



## PRESS RELEASE

### **RECONCILING FOR THE FUTURE: EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS A Regional Conference, promoted by ALDA, will be held in Zagreb on 29th June 2010**

Regional co-operation programmes in different areas, bilateral relations and cross-border co-operation are the major preconditions to strengthen the post-conflict reconciliation process in the Western Balkans in view of the EU integration of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This will be the topic of a Regional Conference which will be held in Zagreb on the 29<sup>th</sup> June (Hotel Panorama Sheraton, Trg Krešimira Čosića 9 Zagreb) organized by ALDA, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies, within a project, where ALDA is lead partner, supported by the European Commission under the Instrument for Stability - Peace building Partnership support programme.

The Conference is the final part of a wider project within which the three country- based panel discussions were held in NIS, Serbia (December 2009), in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina (March 2010) and in Osijek (April 2010).

Some of the main actors are expected to attend the conference, including Ivo Josipovic, President of the Republic of Croatia, Paul Vandoren, Head of the Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Croatia, and Per Vinther, President of ALDA, who was a European Union Representative in Balkan area at the end of the '90s, for 7 years.

Included in the action are the representatives of civil society regional networks, local NGOs, local self-government, minority groups, experts and media to help encourage the involvement of wider range of actors at different levels in the post-conflict reconciliation.

The partners with a substantial experience already working together in cross-border and regional co-operation initiatives are: Centre for regionalism, Novi Sad, initiated the Igman initiative as a long standing regional cooperation programme connecting citizens and local communities from the war- affected zones in the former Yugoslavia.

The Centre for peace and non-violence, Osijek, initiated a range of post-conflict reconciliation programmes in Eastern Slavonia and an extensive research work and public debates on the war crimes.

Local Democracy Agencies in Nis, Osijek and Mostar established by the agreement between the Council of Europe and respective host city authorities work both locally and in the network to promote inter-cultural dialogue and citizen participation in policy/decision making.

The entire action of the project is designed to help to address the post-conflict reconciliation process between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia with

particular emphasis on assessing the achieved level and quality of inter-state relations in view of the progress made toward EU integration. Based on participation of a wide range of key actors, activities also aim to address a number of challenges burdening the relations between Croat, Serb and Bosnian Muslim communities at different tiers of government within respective countries, at bilateral/cross-border and multilateral level. Through a comprehensive set of activities, the project intends both to build the capacity of non-state actors operating at local/regional level in facilitating post-conflict reconciliation, and to support their networking and coordination.

Strasbourg, 26.06.2010

See the Conference Panel here enclosed.

The Conference Panel (in progress)

**VENUE OF THE CONFERENCE:** [www.hotel-fourpointspanorama.com](http://www.hotel-fourpointspanorama.com)

**TIME: TUESDAY, 29TH JUNE 2010, FROM 10.30 – 18.00**

**PROGRAMME:**

10:30 Registration of participants

11:00 – 11.30 Opening session and presentation of the Project:

**Per Vinther, President of ALDA**

**Katarina Kruhonja, Director of the Centre for peace and non-violence**

11.30 – 12.30 Guest speakers:

- **Dr. Ivo Josipovic, President of the Republic of Croatia (\*)**

- **Mr. Paul Vandoren, the Head of the Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Croatia (\*)**

12.30 – 13.00 Coffee break

**13.00 – 14.00 PANEL 1:** *Fostering the regional co-operation of both state actors at different tiers of government and non-state actors for effective reconciliation in the region; Building a shared awareness on causes and consequences of the recent conflict in the Western Balkans (Results achieved, challenges ahead):*

*Mr. Zoran Pusic, Civic Committee for Human Rights, Zagreb*

*Ms. Ana Makic, PR Communication Officer, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia*

*Mr. Vehid Sehic, President of Citizens Forum, Tuzla*

*Mr. Christopher Fry, ICTY Liaison officer in Croatia*

*Moderator: Mr. Per Vinther*

14.00 – 15.00 Lunch break

**15.00 – 16.30 PANEL 2** *Civil society actors networking for confidence building and reconciliation at regional level .Raising awareness on interethnic confidence building and reconciliation as one of the main preconditions for the EU integration perspective of these countries (Results achieved, challenges ahead)*

*Mr. Milorad Pupovac, Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb (\*)*

*Mr. Aleksandar Popov, Director of Centre for regionalism, Novi Sad*

Mr. Slavo Kukic, Professor, Mostar University  
Mr. Bosko Kovacevic, Centre for multiculturalism, Subotica,  
Moderator: Ms. Katarina Kruhonja

16:30-17.30 DEBATE

17.30 – 18.00 CONCLUDING SESSION, Recommendations for follow-up activities  
Moderators: Miljenko Turniski, Stanka Parac Damjanovic

(\* *to be confirmed*)

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