



**Siège c/o Conseil de l'Europe**  
Avenue de l'Europe – 67075 Strasbourg – France

**Ufficio in Italia**  
Viale Mazzini, 225 – 36100 Vicenza – Italia

**Office in Brussels**  
Rue de Confédérés, 47 – 1040 Brussels – Belgium

## PRESS RELEASE

**The signature of the partners' agreement for the opening of the new LDA Kosovo will be held in Peja/Pec on the 2nd August 2010, with the support of ALDA  
THE FUTURE OF KOSOVO IS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The future of Kosovo is in the European Union, like the future of the whole Balkan area. The coming signature (on the 2nd of August in Peja/Pec) of the partners' agreement for the opening of the LDA Kosovo (Local Democracy Agency) with the support of 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.

The Association of the Local Democracy Agencies will be 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 will be represented at the event by Mr. Günther Krug, (Germany), Vice-President of the Chamber of Regions of Congress and member of the Bureau of the Congress. Mr. Krug will be accompanied by Mr. Jean-Philippe Bozouls from the Congress secretariat. Mr. Krug will have an important meeting with the local authorities representatives from Kosovo and from the partners' town.

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 – 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. Now it is time for Europe to be united behind a common future."

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.



+333 90.21.45.93 +39 0444.54.01.46



+333 90.21.55.17 +39 0444.23.10.43



antonella.valmorbida@aldaintranet.org



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The previous activities of the LDA Kosovo, based in Gjilane, was under the auspices of the Association Kosovo Ensemble and Alliance Française.

The process leading towards the re-launching of the LDA Kosovo was started in November 2008. In this framework, the Municipality of Peja has renewed its own commitment in becoming host city of the LDA. ALDA has identified the new partners and the further step will be the signature of the agreement that will be held in Peja/Pec on the 2nd of August 2010.

Among the partners taking part in the signature of the agreement for the opening of the LDA Kosovo are the Region Istria (Croatia), Canton of Neuchatel (Switzerland), 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, Reggio Terzo Mondo (Kosovo and Italy), AIBI, amici dei bambini (Kosovo and Italy) and Alfa Formation (France) will be participating.

The meeting will be held in the premises of the Municipality on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Tavolo Trentino con il Kosovo in Peja/Pec, and it will be part of the activities scheduled for the celebration of the Anniversary. From Province of Trento, main partner of the partnership, is expected the President, Lorenzo Dellai.

“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.”

*Read the Draft programme for the 10th Anniversary of Tavolo Trentino con il Kosovo*

Strasbourg/Pristina, 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010



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## ABOUT ALDA

**ALDA, The Association of Local Democracy Agencies**, is an International non-governmental organization working actively to foster human rights and local democracy. Founded in 1999 as a small initiative of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to coordinate a network of Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) already in existence since 1993, ALDA is today, one of the biggest and most important NGOs connecting the local authorities and civil society involved in European Active Citizenship Programme. ALDA has over than 160 members from local and regional authorities to smaller non-governmental organisations dealing with human rights, local democracy and active citizenship.

ALDA works on strengthening European integration in different geographical areas including Caucasus, active citizenship and citizens' participation, as well as fostering equal opportunities and young policies, sustainable economic development.

The ALDA's working method is based on decentralized and multilateral cooperation (between local, national and international partners), fostering partnerships (partners exchange best practices and create common projects to reach common benefits), technical assistance and training (addressed to local authorities, associations and NGOs on capacity building).

It does this through the exchange of experience, ideas and information and it supports members to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the sector.

## ALDA PRESS OFFICE

**Testa & Rizzo Associati**  
Piazza Duca d'Aosta, 30/1  
31021 - Mogliano Veneto /TV/Italy

**Cristina Testa**  
mob: (+39) 3381576909  
e-mail: [testa@testaerizzoassociati.it](mailto:testa@testaerizzoassociati.it)  
skype: [cristina.testa.16](https://www.skype.com/people/cristina.testa.16)

**Sebastiano Rizzo**  
mob. (+39) 3356985299  
e-mail: [rizzo@testaerizzoassociati.it](mailto:rizzo@testaerizzoassociati.it)  
skype: [rizzose](https://www.skype.com/people/rizzose)



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