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PRESS RELEASE

**Visit of High Officials and MPs from Armenia to the French National Assembly, from the 5th to the 9th of July, with the support of ALDA
ARMENIA LOOKS TO EUROPE**

To give a full insight and understanding of the political systems in France, completed also by European perspective. This is the objective of a study visit to the French National Assembly and other important stakeholders of a delegation of high officials and Member of the Armenian Parliament that will take place in Paris from the 5th to the 9th of July 2010. The visit is organized by ALDA, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies that is promoting an initiative to support governance in Armenia, falling under the activity of the Academy for Educational Development of Yerervan.

The President of ALDA, M. Per Vinther, will meet them on Tuesday afternoon.

The members of the delegation will be hosted by the Ambassador of Armenia in Paris, M Vigen Tchitechian.

A special visit at the National Assembly will be organized by the Friendship group of Armenia and its Chair, M. François Rochebloine, MP of the French National Assembly. A complete picture of the different technicalities and political issues will be given to them thanks to the presentation of professors and a meeting with key stakeholders like Cidem and Ligue de l'Enseignement.

They will be introduced to the European issues at the Maison de Jean Monnet.

"This event absolutely fits into our strategy to get more involved in governance issues in Armenia", says Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida -Director of ALDA, who attended a fact finding mission two weeks ago in Yerervan- We are also receiving benefit from the good experience of our French partners in Paris". Despite the fact the mission is organized with a short delay, the quality of the meetings will be very high. The issue of human rights and media will be dealt during the week as well.

The Council of Europe will participate with the lecture of M. François Friederich, during their staying too.

For ALDA, the project is also an opportunity to cooperate with AED and with USAID, which is one of the key stakeholders in the region of Southern Caucasus in terms of support to local governance. ALDA was selected as the main stakeholder in terms of governance and quality organization that could organize such a tour. ALDA is preparing the start-up of a new Local Democracy Agency in Armenia (that will add to 12 already existing in the Balkans area, Georgia and Albania).



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The towns of Gyumri and Ijevan, in the North of Armenia, could be the local host of the Armenian LDAnew local Democracy Agency that ALDA is preparing. Both cities are interested. The French Municipalities, and in particular Valence and the Region Rhones Alpes, shown their interest on a possible cooperation in the Armenian LDA.

This progress on the identification of the local host was confirmed during a meeting of the Steering Committee for the future Assises of the Decentralized cooperation between France and Armenia, taking place in Yerevan on the 20th of June 2010, chaired by The Deputy Mayor of Grand Lyon, M. Hubert Julien La Ferrière.

ALDA will participate at the Assises of the Decentralized cooperation that will take place from the 7th to the 8th of October 2010 in Yerevan, Armenia.

On the topics of shared cooperation, ALDA will be able to explain in plenary session the objectives to be reached in the region as for as local democracy is concerned.

The Armenian delegation in Paris:

Hovhannes Margaryan, Committee Chair, Standing Committee on Territorial Management and Local Self-Government of RA NA;

Rafik Petrosyan, Deputy Committee Chair, Standing Committee on Protection of Human Rights and Public Affairs of the RA NA;

Andranik Mnatsakanyan, Expert, Standing Committee on Protection of Human Rights and Public Affairs of the RA NA;

Arpine Hovhannisyan, Adviser to the RA National Assembly Speaker;

Sirvard Gevorgyan, Adviser to the Head of Legal Department, RA NA;

Armen Galstyan, Expert, Standing Committee on Territorial Management and Local Self-Government of RA NA;

Anna Hovhannessyan, Local Expert for USAID Assistance to the RA National Assembly project.

Read the annex Draft of the programme

Strasbourg, 5 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 of European integration in different geographical areas including Caucasus, active citizenship and citizens' participation, fostering of 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 of 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 supports members to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the sector.

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