



PRESS RELEASE

LOWER NORMANDY REGION AND REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA TOWARDS A NEW THREE-YEAR COOPERATION PROJECT WITH COORDINATION OF ALDA

To prepare the action plan 2010-2013 of decentralized cooperation project initiated since the 2006, the 16th and 17th of September, the different actors of cooperation between Basse-Normandie and Macedonia met in the Abbaye aux Dames in Caen.

Mr. Musa Xhaferri, Minister of Local Self-governance of Macedonia and the delegation of Macedonia were welcomed to the Council of Lower Normandy Region by Alain Turret, Vice-President of the Lower Normandy Region in charge of international relations, Sabine Guichet-Lebailly, Head of Decentralized Cooperation and Human Rights Mission and Antonella Valmorbida Director of ALDA, Association of Local Democracy Agencies.

The Steering Committee of the cooperation project was held in Caen during these two days to prepare the agenda for the three years 2010-2013. It brought together all stakeholders to analyze the results over the last three years and plan strategic guidelines for 2010-2013

Democracy and development are the key values that have underpinned since the 2006 the decentralized cooperation program.

"The decentralised cooperation between Basse Normandie and Macedonia is an example of an articulated and long term strategy – states Mrs Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA –. It focuses on development and democracy both in France and in Macedonia. ALDA brought and learned a lot from this process too! We assisted the programme since 2006 and we are carrying it through the next three years. We are convinced that the whole programme would be a milestone in decentralised cooperation activities in Europe. We must underline the great network established so far with more than 80 partners involved from cultural sector to economy and agriculture. We are looking forward to the future actions."

This cooperation has started as a product of a joint effort of the two partner entities to open up to the world and to encourage their population to engage in active citizenship at local and European levels, with the aim to build up the aspect of good local governance in all areas of co-operation. The main objectives were, and still are, to reinforce the capacity of local authorities to implement the decentralisation process, to mobilize citizens, to ensure that the development is sustainable and to foster human rights.

This cooperation has been built around six pillars:

1. Local information and communication technologies (ICT): training and use of new technologies for better local governance
2. Youth, education, local and European citizenship
3. Culture: setting up of a culture policies and a platform for a dialogue and artist mobility
4. Tourism: protection of a cultural heritage and support for sustainable tourism
5. Heritage inventory and promotion
6. Agriculture and Economic Development: exchange of experience in organizing farmers



The Lower Normandy Region and Macedonian governments have decided to extend until 2013 the cooperation program, that had started with a three-year action plan developed in 2007, considering the value of its guidelines.

French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs have been financially supporting the activities of this programme, in cooperation with the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) as the lead coordinator.

Region Lower Normandy altogether with the Macedonian Ministry of Local self Governance are the political leaders of the cooperation, and as such, give the political guidelines of the cooperation between the two territories.

Since 2007, the program has built bridges between the Lower Normandy Region and Macedonia, which resulted in a sixty committed partnerships. The program has affected directly or indirectly, nearly 1.000 associations, businesses, communities or individuals in both countries. These bases should ensure strong relations between the two peoples.

ALDA has been selected as technical coordinator of this project thanks to the expertise achieved in over ten years experience in the Balkans area as far as democracy, interethnic dialogue, European integration, promotion of active citizenship and citizens' participation are concerned.

Caen, 16th – 17th September 2010

Région Basse-Normandie
Caroline MONNOT
attachée de presse
Abbaye-aux-Dames – Place Reine Mathilde
BP 523 – 14035 Caen Cedex France
Tél +33 (0)2 31 06 96 27
e-mail: c.monnot@crbn.fr

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
skype: [cristina.testa.16](https://www.skype.com/name/cristina.testa.16)