



ALDA Director, Antonella Valmorbida Statement **Belarus: ALDA, Lev Sapieha Foundation and Eurobelarus call for further actions to strengthen local governance and civil society participation.**

ALDA, Lev Sapieha Foundation, and the International Consortium “Eurobelarus” participated in the Civil Society Consultation on 25th September at the EU Delegation office in Minsk, Belarus. The issue discussed in the meeting is of our great interest for our associations, and represent the core of our common activities in the country and in the Eastern Partnership.

ALDA and Lev Sapieha Foundation have been working since its establishment to develop local authorities and civil society groups in order to let them work together for a better local governance. The International Consortium “Eurobelarus” is a member of ALDA since 2012 and takes active part in the development of Civil Society in Belarus as well as in other EaP countries.

ALDA, Lev Sapieha Foundation, and Eurobelarus strongly support the approach given by the new programme CSO/LA in Belarus, as we think there is a great potentiality in supporting the development of local and regional authorities. We are working in raising this issue, particularly through our work with the CORLEAP and the Sub Group on Local Government and Public Administration reform of the Civil Society Forum for Eastern Partnership.

We are now calling for different concrete actions in support of local governance and civil society participation in the country.

First of all, we are calling for Belarus adopting and ratifying soon the principle of the European Charter on Local Self Government and support the work of the Congress of the Council of Europe in this matter.

As for Local Governance is concerned, we would like to raise the attention on a useful instrument – the Code for Good Practices on Civil Participation in Decision Making, developed by the Conference of the International Non-Governmental Organizations of the Council of Europe. It is a practical guide for improved cooperation endorsed by the Council of Europe institutions, even though not binding instrument. It is [available in Russian](#)

Furthermore, concrete actions to address local authorities autonomy and competences are crucial, such as a first development of fiscal decentralization. A process in that sense could be launched in Belarus – see the priorities shared by the CORLEAP (where Belarus representative gave its support) <http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/Pages/corleap.aspx>

Regarding the involvement of CSO, we believe the country should focus on all the future projects proposed by the local authorities which would involve substantially civil society groups in all the phases of its development (planning the project, drafting, implementing, reporting and evaluating).

Finally, we suggest to support the involvement of the European Partners in the programmes, to give the possibility of exchange of experience and further develop the knowledge and concrete understanding of the Eastern Partnership.

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