Governing Institutions and Practical Workshop of Journalism” and the training “EU IPA Funds for BiH 2007-2013 – Advanced Module” for the representatives of the Canton 7 Ministries, Canton 7 Government and Mostar City Administration, which followed the roundtable titled: “Cross-border Co-operation – Advantages and Possibilities for Economic Process in Mostar and Canton 7”, organized in May 2009. This roundtable aimed at bringing together representatives of Mostar City Administration and

of governmental and non-governmental sectors. The debate focused on lack of staff teams within governing structures educated on European funds, lack of a database of EU projects being implemented on the Canton 7 territory and lack of co-ordination.

The RCD of LDA Mostar was also actively involved in the organisation of trainings for local and international organisations.

1.2 Training organized for Handicap International

For the beneficiaries of the “Participatory Mine Action and Development” Project, implemented by Handicap International, the LDA Mostar organized a series of trainings aiming to support the population living in the mines-affected communities.

1.3 Training for Entrepreneurship and Business Association LiNK – Mostar

A two-day seminar was organized on the subject of “Team Building and Strengthening of Team Work and Strategic planning” aiming to strengthen the participants’ capacities on building a quality team and on designing a “Strategic Planning”.

1.4 Needs assessment and trainings for NGOs within the network of Regional Resource Centres (RCC) BiH

The RCD, as a member of the Regional Resource Centre and as a part of the Centre for Promotion of Civil Society Project, realized a need assessment of the non-governmental sector from 16 municipalities of Herzegovina (Mostar, Široki Brijeg, Neum, Stolac, Čapljina, Ravno, Trebinje, Ljubinje, Bileća, Ne vesinje, Gacko, Čapljina, Ljubuški, Jablanica, Konjic and Prozor). This assessment brought to the implementation of two focal trainings on: “Project Proposal Development” and “Strategic planning”.

1.5 “Councillor – Citizen” Project

December 2009 - December 2010

After its establishment the Resource Centre for Democratisation was actively engaged on the Project “Councillor-Citizen”. This project promotes the work of the City Council, encourages citizens to actively participate into the decision making process and strengthens the communication between the Councillors and citizens of Mostar. This Project also ensures further active engagement of the Resource Centre for Democratisation Mostar, which is strategic for the Local Democracy Agency Mostar.

Process of democratization, human rights protection, citizen participation into the decision making process, transparency of local authorities and their institutions as basic preconditions for BiH to speed up the process of European integration were the main issues of the project. It was focused on the idea that each councillor is at the same time a citizen, and that each citizen could be a councillor, by using the competencies of the previous councillors, in order to find solutions to the community problems.

On 30th December 2009 an initial meeting was held in the office of the Mostar City Council President, with the aim of joint planning of concrete activities within the Project that will be implemented in 2010.

1.6 Final session of the Resource Centre for Democratisation Project Steering Board

On 30th June 2009 the final session of the LDA Mostar Resource Centre for Democratisation (RCD) Project Steering Board was held in the premises of LDA Mostar. The RCD Project Manager and LDA Mostar Finance Officer presented the Narrative and Financial Report on the work of the centre. The Steering Board members – representatives of the City of Mostar – were in charge to ensure the transparency in the management of allocated funds for RCD, as well as to monitor the realisation of the activities. During the Steering Board they highlighted their satisfaction for the implemented projects and its positive reflection upon the local community.



Young people attending a workshop on Women's Rights, Mostar, January 2009

2. Regional Partnership for Inter-cultural Cities

Donor: European Commission – Directorate General for Enlargement

Leading Project Partner: Subotica City Assembly (Serbia)

Project Partners: Local Democracy Agencies Subotica (Serbia), Osijek (Croatia) and Mostar (BiH), and “Light House” Wolverhampton (UK), ALDA

“Regional partnership for inter-cultural cities” is one of eight projects of international co-operation, approved in the framework of the “People 2 People” Programme of the Directorate General for Enlargement of the European Commission. It aims at consolidating the partnership between civil society organisations and authorities and strengthening minority rights in the region”. It was funded also as a part of the CARDS Regional Action Programme 2006.

In July 2009, an initial Conference of “People 2 People” Programme took place in Brussels. This meeting was an excellent opportunity for exchanging experiences and networking not only between the beneficiaries and the representatives of the European Commission, but also among

other stakeholders at European level. Among others, the representatives of the “Regional Partnership for Inter-cultural Cities” Project, delegates of the Leading Project Partner, Subotica City Assembly, ALDA, LDA Osijek and LDA Mostar Partners attended the meeting.

In August 2009 the first roundtable took place at the City of Subotica, with participation of all Project Partners. On this occasion LDA Mostar organised a joint presentation of the representatives of organisations from Mostar, which are engaged in cultural activities, on the topic of the cultures of different national groups. Representatives of the Mostar Youth Theatre, Association of Croatian Cultural-Artistic Clubs, Serbian Orthodox Cultural Association Prosvjeta and the City of Mostar, had the opportunity to exchange their experiences with similar organisations from the regions of Partner Cities. During a four-days visit to Subotica, the partners attended the local Festival of Wheat and Bread “Dužijanča”.

After a series of activities in all Partner Cities, development of a website and three documentary films that will address the subject of national minorities in the regions of Partner Cities, the final conference will be held in Mostar in April 2011.



“European Day of Neighbours” in Mostar, pronounced as the best practice in 2009

3. Other Activities

3.1 Support to the Swedish students’ Project

High school students from the Swedish town of Uppsala were hosted in Mostar in the framework of a school programme on the introduction to foreign cultures. They were trained by the LDA Mostar and had the unique opportunity to meet with the youngsters from the United World College (UWC) Mostar as well as with youth from Mostar, to exchange experiences and interests.

Through this activity, the LDA Mostar is aiming at empowerment of young people.

3.2 Study visit of youth from Trento (Italy)

In April 2009 LDA Mostar hosted some high school students from Trento (Italy), who visited Mostar in the framework of a study-visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina organised by the Association “Viaggiare i Balcani”.

3.3 European Day of Neighbours

LDA Mostar, in co-operation with the City of Mostar and Mostar City Council, organised an event on “European Day of Neighbours” on 26th May 2009.

Mostar is the first city in Bosnia and Herzegovina that became a member of the “European Federation of Local Solidarity”, which coordinates the ceremonies of “European Day of Neighbours” in 29 countries, in over 1000 cities and with more than 8 million participants.

In 2009 the City of Mostar organized this day involving the local communities of Mostar, Brankovac and Pothum, with the attendance of the City Councillors and the Mostar City Council President, Mostar City Administration employees and the City Mayor, foreign consulates, EU Info Centre, civil society organisations, schools and residents of these local communities. With voluntary contributions of local



Press conference in Mostar about Micro-crediting scheme, January 2009

businessmen and catering stores, this was an opportunity for the citizens to socialise and to establish contacts with their political representatives.

The aim was also to present Europe as one big neighbourhood and to bring the European Union closer to BiH citizens, with the long-term purpose of an easier integration of BiH in to EU.

The “European Federation of Local Solidarity” of Paris, as a co-ordinator of the “European Day of Neighbours” all over the world, published a report from Mostar, and photos and video clips of this event (www.european-neighbours-day.com). Moreover, the organisation of the “European day of Neighbours” in Mostar was also pronounced as the best practice in 2009.

3.4 Regional Resource Centres network in BiH

The first co-ordination meeting of 7 NGOs, members of the Regional Resource Centres (RRC) network in BiH was held on 8th September 2009. At the meeting an agreement on the first activities related to the needs assessment of NGOs in BiH was reached. Guidelines for drafting the RCC network strategy development were provided.

3.5 Programme of French/Balkans Multilateral Decentralised Co-operation of Good Governance in South-East Europe

In September 2009 the launching Conference of the “Programme of French/Balkans Multilateral Decentralised Co-operation” was organised in Sarajevo. The Conference on the topic of good governance in Southeast Europe was organised in co-operation of ALDA, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Region of Auvergne. LDA Mostar, together with the representatives of other LDAs from BiH, attended the Conference, had an opportunity to present their work and experiences in the field of decentralised co-operation.

3.6 “Humanity in Action” Network in BiH

In October 2009, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark in BiH organised a dinner on the occasion of anniversary of the “Humanity in Action (HiA)” Network. HiA is an international network established with the objective of preserving values of human dignity and protecting minority rights of the new generations of social, cultural and political leaders.

As a part of its programme, HiA Network organises youth study-visits to this Network’s member countries. LDA Mostar, among other few representatives of civil society organisations, but also domestic and international state officials, was invited to attend this event, with the aim of establishing co-operation with the HiA Network and supporting project activities directed towards youth empowerment.

3.7 Promotion of the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination

Upon the invitation of OSCE, LDA Mostar representatives participated in one out of four radio shows organised in BiH, with the aim to promote the recently adopted Law on Prohibition of Discrimination. In addition to a OSCE jurist, who was actively engaged in the process of adoption of

this Law, and to the BiH Ombudsmen, the LDA Mostar representative got the chance to present its activities in the field of discrimination and of BiH civil society contributions to the promotion of this Law at national level.

3.8 Youth Fair in Berlin

In November 2009, LDA Mostar Youth Officer attended the Berlin Youth Fair, organized in a French/German partnership with the Office of Franco-Allemande pour la Jeunesse Innovation and Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk Zukunftswerkstatt. The Fair's objective was strengthening capacity building of youth through exchanges of good practices, knowledge and capabilities, cultural and historic experiences of different countries.



Young women from Mostar during a "Job shadowing" training in Milan, Italy, June 2009

3.9 Council of Europe Political School

The Council of Europe Political School, "School of Local Democracy in the Western Balkans", and LDA Mostar enabled the participation of the City of Mostar Legal Affairs and General Administration Department in a three-day seminar titled "Capacity Building and Good Practices in Local Governments", held in November 2009 in Budva (Montenegro).

3.10 Training Programme "Introduction to the Quality Insurance System for NGOs"

The Centre for Promotion of Civil Society, based in Mostar, implemented a programme titled "Sustainable Development of the Non-profit Sector II", funded by USAID. Among the activities, a series of successful trainings were organized in order to launch a quality insurance system for NGOs in BiH. The project provided an expert from the Slovenian Institute of Quality and Metrology (SIQ), which assisted the participants in each step. This challenging eight-days training was attended by two representatives of LDA Mostar, which gained a certificate of internal controllers for the introduction of quality insurance system. Through activities like these, LDA Mostar is strengthening its capacities and increasing the trust of the local community, for which the Agency realizes its activities.

3.11 Fundraising

LDA Mostar has dedicated the whole 2009 to its own fundraising, with an objective of strengthening self-sustainability. A lot has been invested in strengthening the capabilities of LDA staff, which has resulted in a significant increase of the part of funds secured directly by the Agency in addition to the ones provided thanks to the Association of Local Democracy Agencies.

LDA Mostar is a member of the following associations, networks and councils:

- Mostar Youth Council
- Network of Regional Resource Centres (RCC) in BiH
- Network Plus Agreement
- EVS / European Voluntary Service

2.3 LDA Prijedor



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Lead Partner: Associazione Progetto Prijedor (Italy)

Partners: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Municipality of Prijedor;
Italy: Comune di Trento, Comprensorio Valsugana C4, Comprensorio C5 Adige Valley, City of Aldeno, Town of Baselga di Pinè, Municipality of Borgo Valsugana, City of Caderzone, City of Caldonazzo, City of Cavalese, City of Grumes, Municipality of Lavis Levico, City of Massimeno, City of Pergine, City of Pinzolo, City of Predazzo, City of Ronzo Chienis, City of Spiazzo Rendena, City of Varena, Group "L 'Still", Cultural Association "Il Mosaico", Association "Trentini nel Mondo", Cultural Association "L'Allegria", CISV – Section of Trento, As-

sociation "94 Yugo", Syndicate Retired Spi-Cgil Friuli Venezia Giulia; Spain: Diputacion de Cordoba.

1. Youth and participation

1.1 "Youth and active citizenship - third edition" - "School of citizenship"

As a follow up of seminars cycle "School for peace", implemented between 2002 and 2008 to improve capabilities in understanding conflicts and to spread confidence and friendship between youths of the three main ethnic groups, LDA Prijedor organized a youth seminar called "School of citizenship".

This activity can be considered one of the high level workshops among educational and practical seminars on the issues of active youth participation in the local community life. This event focused on empowerment of youth about how to plan initiatives concerning "Youth policy" and youth needs and problems. As a result, the LDA designed a project titled: "Better Prijedor" that was implemented by the representatives of youth organizations and centres from Prijedor. The general goal of this project was to develop civil society and all the mechanisms for the protection of youth



rights. Hence, this project had 4 dimensions: cultural, political, legal and socio-economic.

The cultural aspect included the realization of cultural activities as a powerful tool to promote ideas of tolerance and acceptance of differences among the youth organizations. The political feature included lobbying and activities with citizens in order to influence civil authorities with political pressure and to achieve better results.

Another dimension was the legal one, which comprised an awareness campaign on respect and implementation of national and local laws and of international agreements that request the duties and responsibilities of local authorities.

The latter, the socio-economic aspect, included the active commitment by the LDA in order to monitor the respect of decisions taken by the Municipality of Prijedor.

To support the project, LDA Prijedor realized several activities for the youths. In the framework of the project "Better Prijedor" ("Bolji Prijedor"), a Rock concert was organised to promote youth citizenship. In addition an exhibition titled "Minimum-maximum" was the key event within the project for promotion of youth cultural activism. Another successful event was a television programme called "Caffé Prijedor", broadcasted for free on the local television for 6 months. Its core issue was youth rights and needs and youth activism.

"School of citizenship" showed to its participants and all direct and indirect target groups of this programme, that a well-organised youth associations' network can promote the development of youth sector. This approach brought to the attention of local authorities the needs of youngsters and pointed out that youth can be recognized as strong stakeholders able to make good changes and able to work for the benefit of the whole local community.

At the end of the Project, there was no other donor to support the continuation of activities, but there is still a youth working group alive that works to develop new ideas for the future. LDA Prijedor is working in order to find new funds to give this project a worth follow up.



Round table on youth policies in Prijedor with youth associations and institutions, December 2009

1.2 "Youth Project 2009" – Exchanges of youth policies

Developed and implemented in cooperation with the Municipality of Prijedor, and with the support of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Prijedor (OSOP).

This project consisted in a study visit to the Municipality of Trento, their youth institutions, cultural organizations and educational centres on youth policy, as well as in two round tables with youth associations and institutions in Prijedor on the topic: "Programming and activities of Summer garden", a open and indoor municipal space for youth.

APP (Association "Project Prijedor") staff, LDA Prijedor, representatives from Prijedor Municipality and OSOP attended the study visit in Trento and the exchange of experiences on youth policy issues. Experience and knowledge gained in this action were of great importance for future ideas and projects in youth sector since several opportunities for partnership opened during the visit. The participants had the chance to understand the functioning of youth policy, the methods of communication among stakeholders in this sector, instruments and actions that young people use to solve problems, non-formal education and practice young

people receive in voluntary activities. It was interesting since all these methods could be implemented in Prijedor with children and youth.

Both round tables reached their objectives and expectations: they revealed great interest by youth organizations, which debated on this issue and showed their active participation. During the round tables several ideas were presented: a proposal of work organization, activity's suggestions and active participation of youth organizations in designing programmes for the "Summer garden" space programme. This project consists in a cultural-educational centre of the Municipality of Prijedor. Since the foundation its aim was to promote and enhance the cultural life in the town. "Summer garden" includes open and indoor spaces in which many events could be organized: domestic and international festivals and concerts, film screenings and theatre performances, art performances and exhibitions, school fairs and youth organizations fairs, as well as other cultural events. Active participation in coordinating cultural events brought to work youth organizations together with cultural and artistic societies, NGOs and public institutions. The conclusions of round tables were sent to Municipality of Prijedor as well as a do-

cument containing some proposals to the Commission for activities of "Summer garden" space of Municipal Assembly.

A calendar of activities for 2010 was presented; it consists of projects that every youth association and institution planned to organise within the "Summer garden" space.

1.3 Support to the activities of youth centres in Prijedor region

During 2009 the Association "Project Prijedor" continued to support the activities of youth centres in Hambarine and Ljubija. The projects they implemented, with active support of LDA Prijedor, were focused on development of different talents (dancing, playing guitar, acting in the theatre, learning about children rights) in Ljubija and on the socializing of small children and their preschool preparation, in Hambarine. Both projects had a great impact in developing children and youth healthy and stable personality.

1.4 Prijedor and Trentino (Italy) youth associations' interactions

The cooperation with youth organisations from Trentino Region (Italy) offered a valuable enhancement in the work with youth centres. Study visits were organised, attended by youth from Cavalese (Italy) which visited Prijedor and youth centres, as well as the visit attended by young representatives of youth associations and centres from Prijedor to Strasbourg (France) and Pec (Kosovo), within the cycle of study visits on the topic of dialogue and human rights, organised by Alexander Langer Foundation. In this framework other activities were implemented, among them LDA Prijedor held an event with local children on drama, art and dance at the Camp "Most mira", festival in Kevljani, a small community centre of Prijedor region. In Ljubija, a small village in the region, the LDA organised a camp for youth in cooperation with CISV from Trento (Italy) and local youth centres. One more youth camp in the small community of Hambarine was organised in cooperation with the Italian organisation "Lucicate" from Rovereto and local Prijedor youth centres.



Youth associations from Prijedor and Italy together in the Camp of Ljubija, (BiH), August 2009



Study visit within the PEARL.EU programme in Monfalcone (Italy), March 2009

1.5 Participation in the “Local Democracy Week”

In October 2009 the Municipality of Prijedor organized a series of initiatives to enhance citizens' knowledge about the functioning of local authorities and their possibility of participation in the decision-making process at local level. The “Local Democracy week” included: a visit of elementary and middle school students to the city council, whose departments were opened to the public. A meeting on cooperation between the Municipality and LDA Prijedor was organised, and the LDA was invited to present its projects.

1.6 International Civil Service

Between October 2008 and September 2009 two volunteers from Italy were assigned to work with youth associations in two directions: exploring and strengthening the youth associations and twinning schools Prijedor-Trento. Regarding the work with youth associations, at the Youth Centre “Ljubija”, the administration and its volunteers received useful trainings on fund-raising, search for partners and design of new project ideas. Other youth associations also had a benefit from the help of the volunteers in exchanging knowledge and experiences.

Other projects implemented by the LDA and related to “Youth and Participation” were:

Relations between the schools of Prijedor (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Trento (Italy)

In March 2009 LDA Prijedor supervised an Italian-Bosnian primary and high schools exchange programme. After the request from two schools from Trentino Region (Italy) and with volunteers' help, an active exchange programme between both pupils and teachers was carried on. The project aimed at establishing good relations between primary schools and three particular types of high schools: agricultural, humanities' and economic ones. The first exchange set of visits was between the primary school “Dositaj Obradović” of Prijedor and the “Istituto Comprensivo Johannes Amos Comenius” of Cognola (Trento, Italy).

With the invaluable cooperation of the Italian organization called “Associazione Trentino con il Kosovo” two teachers from Prijedor went to Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy) and attended trainings along with representatives of Educational and youth policies departments of Trento Municipality and from the intercultural centre “Millevoci” as well as with other teachers from Kosovo.

During this activity several study visits were organized, in particular the participants had the chance to visit the school “IPSCT Battisti”, the training college “Enaip” in Villazzano (Trento, Italy), the youth centre of “Cooperativa Arianna”, the non-profit organization “AMA”, the youth association “Spazio giovani” in Cavalese (Trento, Italy). The part of the programme involving high schools is scheduled for 2010 and will comprise exchange visits between groups of students as well as video documentary exchange.

Festival “Most mira”

“Most Mira” (peace bridge) is a British registered charity association working to provide an opportunity for children living in a post conflict environment to participate in a funny

and creative event. "Most Mira" is run by a group of dedicated volunteers from both England and Bosnia. During 2009 the Association organized a Festival in the village of Kevljani (Municipality of Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the LDA gave its support especially for the workshops were concerned. An additional support came from volunteers from 14 countries and from the Italian theater company "Teatro del Corvo" which involved children and teenagers from Ljubija, Hambarine and Donja Puharska in a puppet design activity. The theme of the Festival was the Nature, with an emphasis on recycling. The method of working was child-centered, participatory and collaborative. Before the successful six days "Most Mira" Festival in Kevljani, a parade along the streets of Prijedor was organized to show the artistic creations of the children as well as to promote the Festival and an alternative way of theater performance that "Teatro il Corvo" is using.

2. Culture and memories

2.1 "Ars Kozara 2009"

The Third Edition of "Ars Kozara" was held from July 20th to 30th 2009. This initiative provided an opportunity for artists from different countries including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, France and Italy to experiment and create their pieces of art inside the beautiful and suggestive scenery of the forests on Mount Kozara and the peak of Mrakovica. Among the participants of this edition there were also artists who are dealing with art and nature or "art in nature" and who showed work such as "Opera Bosco" of Viterbo (Italy) and "Slama" of Osijek (Croatia). An official opening of the exhibition marked the end of the festival, in the presence of the Minister of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska, Anton Kasipovic, who expressed his deep appreciation for the original initiative.

In the framework of this event, 10 murals about the topic of the sport were drawn along the stadium wall (about 12 metres long) as performance of Art Association "Tač.ka".

2.2 "Čitajmo i govorimo zajedno" ("We read and talk together")

In 2009 the Civic Forum organized a cycle of meetings with some authors entitled "Čitajmo i govorimo zajedno" ("We read and talk together").

The first guest was the Croatian journalist Drago Hedl, who is also one of the authors of the famous documentary film "Vukovar, final cut", whose screening was a successful audience event. This Serbian-Croatian co-production reconstructs the events of Vukovar during the war and tries to give voice to as many different witnesses as possible. The particular documentary topic made this screening play not easy, but the audience reactions were positive.

The second guest was the author of the book "Good People in an Evil Time": Svetlana Broz, who held a public meeting for two high school classes and donated a copy of her book to each pupil.

Ms Broz brought also the attention to her significant experience as director of the NGO "GARIWO" of Sarajevo, which is active in sensitizing about civil courage during all the wars.



Young artists' performance in the forests on Mount Kozara, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 2009



CISV International camp, collecting memories from Ljubija mines Bosnia Herzegovina, July-August 2009

Other projects implemented by LDA Prijedor were:

2.3 International Camp CISV - A collection of memories of the mines in Ljubija

Between July and August 2009 Ljubija hosted a CISV International camp with CISV delegates and volunteers from 15 countries. A training was organized on the Ljubija mine's story and oral collected memories of Ljubija inhabitants. The aim of this project was to revitalize and restore the forgotten identity of the mine, which provided the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with about 70% of mined iron ore. The training was provided by the director and the archivist of the local museum, by the historian Vlado Knežević and by the LDA delegate Simone Malavolti. The programme comprised also two public events held in Ljubija and in Prijedor to present the results of the CISV International camp, such as eight video-interviews which were archived together with pictures to the local population. During these events there was also the chance for several architects of Banja Luka to present their projects to restore the town of Ljubija.

A follow up of this project will continue in 2010 also with cooperation of the "Kozara museum" of Prijedor, as well as with youth and other organizations of the city.

2.4 Study trips and exchange Prijedor-Prato-Pistoia

With the aim of enlarging the European partnership LDA Prijedor organized several study trips to Pistoia and Prato (Italy) for the director of "Kozara" museum of Prijedor, the custodian of Donja Gradina monumental site, as well as for the mine director. They had the chance to visit the "Historical Institute of Resistance" and the "Deportation Museum" in Pistoia (Italy). During this trip there was also the opportunity for them to meet representatives of the Association "Prato-Ebensee" of Prato (Italy) and the Cultural councillor of Prato Municipality: a first step for future cooperation.

2.5 Participation in meetings organized by the Langer Foundation

Following the idea proposed by the "Langer Foundation" of Bolzano (Italy), LDA Prijedor organized two trips to Strasbourg (France) and Peć/Peje (Kosovo) for a group of local youths aiming at giving them the opportunity to visit the European Parliament and to exchange ideas about a common European identity. The second part of the project comprised the trip to Peć/Peje (Kosovo), which was an excellent opportunity for the youths from Prijedor to meet their peers from Srebrenica (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Peć/Peje Kosovo and talk about cohabitation and conflict resolution. In the framework of this programme in July 2009 a youth group organized by the "Langer Foundation" went to visit LDA Prijedor, the civic forum and the staff from "Café Prijedor" television programme.

3. Local development

3.1 Project Local development 2009

In collaboration with "PREDA", which is the local development agency of Prijedor, several activities were set up by the LDA in the framework of the same projects implemented in 2008. A documentary with interviews of participants at the past editions was realized to enhance and raise awareness on entrepreneurship's projects. Two meetings were

also organised to present the idea of developing an association of small businessmen and artisans of the Municipality of Prijedor or the region.

From August to September 2009 the Municipality of Prijedor developed the "Business Incubator project" on micro-credit. This project comprised a competition for new entrepreneurs "PREA" and LDA Prijedor chose the most interesting entrepreneurship projects that could provide a scheme of micro-credit in order to start a business.

The LDA Prijedor organised also several trainings for future LDA staff to raise awareness on writing European financed projects.

Other activities implemented by the LDA in this framework were:

3.2 Project Environment

After a feasibility study was realized to implement a recycling project for plastic materials, which is considered to be the easiest to start a recycling programme. After Besides to the Municipality interest, LDA Prijedor is looking for new partners interested in this programme.



"Caffe' Prijedor", a television programme about young people broadcasted on local TV

3.5 Round Table on the tourism potential of the region of Prijedor

The Association "Promotur" of Prijedor is an association that implements its activities in the area of Prijedor Municipality and aims at enhancing conditions for promotion of culture, tradition and tourist potentials of Prijedor Municipality, as well as to improve a tourist offer. In June 2009 "Promotur", in cooperation with LDA Prijedor, PREDA and "Associazione Progetto Prijedor" (Italy), organized a round table on tourism potential of the Prijedor region. This event represented an important chance to discuss about sustainable tourism and economic sustainable development in the region.

3.6 UCODEP project: "Supporting the creation and promotion of roads and environmental sustainability of tourism in BiH"

Lead Partners of the project: WWF and Italian Development Cooperation

Partners of the project: in Italy: CST of Firenze, Grosseto Province, "Associazione Progetto Prijedor". In Bosnia and Herzegovina: "Green Tour"

With the partnership of WWF and Italian Development Cooperation, LDA and Promotur presented the UCODEP project "Supporting the creation and promotion of roads and environmental sustainability of tourism in BiH" at the round table on tourist potentials of Prijedor.

After a feasibility study, a sustainable tourism theoretical study was implemented, together with several study visits to Italy: Grosseto and Autonomous Province of Trento for Bosnian state institutions' officers. A sustainable tourism programme was drawn and three committees were established, namely each for the three areas involved: Neretva valley, Una-Sana valley and Drina valley.

The core aim of the project was to offer a sustainable tourist programme and promote it on the Italian website "Viaggiare i Balcani" as well as through promotion at Inter-

national tourism fairs in various locations with documentary movies and advertising materials.

4. Social and human promotion

4.1 Distance foster care project

Also in 2009 the project “Distance foster care” continued to support 307 families in Prijedor living in poor conditions. This project involved the same amount of families in Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy) as well as local schools and local authorities. In the framework of this programme several travels were organized in order to allow the Italian parents to meet the related beneficiaries and for both this was an opportunity to meet, to share, to get to know each other and to enrich each other in term of human relations.

In Prijedor a team of five people from LDA, local Social services and local volunteering associations continuously supervised this project.

4.2 Monitoring of the social situation

For a future project dedicated to monitoring the Social context in Prijedor, the LDA organized a preliminary visit of an expert from the social school of Trento (Italy): Mr. Francesco Gabbi. This activity was arranged in order to establish connections with the Social services centre of Prijedor and further draft a common project on the social situation in the region.

4.3 Special school “Djordje Natosevic”

In 2009 LDA Project continued the relationship with the Special school “Djordje Natosevic” especially with its new director. In order to provide a space for disabled persons, several agreements were signed with the sponsors: Ministry of schools and Prijedor Municipality, particularly as about the refurbishment of the school. In fact, the core aim of this project is to provide a place in which disabled people who finished the school could spend their spare time.



Long distance foster children going to visit Italy, summer 2009

4.4 Support for the elderly population of Ljubija

This social assistance programme for elderly continued also in 2009 at “White house” centre in Ljubija (Bosnia and Herzegovina), with the support of “Associazione Progetto Prijedor” (Italy). This is an important gathering centre for the elderly population in the town.

Several activities were implemented in this community centre such as: hand knitting works, further sold at the Tourist organization of Prijedor and at the Italian NGO “YUGO ‘94”, sanitary and home assistance, as well as humanitarian aid distribution.

During 2009, monthly meetings with physicians, social assistants, psychologists and law experts were organized, in order to provide assistance and information about specific topics, which were interesting for the assisted people of the centre. Furthermore the “White house” centre was refurbished to give also an exhibition space to the hand knit works. A trip to Martin Brod (Bosnia and Herzegovina) was organized in May, this was an activity very much appreciated by the elderly that usually do not have other opportunities to go travel and enhance their culture.

2.4 LDA Zavidovići



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Partners: Association "Local Democracy Agency in Zavidovići" (lead partner), composed by Municipality of Zavidovići (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and in Italy by: the Association of Local Authorities of Brescia, the Province of Cremona and the Municipality of Alba; Municipality of Roncadelle, Staff service Mu Ap, "Uisp" of Brescia, Spi-Cgil of Brescia, "Cinsa" (University Consortium), Association "Liberacion" from Carpenedolo (Brescia), "CeTamb" (Documentation and Research Centre on Environmental Issues, University of Brescia), Association "TrEatro", ARCI Nuova Associazione

of Cremona, CGIL of Cremona, SPI-CGIL of Cremona, Oglio Sud Park, UISP of Cremona, Association "Amici di Emmaus", Municipality of Torre de Picanardi, Association "Peace Office" of Alba, Association "Donne in nero", Association "Strani Vari".

During 2009 Local Democracy Agency of Zavidovići devoted its work mainly to strengthen its activities in three key sectors: youth policies, social welfare and sustainable economic development. In each of these sectors the LDA focused on increasing the net of the local actors involved, promote their role, animate and support them through LDA's Italian partners and the LDAs network. The Agency committed itself also to enlarge the relationship with other local and international NGOs, Bosnian institutions and foreign authorities and to support local NGOs, active in the social and educative field, in becoming more sustainable and proactive.

In addition, one of the purposes was also to strengthen LDA presence in the rural areas, affected by an increasing nationalism, as well as to provide other financial resources in order to guarantee continuance to the three main sectors of activity.

Projects fundraised by LDA Zavidovići

1. Local economic development

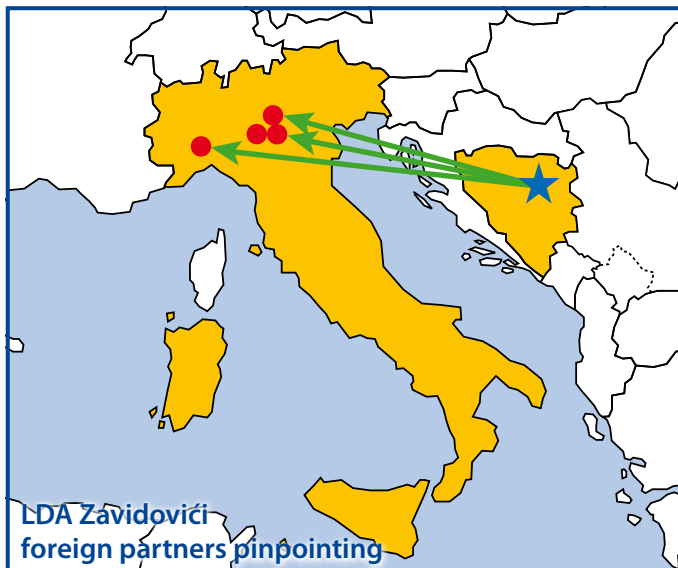
1.1 Development of Local economies in the Zenica-Doboj Canton

Donors: in Italy: Lombardia Region, CGIL of Crema, Municipality of Roncadelle, Province of Cremona

Partners: in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Local Associations of farmers from Zavidovići and Žepče; in Italy: Association "Buona Terra", University of Padova, "Cinsa" – Italian Universities Consortium on Environmental Sciences, "CRPV" of Cesena.

This project aimed at fostering local economic development, supporting agricultural and handcrafted production.

The first goal was diversification of agricultural products





General Assembly of LDA Zavidovići - working groups in Dom Kulture, Zavidovići, November 2009

in some selected areas of each involved farm. In 2009 LDA Zavidovići succeeded to diversify products and increase the household incomes of the 15 targeted farmer families through training, consultancy and technical support in the cultivation and processing and with the creation of a market linkages with buyers.

Another achievement was the creation of opportunities to increase the local business. Besides, the project aimed at developing a strong local food culture through educational programs, networking opportunities and increased availability of locally grown food.

The project contributed to build the capacities of farmers from rural areas of linking local productions to market, of generating more income and fostering employment in the farming sector.

In handicraft field, LDA Zavidovići supported the production of *"pape"*, traditional wool socks, knitted by women from rural areas, and some others textile products (such as carpets, gloves, caps, scarves...), which were sold in a shop opened with LDA support as well in the close town of Žepče.

In 2009 there were specific results achieved such as the definition of the farming plans for each farmer, production of small plants, but also seeding of the first new varieties and distribution of this seeds among selected farmers in some experimental areas.

Support to the farmers through consultancy and financial contribution was given all year long. A selling point was set up as well as a handicraft shop in Žepče for the production of wool samples made by women from some rural areas around Zavidovići.

2. Decentralized cooperation

2.1 Pilot farms network in Central Bosnia

Donor: Region Auvergne (France)

Partners: Association of Farmers of Travnik (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

The project started in the middle of 2009 with specific goals such as: to recognize rural values and to boost family agriculture, to achieve food self-sufficiency by modernization of family farms, to develop an attractive agriculture for young farmers, as well as to develop good farming practices in the field of sustainable development.

Farmer's network is a way of providing educational and informational activities to a network of farmers as well as facilitating farmer-to-farmer exchanges of knowledge and experiences related to agricultural practice. In the first year of implementation the project brought French specialist advisers and consultants to deal with the subjects that are important to farmers and to help them to improve their knowledge and skills.

Besides that, technical assistance was provided to farmers and a collection of information about farm management practices was provided in order to support French consultancy. For 2010 the project will also create the opportunity for exchange between Bosnian and French farmers.

3. Environmental protection

3.1 Environmental protection and trans-border cooperation in Zavidovići area: exchange of best practice on waste management and testing collection of items for recycling. in the centre of Zavidovići

Donors: Piemonte Region (Italy) and Municipality of Alba (Italy)

Partners: Municipality of Alba (Italy) and Zavidovići (Bosnia and Herzegovina), local NGOs "Peace Trees", "ERICA" (Italy)

The main objective of this project is to increase cooperation between Italian and Bosnian subjects in the field of waste management. The project aims at raising the public awareness on such topic inside public and private actors, promoting the exchange of best practices between the Municipalities of Alba and Zavidovići, developing level of competences of administrators and technicians from Zavidovići Municipality and testing a pilot collection of items for recycling involving the public utility, some local enterprises and the Roma community. Besides that, the project realized a wide educational program in the schools and an informative campaign on local TV and radio. In 2009, following

a visit of an Italian delegation to discuss the collection plan designed by the local public utility, LDA Zavidovići implemented several supporting activities for the plan implementation (consultancy provided by Italian partners, promotional campaign, equipment) and monitoring activities (interviews, visit on the spot, data collecting and analysis). Moreover, an evaluation was scheduled as well as a follow up to expand the collecting area.

4. Social welfare

4.1 Against Domestic violence: different experiences in Italy and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Donors: Piemonte Region and Municipality of Alba (Italy)

Partners: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Municipality of Zavidovići, Social Welfare Centre of Zavidovići, several primary and high schools, Association "CeKER" (Bosnia and Herzegovina): University of South - East Piedmont – Department of Social Research, ASLCN2 – Centre against drug and alcohol abusers, Social Welfare Centre of Alba Langhe Roero (Italy).

The projects aims at testing a new methodological approach within the social field, the networking and the community care approach in order to the increasing problem of the domestic violence. In specific, the project would like to sensitize the public opinion on domestic violence problem and on community responsibility in helping the victims, to provide them first aid and bring them towards autonomy. Through the project, started in 2007, a trained net of 10 actors from public institutions and civil society was established, that made 800 hundred people aware of the problem, several meetings with women and students were organized in towns and in rural areas, but also 7 victims have been directly supported.

In 2009 the Italian partners led trainings on networking, followed by a visit to other Bosnian similar experiences on the same topic. LDA Zavidovići contributed to the fund for the



Pilot project on waste management. Donation of a press for paper/plastic, Zavidovici, November 2009

victims of domestic violence. It also focused on raising awareness on the issue by a particular media campaign through radio and TV broadcast, leaflets and posters. This work brought to the enlargement of local inter-sector net against domestic violence also through implementation of several workshops.

LDA Zavidovići organized a public final event.

4.2 Analysis of the Social needs in Zavidovići, with special care to the rural area

Donor: Province of Cremona (Italy)

Partners: Municipality of Zavidovići (Bosnia and Herzegovina), University of South-East Piedmont – Department of Social Researching (Italy)

The project aimed at strengthen decision making process within decentralized cooperation and planning of future actions in social field of the Province of Cremona (Italy) and its net of Municipalities for Peace, as well as Municipality of Zavidovići and LDA. The Social Research Department of the A. Avogadro University (Piemonte, Italy) was entrusted to carry out a research, which is an exploratory field survey on access to basic services of the Zavidovići Local Communities (LC or Mjesna Zajednica) in Central Bosnia and Herzegovina. The work pays particular attention to rural Local Communities, and gives data on employment, healthcare and social protection systems.

The research activities, realized in 2008 ended in 2009 and were developed on 3 levels, such as survey on the demographic and social composition of the population, interviews with LC Presidents, on services, economic activities and local resources and submission of a questionnaire to a sample of rural LC women (150 persons) aimed at studying living standards and life satisfaction.

In 2009 LDA Zavidovići provided final editing of the research, followed by a public presentation of the research. Excellent was the reconstruction of Kovaci's local community premises as micro action at the local level.



“Strani Vari” project in summer 2009, Bosnian and Italian volunteers, Zavidovići, July 2009

5. Youth policies and educative activities

5.1. “Strani Vari” 2009 - summer activities for children

Donors: Municipality of Alba (Italy), ARCI of Cremona (Italy), Association “Strani Vari” (Italy)

Partners: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Municipality of Zavidovići, Association “CeKER”; Italy: Association “Strani Vari” and “Il Ciabotto”.

The project started in 2003 and its goal is organizing summer activities for children, involving Italian and Bosnian young people and training them on educative issues.

The main results achieved in 2008 and in 2009 were that, after several years of activities mostly led by the Italian group, the Bosnian animators have been successfully in charge for the organisation and implementation of the activities in the two urban schools.

The Italians carried out the ones planned in the rural areas. Besides, an increasing number of children, animators and villages have been involved.

Several activities were implemented in 2009, as selection and training of the Italian and Bosnian young educators and

preparation of an activity plan for the two schools and the 8 villages. LDA Zavidovići organized also a final party open to parents and citizens.

The evaluation of the project was made through the submission of evaluation questionnaires to parents, children and animators. In addition to this, another evaluation seminar of the summer activities and follow up of the project for 2010 with youth representative of Italian and Bosnian NGOs was organised.

5.2. Ludobus in rural areas

Donors: Friuli Venezia Giulia through Peace Games, "Mosaico" Association (Italy)

Partners: "Educaid" onlus, "Peace Games" Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy)

LDA Zavidovići in cooperation with local youth association "CeKER" carried out a successful project for animation of children in rural areas, involving four distant rural areas of the municipality.

The Ludobus offers to the children chances of playing, cultural and educational activities and the opportunities to meet and be involved with young volunteers.

Ludobus involves children, teen-agers, adults and older people by promoting their participation while respecting the dignity and differences of each. The Ludobus provides games and toys, offers recreational, leisure, cultural, sporting, laboratories and theatrical entertainment shows, music and circus in the squares, in parks, schools, in streets and green areas of cities and villages.

In 2009 LDA Zavidovići was present in the local communities of Gostovići, Vozuća, Lovnica, Hajderovići. This project involved 20 young animators that after the training took care of over 1.000 children. In December they promoted an entertainment on Santa Klaus theme.



Vivicitta' - Internacional sport event for peace and solidarity, Zavidovići, April 2009

5.3. World Action 2009

Donor: Cooperativa "Cauto" (Italy)

Partner: Association "CeKER" (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

The first week of August 2009 a group of Bosnian teenagers took part in a work camp in Brescia (Italy), a weekly programme with particular focus on environmental issues.

5.4 Development of services for 5 years old children in the rural areas of Zavidovići

Donors: Piemonte Region (Italy), Municipality of Alba (Italy)

Partners: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Kindergarten of Zavidovići, Municipality of Zavidovići, Association "CeKER" (Zavidovići); Italy: three primary schools in Alba

The project aims at developing an educative service for five-years-old children in four rural local communities of Zavidovići, in order to prepare them to the primary school. This activity was added to entertainment provided by the Ludobus in the afternoon with the aim to increase opportunities of exchanges and socializing.

Besides, thanks to the cooperation with the prima-

ry schools of Alba, the teachers of the kindergarten of Zavidovići developed a common action plan to be realized both in Zavidovići and Alba.

At the end of the experimentation, all the actors involved compared the methodology and the results achieved during the trip to Italy and designed a follow up for 2010 (new training on educative approach and coaching).

In 2009 LDA Zavidovići implemented a Pre-school programme for five-years-old children in rural areas through plan of common activities in both Italian and Bosnian kindergartens and visits of a delegation of teachers from Zavidovići to the kindergartens and the primary schools in Alba followed by an evaluation and a follow up of the exchange.

Association's life

The 12th Edition of "Vivicittà"

Donors: UISP Brescia and Cremona (Italy)

Partners: Bosnia Herzegovina: Municipality of Zavidovići, Association of Zavidovići sport teachers, Association of Athletics "Krivaja" from Zavidovići. Italy: high schools from Brescia, volleyball team from Alba.

In April 2009 the 12th edition of the foot run "Vivicittà", an International competition for peace, was organized with the participation of students from the high schools of Brescia, Cremona and Zavidovići. Several sport aside events (volleyball, basket and football matches) took place. More than 140 people attended the event.

"Play in street Festival II"

Donor: Association "Il Ciabotto" (Italy)

Partners: "Strani Vari" (Italy), "CeKER" (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

The first week of August Zavidovići hosted the second edition of the "Play in street festival". It is one-week street and theatre performances in the town and in the local communities, carried out by the cultural association "Il Ciabotto" in cooperation with the association "Strani Vari" and a group of young animators from "CeKER".

Town twinning between Roncadelle and Zavidovići municipalities

Donor: Municipality of Roncadelle (Italy)

Partners: Bosnia and Herzegovina: municipality of Zavidovići, civil society organisations from municipality of Zavidovići (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Roncadelle (Italy)

In the framework of the town twinning between Roncadelle and Zavidovići municipalities, several sport events (volleyball and basketball tournament) and institutional visits were organized through the year. It was a success and the local communities appreciated it.



Play in street Festival II - Animation provided by association "Il Ciabotto", Zavidovici, August 2009

2.5 Croatia



LDA Osijek

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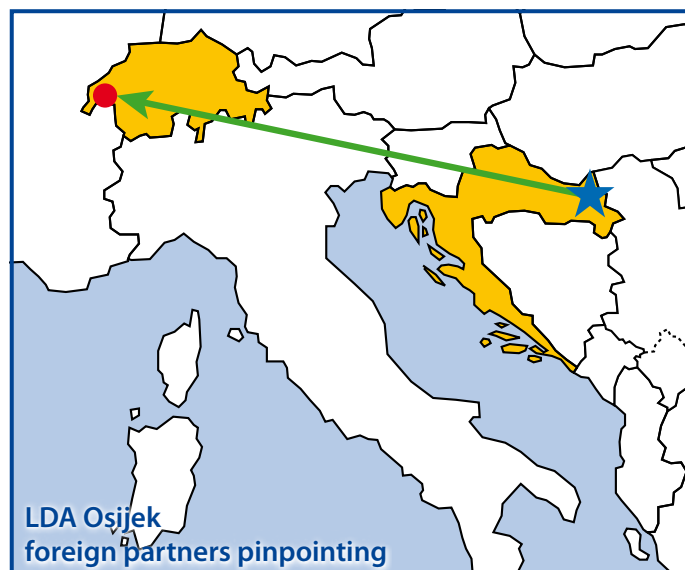
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Lead Partner: City of Lausanne

Partner: City of Osijek

Since its establishment LDA Osijek aimed at building social capital and at re-establishing confidence in Eastern Slavonia, as well as at building local capacities in rural areas with special focus on youth. The promotion of active European democratic citizenship and EU youth programmes as well as the network of local capacities and stakeholders with European



partners were always a focal point for the Local Democracy Agency. Furthermore, LDA Osijek highlighted its strategic goals such as fostering cooperation among civil, public and business sector as precondition of any form of development, but also fostering and implement a new, creative initiatives in the field of rural tourism and the promotion and inclusion of tradition and heritage in new development trends.

1. "European Citizenship – European Labyrinth"

Sponsored by: National Foundation for Development of Civil Society (Croatia), Municipality of Osijek (Croatia), Osijek-Baranja County (Croatia)

This project aimed at promoting the concept of active citizenship and democracy in Osijek-Baranja County and it was organized for Civil Societies Organization's (CSOs) representatives and ordinary citizens. The core activity of this programme was the "Day of Europe" celebrations (9th of May) in Osijek (Croatia). For this purpose the LDA invited all interested local CSOs to join in a creative way, since the event took place within a "European labyrinth" made of straw bales and located close to the city promenade. Eight associations, supervised by twenty volunteers of LDA Osijek, organized twelve creative workshops about European citizenship: flag painting, social games, EU puzzles and quizzes, graffiti and anti drugs workshops for primary school children. It was a great way to actively draw the attention of new partners among local CSOs and mark the Day of Europe in a new way.

In the last part of 2009 the T-Kit no. 7 "Under Construction...Citizenship, Youth and Europe", a thematic publication written by experienced youth trainers for the Council of Europe, was translated into Croatian, printed and disseminated. Furthermore a brochure titled "European Citizenship-European Labyrinth" was designed and disseminated. This publication presents the projects on active citizenship implemented in 2009 by LDA Osijek as well as some other useful resources and reading advices on active citizenship.



20 volunteers made the "Day of Europe", interesting and very visible, Osijek (Croatia), May 2009

2. EU Youth Corner

Sponsored by: Municipality of Osijek

In the framework of the "Youth in Action" programme, LDA Osijek implemented a project aimed at providing information about opportunities offered to young people in Osijek. Through the LDA website and through training, young people of Osijek got acquainted with all various opportunities offered to youth. All the publications related to the "Youth in Action" topic found a dedicated corner at the LDA office.

3. Cultures and Borders

Sponsored by: Union People et Culture of Paris (France) and "Jugendbildungszentrum Blossin e.V." of Berlin (Germany)

Supported by: OFAJ/DFJW – the French German Youth Office

This project involved young people from France, Germany and Croatia attending three seminars of five days each organized in Osijek/Vukovar (Croatia), Strasbourg (France) and Berlin (Germany).

The core aim of the programme was to support the peace building process and its sustainability in multiethnic societies through intercultural learning and experience.

It enabled twenty-four young people to experience two other European countries through learning about their history and mainly their conflicts. Young participants had also the opportunity to visit specific institutions in each country, such as the Croatian Parliament, the Council of Europe of Strasbourg and the Bundestag (the German Parliament) in Berlin. Since the training was designed also to be functional, the participants had the chance to develop their communication and orientation skills, but above all to build up their intercultural understanding and tolerance.

4. "Crossed History: Approach to European Memory"

Sponsored by: French-German Youth Office (OFAJ/DFWJ)

Partner: International Guest Youth House, Dachau (Germany), "Centre de la memoire d'Oradour", Oradur-sur-Glane (France)

How is history remembered in places such as Dachau (Germany), Oradour (France) and Jasenovac (Croatia)? And how in Vukovar (Croatia) and Osijek (Croatia)? In what way it reflects in the collective memory of the nations? And what does "memory" mean for Europe today?

The participants of a new project of LDA Osijek founded answers to these questions. Twenty-two young people from Croatia, France and Germany took part in the project that started in December 2009, when the participants spent all together a week in Dachau (Germany), a week in Oradour/Limoges (France) and a week in Osijek (Croatia). During the first seminar, which took place in Dachau (Germany), the young participants had the chance to meet Mr. Clemente Quentin, who is a survivor of Dachau concentration camp and is still active in spreading the truth about what happened during the Second World War.

5. “Live Nativity” fair in Aljmaš (Croatia)

Supported by: Erdut Municipality (Croatia) and its Tourist Board

For the third year the “Live Nativity” fair was held in Aljmaš (Croatia), an event supervised by LDA Osijek and organized by the “Cultural association Aljmaš”. This project started three years ago after an idea of the LDA with a significant support from the Italian association “Pro Loco-Frentana” from Montenero di Bisaccia (Molise region, Italy), which organizes similar manifestations already from twenty-seven years in its municipality. This event aimed at giving the idea of such a manifestation to local community in Aljmaš and Erdut municipality (Croatia).

The Local Democracy Agency implemented this programme and established contacts to further organize exchange visits between local and Italian partners.

Mostly young people joined the event and recognized this manifestation as a tourist future opportunity for Aljmaš.

This year the “Live Nativity” presented a spirit of Bethlehem with ancient costumes of Jews, Greeks and Romans. A three days long event was open for visitors on Christmas Eve, St. Stephens’s Day and on the Day of Epiphany.

Forty villagers took part in the event of Aljmaš which is a genuine proof that they accepted this event quite as part of their tradition but also as a important public event to develop religious tourism in Aljmaš and Erdut Municipality.

6. Fair of Old Customs and Crafts in Erdut Municipality (Croatia)

Partners: Erdut Municipality (Croatia): Tourist Board, Centre for Entrepreneurship and Development, association GORD, Hunters association; Dalj (Croatia): Women’s association, Serbian cultural association “Prosvjeta”, Fishermen’ association, Serbian cultural and artistic association “Branko Radičević” and Dalj local council



Fair of old customs and crafts took place in Dalj (Croatia), 26th-27th September 2009

As part of the Local Democracy Agency’s project titled “Tourism in accordance with needs of my local community – Erdut Municipality”, thanks to the local community, the Fair of “Old Customs and Crafts” became a traditional event of Erdut Municipality and brings every year more participants and visitors to this municipality. This year the fair gathered sixty participants from all Slavonian regions, Serbia and from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Since 2005 the fair took place in different cities of Erdut Municipality, this year the appointed city was Dalj. The event aimed at fostering development of rural tourism in Erdut Municipality (Croatia), promotion of local tradition, culture, crafts and gastronomy as well as aimed at improving the tourism in Erdut Municipality. Movies and publications with nice pictures about this event were collected on LDA Osijek website.

2.6 LDA Sisak



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Lead Partner: Municipality of Mogliano Veneto (Italy)

Partners: in Italy: the cities of Lainate, Arese, Marcon, Preganziol, Casale Monferrato, Roncade, Noale, Province of Venice, NGO "Going to Europe"; in Croatia, the cities of: Sisak, Hrvatska Kostajnica, Petrinja, Kutina, Dvor; NGO "International School for Peace Studies" (Northern Ireland)

The Local Democracy Agency in Sisak aims at contributing to local community development and at fostering active citizenship by promoting human rights, preserving peace and strengthening local democracy. By implementing non-profit programs, connecting and networking activities the LDA responds to the needs of individuals, local governments and of a wider community of the region.

1. "For a Community without Domestic Violence"

Supported by: Sisak-Moslavina County and Town of Sisak

The project was implemented in the area of Sisak-Moslavina County (Croatia) for twelve months.

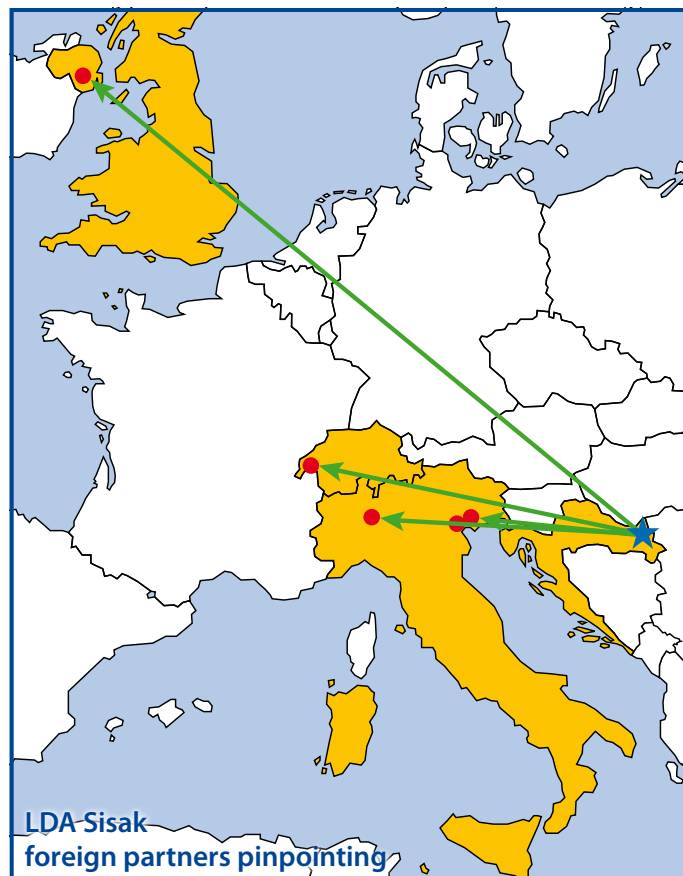
The overall objective of the programme was to reduce domestic violence in Sisak-Moslavina County area, while specific aims were identified in: giving first aid and strengthening the victims of domestic violence, improving the quality of the protection of domestic violence victims and sensitizing the public on issues of domestic violence and of society's responsibility in providing help for the victims.

In the framework of the project, several activities were implemented, such as a hot line for victims of domestic violence and virtual self help group, supervisions for the hot line volunteers as well as public awareness campaigns on domestic violence issues.

The main outcome of the project was improved services for domestic violence victims and bigger sensitivity of the wider community on domestic violence issues.

2. "Everything in its Place!"

Supported by: Sisak-Moslavina County (Croatia), Administrative department for environmental and nature protection



This project started in 2008 and was designed to inform and educate citizens in Sisak-Moslavina County (Croatia) about environment and nature protection. The aim of the project was to actively involve elementary school students in environment protection education, as well as to raise public awareness on necessity of properly waste disposal and informing public about specific products landfills. The programme was conducted in Sisak-Moslavina County using different methods such as creative experiential expression (students' drawings), creation of educational posters, public campaigns and public presentation of the results.

Elementary school students were actively involved through a call for drawings, which was promoted in several schools. To candidate a poster several parameters were required: it had to show the time needed for natural degradation of each product, information about landfills of specific waste products (such as automobile tires, old medicines, used batteries and similar) and name of students whose drawings were on it. An expert jury chose the best drawings used for developing educational - informative poster in January 2009, during a prize-winning event in Sisak (Croatia).

The winning posters were disseminated during a public campaign in Sisak-Moslavina County (Croatia). All elementary and high schools, kindergartens, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, local media, local self-governments, libraries and other public institutions exhibited these posters in order to encourage the respect for environment.

3. Clown Therapy

Supported by: Province of Venice (Italy)

The overall objective of the project is forming group of clowns volunteers in Sisak (Croatia) with the main purpose of implementing clown therapy in social institutions, of supporting people living in disadvantaged physical situation and social surroundings.

The specific objectives of the programme were three: cooperation, social support and education. In the framework of the first topic, active promotion of volunteerism as social



“Everything in Its Place!” – Press conference at “Siscia Jazz Club”, Sisak (Croatia), January 2009

obligation was carried on, especially as far as young people are concerned, in order to strengthen their role in the society. Beside this, LDA Sisak worked to foster mutual cooperation by promoting idea of diversity richness and promoting basic values of the VIP clown association (Italy): fraternity, unity, solidarity. The LDA worked also in order to emphasize values and social rights through activities based on cooperation and listening. Aiming at fostering social support, volunteers were trained on tools for improvisation, clown entertainment, circus skills with the final goal of helping other people to overcome suffer, loneliness, humiliation and diseases. Finally, an evaluation of creative capabilities was carried on, in order to foster participants' personal self-confidence in personal competences and enabling expression of feelings of personal discomfort, insecurity and shyness.

For these purposes an intensive workshop was organized in order to form a group of clowns' volunteers in Sisak. In the framework of the programme an internship for two volunteers from Sisak was prepared in S. Donà di Piave (Italy) and their participation in activities of the VIP Venice ONLUS association (Italy). In addition a visit of a group of volunteers from VIP Venice ONLUS to Sisak was arranged, as well as group activities in order to take part in local manifestations.

4. Smile to Smile

Supported by: Regional for Foundation Local Development ZAMAH

The project's aim was forming groups of clowns-volunteers in Sisak area (Croatia) that afterwards will conduct clown-therapy in social institutions. Ten volunteers were actively involved in arranging seven shows for several social institutions and organizations of Sisak area and its surrounding. The project's activities: a public event to celebrate the "Planet Earth Day", the participation to the International Children Theatre Festival "Dandelion" and to the Flower festival in Sisak, gathered over 600 participants. In the framework of the programme regular weekly meetings and rehearsals were held in order to form and monitor the work of clown volunteers. 500 flyers and posters of clowns-volunteers group "SKLAUN" were also disseminated to promote the clown-activities.

5. Youth exchange "Kingdom Palatschinke" in Wassersprend (Austria), July-August 2009

Supported by: Youth in Action programme of the European Commission

"Kingdom Palatschinke" is the name for a virtual kingdom, that gathered forty young people from ten countries, once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: Austria, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary and Slovenia. LDA Sisak cooperated with the "Palatschinke" Team, an informal group of youth workers and students with the support of "Grenzenlos" ("No borders"), a non-governmental organisation from Vienna (Austria), in order to organize this event. The main topic of the youth exchange was discrimination and cultural learning and social concern on free time of young people.

The idea behind this programme goes to the past, to the Austrian Monarchy as once constituting a common cultural area for all these ten countries. Whether it is reflected in simple visible items such as food, music, dressing or on hidden levels, this historical period created a good ground for observing si-

imilarities. On the other side this period of the Empire it is also a period of national wake-ups and revolutions which developed differently in specific countries for last hundred years.

This exchange programme had two major aims: spreading knowledge on theoretical issues of European identity, history and monarchy, nationalism, xenophobia and discrimination, and therefore raising awareness on European culture and European citizenship. To reach this goal several interactive workshops were organized. The second aim of the project focused on developing creative skills in youth work: theatre workshops, drumming and traditional dances. At the end of the youth exchange, both objectives had, as a result, a public performance in the town of Mödling (Austria). As informal part of the programme intercultural evenings, a tour to Vienna and to its countryside were organized.

During the whole 2009 LDA Sisak was very active to promote its projects and events. Among others the LDA broadcasted various activities on local Television station "NET TV" and other regional radio stations, published articles in daily and weekly newspapers and organized a concert for International Volunteer's Day and International Human Rights Day, for which 300 tickets were sold and 150 posters disseminated.



"City walk", a clown activity during "The day of planet earth" in Sisak (Croatia), April 2009

2.7 LDA Verteneglio– Brtonigla



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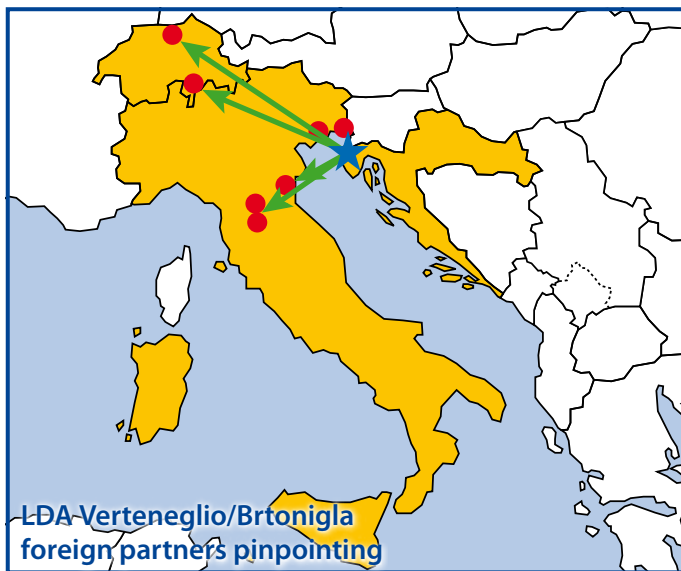
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Lead partner: City of Bellinzona (Switzerland)

Partners: Associations “Causes communes Swiss” (Switzerland); in Italy: City of Portogruaro, Municipality of Ravenna, Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Municipality of Greve in Chianti, Municipality of Russi, Province of Florence, Municipality of Duino-Aurisina, Ngo “Marevivo”, Ngo “Circolo culturale Istria”; in Croatia: Istrian Region, Municipality of Verteneglio.



LDA Verteneglio mission is dedicated to improve democracy in Region Istria through the promotion of a multiethnic and multicultural society and through the cooperation with local and international stakeholders, in order to contribute also to a sustainable economy in the region.

1. Verteneglio Partner Cities together on Annual General Meeting

In April 2009 Italian and Croatian partners, who are supporting the LDA Verteneglio, met in Bellinzona (Switzerland) for the regular annual meeting. The Lead Partner, the City of Bellinzona, opened the doors of its beautiful City Hall to hold there the summit. During the meeting the partners developed ideas for further common future activities related to spreading the importance of trans-border cooperation in North Adriatic area.

Since important institutions among LDA's partners are sited in this area, such as the Adriatic Euroregion and the Forum “Cherso-Carso”, as well as Istria Region, which is the local partner of the LDA and holds the Presidency of the Adriatic Euroregion.

Besides, all partners attending the meeting gave support and prize to LDA Verteneglio activities targeting youth and strengthening active participation of youth in local community policy making. At the end of the summit LDA Verteneglio confirmed its commitment in developing youth activities aiming at promoting an active role of young people in the society.

2. Transnational Working-table on Peace and Nonviolence

In November 2009 LDA Verteneglio organized a transnational meeting between Italian, Slovenian and Croatian bordering Cities for the common signing of the first draft of the “Transnational Agreement on Peace and Nonviolence”.



Human Peace Sign made by children in Verteneglio (Croatia), October 2009

The event took place in Buje (Croatia) where LDA Verteneglio together with bordering Cities and Municipalities from Italy, Slovenia and Croatia discussed over common issues and values.

All the participants agreed upon issues regarding the strengthening of civil society and of trans-border/transnational authorities as tools to prevent nonviolence. The agreement signed by all parties set bases also to define common goals for enforcing human rights, for stressing the importance of economies that are focused on ethics and democracy, for supporting education of youth and NGOs in the three mentioned countries.

The signatories authorities attending the meeting were bordering authorities from Italy (Province of Trieste, Province of Gorizia, Municipality of Muggia, Municipality of San Dorligo della Valle, Municipality of Sgonico), authorities from Slovenia (Municipality of Koper, Municipality of Hrpe-lje-Kozina) and authorities from Croatia (Municipality of Buje, Municipality of Umag, Municipality of Novigrad, Municipality of Grožnjan, Municipality of Oprtalj), several Italian NGOs attended too.

3. World March for Peace and Nonviolence - LDA Verteneglio contribution

A contribute to the World March for Peace and Nonviolence which took place all over the Globe (starting from Australia on October 2nd 2009 and ending in Argentina on January 2nd 2010) came also from LDA Verteneglio network, partners and members which all got lively engaged in the worldwide event!

Prominent personalities like Mr. Mesić (former President of Croatia) and Mr. Jakovčić President of Istria Region took part at the event. At interregional and regional level LDA Verteneglio helped organizing the "human peace sign" in Verteneglio on October 2nd 2009 and the International School Competition on Nonviolence in Istria Region's primary and secondary schools in December 2009.

Quoting the Charter for a World Without Violence, signed by Nobel Peace Laureates, LDA Verteneglio embraces all its content and was moved by same goals when activities were organized, because it strongly believes in *"the need to end the spread of violence at all levels of society and especially the threats posed on a global scale that jeopardizes the very existence of the humankind [...] No state or individual can be secure in an insecure world. [...] The values of nonviolence in intention and practice have grown from an option to a necessity...* convinced that adherence to the principles of nonviolence will usher in a more peaceful, civilized world order in which more effective and fair governance, respectful of human dignity and the sanctity of life itself may become a reality. Cultures, histories, and individual lives of human beings are interconnected and our actions are interdependent.

Especially today as never before, LDA Verteneglio believes that a truth lies before us: our destiny is a common destiny. That future destiny will be defined by human beings' intentions, decisions and actions realized today. LDA Verteneglio is further convinced that creating a culture of peace

and nonviolence, while a difficult and long process is a necessary and noble purpose.

Affirmation of the principles contained in the Charter is a vital first step to ensuring the survival and development of humanity and the achievement of a world without violence."

4. Strengthening networks and developing partnerships

LDA Verteneglio was very much involved during 2009 in spreading information and rising awareness on EU funds like IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) and specific EU programmes, such as "Youth in Action" and "Europe for Citizens".

Printing and spreading LDA Verteneglio Newsletters throughout the year served the purpose too. Moreover, the LDA hosted national and international meetings in order to enhance international cooperation.

5. European Voluntary Service (EVS) - from France to Istria!

Peculiarity of Verteneglio is being the most "Italian" village in the Croatian region of Istria, as the Italian minority represents the majority of the population and Italian is the most used language in everyday life.

This fact was very attractive for a young French man who chose LDA Verteneglio to volunteer on rural development and minority issues. In this individual EVS project promoter is the French Sending Organization "Youth Center of Brest" and the volunteer is Luc Toutous, a young biologist staying in Istria for 11 months, since September 2009.

The EVS programme gives volunteers the possibility to have sound learning opportunities by integrating in the community and in LDA activities too.



"Micro credit" project on local economy development, Verteneglio-Brtonigla (Croatia), September 2009

The volunteers are also encouraged to act to share their personal experiences with local population by holding meetings about their culture and their knowledge; moreover they are encouraged to explore Istria region during their free time to gain as many positive experiences as possible during their stay in Croatia.

2.8 Georgia



LDA Georgia

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Lead partner: Newport City Council, Wales, UK,

Partners: Municipality of Monfalcone (Italy), City of Strasbourg (France), City of Nantes (France), Newport-Kutaisi Twining Association (UK), Georgia: City of Tbilisi, Kutaisi-Newport International Association, Kutaisi branch of Georgian Young Lawyers, National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia

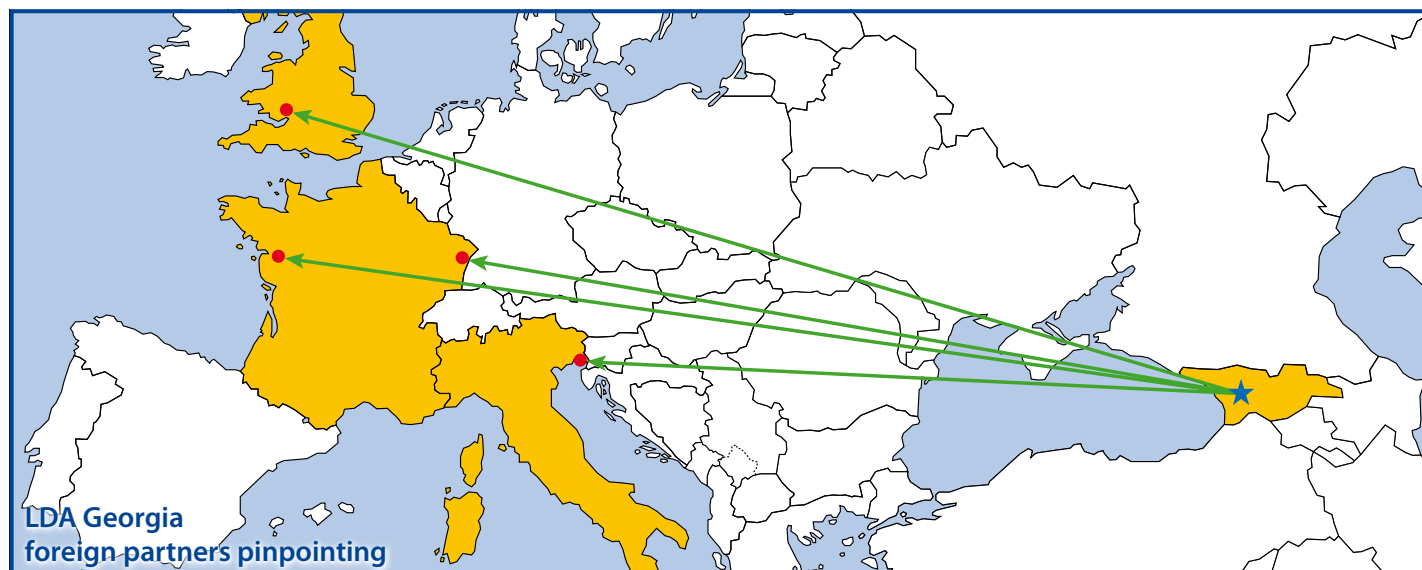
1. Support to Local and Regional Democracy in the South Caucasus

The project was conceived in the framework of the objectives of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities aiming at addressing the crisis in Georgia through the Resolution 272/2008: "The Local consequences in the conflict zone in Southern Caucasus and the support from European and regional authorities", adopted by the Congress.

Two events were organized in Kutaisi: an international conference "Local Authorities Associations of South Caucasus" and a training on "Active Citizenship" addressed to the representatives of the Kutaisi Local Self-government and to civil society organizations.

1.1 "Local Authority Associations of South Caucasus"

On 29th and 30th of October 2009, ALDA with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe organized this international conference. Representatives from National Associations of Local Authorities from



Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria and Georgia, as well from the Congress, ALDA and LDA Georgia participated in the event.

The conference explored present and future opportunities for South Caucasus Local Authorities Associations and analyzed the benefits of networking based on the experience of ALDA in South Caucasus and the LDA in Georgia, especially by exchanging best practices. The conference focused on the new Euro region-South Caucasus Cross-Border cooperation and on the support for decentralization and active citizenship.

As a result of this event, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and ALDA decided to strengthen and develop local and regional democracy in the South Caucasus through further joint projects, including the reinforcement of the Local Democracy Agency in Kutaisi, Georgia, support to the newly established Euro region-South Caucasus programme, networking and cooperation between associations of local authorities in the South Caucasus region, capacity building of elected local representatives and civil society actors as well as development of the LDA network in the region.



A group presentation during the EVS training programme in Kutaisi (Georgia), May 2009

1.2 "Active Citizenship"

As a follow-up on the above mentioned conference a training on "Active Citizenship" for the representatives of Kutaisi Local Self-government and civil society associations was organized in Kutaisi from the 1st to 4th of December 2009.

Forty participants from different governmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the training and planned a joint action plan for future cooperation in the field of active citizenship. This training intended to foster particularly the cooperation between local authorities and civil society, which will allow development of synergies and the promotion of "multiplier effects", therefore it ensured an impetus for the local community to develop and set up participative and democratic processes.

2. Support to IDPs in Kutaisi

After the Russians aggression to Georgia in August 2008, 2500 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Upper Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions relocated to the city of Kutaisi. Currently, 116 IDP families decided to live in the city.

To improve the living conditions of IDPs, Kutaisi local self-government, thanks also to the financial support from the State budget, rehabilitated three administrative buildings in order to give accommodation to IDP families.

In the first days of war, the Newport-Kutaisi Twining Association (NKTA) was amongst the first to send humanitarian aid to Kutaisi. Headed by Newport's Mayor, Newport Kutaisi Twining Association raised 1.652,00 Euros. ALDA raised 1.000,00 Euros to help the IDPs living in these buildings.

LDA Georgia, with the support of ALDA members, raised 2.444,00 Euro to support IDPs living in Kutaisi. In particular, Newport-Kutaisi Twining Association, member of LDA Georgia, donated 1.444,00 euro and 1.000,00 euro was donated by ALDA.

Based on the needs of IDPs and weather situation, 117 electric heaters were purchased and delivered to the IDP families. In March 2009 heaters were delivered to the IDPs families. The Mayor and Vice-Mayor of the city took part to the distribution and the LDA Georgia Delegate supervised the process.

3. Integration and Promotion of Quality Life of IDPs in Kutaisi

In September 2009 LDA Georgia started the implementation of a new project funded by Veneto Region (Italy). It is coordinated by the Municipality of Vicenza (Italy) and implemented by LDA Georgia.

The goal of the project is giving support to the 512 displaced persons from Kodori Gorge and Tskhinvali Region who are now living in Kutaisi since Russia aggression in August 2008 and fostering their integration into the local community. The projects focus on mobilizing the IDP community providing education on IDPs' rights and advocacy capacities.

Several activities have been implemented, such as the establishment of three Community-Based Organization (CBO), as well as the equipment for their offices.

An information and educational campaign on IDPs' human rights has been organized in each IDP centre.

In each CBO several meetings with a law expert were provided to IDPs about legal issues the displaced persons needed to find a solution for.

At the end of meetings the problems related to IDP rights have been discussed with the legal expert, which provided advocacy and legal support for solving identity and property issues identifying the right office to address to and providing information about specific laws ruling the IDPs status.

To raise awareness among the Georgian community about the IDP's life, future projects were scheduled such as a short movie and a calendar.



Youth NGOs representatives showing their certificates after EVS training, Kutaisi (Georgia), May 2009

2.9 Kosovo

LDA Kosovo, in progress

The relaunch of LDA Kosovo has been supported by Youth Kosovo/Directorate for Political Affairs of the CoE.

The LDA Kosovo in Gjilan/Gnjilane has unfortunately run into financial difficulties and has been closed at the end of 2008.

Since the region is extremely strategic and since the LDA in Kosovo has a longstanding track record in youth activities, ALDA Governing Board together with the Congress of Local and Regions Authorities decided to re-launch the Agency in a different town: Peja, to continue this important work.

The previous activities of the LDA Kosovo, based in Gjilane/Gnjilane and working under the auspices of the Association Kosovo Ensemble and Alliance Française, will not be considered any longer as LDA Kosovo. The Association of

Kosovo Municipalities (AKM) will assist ALDA in the process of re-launching the new Local Democracy Agency in Peja.

The official re-launch of the LDA Kosovo will be decided in 2010, during the partners' meeting that will be held in Trento (Italy).

Organizations who showed interest in becoming partners of the new LDA Kosovo:

Leader Partner: Tavolo Trentino con il Kosovo/Province of Trento (Italy)

Potential Partners LDA Kosovo: Istria Region (Croatia), Canton of Neuchatel (Switzerland) - to be confirmed, Union of Municipalities of the Marmara Region, Istanbul (Turkey) to be confirmed, in Kosovo: City of Pec/Peja, Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AM), in Italy: Reggio Terzo Mondo (RTM), AiBi (Amici dei bambini in Kosovo) Mezzano di San Giuliano Milanese (Milano, Italy), "Studiorum", Skopje (FYROM), ALFA Formation (France)

During the re-launching process of the LDA Kosovo, some activities were implemented.

The two-year project "Empowering the Role of Young People in Kosovo" supported by the Council of Europe, Di-



rectorate General of Democracy and Political Affairs, was a set of coherent activities aimed at enhancing the role of young people in the Kosovo society.

1. Preparation phase

The preparation phase of the abovementioned overall project was implemented between October 2008 and July 2009, a period which comprised several activities, such as: a seminar on the participation of Youth in Local Life in Gjilan/Gnjilane (Kosovo), in the framework of the European Democracy Week, web groups and electronic communication as well as two meetings: a Steering Committee in Prishtina (Kosovo) and a meeting with representatives of “Don Bosco Centre” of Prishtina (Kosovo).

The steering Committee was organized by AKM (Association of Kosovo Municipalities) and ALDA, represented by Mr Srdjan Cvijć, and was focused on planning the activities within the project “Empowering the Role of the Young People in Kosovo” in the context of the re-launching process of LDA Kosovo.

With regards to the activities leading to this process, an agreement was reached to keep the focus on the youth activities, bearing in mind the demographic and economic

situation in Kosovo, but also the objective of bringing together the local authorities and the civil society organisations. The overall goal was providing assistance necessary to ensure a smooth and stable transition towards democracy and European integration, with an emphasis on promoting tolerant and trust-based relationships within local communities. Therefore, bearing in mind the multi-ethnic nature of Kosovo, one of the priorities of the LDA will be the strengthening of cooperation among its communities and the facilitation of their economic and social integration – including the work with all communities in Kosovo and the enclaves. Therefore ALDA and AKM committed to speed-up the implementation process. Concerning the project “Empowering the Role of the Young People in Kosovo” an informal agreement was reached first and foremost with AKM, “Tavolo Trentino con il Kosovo” (Italy), “Don Bosco Centre” of Prishtina (Kosovo) and CBM (Kosovo) to build synergies on the project together with the partners of the old LDA based in Gjilan/Gnjilane.

The activities implemented within the project were: a meeting to set up a “youth ambassador” group, a training on project development and management, a training on active citizenship, networking meetings between local youth NGOs and local authorities, an international youth seminar with the aim of bringing together wider European stakeholders from ALDA’s network of LDAs.

2. “Networking Meetings at the Local Level and Setting up a “youth ambassador” group”

This activity comprised a set of three meetings between local youth NGOs and relevant local authorities, chosen during the preparatory phase. After the Steering Committee, the networking meetings that took place from May to July focused on the future potential LDA Kosovo host cities – Peja and Prizren, and were organized in close cooperation with AKM and the assistance of Sazan Ibrahim, Executive manager and Faruk Mustafa, senior translator and project coordinator, as well as international partners, who participated in the organisation of other activities such as the trai-



Participants at the “International Youth networking Seminar”, Prishtina (Kosovo), December 2009

nings and the international youth conference.

The meetings focused on the empowerment of the young people in Kosovo in the context of the LDA Kosovo re-launching process, experiences of other LDAs in the region, partnership and networking with European local/regional authorities, basic preconditions for becoming a host city to LDA and EU integration oriented projects. The aim of these events was teaching to the representatives of the involved municipalities and of the CSOs the opportunities of joining international partnerships in order to carry on projects that could improve the economic and social conditions of their own communities, in particular of the young.

The latter meeting in Prizren (Kosovo) aimed at creating and strengthening a local group of young people and youth workers committed to the promotion of youth participation, acting at local level to involve young people and youth organizations in initiatives. They were the so called “youth ambassadors”: 25 participants from secondary schools in Prizren, NGO Youth centre (Prizren), Youth club of Prizren, OSCE Mission (Prizren), Ipsia – Acli Institute for Peace (Italy), “Development and Innovation” of Prizren (Kosovo), that were trained with success for the abovementioned purposes. The training dealt with: concept and objectives of the future LDA Kosovo, programmes to be implemented for youth groups with particular emphasis on promotion of EU integration and youth participation in public and political life.

The second phase of the project comprised two youth activities: a “Training on Project Development and Management” and an “International Youth Networking Seminar”, both implemented in Prishtina (Kosovo).

3. “Training on Project Development and Management”– Prishtina, Kosovo 15-17 December 2009

The Training lasted two days and involved almost twenty young participants from the University of Prishtina, from different Youth NGOs in all the country area, youth workers



“Training on Project Development and Management”, Prishtina (Kosovo), December 2009

and youth volunteers. It aimed at teaching to reliable, credible and capable young people and youth workers who could act at the local level, with the necessary capacities and skills, as promoters and initiators of youth activities.

This training covered six core topics: the first one aimed at getting familiar with the “Youth in Action Programme Guide 2009”, particularly as far as concerns the European Voluntary Service, and the Cooperation with neighbouring countries. Another main topic was “Management of international youth projects” as well as the subject of “Project Cycle Management and Project ideas’ development”. A special training was offered to get the participants familiar with local youth work/policy/strategy/practices and with the activities of the local youth NGOs. In addition, the last two issues proposed by the training were related to identify important actors/stakeholders in the area of the youth work in participant’s communities and to reflect on the local youth interests (hobbies, subcultures, etc), needs and issues.

At the end of the training all participants were aware on the main actions of the “Youth In Action Programme” and they personally were able to explain the programme. Fur-

thermore, they acquired the basic knowledge of the Project Cycle Management and of the implementation of International projects. They also got information about the main sources of funding for the implementation of youth projects.

The most successful side was the active involvement of youth in all the phases of the training and their curiosity they showed about the main theme of the activity.

4. “International Youth Networking Seminar” – Prishtina, Kosovo, 17th December 2009

An international seminar “International Youth Networking Seminar” was organized on the 17th of December 2009; it was, focused on youth participation, aiming at deepening the mutual knowledge of the different youth contexts and at promoting cooperation in the field of youth. It contributed at supporting the active involvement of young people and youth workers coming from different countries of the enlarged Europe in cooperation for the implementation of International youth projects. In addition, the seminar aimed at developing new project’s ideas and at involving Kosovo young people in international youth networks. An added value of this activity was represented by the positive impact

concerning multicultural, multiethnic and multi-faith dialogue in the region. The activity involved the participants of the seminar and representatives of youth NGOs, youth workers and leaders from Romania, Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Albania, and Poland.

Five main objectives were proposed at the seminar: to support networking of Youth Ambassadors in Europe and in SEE, to provide opportunities for sharing experiences, to raise awareness about role of Youth Ambassadors, to develop joint international youth projects and to empower the role of Kosovo youth in an international dimension.

At the end of the seminar, all participants raised their awareness about role of Youth Ambassadors, they understood the importance of the implementation of the “Youth in Action” projects in order to promote the empowerment of youth particularly in SEE. Moreover, all the participants were involved in the development of project ideas and at the end of the seminar they agreed to carry on the proposals they developed during the activity.

As already mentioned, this work was part of the wider project “Empowerment the role of Young People in Kosovo” and was inserted in the set of activities implemented during the past two years for the process of re-launch of the LDA Kosovo. Indeed, working in the youth sectors, by encouraging young people to be active citizens is getting crucial in the nowadays Kosovo. Kosovo’s youth will be crucial to building the future. Young people growing up in the region face enormous social, economic, and psychological challenges as they struggle to overcome years of ethnic conflicts and political and social upheaval.

The programme proved to be of great importance by focusing on need of civil society and youth in a complex political situation due also to a unilateral declaration of independence not unanimously recognized at international level. There is a great potential in working with Youth in Kosovo in order to encourage the future development of civil society in the country.



Game at the “International Youth networking Seminar”, Prishtina (Kosovo), December 2009

2.10 Montenegro



LDA Montenegro

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Lead partner: Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region (Italy)

Partners: 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 Nikšić, Kotor and Rožaje (Montenegro); Union of Municipalities of Montenegro, Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Montenegro

1. Fight against corruption at local level

In order to find donors to implement this project, during 2009 LDA Montenegro prepared a "Dictionary of Corruption": a publication with comprehensible definitions of corruptive behaviours which was distributed among citizens, and promoted specific trainings to raise awareness at local level on the forms of corruption in the society.

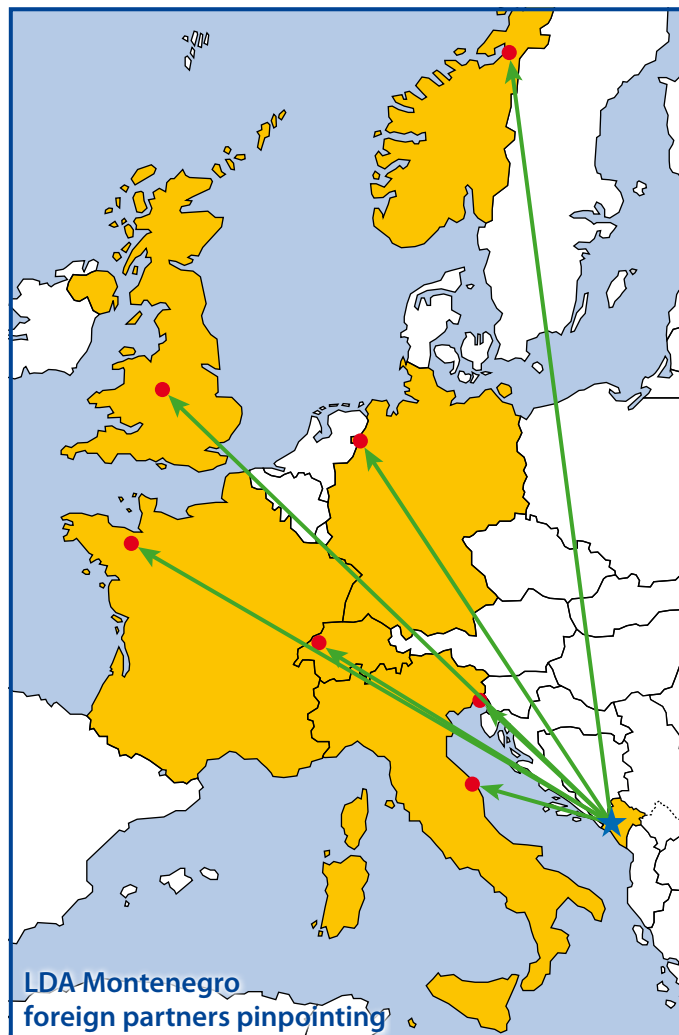
LDA Montenegro selected target groups such as: citizens, NGOs' activists and local authorities.

Two are the main objectives of the project: the enforcement of a specific law on the issue and abidance for international commitments in order to fulfil the conditions for EU accession.

2. RUNtoFUN

Supported by: LDA Montenegro, Cooperativa Sociale O.R.So, Torino (Italy)

RUNtoFUN is a youth exchange, sited in Alba (Italy) lasting ten days long. The project dealt with the topic of "entertainment" of youngsters. It aimed at helping participants



to think about and analyse which is their role in the choice of their own entertainments. The training comprised also a test to understand the participants' ability in organizing and promoting their entertainments.

Young people from Nikšić (Montenegro) met in Alba (Italy) their peers from Lithuania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece and Italy to exchange experiences about youth's spare time in different countries. A Montenegrin team of five youth and two leaders went to Alba to present their documentary movie about free time of young people in Nikšić. This was a great opportunity for them to learn from other participants, to bring back to Montenegro new experiences in order to share them with the local youth organizations.

This project aimed especially at pointing out to the youngsters that there are other ways of "entertainment", different from alcohol or drugs, to have fun with. Several activities were implemented: a preparatory meeting in Alba (Italy), the selection of youth for the team as well as the video to bring to Alba; after the training the ideas were elaborated for the follow up and future youth activities.

3. "Green Agenda"

Supported by: "Milieucontact International" Amsterdam (the Netherlands), and Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Green Agenda is a programme aiming at fostering local sustainable development. The projects of the programme encourage NGOs to work on designing a local sustainable strategy and an action plan in order to improve and preserve local values, such as natural and cultural heritage.

The project focuses on developing and implementing local politics for environment protection to design new methodologies in the process of "Green Agenda". LDA Montenegro implemented four pilot projects and submitted the first draft of the "Green Agenda" project document,

in order to be adopted by the Municipality of Nikšić, as an annex to the local strategic plan called "LEAD" (Local Ecological Action Plan).



Green agenda - Arranging of the Approaching Area to the Carev Bridge Site, June 2009

4. Employment of People with Disabilities

Lead partner: Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (Italy)

The project focused on supporting the State institutions for implementation of the Montenegrin Law of 2008 on Labour and Social Welfare and the Law on Vocational Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities. The final goal was the opening of an Employment Office for People with Disabilities in Nikšić (Montenegro). A initial successful meeting with representatives of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (Italy) and the municipality of Nikšić was organized in order to design the project's drafts and to identify an adequate space for the purpose.

The first office was opened after a research for the location and an agreement with the municipality of Nikšić that provided the space.

LDA Montenegro organized a round table to plan the future activities of the Office for Employment of People

with Disabilities and a meeting with the Minister for health and social welfare of FVG Region (Italy) and the mayor of Nikšić municipality for the opening of a Day-care Centre for children with growth disorders.

This meeting was attended also by the Italian Ambassador in Montenegro to better highlight the important support of his country to this project.

The office had an outstanding feedback especially in supporting the people with disabilities in finding work, by promoting and matching supply and demand within the work environment.

After few months of activity there was the need of a bigger space to better assist the potential employers.

Future projects of LDA Montenegro will be: implementation of more extensive employment services for disabled people in Nikšić, enhancement of the role of local actors (LDA, Municipality, social organizations) in promoting social inclusion with specific attention to empowerment of disabled people and promotion of their rights.



Youth exchange with the international training "RUNtoFUN", Alba (Italy), March 2009

5. Capacity building of Roma NGOs in Nikšić

In cooperation with: "O.K.C. Juventas" Podgorica (Montenegro)

This programme aimed at training youth representatives of Roma NGOs from Nikšić in order to enable them to work in the non-profit sector. In co-operation with the youth association "Juventas" of Podgorica (Montenegro), LDA Montenegro organized a campaign to promote this project and afterwards gave young Roma activists the opportunity to take part in two internships at its office.

At the end of this project, educational materials were published and disseminated in Nikšić (Montenegro).

6. InterculturArt

Donor: European Commission

In cooperation with: LDA CSS (Serbia)

LDA Montenegro in cooperation with LDA CSS (Serbia) developed the "InterculturArt" project, which aimed at gather young people from Nikšić (Montenegro) with their peers from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Italy to exchange their experiences in their own country.

This youth programme was designed to let the young people achieve a better understanding of their neighbours, to develop more tolerance towards each other and to open opportunities for a constructive cooperation in the region.

The primary aim of the project was to provide young people and the local community with a message of coexistence through artistic expression.

After the preparatory meeting in Niš (Serbia) LDA Montenegro carried on a selection among its young activists to create a Montenegrin team of five youth and two leaders who attended the preparation of a training-seminar. During the preparation, the chosen team recorded video materials, in order to offer a presentation of Nikšić and Montenegro.

The training-seminar in Niš (Serbia) was the final activity and lasted five days. The follow-up of this project consisted in several cultural youth events addressed to the population in Nikšić (Montenegro) region.

7. Integration and Promotion of the Unique Tourist Product of the City of Rožaje

This project aims at promoting the present tourist offer of the city of Rožaje (Montenegro) and at enhancing opportunities for economic investments in the city.

A web site for the city of Rožaje was designed in order to promote tourist attractions and economic offers of this area. In addition, a tourist guide of the city was published as well as a mountain paths hikers' map and a Cultural Heritage Museum brochure.

8. PROCOOP – The Development of Culture of Social Cooperatives

PROCOOP is a three-years project implemented by a consortium of Italian cooperatives and institutions: ICE, INFORMEST, LEGACOOOP, CONFSCOOPERATIVE, Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (Italy) with Italian Ministry of foreign affairs contribution. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2010.

PROCOOP aimed at providing assistance to cooperative enterprises in Balkan countries as well as at aligning Balkan countries systems to EU standards. To reach these goals LDA Montenegro attended the Second Steering Committee in Sofia (Bulgaria) and prepared an analysis of Montenegrin cooperative enterprises and their interaction with social laws as well as a database of institutions and organizations that are active in this field.

In September the Montenegrin Union of Cooperatives, of which also "Rukatnice" (Roma Women Craft Cooperative) and SOS are part, visited Trieste (Italy) and Pordenone (Italy),



PROCOOP – Meeting with the social cooperatives in Trieste (Italy)

This was an excellent opportunity to visit the Pordenone Trade Fair and meet the Regional cooperatives presented there. The visit continued further bringing the Union to Trieste and the rest of the region.

9. Italian Language Course

A second course of Italian Language was organized, in cooperation with the Italian Community from Kotor (Montenegro). The main intent of this programme was to promote within Montenegro the culture of EU member states, namely the Italian one, and in particular enabling youth and citizens of Nikšić to directly communicate, learn and exchange with their Italian neighbours.

Three-months courses, free of charge, were implemented and sixty people attended. Moreover a lecture about "Integration in European Union" was organized. The project has a great success and was very appreciated by the participants.

2.11 Serbia



LDA Central and Southern Serbia – CSS

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Lead Partner: Aarhus (Denmark)

Partners: Reggio nel Mondo (Italy); Municipality of Saltdal (Norway); "Tavolo Trentino con Kraljevo" Trento (Italy), the cities of Niš, Kragujevac, Kraljevo and Leskovac (Serbia); Local Democracy Agency Zavidovići (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Projects implemented by LDA CSS:

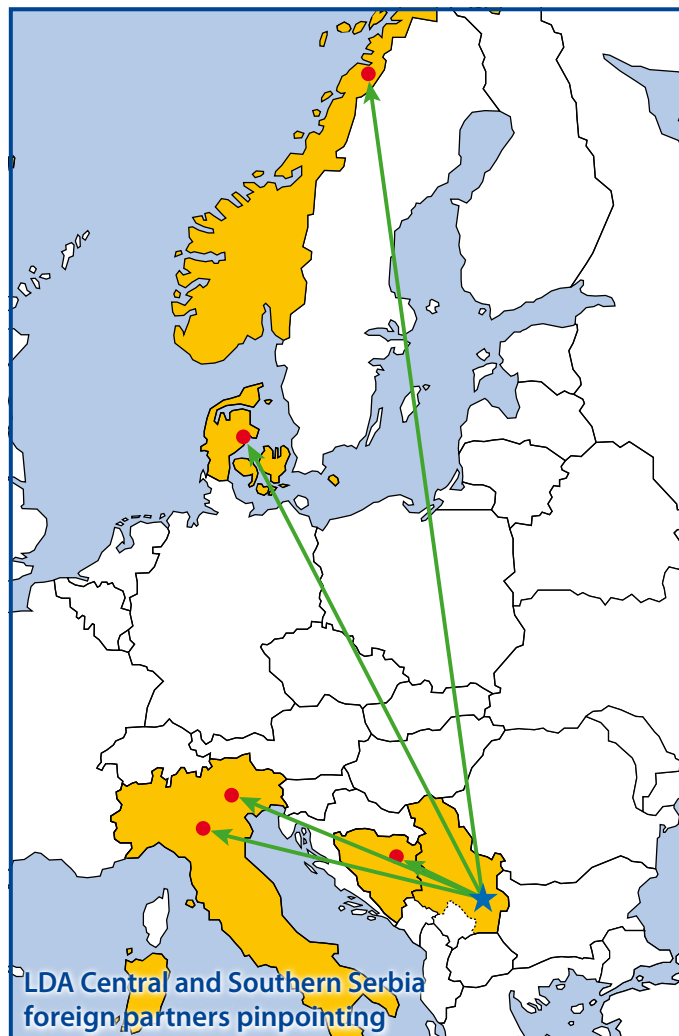
1. Waste management: Raise awareness on waste management through education and implementation of selective collection of cardboard and PET waste for recycling

Supported by: Canton Geneva, the City of Geneva, the City of Suresnes (France), the City of Kragujevac (Serbia)

Partners: Serbia: City of Kragujevac, Public Utility Company Čistoća, Public Utility Company "Zelenilo", Ministry of Education, School Department of Kragujevac, National Recycling Agency

LDA CSS implemented this project succeeding with excellent results in its intent of raising awareness among local communities about the environmental protection issue.

The aim of this project was to strengthen public awareness on waste and its adequate management starting its selective separation process. For this purpose the developed activities were divided into three main aspects: a technical part, an education and information part and a public campaign. All these aspects were designed as a set of connected activities that followed and supported each other. Eighty





“Little green people” in Kragujevac (Serbia),
January – December 2009

containers for storage of paper and cardboard packaging for the territory of Kragujevac (Serbia) were purchased and distributed to implement afterwards several comprehensive educational programmes with citizens, workers of public utility companies, teachers, educators and their students.

LDA CSS established a system of collecting raw materials and first classification as a preparation for future recycling by forming a network of institutions where the LDA placed containers and enabled public utility companies and private sector dealing with recycling.

An added value to the project was the involvement of preschool children into the educational activities. In order to raise awareness on the thematic twenty-two primary schools, nine kindergartens and six local communities were actively involved in the programme. Kids and their parents actively participated in the organized workshops. The LDA developed a programme to educate citizens on environmental protection issues establishing afterwards a process of collecting secondary raw materials in schools and local communities.

LDA CSS developed also a public campaign to inform the citizens about the project and the source separation of

waste and environmental issues. They also participated in environmental events (Eco patrol, children plays, cleaning up the neighbourhood) together with schools and kindergartens located within the same local community.

It is important to underline that during the implementation of this project several local and national stakeholders joined the LDA, therefore the overall impact of the project was much more than expected.

2. Institutional support of the City of Suresnes to the City of Kragujevac in defining city social policies

Supported by: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the City of Suresnes (France), the City of Kragujevac (Serbia)

Partner: Preschool Institution Nada Naumović (Serbia)

Within the framework of strengthening capacity building, two trainings were organized for the local government representatives of Kragujevac (Serbia). The main issue of this training was focused on the methodology of transversal approach in defining city social policies. A study visit to Suresnes (France) was the final event of this project.

3. “One place for all youth” – establishing a Youth Centre

Supported by: Serbian Ministry for Youth and Sports, City of Niš (Serbia)

Partner: City of Niš (Serbia)

This project aimed at strengthening youth activism in local community through activities organized by the Youth Centre of LDA CSS. This centre was established with the support of the City of Niš who recognized the need of implementing this kind of programmes for young people in the local community; this project attracted a great number of youngsters, who took part in the planned activities.

Between January and March 2009 LDA CSS realized twenty workshops for students in all secondary schools of Niš (Serbia) in order to promote volunteerism among the youngsters and afterwards to establish the youth centre. The most important aims of this programme were focused on: drawing attention of local stakeholders and of the whole local community to the problems of youths in Niš, followed by a network of peer educators, increasing awareness of young people about methods of peer education and volunteerism.

Twenty young activists were selected and trained to implement a methodology of peer education. In ten high schools of Niš they held series of workshops for their peers on topics that young people marked as important: non violent communication, conflict resolution management, trafficking, combating domestic violence, non verbal communication as well as writing a curriculum vitae.

Based on the experience gained through this activity and its researches about youth unemployment, LDA CSS published and distributed a complete manual for peer educators.

The last activity within the framework of this project was



“Where to now?” campaign to provide information for future students of the University

designing, publishing and distributing an alternative guide for young people about the studying opportunities in Niš University.

The main result of this project was the establishment of a volunteers’ centre where young people, gathered through this programme, continued their activities through many volunteer actions (e.g. designing and managing a programme to promote young artists and writing youth exchange projects).

4. Together toward “Local strategy paper for youths”

Supported by: Serbian Ministry for Youth and Sports, the City of Niš (Serbia)

This project aimed at establishing functional cooperation among youth organizations, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders, while working on the proposal of local action plan and the “Local strategy paper for youths”.

Within the purpose of this programme LDA CSS implemented several activities, such as: compiling a data base of youth organizations and institutions dealing with youth in Niš area and carrying on a comprehensive research on the current situation of youth in Niš and surrounding communities. To discuss the collected data and to draft a proposal for the “Local strategy paper for youth” the LDA organized a series of round tables gathering also all relevant stakeholders and established a local network of eighteen NGOs working in the field of youth.

The main successful results of this programme were the establishment of a functional youth organizations’ network fostering the interest on youth by local authorities and other relevant stakeholders. LDA CSS published a study paper on the needs of youth in Niš areas, as well as recommendations for the Local strategy paper for youths.

The provided advocacy activities of the LDA succeeded giving its results: local authorities accepted its initiative and officially started the process of defining the local strategy paper and action plan for youth. Representatives of LDA CSS are now members of the Supervisory board established for this process and are actively contributing to it.

5. Economy and management of NGO in Serbia

Supported by: Bratislava - Belgrade fund

Partners: Slovakia: CVNO (Education Centre on non-profit Organizations), Banská Bystrica, University "Matej Bel" of Banská Bystrica; Serbia: Faculty of Economic of Niš University

Between September and December 2009 LDA CSS started a process to foster capacity building of institutions and civil society organizations. The LDA worked to network the Universities of Niš (Serbia) and Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) and proposed to draw a joint master course on "Economy and management in NGOs".

6. Poverty Reduction: Civil Society and Responsible Government

Supported by: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) of Belgrade (Serbia)

Partner: Association for Protection and Promotion of Mental Health in Children and Youth of Niš (Serbia)

On the 4th of November 2009, LDA and "Association for Protection and Promotion of Mental Health in Children and Youth" signed a protocol on Cooperation for the project "Poverty Reduction: Civil Society and Responsible Government". For the next two years LDA CSS will collaborate on achieving two main goals, such as: increasing accountability of local governments in the process of achieving the priorities based on the rights of children, especially the poorest; implementing measures and activities defined to increase

the transparency of the budget of local governments, specifically as far as the appropriations for children's projects are concerned, through transparent and inclusive processes of planning and budgeting

This project was implemented, with the support of Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Institute for Sustainable Communities, by the "Association for Protection and Promotion of Mental Health in Children and Youth", which deals with women and children affected by mental diseases.



Local peer educators during the activities of "Youth empowerment" in Nis (Serbia), April 2009

7. InterculturArt

Supported by: European Commission, Youth in Action Programme

Partners: Cooperativa Or.So, Alba (Italy), LDA Montenegro, "Balkan Sunflower" of Prishtina (Kosovo)

The objective of this project was youth empowerment. A youth exchange was organized in Niš (Serbia) and gathered young people from Italy, Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia, which worked together for a week producing a street art performance on intercultural understanding and tolerance.

8. RUNtoFUN

Supported by: European Commission, Youth in Action Programme

Partners: Cooperativa Or.So, Alba (Italy), LDA Zavidovići (Bosnia and Herzegovina), LDA Montenegro, SOS Children's Centre (Lithuania)

RUNtoFUN is a youth exchange, which took place in Alba (Italy) lasting ten days long. The project dealt with the topic of "entertainment" of youngsters. It aimed at helping participants to think about their role in the choice of their own entertainments.



Workshops for secondary schools' students. Local peer educators trained in Nis (Serbia), April 2009

The training comprised also a test to understand the participants' abilities in organizing and promoting their entertainments. Young people from Niš (Serbia) met in Alba (Italy) their peers from Lithuania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece and Italy to exchange experiences about youth's spare time in different countries.

For this purpose the team chosen by LDA CSS prepared a video documentary, in order to present to the other groups

the way the young people of Niš (Serbia) spend their spare time. It was an excellent opportunity for young people to know each other and to have an intercultural experience.

9. "1000 Young Serbian Leaders"

Supported by: International Republican Institute IRI, Washington (USA)

The LDA organized a training on youth activism with the general purpose of promoting youth empowerment. The specific objective was to raise awareness on secure driving. After carrying out a careful research, a public campaign on security in traffic was organized.

10. "Sportno poletje (Summer sports)"

Supported by: European Commission, Youth in Action Programme

LDA CSS took part in the EVS (European Voluntary Service) programme as sending organization and gave the opportunity to two young volunteers from Niš to participate in it. The volunteers supported for six months the organization of the summer programme at the youth centre "BIT" of Črnomelj (Slovenia).

11. Reconciling for the future – European perspective for the Western Balkans

Supported by: The European Commission, "Instrument for Stability Crisis preparedness component – Annual Action Programmes 2007-2008/ Peace-building Partnership Support/ Organization of Round Tables

Partners: ALDA, Center for regionalism Novi Sad (Serbia)

A National conference on EU perspectives for the Western Balkans was held in Niš (Serbia) aiming at strengthening capacity building for local authorities and civil society organizations.

12. Partner meetings

Two partners meeting were organized by LDA CSS during 2009. The first one was held in Rovereto (Italy), in the premises of "Fondazione Opera Campana dei Caduti".

The partners discussed the work of LDA during the past year and pending issues such as the election of new Partner leader.

The second partners' meeting was held in Brussels (Belgium), in the premises of Denmark EU Office on the topic of the status of LDACSS partnerships with the aim to define the future list of active partners.



Young artists performing in the streets of Niš (Serbia), March 2009

13. "Put Vode 2009" – University Cooperation between Niš (Serbia) and Trento (Italy) and Cooperation between libraries of Kraljevo (Serbia) and Trento (Italy)

Supported by: Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy) through Tavolo Trentino con Kraljevo, Trento (Italy)

Partner: SODALIS, Salerno (Italy)

LDA CSS promoted cooperation between the Universities of Niš (Serbia) and Trento (Italy). In the framework of this project a summer camp was organized.

The activity brought students and professors from both universities in Rudno (Serbia) to map the sources of pollution in the town and afterwards design and define a project to reduce pollution in this area.

The LDA networked also the libraries of Kraljevo (Serbia) and Trento (Italy), this cooperation was strengthened by two exhibitions of cultural heritage and two exchange visits between the libraries of Kraljevo and Lavarone – Trento (Italy).

14. Self – help: a good way to emancipate

Supported by: Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy) through "Tavolo Trentino con Kraljevo", Trento (Italy)

Partner: Association "Fenomena" of Kraljevo (Serbia)

With the support of LDA CSS, the Serbian Women association "Fenomena", active since 2003, sponsored an IT training for women in Kraljevo (Serbia) pointing out the need of a women empowerment in the local community to foster the computer competencies of the women.

15. School of life skills – Club Open doors

Supported by: Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy) through "Tavolo Trentino con Kraljevo", Trento (Italy)

Partner: MNRL - Citizens association for help to mentally challenged children and youth of Kraljevo (Serbia)

In the framework of fostering the social welfare of Kraljevo local community the LDA coordinated a yearlong programme to raise the level of self-confidence and self-efficiency of mentally challenged children in collaboration with the daily centre of MNRL Association of Kraljevo (Serbia).

16. “Adotta un nonno della Šumadija” (Distance foster care for elderly in Šumadija)

Supported by: Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy) through “Tavolo Trentino con Kraljevo”, Trento (Italy)

Partners: Serbia: Center for Social Welfare Kraljevo, Association “Fenomena”, Kraljevo (Serbia)

Since almost eight years the association “Tavolo trentino con Kraljevo” has been involved in carrying on a special programme of distance foster care, aimed at supporting the elderly in Šumadija (a region of Central Southern Serbia which Kraljevo is part of). After the war, the vulnerable elderly population lost almost everything along with even the hopes in a better future. Also in 2009 LDA CSS cooperated as liaison agency with the association “Tavolo Trentino con Kraljevo”, to improve their living conditions and assure a financial support for twenty-five old disadvantaged people in Kraljevo (Serbia).

17. Support for a better old age

Supported by: Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy) through “Tavolo Trentino con Kraljevo”, Trento (Italy)

Partners: House for old people in Mataruška Banja (Serbia), Association “Fenomena” of Kraljevo (Serbia)

LDA CSS cooperated in a research about “elderly needs” on a sample of 300 old people of Mataruška Banja (Serbia). The results were published and distributed to relevant institutions. In the framework of the overall project titled “Support for a better old age”, part of the house for elderly people in Mataruška Banja (Serbia) was renovated to host a programme of workshops and lectures. In addition, a study exchange among professionals working with elderly people in Kraljevo (Serbia) and Trento (Italy) was organized on the theme of improvement of the living conditions of this part of the population.



People crowd a young artists exhibition in Nis (Serbia), July 2009

2.12 LDA SUBOTICA



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Partners: Wolverhampton City Council (UK), Buskerud County Council (Norway), City of Subotica (Serbia)

1. European Intercultural cities programme

This is a Joint Programme of the Council of Europe and European Commission, in which the City of Subotica, in co-operation with LDA Subotica, actively participated.

In the framework of this project several visits and bilateral exchanges on various topics were organized and attended by delegations from the City of Subotica. The scheduled events were: an international conference in Barcelona: "Intercultural Dialogue policies at local level", a bilateral exchange of good practice, a study visit to Lublin (Poland) and the conference: "Role of media in intercultural practice at local level" in Patras (Greece). This programme allowed establishing a network of fourteen cities, an action through which frequent bilateral contacts started, increasing the number of local organisations involved.

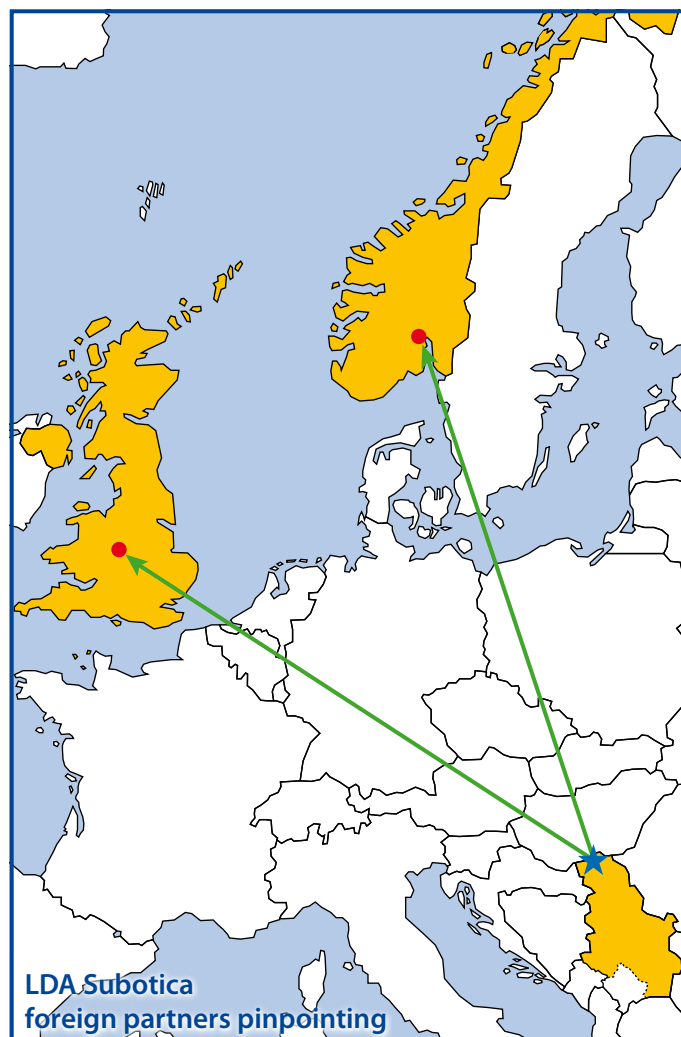
2. "Local media promotion of the Intercultural Cities Programme"

Supported by: the Vojvodina Fund for the development of non-profit sector (Serbia)

Partner: Media Diversity Institute, London (UK)

This project was promoted by LDA Subotica and imple-

mented in order to encourage local media to give quality information on issues of European enlargement, in particular about local promotion after the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue" (2008). In co-operation with the local television "YU Eco" and the local government, the programme's activities included the production of a wide range of TV documentaries, reportages on good local practice



in intercultural governance and participation of minority communities in decision-making. The main objective of the project is to help promote Subotica (Serbia) as the city with a long history in good intercultural governance and a high level of interethnic understanding and dialogue. The NGOs of Subotica included in the project implementation were: the LDA, "Roma Education Centre" and "Open Prospects".

This project included also a training for local journalists on "Media diversity reporting" held by Ms. Milica Pesic, Executive Director of "Media Diversity Institute", and visits of the "YU Eco TV" crew to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg (France) and Reggio Emilia (Italy).

3. "Local coalitions for EU integration"

After the approval of the "Institute for sustainable communities" of Belgrade (Serbia), LDA Subotica in collaboration with Centre for regionalism of Novi Sad (Serbia) started this project in October 2009, scheduled to last one year and its title had a specific connotation.

"Local" means that the project was based on effective structures established to facilitate the communication, still

scarce, between municipal administration and local NGOs. As a result, the lack of administrative capacities for collaborative development of EU funded project proposals is more than evident, especially in smaller municipalities of Vojvodina region (Serbia), mainly multicultural local communities, which are eligible for a wide range of EU supported programs, including the cross-border and Neighbourhood co-operation programs. "Coalitions" was used because to follow the EU co-operation programmes, a new municipal administrative function was established, which contributed to give better information on EU funding opportunities, to share with local NGOs and municipal institutions.

The aim was to create more opportunities for civil organizations and experts in order to get in the process of preparing and adopting local sector policies, developing strategies and applying in close collaboration with the local government. "EU integration": the aim was giving tools to the EU policy officer to become capable of municipal administrative mechanism and contribute in increasing visibility as well as more tangible results of the local government in coping with use of EU funds and inclusion of wider scope of beneficiaries of potential EU funding opportunities.

The main objective of this project is to help improve the knowledge and understanding at local level of EU integration process through appointing the EU policy officer, as well as to help build the administrative capacities to implement the European standards, applying on EU funds and cooperation to enhance good local governance.

This overall project's objective will be achieved through validation of the EU policy officers in cross border local municipalities as the result of active advocacy with citizens, coalition of civil organizations, local neighbourhood community members, experts etc. Through the training component, information sharing, publishing activity, the peer-to-peer exchange of experience on collaborative development of EU proposals and on effective local/regional



Toast for the partnership between LDA of Subotica and Wolverhampton's Mayor

co-operation partnerships for development, organizations truly believe in reaching and fulfilling project's aims.

The main target groups are the local elected/appointed officials (decision makers): Mayors' Office members, Mayors' advisors Municipal Assembly, Mayors, civil society organizations and neighbourhood community centers in 6 municipalities of Vojvodina (Serbia): Apatin, Bač, Kikinda, Novi Bečej, Kovačica. They will be involved in local democracy building, human/minority rights groups, women's' organizations, youth groups or professional associations.

Wide public and citizen involvement is expected to attend the series of street performances and media campaign, with the main objective to get the citizens closer to the process of EU enlargement and inform them about the role they may have in this process. The main beneficiaries are the local self-government bodies, local institutions and the citizens in municipalities included.

Since the project main objective is the establishment of a EU policy officer, to enhance that result, the programme planned several activities such as an opening thematic conference in Subotica with four thematic workshops, including: EU Regional Policy – Historic background and the potential for future of EU Integration; EU enlargement strategy for Western Balkans; Vojvodina in EU integration – challenges and perspectives; and Local self-governments and EU integration perspectives.

Another planned activity was a group of training seminars in Apatin, Bač, Kikinda, Novi Bečej, Kovačica municipalities, organized in close collaboration with the municipal officials, while the main target groups are the heads of different departments, administrators, neighbourhood communities' elected/appointed representatives, local NGO-s. A main thematic workshop was titled: "EU regional policy – institutions and support programmes".

The third activity of the programme was dedicated to

experts who are actively participating in training seminars to develop basic background situation analysis for the mu-



Opening Conference on "Local coalition for EU integration", November 2009

nunicipality in which they are engaged and to teach them drafting recommendations for establishing the EU policy officer and the necessary steps for adoption of such a decision.

In the end the last activity scheduled by the programme was dedicated to "Visibility actions and Media campaign", a project organized by local coalitions of NGOs in all the five communities and by LDA in Subotica.

Each of those promotional campaigns included: a Media press conference, a presentation and promotion of the digital CD publication "9 of May: Day of Europe", a citizens petition to explain what is the role of the EU Policy officer and thus to support its establishment with the help of the citizens signatures, stand with promotion and information materials about EU and youth performances in the main square.

Since the yearlong project started in the late 2009, several results are envisaged:

The Project activities are intended to improve general awareness and knowledge of the beneficiaries on specific EU policies in order to get the citizens of small local communities closer to EU integration related issues, such as:

1. Appointing the EU policy officers in cross border local government on the role of local self-governments in EU integration (active advocacy with citizens);
2. Improved knowledge and skills of local elected/appointed councillors, neighbourhood communities' campaign about possibilities of local self-development;
3. Elaboration of experts' recommendation (for five municipalities) as a tool for appointing the EU policy officer and his sustainability.

4. Celebration of 9 May – Day of Europe

LDA Subotica improved European and democratic attitude organizing a day programme for different target groups to celebrate the "Day of Europe" on the 9th of May.

The LDA with the support of twelve embassies in Belgrade and the Hungarian and Croat consulates in Subotica organised a European desk in the city centre, on which during the whole afternoon citizens could get promotional materials from different EU countries. The Local Democracy Agency in cooperation with "FOKUS foundation" of Subotica organized a reception in the city hall, film screening and a concert of the Serbian band "Nezni Dalibor".

5. "BookCrossing"

Among the "streets events" "BookCrossing" was certainly the most successful. Following the famous earth-friendly way of sharing culture through books left on a bench or in a coffee shop for the next reader. Around 800,676 people in over 130 countries share their passion for books in this way. With the aim of including Serbia in this network of "BookCrossing", LDA Subotica in co-operation with FOKUS and



Celebrating the 9th of March, "Day of Europe", in Subotica (Serbia)

the art-workshop "Medijala" organized a "BookCrossing"-Promotion in the restaurant Baš Kuća. The programme of this first "BookCrossing"-Party in Subotica included explanation about "BookCrossing" web community, presentation of the website www.bookcrossing.com and the possibility to open a profile and to register books online directly on place. The evening concluded with a concert of two local bands: "DUOdenum" and "Wooden Ambulance".

The most important moment was the official opening of the first "BookCrossing" Zone in Subotica: a bookshelf full of interesting book placed permanently in Baš Kuća.

Everybody who wished to exchange books could join BookCrossing.com, register his read books, bring to this bookshelf and exchange them for new (second-hand) books. Once you read your new book you put a comment on it on www.bookcrossing.com and leave it for next readers in a place you should indicate with the "release" option on the website. All this is completely for free. The next reader of your book will put a comment about it on www.bookcrossing.com, which allows you to follow the travelling of your books. Through this unique method of recycling books, "BookCrossers" give them life.

This event had a positive echo and a lot of people joined “BookCrossing” registering their books during this evening and hoped that all of them will continue “BookCrossing”. The hope of the organizers was that this would help to make Subotica part of this “worldwide library”.

6. “Do we understand each other?”

Subotica is a multicultural town in which live Serbian, Hungarians, Croats, and other ethnics groups. One of the most visible aspects of these different cultures is the variety of languages.

With an original street event LDA Subotica and “FOKUS” wished to raise awareness for this rich cultural diversity in Subotica and to motivate people to learn others language, trying to communicate with people belonging to the other cultures. At the same time the action focused on encouraging using public spaces in a creative and funny way.

The volunteers that participated in this programme were wearing paper-sandwiches showing the symbolic question: “Do we understand each other?” in all Subotica’s most spoken languages; Serbian, Hungarian, Croatian and Roma language. This question caught the attention of pas-

sersby, requested to write with chalk next to an object on the street how this object was called in their mother tongue and in foreign languages.

7. “Europe across the street”

This was the title of a thematic evening organized by LDA and “FOKUS” foundation (Subotica) in August 2009 at the Restaurant “Stara Pizzeria” of Subotica. The evening’s programme consisted in several movies and in a round table on the topic “mobility and possibilities to travel for young people in Serbia”. The first movie shown was “Beyond”, a documentary film produced by a group of young European volunteers. For this documentary movie over forty young people in Serbia were interviewed about what they think about Serbia, Europe and European Union, about their hopes and fears related to this topic. The documentary clearly showed that the visas were one of the main problems for young people in Serbia.

The second documentary was a short movie elaborated in collaboration with international and local volunteers and dealt with the same topic but in a more artistic way.

After the presentation of these two movies, a round table was organized with representatives of several organizations, which introduced specific programmes drawn to give to young people the opportunity to travel or volunteer abroad and discussed the topic of “mobility for young Serbian people” with Sonja Kozlina and Afrim Uka: the first young Serbians with disability selected to participated in a long-term volunteering service. Other participants were volunteers from the International Student Driven Association “AIESEC”, from the travellers’ organization of Hospitalityclub.org, from Couchsurfing.org and Marko Aksentijević, author of the guide for cheap travelling.

At the end of the evening there was a screening of the German road movie “Im Juli” (In July), showing the journey to Istanbul of two young people across the Balkans.



“Europe across the street”. Evening movie about EVS programme, Subotica, 27th August 2009

8. Youth programmes: EVS (European Voluntary Service) – Hosting Noemi Helfenstein

The EVS is one of the main actions of the EU- Youth in Action-Programme, that LDA Subotica is promoting. The European volunteer Noemi Helfenstein came from Switzerland and worked with LDA Subotica from March to September 2009. She worked mainly in LDA Subotica's youth programme as well as in the planning and implementation of different events.

As part of her EVS-project in the months of May and June she held workshops with a group of young people in the dormitory for high school students in Subotica.

The series of workshops was titled "Put Action in your Life!". The first of them was dedicated to getting to know better each other and oneself. A cycle of questions to reflect about wishes, aims, strengths and weaknesses, roles, things and dear persons, as well as personality tests, invited all students to think about their identity and to get to know themselves better. In the third workshop a so called "talent-fair" was organized, in which the students, after getting aware of their talents and strengths in the previous

workshop, were encouraged to exchange their talents and helping each other with their weaknesses.

After a closer look at themselves and their identity, the students had to answer the question: "Where are we from?", presenting to the group their villages and reflecting about which values and which influences they got, being from a certain place. The EVS volunteer prepared also a presentation on Switzerland, showing what is typical from her country, but also what it meant for her to be "Swiss".

In the final step the participants had the chance to get to know themselves and their environment, the idea was to think about communication with others and to develop a small project. Unfortunately the students were very busy with studying at the end of the year and didn't have enough initiative and motivation to realize a project. And Noemi noticed: "During all the workshops I could feel that the students were used to an authoritative style of education. They were not used to have to think, and to "create themselves". Nevertheless I think the main aims of the workshops were reached: we enabled them to encourage the pupils to think critically, to get aware of their strengths and possibilities and to take their lives in their hands as well as to get involved and active".

Despite the limited number of the workshops, the participants got some different and new ideas about education, values and life in general and for the Swiss EVS volunteer this was an inspiring experience.



Presentation to the local authorities of Obrenovac (Serbia) within the "Microcredit scheme"

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