



Siège c/o Conseil de l'Europe

Avenue de l'Europe – 67075 Strasbourg – France

Ufficio in Italia

Viale Mazzini, 225 – 36100 Vicenza – Italia

Office in Brussels

Rue de Confédérés, 47 – 1040 Brussels – Belgium

PRESS RELEASE

ALDA Steering Committee on the Microcredit project will take place in Tirana on 15th and 16th July, in partnership with Council of Europe Development Bank and Banca Intesa Sanpaolo, with the help of local Banks. A project also supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

THE MICROCREDIT PROJECT TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BALKANS MOVES FORWARD

It was the 2006 when the Microcredit project was created. Association of Local Democracy Agencies, Council of Europe Development Bank, Banca Intesa Sanpaolo (with the help of local Banks: Banca Intesa Beograd in Serbia, Banca Intesa Sanpaolo Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Privredna Banka Zagreb), thanks to the support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have set up an innovative Microcredit Scheme that aims to help the economic development through the support of small and medium enterprises.

The project is focused in the first phase on the countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, with the aim to expand itself to other countries of the Western Balkans region.

The Steering Committee taking place at Hotel Carlsberg in Tirana (Albania) on 15th and 16th July represents an important step forward in the progress of the project which is also supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Together with ALDA Director, Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida, ALDA partners and ADL Delegates, the representatives of Intesa Sanpaolo South Eastern Europe Banks Dpt. and Banca Intesa Beograd, PBZ Croatia and ISP Albania will focus their attention on bridging activities and opportunities in Albania, the country which is expected to be the next country to take part in this project.

Starting from an overview of Microcredit Services in Albania, their opportunities and difficulties, the identification of potential target groups (such as women, young entrepreneurs, etc.), then the assessment of local LDAs capacities (staff, training needs, relations with local entities) will be examined.

The aim of ALDA Steering Committee in Tirana is to analyze the perspective for the Microcredit scheme for 2011/2013 and to enter into details concerning the activities to be run accordingly.

This project is particularly effective in Serbia, where more than 1million euros were assigned in only four months last year, as well as in Croatia. In Bosnia the high competition has created some difficulties in the start-up but the project is anyway beginning to work well.

In terms of assets, a 50% of the capital comes from the Council of Europe Development Bank, at a good value rate, whereas the remaining 50% is provided by Banca Intesa Sanpaolo or through its local Banks.



+333 90.21.45.93 +39 0444.54.01.46



+333 90.21.55.17 +39 0444.23.10.43



antonella.valmorbida@aldaintranet.org

**Siège c/o Conseil de l'Europe**

Avenue de l'Europe – 67075 Strasbourg – France

Ufficio in Italia

Viale Mazzini, 225 – 36100 Vicenza – Italia

Office in Brussels

Rue de Confédérés, 47 – 1040 Brussels – Belgium

The war that ravaged the Balkans for ten years left evident traces in the economy of the Balkans, in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The economic situation is all over the region rather difficult and the effects of the painful transition process are currently exacerbated by the results of the global economic crisis. Given the rigid and costly credit system in all the countries of the region and a banking system that usually leaves out most of the proposal in their start-up phase, the proposed Microcredit Scheme project with its conditions, inserts itself among the few “socially responsible” opportunities in the market.

The countries of the Western Balkans where the Microcredit Scheme project will be based are slowly but steadily proceeding towards European integrations. Economic development and democratization are equally important for the fulfillment of these tasks and in order for both to be successful development of the capacities at the local level is crucial. Among the difficulties are the political heritage from the past and an economic transition, which hardly find a solution to old and costly systems of production. The balance to be assured between private and public companies is often the results of blind and short-sighted strategies, which leave a large part of the population without assistance and real possibility of having a future. The main goal of the project is to contribute to the creation of new employment opportunities in these countries and to help the overall economic and social recovery of the region.

With regard to Counseling and Financial Services, the implementing agents in the project are on the one hand the Local Democracy Agencies of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies in: Serbia (LDA Subotica, LDA Central and Southern Serbia), Croatia (LDA Sisak, LDA Osijek, LDA Verteneglio), Bosnia and Herzegovina (LDA Mostar, LDA Zavidovici and LDA Prijedor).

Local Democracy Agencies are helping the potential clients write and develop their business plans. They get to know their companies through the project in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the potential credit related risks involved.

The main advantage of the project is that LDAs are already existing and functioning local offices and the project is not requested to establish new structures. Furthermore, they have good and established knowledge of the social, economic and political situation in the regions and countries where they are operational.

The project began in 2006, focusing on structuring the microcredit activity and preparing the LDAs to deal with the task. Its current phase (operational credit and assistance) is to be completed by 2010 with a goal of continuing the activities and expanding the project to other countries of the region.

Read the annex Programme of the Steering Committee

Strasbourg, 15th July 2010



+333 90.21.45.93 +39 0444.54.01.46



+333 90.21.55.17 +39 0444.23.10.43



antonella.valmorbida@aldaintranet.org



Siège c/o Conseil de l'Europe

Avenue de l'Europe – 67075 Strasbourg – France

Ufficio in Italia

Viale Mazzini, 225 – 36100 Vicenza – Italia

Office in Brussels

Rue de Confédérés, 47 – 1040 Brussels – Belgium

ABOUT ALDA

ALDA, The Association of Local Democracy Agencies, is an International non-governmental organization working actively to foster human rights and local democracy. Founded in 1999 as a small initiative of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to coordinate a network of Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) already in existence since 1993, ALDA is today, one of the biggest and most important NGOs connecting the local authorities and civil society involved in European Active Citizenship Programme. ALDA has over than 160 members from local and regional authorities to smaller non-governmental organisations dealing with human rights, local democracy and active citizenship.

ALDA works on strengthening European integration in different geographical areas including Caucasus, active citizenship and citizens' participation, as well as fostering equal opportunities and young policies, sustainable economic development.

The ALDA's working method is based on decentralized and multilateral cooperation (between local, national and international partners), fostering partnerships (partners exchange best practices and create common projects to reach common benefits), technical assistance and training (addressed to local authorities, associations and NGOs on capacity building).

It does this through the exchange of experience, ideas and information and it supports members to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the sector.

ALDA PRESS OFFICE

Testa & Rizzo Associati

Piazza Duca d'Aosta, 30/1

31021 - Mogliano Veneto /TV/Italy

Cristina Testa

mob: (+39) 3381576909

e-mail: testa@testaerizzoassociati.it

skype: [cristina.testa.16](https://www.skype.com/people/cristina.testa.16)

Sebastiano Rizzo

mob. (+39) 3356985299

e-mail: rizzo@testaerizzoassociati.it

skype: [rizzose](https://www.skype.com/people/rizzose)



+333 90.21.45.93 +39 0444.54.01.46



+333 90.21.55.17 +39 0444.23.10.43



antonella.valmorbida@aldaintranet.org