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## **PRESS RELEASE**

***International conference in Kutaisi (30<sup>th</sup> of November – 1<sup>st</sup> of December), promoted by ALDA (Association of Local Democracy Agencies), Council of Europe, GTZ, NALAS and LDA Georgia***

### **COOPERATION BETWEEN ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES SHARED EXPERIENCE HELPS TO BRING SOUTH CAUCASUS CLOSER TO EUROPE**

The Governor of Imereti Region (Georgia), Mr Lasha MAKATSARIA, together with Mrs Antonella CAGNOLATI, Director of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe and Mr Per VINTHER, ALDA President, will open the international Conference on “Cooperation for local government development in South Caucasus”, that will be held in Kutaisi (30<sup>th</sup> of November – 1<sup>st</sup> of December).

The Conference is promoted by **ALDA** (Association of Local Democracy Agencies), the **Council of Europe**, **GTZ** (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit), **NALAS** (Network of Local Authorities Associations of South Eastern Europe) and **LDA Georgia**.

Mr Günther KRUG, Former Vice president of the Congress and member of the Berlin House of Representatives, and Per Vinther, ALDA President, will conclude the Conference.

This is the second Conference in Kutaisi in the framework of the project “Support to Local Democracy in Southern Caucasus”, promoted by ALDA and NALAS and supported by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

Its main objective is to focus on what is needed and which steps can be taken to support the development of the local government in South Caucasus.

“We believe that the cooperation and experience we can offer through the network of Municipalities, NGOs and other partners we have throughout Europe can provide a great benefit for the development of Local governance in South Caucasus” states Mr Per Vinther, ALDA President presenting the Conference.

“This cooperation and experience sharing is important –says Mrs Antonella Valmorbida, ALDA Director- not only for the local government development in South Caucasus, but also for a wider knowledge and understanding of the South Caucasus countries to be



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brought to European municipalities. The exchange in both directions helps to bring South Caucasus closer to Europe”.

During the conference local government representatives from several European countries and Associations in South Eastern Europe will present their experiences and ideas (please read the annex Agenda).

ALDA considers its work in South Caucasus to be very important and among its top priorities. During the past year ALDA has been very active in the Eastern Partnership process and has built the basis for an increase of activities in South Caucasus. LDA Georgia has been working successfully in Kutaisi for more than four years now and ALDA is deeply engaged in making the opening of new LDAs in Armenia and Azerbaijan possible in the next future..

Kutaisi, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2010

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