ORIANO OTOČAN, ISTRIA REGION, ELECTED NEW PRESIDENT OF ALDA, and new Governing Board

Oriano Otočan is the new President of ALDA, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies. He represent The Istria Region, Croatia, where he served first as a Member of the Regional Government, and afterwards as Director of Department in charge of international cooperation and European integration. He has been elected by the Governing Board of ALDA, that has been renewed by the General Assembly the of the Association.

Press clipping

In the Bureau, with Otočan, has been elected also Imislawa Gorska, Principal of the International School of Bydgoszcz, Poland, Vicepresident, Alessandro Perelli, Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Italy, Vicepresident, Paula Rauzan, Delegate of the local Democracy Agency of Sisak, Croatia, Secretary, and Roger Lawrence, Municipality of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom, Treasurer. Other elected members of the Governing Board will be for the next four years also Per Vinther, past President, Alain Tourret, Vicepresident of Lower Normandy Region, Mircea Cosma, President of Prahova County, Romania, Valery Deschamps, President of the Association “Maison de l’Europe”, Caen, France, Dobrica Milovanovic, Deputy Mayor of the City of Kragujevac, Serbia, Ruggiero Mennea, Councillor of Apulia Region, Italy, and Lucio Gregoretti, Municipality of Monfalcone, Italy.

“It is important to continue the ALDA activities in the countries of South East Europe - stated Oriano Otočan, new ALDA President - because, if it is true that Croatia will be soon an EU member, is also true that other countries are still too much centralized, and have in front other steps toward the EU integration. ALDA can be surely an actor in this path and can be helpful to provide and support these countries in achieving the necessary requisits. Also thanks to its experiences in Croatia, ALDA will work to guarantee a stronger citizen participation, the strengthening of local authorities and a development that meets the needs of citizens”.

A GREATER ROLE OF NGOs AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENHANCING LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES IS NEEDED

After Slovenia, Croatia will join the EU in the next year, having achieved the requirements for access. In particular, those related to democracy and decentralization, real pillars, in addition to economic aspects, in belonging to the great European family. This result comes after a path that started twenty years ago, following the conflict in former Yugoslavia.
ALDA was one of the actors of this path, with the support of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, and with its network, made by the eleven Local Democracy Agencies active in the Balkan countries, and hundreds of partners, particularly local authorities, NGOs and civil society.

A special role in these years has been played by the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, that hosted (June 7 and 8) in Udine, besides the annual general meeting 2012 of ALDA, also the international conference on "Strengthening the role of citizens and local governance in the neighbouring countries", whose objective was to evaluate whether the experiences gained with success in South East Europe can be used and replicated in other countries which now live a transition to democratic regimes.

ALDA is already doing it in the South Caucasus, where two Agencies are now active in Georgia (Kutaisi) and Armenia (Gyumri) and is working for the opening of a new Agency in Azerbaijan. The need for Europe is to complete the path in the Balkans, a region that needs the political and economic stability that would result from further enlargement, but also to give practical support to the "Arab spring", the revolution that in the last year has reversed in some countries, and is still trying to do so in others, authoritarian regimes and dictatorships to give birth to new democracies. 

"In moments of crisis should be promoted even more strongly the processes of participatory democracy, strengthening information networks, exchange of knowledge and opportunities, especially for young people and social groups that need it most: it is why I think that the commitment of ALDA is important and especially of the volunteers in all our communities in supporting the growth of people in disadvantage situation" said the President of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Renzo Tondo, opening of the General Assembly of ALDA.

"The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe has started with Morocco and Tunisia, at the request of these countries, some projects that aim to enhance the role of active citizenship and civil society," said Keith Whitmore, President of the Congress. "The civil society plays a crucial role, not least as a source of a new political class which is being formed in those countries, and its involvement in democracy-building is certainly a sign of greater democratic maturity of the society", said also Mr. Whitmore.

"Europe cannot have a black hole inside her where human rights and minority rights are not respected, and therefore the path of democratization completed successfully in Croatia has to be completed also in the other countries of South Eastern Europe, from Bosnia to Serbia, from Albania to Montenegro," said Ivan Jakovcic, President of the Istria region, that considers that the Croatian experience, although not being a model, is important and can show a way and proves that a country cannot be called democratic if there is no democracy at local level.

During the conference many experiences have been illustrated, from those of the Committee of Regions and of NGOs operating both in countries of South East Europe and Med Region, which show a strong need for support to civil society and local authorities, whose role is crucial to the democratisation of the neighboring countries.

In particular, Monsef Ben Slimane, President of Lam Echaml network (which in Tunisian means stay together in Tunisia), which illustrates the path started in his country for the training of citizens to the exercise of voting rights, has launched a strong appeal to Europe, to give support to many organizations of civil society that in some Arab countries, as Egypt, Libya and Jordan, are struggling fighting to assert democratic values, addressing the resistance of the old regimes, but also in those countries such as Morocco and Tunisia where the democratic process has already started but needs to be strengthened.

The transition to democracy, said Ben Slimane using a metaphor, cannot be done with a “copy paste”, but needs new applications that well match with the different local realities.

Avi Rabinovitch, an expert on local development in the Med Region, has told the difficulties of developing cooperation between local authorities and civil society in the Middle East, particularly between Israelis and Palestinians, where there are many funds available that often are not used owing to these difficulties.

"The intervention of third parties would be useful to facilitate the dialogue”, said Mr. Rabinovitch.
Azay Guliyev, Member of the Azerbaijan's Parliament and Chairman of the Council for State Support to NGOs in his country, said that since 2008 11 million of US dollars have been allocated by the Government to finance projects of NGOs that are more than 3,600, with half a million volunteers and nearly two million beneficiaries. A tissue for which to share experiences and best practices with NGOs of other countries could be of great interest.

Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA, closing the conference has anticipated the contents of a final document that expresses the recommendations of the conference, indicating the need to continue the work in the neighboring countries to create a stable democracy and respect for rights human, as an indispensable instrument for their stabilisation and as an element of peace and prosperity for the whole Europe.

ACTIVE ELDERLY ARE A BIG RESOURCE FOR THE SOCIETY.

VIT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN UDINE (I). 8 June 2012

Making elderly active in the society is a fundamental tool to fight against their isolations and give to the community the opportunity of not losing a big resource. This is one of the main indications emerged by the international conference organised by ALDA within the project VIT on 8th June in Udine (Italy).

Around 150 people from all Europe and neighbouring countries attended the conference with title “Active Ageing and Local Governance: How to involve elderly as active citizens in their local communities”.

Per Vinther, as former President of ALDA, opened the conference with a detailed presentation of the project VIT and an introduction to the conference.

He stressed the importance of town twinning for the construction of an open-minded and peaceful Europe and the strong necessity to support active citizenship and European values in the enlarged Europe. He explained that the project VIT has the ambition to match with the priorities of the European Union and European Years during the last of the project. Therefore in 2012 in Udine, one of the two international conferences organised within the project VIT focused on the field of Active Ageing referring to the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. More precisely, the conference aimed at speaking about Active Ageing in the prism of town-twinning and local governance with special focus on the importance of volunteering and citizens’ participation from younger to older at local level for good local governance and an inclusive society.

Franco Iacop, Vice President of the V Permanent Commission of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Council, moderated this conference and explained that, as public administrator, he has been dealing with these issues for a long time and knows the crucial importance to make elderly active in the society and to fight against their isolations.

After a short presentation of the agenda, speakers entered in the body of the subject and Marco Boaria, Resource and Development Unit Coordinator from the Association of Local Democracy Agencies, started with a presentation of the Europe for Citizens Programme stressing the fact that this programme contribute to make elderly active as well as all citizens whatever their ages. Marco Boaria made this presentation instead and on behalf of Mrs Leila Giuseppina Nista, from Europe for Citizens Point Italy, who cannot attend the conference due to other commitments.

Then Alice Sinigaglia, coordinator of the coalition and campaign of the 2012 European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, presented to participants the platform, its goal and work as well as the European Year 2012. For Mrs Sinigaglia, the European Year aims at raising the awareness on demographic change and to see it as an opportunity and not a challenge. She explained that the Platform aims at creating age-friendly environments, which play a crucial role in enabling older people to remain healthy and actively involved in their communities. In particular, the platform is a Coalition of more than 50 stakeholders working together to promote a society for all ages. The European Year 2012 campaign is based on two central points: the joint Manifesto for
an Age-Friendly EU by 2020 calling for a Covenant of Mayors on demographic change and a EU Network on Age-Friendly Environments and the joint Roadmap with concrete actions to be implemented in 2012.

The moderator Franco Iacop insisted on the crucial importance of solidarity between generations as glue for the society.

After these general and introductory presentations, the public had the chance to assist to a concert of a choir called "Coro Danito Dobrina", nationally recognised since they sang for the Pope at the occasion of the birthday of Roma. They interpreted four songs and finished with the Anthem of Europe, the "Ode to Joy" based on the final movement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

After this emotional moment, Professor Furio Honsell, Mayor of Udine took the floor to present to the public, in a very interesting and interactive way, the experience and vision of the City of Udine on senior policies. He started by stressing on the importance of the equality and the consequences of inequality in our societies in term of health notably. He showed that the City of Udine is very involved in helping elderly to stay active in the society and to fight against their isolation. He precised that the City of Udine is member of covenant of Mayors and of the Healthy Cities European Networks, which is a project of the World Health Organisation. He finally presented numerous activities organised by the City of Udine for increasing active citizenship among all generations and for facilitating the exchange between generations.

The second part of the conference was dedicated to good practices from VIT international partners and local actors from the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia on the ways to involve elderly in their communities. A large space was given to partners of the VIT project to make them able to share with participants the results of the local event they have already organised within the above-mentioned project. Firstly, Dorothee Fischer from the Spanish association RECREATURA presented the results of the event on "Volunteering in times of crisis" the association organised within the project VIT in Valencia on March 2012. Then Agnieszka Dybowska from the Municipality of Bydgoszcz (Poland) exposed the good practices of the Municipality of Bydgoszcz on the field of seniors' policies and the ways and means to use the town twinnings, in which the Municipality of Bydgoszcz is involved, as a tool for active ageing. Mrs Dybowska talked particularly about the town twinning her Municipality developed with German Cities. Thirdly, Mirela Muca from the Association of Albanian Municipalities gave the conclusions and recommendations developed during the conference on “The Role of the Local Government Authorities Units in Offering Social Services - Ageing "organised in Tirana on 9th-10th May 2012 within the project VIT. Mrs Muca sayed (qui link al pdf: Albania -good practices ALDA_8 June 2012)that this conference had an important echo and aroused a strong interest of public and private organisations in Albania since it was the first event organised on these tackled issues. She also presented good practices on senior policies in two Albanian municipalities: Tirana and Kamza. Finally, Kristine Kulite, specialist of foreign affairs in Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, and Dianela Stanculescu, from the Association of Romanian Municipalities, shared good practices of Latvian and Romanian Municipalities respectively to enhance active ageing and fight against senior’s isolation through different kind of activities and public policies.

The last part of the conference was dedicated to local good practices on active ageing. Mr Ugo Lupatelli, President of the University of Third Age of Trieste, took the floor to introduce his organisation created in 1982 and aiming at maintaining elderly active in their communities through numerous and diversified activities. Then Mattia Vinzi, President of the association Exist, showed a short video on the project "Together we grow", granted by the Europe for Citizens Programme under the action 4-Remembrance, and which gathered people of all ages around the idea to keep together people, facts and memories from the Cross Border Regions of the Eastern Border and to reflect about the everyday life on the borders facing with the crimes of Nazism and Stalinism. Finally Antonella Valmorbida, Director of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies, concluded and sayed that the need of exchange of good practices and experiences is very pregnant especially on the field of active ageing, that is the project VIT is so much important. Several attending person took the microphone to express their gratitude to organisers for having chosen this
subject and stressed again the important role of Local Authorities and Civil Society Organisations in making elderly active in their local communities.

ALDA AT THE TRAINING OF TRAINERS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN BAKU (azerbaijan). 18-22 June 2012

Supported by the British Council and in cooperation with its Azerbaijan member, the Economic Research Center from Baku, ALDA took part in the Training of Trainers for Local Authorities and Civil Society in Baku (Azerbaijan) from the 18th to the 22n of June 2012. Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA, was the main trainer.

The programme is developing the capacities of LAs and CSOs representatives engaged in a programme that aims to strengthen NGO/municipal cooperation. The five days training was based on shared experiences from the ALDA network and European best practices of Citizens' participation. A particular attention was given to the opportunities offered by the Code of Good Practices on Citizens' participation of the Conference of the INGOs of the Council of Europe. The participants were engaged in active exercises to improve their skills as trainers, too.

The programme is included, for ALDA, in the general activities to strengthen local democracy and governance and citizens' participation in Southern Caucasus. Since 2010, ALDA is promoting initiatives to develop a possible Local Democracy Agency programme in Azerbaijan.

NEW ENTREPRENEURS WAYS. ALDA AND STUDIO PROGETTO SEMINAR IN ARZIGNANO (I). 11-16 June 2012

ALDA is now implementing in the city of Arzignano the seminar “NEW”, first phase of the one-year project “New Entrepreneurs Ways”. The topic of the project, developed in the framework of the Youth in Action Programme and led by the Municipality of Arzignano, is youth entrepreneurship.

The second step of “New Entrepreneurs Ways” will consist of six National Youth Initiatives (one for each partner country), that will make young people be directly and actively involved in activities managed by themselves for developing their initiatives, entrepreneurial spirit and creativity.

The third phase of the project will consist of a trans-national Youth Exchange in Pelhřimov, Czech Republic: through “discovery visits”, workshops, debates and role playing activities it will provide the participants with a concrete experience about the situation of work, employment and entrepreneurship in Europe. At the end of the project, a publication will be produced to promote its tangible results and outcomes.

The seminar, organized by ALDA and Cooperativa Studio Progetto, is seeing the participation of young people from Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy and Malta. The participants are being involved in debating about entrepreneurship and youth employment with a creative and international approach.

The active collaboration of the local economic fabric has allowed the development of some strongly formative activities, such as the round table “NEW entrepreneurship today: utopia or reality?”, in which various local entrepreneurs and experts on company start-up were involved: Andrew Arduini from Editrice Millennium, Alessandro Fracasso from Italian Power Company, Filippo Storti from Manostorti, Patrizia Bernardini from Centro di Produttività Veneto, Massimo Avantaggiato from UNISCO and professor Roberto Ricciuti from the University of Verona. The round table was organized by Marco Boaria from ALDA and Andrea Rilievo and Lara Lupo from Cooperativa Studio Progetto, and was centered around the meaning of being an entrepreneur today and the role
MEETING OF THE MACEDONIAN MUNICIPALITIES WHICH COOPERATE WITH MUNICIPALITIES FROM LOWER NORMANDY (SKOPJE JUNE 12, 2012)

The Macedonian municipalities of the decentralised cooperation project between the French region Lower Normandy and Macedonia met on June 12, 2012 in Skopje. The meeting was organised by the Project’s Office in Skopje, in charge of the technical support of the cooperation between the cities, and by the Association of the Units of Local Self-government of the Republic of Macedonia.

The meeting was an excellent opportunity for the Macedonian municipalities to present their projects and upcoming activities, to discuss about the cooperation with the municipalities from Lower Normandy and to identify new areas and common interest to cooperate. The Macedonian municipalities show real initiative to further enhance the cooperation in other areas. The main domains of the cooperation between the cities are: tourism, youth, culture, heritage and waste management.

Another meeting is foreseen for September 2012 which will take place after the final steering committee for the Decentralised cooperation programme. Town twinning as a segment in the Decentralised cooperation between Lower Normandy and Macedonia builds up contacts and friendship with communities from the two territories and promotes better understanding. The Programme for Decentralised cooperation is coordinated by ALDA, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies.

For further information please consult the website of the Cooperation programme, or contact Ivana Dimitrovska ivana.dimitrovska@aldaintranet.org.

TWO EUROPE FOR CITIZENS PROGRAMME’S INFO-DAY AND TIC-TAC PROJECT EVENTS IN GAZI BABA AND VALANDOVO, MK. (12 AND 14 JUNE 2012)

Center for Institutional Development-CIRa organised two info days for presenting Citizens for Europe Program and Active Citizenship to citizens of Macedonian municipalities within the ALDA project TIC-TAC (Training, Information, Cooperation - Towards Active Citizenship). The first “Info Day” has been organized in Skopje (hotel Kontinental) on 12 June 2012, in partnership with the Municipality of Gazi Baba, one of the Municipalities in the city of Skopje, capital of Macedonia.

The second “Info Day” has been organized on 14 June 2012 in the Municipality of Valandovo (restaurant Klaringo), located on south part of Macedonia.

Mayor of Valandovo, together with the Executive Director of CIRa, had an introduction speech to the participants, about importance of the active citizenship concept as well as possibilities for participation in the Citizens for Europe Program.

The goal of those two sessions was to present the best practices of the model of Active Citizenship to citizens, and to present the Citizens for Europe Program, in order to enable them to practice and use this opportunity for public participation in solving the community problems.

This two events were organized as joint events together with on-going Community Forum Program process for fostering citizen participation implemented by CIRa in those two municipalities.
"RELEASE THE WILL POWER", A LOCAL EVENT IN SLOVENIA OF ALDA VIT PROJECT. (Novo mesto, 15 - 16 June 2012)
The Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo mesto organised an international workshop, within the project VIT-Very Important Twinning, Volunteering in Town. The event entitled "Release the will power" took place in Novo mesto on 15-16 June. This project aims at promoting volunteering in towns, addressing this issue from a participatory perspective. In particular, the project VIT wishes to create a platform involving different types of stakeholders that will encourage and revitalize twinning as a tool for long-lasting cooperation by promoting the EU values as democracy, volunteering and citizen participation.

The event in Slovenia entitled "Release the will power" aimed at presenting examples of a good practice in the field of minorities integration and at emphasising the role of voluntary work as a tool for gaining intercultural competences.

The program addressed the following topics: “How citizens, through volunteering, may contribute to the enhancement of the governance of the communities in the enlarged Europe”, How “citizens volunteers” may successfully contribute to town-twinning, and “The European Year for Active Ageing and International Solidarity”.

For more information, please contact Marine Henry, ALDA’s project manager (marine.henry@aldaintranet.org).

INVITATION NOW OPEN TO APPLY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM (29-30 NOVEMBER 2012, SWEDEN)

The Steering Committee of the EaP Civil Society Forum is now inviting all interested parties to submit expressions of interest to participate in the fourth meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in Sweden in November 2012.

The submission of expressions of interest is a necessary step in the selection process to participate in the EaP CSF meeting.

For further information please visit the EaP Civil Society Forum website.

The meeting will be made possible thanks to the support of the European Commission/European External Action Service and the support of Sweden’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Submissions of expressions of interest (see application form attached) should be completed in English or Russian and sent before midnight CET, 18 June 2012, to the contact e-mail address: applications@eap-csf.eu

The first EaP CSF took place in Brussels on 16-17 November 2009 and gathered more than 200 CSOs. During the Forum, participants elected the CSF Steering Committee and tasked it with the responsibility of developing a procedure for selection of the participants for the next Forum. The CSF Steering Committee elaborated the procedure that was applied in the process of selection of the participants to the second meeting of the EaP CSF, which was held in Berlin on 18-19 November 2010, and to the third meeting held in Poznan on 28-30 November 2011. The fourth meeting of the EaP CSF will be held in Sweden on 29-30 November 2012.

The procedure for selection can be found in the call for expressions of interest, duly updated in line with the emergence of national platforms, the need for more explicit criteria to be shared with applicants to ensure the transparency of the process, and to reflect the increase from four to five working groups.
“LOCAL PARTICIPATORY ACTION AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT”. A POST GRADUATE COURSE AT IUAV UNIVERSITY OF VENEZIA (Academic year 2012-2013)

It’s possible to subscribe (until July 12) to the twelfth edition of the post-graduate specialization course on “Local participatory action and sustainable urban development”.

The course is organised by the University IUAV of Venice, which will host the didactic activities, in collaboration with the Department of Architecture and Planning at the Politecnico of Milan and with the sponsorship of Italian Local Agenda 21. The training project aims to deepen the new skills and knowledge required for professionals who plan and design interventions for local or urban development, and local administrators and technicians who work within a strategic, intersectoral and participatory action. The course trains professionals to be able to activate and manage paths on participatory urban, environmental and social issues. It is particularly aimed at engineers, managers and officials of governments or private companies, third sector professionals and recent graduates who wish to enrich their knowledge on methods and techniques for listening and being involved on the construction of shared strategies and choices, on participation in planning policies, programs and projects.

The course is reserved to graduates with at least a three years bachelor degree, or equivalent European title. Additional information are available at www.azionelocale.net. Information on terms and forms are available at: http://www.iuav.it/master/.

Participants have the opportunity to gain academic credits and an to participate to an internship.

ALDA AT “THE GREAT DEBATE: SUSTAINABILITY IN THE EU”. 1 -3 June Aarhus, Dk

From Friday June 1 to Sunday June 3, ALDA attended the Global Citizen’s conference “Solutions by Re-thinking” at the Aarhus University, Denmark. The “Great Debate” was promoted and organized by Global Citizen in connection to the Danish EU Presidency and with the support of the European Commission through the programme Europe for Citizens. (Foto: www.au.dk/Roar Lava Paaske/AU Kommunikation/).

The meeting gathered together more than 400 interested citizens - representing organisations, associations, companies, parties, think tanks and universities, who debated about the problems and possibilities we face in Europe towards 2050: what are the key problems we need to tackle? what do the solutions look like? who should make it happen?

The meeting was particularly successful thanks to the intense and untraditional format that allowed and facilitated the development of a broad range of suggestions and ideas for tomorrows’ solutions. In order to reach this objective, 35 working groups focused on different specific problems within the areas of economy, demography, environment and social issues were created in order to find new solutions issues through a bottom-up approach.

In particular, Marco Boaria, Resources and Development Unit Coordinator of ALDA, participated to the working group focused on participatory democracy, one of the core issues of ALDA, contributing thus to the vivid debate and exchange and bringing to the fore the relevant expertise and experiences ALDA has gained on this field.

Furthermore, there were, among the others, key note speeches by Nicolai Wammen, the Danish Minister for European Affairs, and Mr. Sony Kapoor from the international Think Tank Re-Define. The outcomes of the event will be available on the Global Citizen’s Facebook site.
The stakeholders’ conference the “Local and Regional Dimension of the Eastern Partnership” took place in Brussels at the Committee of the Regions on Wednesday 30th of May and gathered EU officials, academics working in the area, representatives of civil society as well as member states and partner countries diplomats.

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum subgroup on Local Government and Public Administration Reform participated both in the stakeholder meeting and the following CORLEAP bureau meeting.

This event was devoted to the latest development of the EaP policy, future work of the Conference of regional and local authorities for Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) and practical implication of the EaP policy for the sub-national level of the partner countries.

The first session dealt with the European Neighbourhood Policy Road Map 2012-2013. The second session described a situation of local and regional authorities in Eastern Partnership countries. The main topics were equivalence of financial resources and task devolution in partner countries and development of local democracy as seen from the perspective of partner states. The last session gave an account of funds available for local and regional authorities from the Eastern Partnership countries.

Speakers comprised representatives of European External Action Service, European Commission as well as the CORLEAP Bureau members from partner countries.

As members of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership (CSF EaP) and on behalf of the subgroup of the working group 1 on Local Government and Public Administration Reform, ALDA presented on behalf of the subgroup the position paper addressed to the CORLEAP Bureau members. In this paper the subgroup proposed CORLEAP to work on a joint proposal regarding fiscal decentralisation in Eastern Partnership countries. The proposal was well received and the possibilities of agreeing on such a joint initiative are now being discussed.

Miroslav Kobasa from Lev Sapieha Foundation in Belarus, Samir Aliyev from the NGO Alliance For Municipality Development in Azerbaijan and Ihor Abramiuk from the Public Council of National Agency for Public Service in Ukraine presented their perspectives on the developments in their countries during the stakeholder meeting. During the Bureau meeting David Tumanyan from the Communities Finance Officers Association in Armenia and Veaceslav Bulat from the Institute for Urban Development in Moldova presented the situation regarding fiscal decentralisation in their countries. The participation of the participants from the Civil Society Forum was supported by The International Renaissance Foundation in Ukraine, the City of Chisinau, ALDA and the European Commission.

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ALDA JOINS THE CIME - CONSIGLIO ITALIANO DEL MOVIMENTO EUROPEO

ALDA, with its office in Vicenza, joined the membership of the CIME - Consiglio Italiano del Movimento Europeo. This step want to makes more systematic and synergic the common activities in Italy, in particular in view of the upcoming Year on Active Citizenship 2013.

The two organisation will join their efforts to promote the European values and a stronger involvement of citizens in the EU policies, also by acting jointly in Italy.
ALDA will hold 2 Sessions of 5 days intensive training course on the themes of “Citizens participation and funding opportunities to support participative initiatives”, that will take place in Strasbourg, the “Capital of Europe”, 14-18 January 2013 and 11 – 15 March 2013.

Eligible applicants are citizens of EU 27 Countries, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Croatia and Macedonia.

The course aims at deepen knowledge about the concept of active citizenship and participation in the European context, encouraging participants to take part to the social and political life of their communities with a stronger commitment and more efficient means.

The course foresees to give, as well as theoretical contents, practical notions on the funding opportunities available to support community sector. The participants are expected during the activities to learn how to develop a successful project in the framework of the different actions of the Europe for Citizens Programme and other funding sources related to citizens initiatives.

The course is open to a variety of participants among which professionals and volunteers involved in organisations/institutions management, trainers, careers officer, managers of schools/organisations offering adult education, non-teaching administrative staff, members of students/teachers councils in adult education, inspectors, teachers ect.

The initiative is recognised by the European Union as a Grundtvig in Service Training Course. The participants are therefore warmly invited to apply for a Grundtvig grant, which would enable them to cover their travel, accommodation and course fees expenses.

Soon more information in the homepage of www.alda-europe.eu.

ALDA Alliance WTD, Working Together for Development, has been selected by the European Commission to be included in the next European Development Days programme. EDD 2012 will take place at the Tour & Taxis venue in Brussels, Belgium (16-17 October 2012).

ALDA will organize a creative laboratory conceived as a learning café session aiming at brainstorming and proposing recommendations integrating the contributions of experts and practitioners on the advantages of creating real synergies between LAs and CSOs in development cooperation. In order to achieve its main objective, the WTD Working Together for Development learning café is structured in a dynamic and creative way, which allows not only experts but also practitioners to have a real contribution to the formulations of recommendations. The learning café method allows having informal discussions on themes that are usually threaded in a very formal way. In this manner, WTD learning café wants to formulate recommendations responding to 6 key themes identified as the main features characterizing the joint involvement of LAs and CSOs in development cooperation processes.

For more information please contact Alfonso Aliberti, Project Manager of WTD, at alfonso.aliberti@aldaintranet.org.
NEWS FROM LDAs

“STRANI - VARI”, SUMMER CENTER FOR CHILDREN, IN ZAVIDOVIĆI AGAIN. PROJECT IMPLEMENTED THROUGH THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY

“Strani – Vari”, summer recreational centers for children from 1st to 5th grade of elementary school, will be held traditionally in the elementary schools of Zavidovići again this summer. The implementation of this project is enabled by Italian organisations through the ADL Zavidovici, and Ceker Association.

This year “Strani – Vari” will be held in the period from July 23rd to August 3rd 2012 in two city elementary schools, and also the schools in Brezik, Hajderovići, Gostovići and Kovači. The activities with children will be organised as games and workshops. The participation of children in the summer recreational centers is free of charge.

The project will be held by educators from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy and Turkey. Specialist educated animators will take part in the activities again this year. The children in the summer school will be leaded by pedagogues, professors and teachers.

The summer recreational center “Strani – Vari” has the aim to educate children to have better relation with themselves and the environment, to develop their social skills and have fun during the summer.

LDA OSIJEK: THE EUROPE DAY IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN TENJA

On the occasion of marking of the Europe Day, on 8th May LDA Osijek volunteers held 4 out of 10 EU workshops that will take place in Osijek' primary schools. The workshops are part of an EU Practicum – a second module of the project entitled Volunteers – EU Promoters in Community.

The workshops aiming to introduce main European symbols and values were conducted by Domagoj Barišić, Kristijan Barišić, Marijana Bundić and Katarina Stanić and they were implemented in 3rd and 4th class of this primary school. Through coloring, songs and games, pupils had the opportunity to learn something new but also to show us that they are real experts and promoters of the European Union. We were welcomed by the pupils and school staff and we believe that the workshops and activities have been amusing for all of them.

We are looking forward to more EU workshops to take place in the primary schools of Mladost and Jagoda Truhelka and we expect more fun and laughter during this special European week!

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCIES - MARKING THE DAY OF EUROPE. 9th of May

On the 9th of May 1950, Robert Schuman presented his proposal on the creation of an organised Europe, indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. Today the 9th of May, the “Europe Day”, has become a European symbol and the occasion for activities and festivities that bring Europe closer to its citizens and European peoples closer to one another.
The Local Democracy Agencies marked 9th of May by organizing different public events in their local communities to help increase the level of information on different aspects of EU integration. This year particular focus was on youth and EU active citizenship, while also during the week a wide range of cultural programmes promoting the co-operation links with EU counterparts was organized in the cities all across the Western Balkans. In Croatia – LDA Verteneglio, Sisak and Osijek organised cultural events gathering young people and volunteers, quiz for the secondary school students, public debates gathering citizens from all sections of local community.
Marking the Day of Europe has become a part of regular annual activities of the LDA-s in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia, taking place in Zavidovici, Mostar, Prijedor, Subotica and Nis. During the week LDA Mostar organised a series of local events gathering citizens of diverse ethnic background to promote good local neighbors’ days, in Subotica a public round table on interculturalism and good governance took place and the public NGO fair organized with the support of EU Delegation in Serbia took place in the main city square.

CALL FOR PARTNERS

Europe for Citizens programme Action 1 Active Citizens for Europe - Measure 1.2: Thematic Networking of Twinned Towns
Deadline of the call - 01/09/2012
Deadline for sending your expression of interest - 02/07/2012
Location - an EU member State, Croatia, Republic of Macedonia, Albania.

Visegrad Fund - Eastern Partnership Program - Standard grants
Deadline of the call - 15/09/2012
Deadline for sending your expression of interest - 02/07/2012
Location - Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine.

United States Institute of Peace - USIP 2012 Annual Grant Competition
Deadline of the call - 01/10/2012
Deadline for sending your expression of interest - 01/07/2012
Location - -