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PRESS RELEASE

In Peja/Pec signed the partners' agreement for the opening of the new ADL Kosovo, promoted by ALDA

LDA KOSOVO, A BRIDGE TOWARDS EUROPE

A bridge towards Europe and an important instrument to ensure a smooth and stable transition towards democracy and European integration, with an emphasis on promoting tolerant and trust-based relationships within local communities.

The signature of a pre agreement for the opening of the new LDA Kosovo (the Local Democracy Agency) promoted by ALDA (the Association of Local Democracy Agency) supported by the Council of Europe, will be an important instrument to foster the process of dialogue between majority and minority for the benefit of all communities.

Meaningful is the role of ALDA and the launch of the new LDA Kosovo in the framework of the ruling recently delivered by the International Court of Justice about the 2008 declaration of independence of Kosovo.

"ALDA recognizes the UN's highest court ruling – recently states Mr. Per Vinther, President of ALDA – and will put its work in the medium term perspective of European integration of all the countries of the region and the support of the equal rights of all minorities. "

Among the partners taking part in the signature of the agreement for the opening of the LDA Kosovo was Municipality of Peja/Pec (Kosovo), municipality of Yalova (Turkey) and the Association of Municipalities of Kosovo – AMK (Kosovo) as local authorities; as far as the NGOs are concerned, Tavolo Trentino con il Kosovo / Province of Trento, that will be initially the new LDA partner leader, Reggio Terzo Mondo (Kosovo and Italy), AIBI, amici dei bambini (Kosovo and Italy) and Alfa Formation (France) participated. As far as the Region Istria (Croatia) is concerned, the signature is planned to follow straight away, whereas Canton of Neuchatel (Switzerland) is evaluating to become a signature partner.

The Association of the Local Democracy Agencies was represented by M. Lucio Gregoretti, from the Municipality of Monfalcone (IT), member of the Governing Board and by the ALDA Director, Antonella Valmorbida.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe was represented by Mr. Günther Krug, (Germany), Vice-President of the Chamber of Regions of Congress and member of the Bureau of the Congress, that had an important meeting with the local authorities representatives from Kosovo and from the partners' town.

"The Congress is fully committed to working with Local democracy Agency in order to develop and strengthen democratic stability in this region" stated Mr Krug, speaking on behalf of the President of the Congress Ian Micallef.

"The fruitful experience of on-going cooperation between ALDA and the Congress –stated also Mr Krug- should inspire future initiatives and actions to make the best use of limited resources at our



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disposal. The Congress stand ready to examine new projects and initiatives to be proposed by ALDA and to be jointly implemented by the Congress in the years to come”.

The meeting was held in the premises of the Municipality on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of Tavolo Trentino con il Kosovo in Peja/Pec, and it was part of the activities scheduled for the celebration of its Anniversary.

“We are here to confirm our full involvement in the new LDA Kosovo –stated Alberto Pacher, Vice-Presidente of the Trento Province (Italy)- and the commitment of the Province of Trento, in the process of democratization and development of Kosovo”.

A key contribution for the opening process of the LDA Kosovo was given, during 2009, by the Council of Europe, through the funding of project “Youth Empowerment in Kosovo”, and, during 2010, by the Swiss Cooperation office-Kosovo through the funding of the project “Local Democracy Agency Kosovo: New Challenges and Prospectives”. The implementation of both projects allowed ALDA to carry out a coherent set of activities that led to the settlement of a large and committed partnership. Thanks to the different and useful activities envisaged in the projects it was possible to select the Municipality of Peja/Pec as the host city of the LDA. The Municipality authorities are enthusiastic of hosting the office of the LDA, and they have caught all the potentiality of having a LDA as a tool for promoting the peaceful coexistence of the local communities.

The opening of the LDA Kosovo represents a further step in that direction, and will include a coherent set of activities contributing at the local development and at the peaceful coexistence of the local population belonging to different ethnic background. Practically, the LDA Kosovo will act as an effective tool for local democracy building at the disposal both of the international community and the local stakeholders. Conscious of the importance that the opening of the LDA Kosovo will have in the region, ALDA shared with its members the last steps of that process and wanted to involve them as operative actors.

The objective of LDA Kosovo is to bring together local authorities and civil society organizations, in this way providing the necessary assistance to help ensure a smooth and stable transition towards democracy and European integration, with an emphasis on promoting tolerant and trust-based relationships within local communities.

Bearing in mind the multi-ethnic nature of Kosovo one of the priorities of the new LDA will be to work towards the strengthening of the cooperation among its communities and the promotion of their economic and social integration.

“I would like to stress the importance of promoting local democracy and human rights in Kosovo through the LDA – states Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA – Kosovo is still facing many internal and international challenges, and the action of the LDA could help the local communities to respond in a positive manner to those challenges.”

Peja/Pec, 2nd August 2010



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