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## **ALDA in the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership Steering Committee**

On the 15 and 16 November 2009, The Association of Local Democracy Agencies attended the first meeting that launched the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership. The organisation was prepared by the DG Relex of the European Commission. The event was of major relevance and gathered 200 selected NGOs from the six partner countries from the Partnership (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia). During the 2 days meeting, representatives of the civil society organisations that have been selected by the Steering Committee discussed in working groups and make recommendations. The four working groups were divided as follows:

- a) Democracy and Democratic values
- b) Economic integration and convergence with EU policies
- c) Environment, climate change and energy security
- d) Contacts between people

The important element of the first meeting of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership was the appointment of the speaker representing the forum, Mr Siarhiey Mackeievic, Chairman of the Assembly of NGOs from Belarus, and the election of 17 members of the Steering Committee during the Plenary of the second day. A group of 17 people (7 from EU and 10 from the region) will to organise the Forum and interact with the EU institutions and relay with the other NGOs. The director Mrs Antonella Valmorbida, and ALDA, was elected as one of the Steering Committee members.

The active participation of ALDA in the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership reinforces its commitment to develop ties with and support the civil society in the 6 countries of the Partnership. ALDA is already working in Georgia through the Local Democracy Agency of Kutaisi established in 2006 and which is actively implementing capacity building programmes for local authorities and Non Government

Organisations, promoting active citizenship, good governance, human rights and supporting cross-border and regional co-operation. ALDA is also currently implementing a project in Belarus entitled "Reinforcing Actions of capacity building for civil society" (REACT).

For more information about the Civil Society Forum and the Eastern Partnership, please visit the Commission's webpage dedicated to it:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/civil\\_society/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/index_en.htm)

And for more information about ALDA please visit our website:  
<http://alda-europe.eu>

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