



## Moral report of President for 2016

Strasbourg, 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2017

(24)23

Dear members and partners, dear friends and staff of ALDA,

Last year in May we met in Paris and this year we have a chance to be together here in Torun in Poland. First of all, I would like today to greet our host region and our host city for their support. And also, I would like to greet our LDAs, our members, partners, friends and representatives of all international institutions and international networks attending our General Assembly. I wish you active participation on the General Assembly, and I would like to thank you for your engagement in the work of ALDA.

From the last meeting in Paris, in just one-year period, our already big family has grown. I am happy to announce that Local Democracy Agency Moldova in Cimişlia officially has been established on 3 March 2017. with more than 50 representatives of local governments, civil society, international organizations and donors, as well as the representatives of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe attending the event. Just a few weeks ago, another historic event for ALDA was opening of the Local Democracy Agency in Kairouan in Tunisia, the first one in Africa. This is the natural continuation of our activity in the Mediterranean countries but also represents the will to pursue the values that lie at the heart of Europe on the African continent. Both partners of LDA Moldova and LDA Tunisia expressed their readiness to contribute to the development of local democracy.

As you know, from the establishment of ALDA in 1999, LDAs are at the centre of our activity. ALDA had the aim to coordinate and support the network of LDAs. That's why it is a great satisfaction to announce that Local Democracy Agency Georgia in Kutaisi celebrated its 10 years anniversary on 3rd of May. Last year on 11th November 2016, the Annual Assembly of the LDA Vertenglio from Croatia (now ALDA's Operational Partner) was celebrating the 20th anniversary of its founding. Next June LDA Zavidovići in Bosnia and Herzegovina will also celebrate the 20th anniversary of its founding. Nowadays there are 13 LDAs (Albania, Armenia, Serbia, Ukraine, Georgia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova and Tunisia) and 3 Operational Partners (Croatia). Since the beginning, LDAs mission remain to strengthen local democracy and civil society, to support democratic reforms and local development, and to create innovative approaches by cooperating with local and international stakeholders.

Dear friends,

I would also like to seize the opportunity to highlight some important events from the last period. ALDA is not only EU based organisation, but I have to mention here the results of the Brexit referendum from last June and that it was really an unpleasant surprise. There are still unstable security, political or war situations in many countries around Europe generated by bad economic conditions and poverty. This results in a dramatic increase in refugees fleeing their homes in search of a safe land. All of this, if we add terrorist attacks in European cities and with inadequate, late or ineffective response from the authorities in managing the situation, gives a strength to populist, xenophobic, and Euro-sceptical movements. We are aware of the historical challenges we are facing. It is crucial to remind us why the European Union was created, and what it means concretely to be European citizens. That's way it is important to continue our activities promoting citizens' participation and good local governance in the Europe and neighbouring countries. I have to remind that we actively supported the campaign "One programme, 500 million voices!" to remind EU citizens and institutions the importance of dialogue and exchange, pillars of the programme Europe for Citizens.

There are dozens of others activities and projects of ALDA organised and implemented with our members. It is enough just to open our web site, social networks or newsletter to realise what ALDA means and to understand our size, operational capacity, and recognition. The number and diversity of our members and projects are constantly increasing. We are at the same time working in Bruxelles, Ukraine, Belarus, Macedonia, Algeria or Togo. Just to mention some examples like our participation on the second annual Regional Youth Forum for Local Democracy held in Mostar. ALDA was present in Rome during the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. Our participation on the forum "EU perspectives for local authorities" in Bitola. We are actively engaged in SDG Watch Europe that represents an informal, civil society alliance of more than 70 organisations working in Europe. We tightened cooperation with further DGs of the European Commission, and established cross membership with key associations. A number of pioneering projects were presented and implemented – from sustainable energy to cultural heritage. The recognition of ALDA's expertise led to such a high number of training and technical assistance activities. Currently, the members of ALDA are more than 250, included the Local Democracy Agencies and Operational Partners.

In the previous period, we had several institutional meeting. We visited Region Friuli-Venezia Giulia for Bureau meeting in August 2016. Then we held Governing Board meeting in Palma de Mallorca in October 2016. This year in February, we held Governing Board meeting in Modena. Besides this, we organised several online Bureau and Governing Board meeting to approve necessary decisions. I would like to inform about some of the most important decisions and discussions. A new Communication strategy has been adopted with aim to consolidate ALDA's visibility and reputation, the promotion of ALDA at the EU institutions level, raise awareness by reaching out transparently to ordinary citizens on ALDA's activities and to promote ALDA activities on local level. We also discussed how to liaise activities better with the Governing Board. A new Advisory Board members has been appointed. The appointment of Working groups coordinators has been approved. A membership strategy has been discussed and we appointed those who will be our "ALDA Ambassadors" in order to grow and diversify our membership. The governing board has been working on new staff regulation. But maybe the most important step was the decision to establish

ALDA+, a benefit corporation registered in February 2017, and dedicated to the provision of ad hoc consultancy activities.

Dear members and dear friends,

We like to say that our work is unique in relation to similar organizations because it is including civil society, as well as public sector – towns, regions and municipalities. We deal with important issues that are equally important for the EU countries as well as for the neighbouring countries. The range of ALDA's activities and geographic coverage of our activities is very wide. We can also agree that we are – all together - a successful organisation that knows how to deal and to offer the solution for problems and challenges that our stakeholder face. We have proved that we know also how to deal with our internal unfavourable circumstances. The General Assembly 2015 in Podgorica, in Montenegro, approved the Strategic views guiding us until 2018. In order to remain what we are and to improve our work, I think now is the right moment to start preparation of our next Strategy to be adopted on our next year meeting. Let's think about together, let's contribute and let's find the best solutions for ALDA future. We have to be satisfied of ALDA's results and goals achieved from the last year General Assembly in Paris. Therefore, I need to warmly thank, first of all our staff with Secretary general that work hard every day, then my colleagues in Governing Board for their cooperation, and all the members and partners for their engagement.

I wish you successful work and looking forward for future collaboration.

Thank you,

The President

Oriano Otočan