



**(24) 31**

**Strasbourg, 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2017**

### **SCHOLARSHIP GIANFRANCO MARTINI**

Every year in spring, ALDA launches a call for candidatures for a scholarship in memory of its **Honorary President, Gianfranco Martini**. The winner of the scholarship is invited to present his project during the General Assembly of the Association.

Gianfranco Martini was among the initiators of the concept of Local Democracy Agencies and became the **first President of ALDA** when the Association was founded in 1999. Throughout his active life he remained passionate about the promotion of local democracy, the engagement of civil society and the encouragement of interethnic dialogue in Europe with a particular focus on the Western Balkans. He passed away in October 2012, therefore since 2013 ALDA set up this scholarship on his memory.

This scholarship is awarded once a year to a student or researcher proposing a study or work project focusing **on local democracy, engagement of civil society, or interethnic dialogue**.

Its aim is to receive high-quality academic research and analysis for ALDA's fields of activity in order to develop further strategies on these topics, prioritizing the projects targeting regions where ALDA is active.

At the same time, the scholarship is intended to keep alive Gianfranco Martini's memory, and his lesson of engagement and fight supporting the European project and European values, which are the core of ALDA's mission.

The winner of the scholarship Gianfranco Martini 2017, selected by the Governing Board of ALDA among the applications received from the enlarged Europe, is **Klodjan SEFERAJ**, from University of Tirana, Economic Faculty (Albania), with his work on Local Democracy in Albania, titled **“Albania stands at a crossroads regarding its local democracy”**

Unfortunately, the winner could not take part in the Assembly, but asked us to express his gratefulness and joy for the possibility to further his research in such an important field, and sends his best greetings to all members of ALDA attending today. Soon, updates about his project will be disseminated via ALDA’s website and communication channels.