



Strasbourg, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023

## Statement by the Secretary General of ALDA Antonella Valmorbida, on the Russian Federation's Local Elections in Annexed Ukrainian Territories

As the Secretary General of ALDA, I would like to address a matter of great concern that has recently come to our attention: **the decision by the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation to organise local elections in certain Ukrainian territories**, specifically parts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions. This decision has raised significant questions about its conformity with international law, as well as the broader implications for regional stability and the well-being of the affected communities.

ALDA completely agrees with [the statement](#) made by the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Leendert Verbeek, and condemns the decision of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation to organise local elections in parts of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions.

**The Association emphasises its commitment to the principles of international law**, including respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of nations. We firmly believe that the aforementioned territories are an integral part of Ukraine, as recognised by the international community. The situation on the ground, marked by unresolved conflicts and territorial disputes, further complicates the path to a peaceful resolution. We urge all parties involved to engage in dialogue and diplomacy to find lasting solutions that adhere to international norms.

**It is our belief that holding local elections in territories under disputed circumstances may pose significant challenges to ensuring truly democratic processes and the meaningful participation of citizens in the governance of their communities.** We advocate for a

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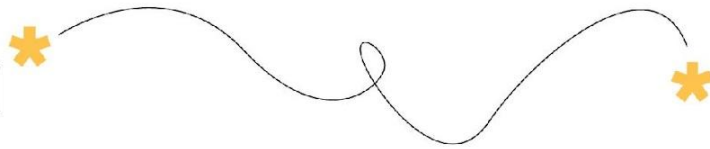
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comprehensive approach that respects the rights and aspirations of all individuals in these areas and seeks to address the root causes of the conflict.

ALDA remains committed to supporting Ukraine in its pursuit of a **just and peaceful resolution** to these complex challenges. We emphasise the importance of international cooperation and diplomacy in addressing this situation and call upon all stakeholders to work together toward a sustainable and equitable resolution.

We invite the international community to engage constructively in efforts to promote dialogue, confidence-building measures, and the restoration of peace in the region. ALDA continues its effort and commitment in the country, in cooperation with the two Local Democracy Agencies in the country, LDA Dnipro and LDA Mariupol, and with its many Ukrainian members and partners.

As stated in our [Flagship Initiative in Ukraine](#), ALDA has the goal and will to open seven more LDAs in Ukraine as instruments to promote peace and cohesion, helping to foster understanding, cooperation and ultimately a brighter future for all those affected by the ongoing crisis.

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