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PRESS RELEASE

In Palermo, on the 28th of October, the final conference of an international cooperation project among ALDA, Sicily Region, Municipality of Lecce and FACM (Algeria) and funded by the European Commission and the United Nations - UNDP.

ALGERIA, FROM BRAIN DRAIN TO BRAIN GAIN: THE NGOs AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES ROLE

Converting the brain drain, from Algeria to Italy and Europe, into human and economic capital, creating real prospects for improving social and economic conditions. This is the objective of a project that has involved a large number of Algerian and Italian local authorities and NGOs. The project has been coordinated and organized by ALDA, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies, and funded jointly by the European Commission and the United Nations.

The scheme was developed through training and information actions addressed both to migrants, potential or back to their country, and to local authorities in Algeria. Results and perspectives of this work will be presented on Thursday 28th October in Palermo, during a workshop promoted by the Sicilian Region and attended by a large number of the subjects involved. The event will be held in Palermo at Hotel Astoria Palace, via Montepellegrino.

Project partners are, together with ALDA, the Sicilian Region, the Regional Department for Family, Social Policies and Labour, FACME, the Algerian Forum for Citizenship and Modernity, the Municipality of Lecce, ISPRES, the Institute of Social and Economic Research (Puglia, Italy), and the Municipality of Kouba (Algeria).

The conference, which will be opened by the Regional Family, Social Policies and Labour Councillor, Andrea Piraino, the Regional Department Manager, Alessandra Russo, and Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA, will be divided into two round tables.

During the first one, entitled "From brain drain to brain gain: the role of civil society organizations and local authorities", Badis Bahri, Mayor of Hydra (Algeria), Nourredine Sbia, President of FACM, Algeria, and Jlenia Destito, IPRES, will take the floor moderated by Naciri Boumezoura, FACM.

At the second panel discussion, "Algerian immigrants in France and Italy, the role of civil society and local authorities", will participate Elizabeth Pennetta, SOUTH Association, Amina Yekhlef, the Association of Algerian immigrants in Paris and Giacomo Massimo Ciullo, Councillor of the Municipality of Brindisi.

In order to capitalize on the migration phenomenon, the project has acted in three directions.

The first one was aimed at the orientation of potential migrants, who were provided with the correct information about what really awaits them once they cross the border and with training fundamentals in relation to future employment.

The second one aimed to assist the immigrants who have lost their job owing to the worldwide



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economic crisis to return to work in Algeria, capitalizing on their experience and laying the foundations for the economic development of the Maghreb area.

The last action aimed to give to local authorities information and technical advice for managing the migration phenomenon.

In addition to moments of debate and exchange of experiences (a workshop in Lecce, and the coming conference in Palermo) the project promoted a “two career days”, each of them conceived as a career fair (first day) and pre-departure orientation seminars in two Algerian cities, and a training session in Algeria about project management and business start-ups. The training sessions will be followed up by a re-granting scheme, which will award the four best business projects from the training sessions and other proposals.

The expectations for the results of this project are high, since Algeria, at least for Italy and the Sicilian Region, in particular, is the country of the Mediterranean area with whom relationships are less established.

The Regional Labour Department has been carrying out institutional activities of orientation for immigrant workers for a long time. Through its projects, this Department has already developed some initiatives to support the migrants' work and is now managing the project "Al khantara" financed by means of PON. This scheme is aimed to make the understanding of the migration phenomenon easier and to support the integration of workers in the countries of the southern Mediterranean area.

This event was seized by ALDA, one of the leading and most important NGOs connecting local authorities and civil society involved in European active citizenship, human rights, and local democracy, to focus on its role in the MED Area. The Association aims to increase its projects in this area (currently in Algeria and Morocco) on a basis of a well defined strategy, that is what will emerge from the meeting, among the ALDA partners in MED area, taking place in Palermo on the 28th and 29th October, after the above mentioned conference.

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