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2000



# ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCIES

*Established on the initiative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe*

## Newsletter

ISSUES December 2000

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**Layout and Design :**  
Municipality of Mogliano Veneto

THE WORD OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE LDA ASSOCIATION

### LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCIES: a tool in the hands of the local authorities for the promotion of

- Gianfranco Martini -

Peace and stability in Southern and Eastern Europe. It's also the task of local authorities and non governmental organisations of the whole Europe. This view has been fully shared by the States and the organisations which signed the Stability Pact.



The Local Democracy Agencies are a concrete instrument in order to reach this difficult and delicate objective. The ambitious project started in 1993 and it is now widespread in all the South Eastern European States (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - Serbia).

The Agencies are - following the spirit of the Stability Pact - projects based on the synergy of different contributions (funds, ideas, programmes of cities and NGOs and community based organisations).

The LDAs implement programmes for the reconstruction, from the bottom, of the civil society by working with different target groups which are the core of the development of the community : local authorities but also young people, natural leaders, journalists, women groups, other NGOs, cultural associations, minority groups. The working methods which are followed are education and training, exchanges of information and good practices and development of associations and their participation in the life of the community. The common ground of all the actions are the promotion of democracy and citizenship and the implementation of human rights and minority rights.

Each Agency implement number of projects according to the needs of the area by focusing on the refugees, for instance, or on the freedom of expression, if it's particularly relevant. The programmes depend also on the activities which could receive the support of the sponsors or the interest of the cities and NGOs

SKOPIJE, 15TH OF NOVEMBER 2000

# First steering committee of LDA related the regional project for promoting civil society and intercultural dialogue

*SUPPORTED BY THE SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT*

Thanks to the support of the Swiss Agency for Development the Association of Local Democracy Agency is implementing the regional programme for promoting civil society and intercultural dialogue. The action foresees the realisation of 8 projects (one in each LDA) dealing with relevant target groups of the civil society (journalists, women, community leaders, minorities, cultural association).

The on-going programme started with a first steering committee which was held in Skopje the 15<sup>th</sup> of November and which was attended by all the Delegates and Local Assistant of the existing LDAs.

The meeting focused on the link and co-ordination between the different programmes. This first action is a clear indicators of the fact that we are really able to work as a network. It was discussed, as requested by the Swiss Agency, the possible continuation of these projects after June 2001.

After the presentations, the discussion focuses on the co-ordination part and on the possible **links among projects**. As to the latter, the results are the following:

1. Sisak: organizations of women from Prijedor and Zavidovici will take part to the seminars. Subotica and Osijek will help in providing lecturers from Women and Human Rights Centers in Beograd, Subotica, Osijek.
2. Tuzla: Roma from Zavidovici will be informed on the activity overall and possibly take part to the meetings. A radio bridge and/or rebroadcasting of the programmes through Radio Zavidovici is foreseen, although at the moment it is not possible to assert how these costs will be covered.
3. Subotica: all Delegates and Assistants of our network will be invited to the Subotica conference; connections with Osijek and Tuzla will be established for inviting experts for the conference;

Prijedor will help in providing an expert from the Trento area.

4. Prijedor: a part of the newspaper will be on the activities of other Ldas, where possible on the issue of return. Zavidovici will exchange lecturers and students with this School.
5. Osijek: the activities will be implemented in strong connection with the Subotica and Tuzla Lda. A common participation to the roundtables may be foreseen on the basis of the revised final programme.
6. Zavidovici: the book published at the end of the project will have a common part as presentation of the whole Lda network. All Ldas will have to submit material by May-June 2001.

Coordination with the Prijedor School.

7. Ohrid: involvement of all Ldas in the electronic debates on the basis of the topics decided.

Concerning the **coordination**, the results of the discussion among all participants to the meeting were:

- A second Steering Committee among all Ldas should be foreseen for June 2001 as evaluation of the 8 projects, the regional dimension of the programme, which new projects may be presented to the Swiss Agency.



STRASBOURG – 12TH OF DECEMBER 2000

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ASSOCIATION

### Strengthening and ensuring the continuity of the whole network of the Agencies of the Local Democracy Agencies

The Association will hold its **annual General Assembly** in Strasbourg on 12 December 2000. On the previous day, the First Annual seminar on “the role of the local and regional authorities in the integration of South-Eastern Europe” will be organised. This seminar should enable an exchange of views between the Delegates and their collaborators, the LDA partners and guest from the European institutions. It is sought to promote a discussion with the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of Regions and the Stability Pact on South-Eastern Europe’s future.

**Ambassador Benoit Cardon De Lichtbuer**, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the Council of Europe and representative of the Committee of Minister to the Association, **Mrs Doris Pack**, Member of the European Parliament and **Mr Jean-Louis Laurens**, Council of Europe Director for Strategic Planning will address the assembly. Associations of local Authorities and the Assembly of European Regions will be invited to make contributions to the debate. The conclusions of the seminar should help drafting the future orientations of the Association.

The General Assembly will be invited to appoint its organs and select its Governing Board, its Bureau and its representatives (President, Vice-President, Executive Secretary). Apart from these institutional tasks, the Assembly will examine the functioning of the LDA pro-

gramme, including the issue of the legal status of the Agencies in the different countries of action and the statutes of the LDA Delegates and their collaborators.

A further challenge will consist in launching new LDA initiatives in Southern Serbia and Montenegro, at the request of the local authorities. This challenging and important development of the programme will require to expand the financial resources of the programme, which are limited for the moment. A tribute should here be paid to the Irish and the Swiss authorities, which are making an important contribution to the programme.



Antonella Valmorbida

Establishing new contacts, especially in co-operation with the Association of local and regional authorities operating in many European countries, will be on the agenda of the Association. In fact, for the future, the optimum solution that could be offered to the Agencies would be a strong and substantial support from various partners (cities, regions NGOs and European institutions and countries).

The objective of the Association is to ensure the continuity of the Agencies’s work performed in South Eastern Europe, with a strong support of the LDA partners and co-operation with further actors in the region...The General Assembly will give the first impetus for next year’s action plan !

**Antonella Valmorbida**  
*Executive Secretary of the Association*

Programme  
2001  
to be  
financed !

#### Conference on the role of the Local Democracy Agencies and the participation of the european partners

This year, the first meeting of this kind was organised by two cities, partners of the LDA in Sisak: Marcon and Mogliano Veneto. This meeting introduced the new Association and explain the role of the LDAs and the possible partnernship to numbers of participants. The costs of this event were supported by the city partners, as contribution in kind

#### Annual conference for the participants to the training session of the LDAs

In 2001, thanks to the support of Local Government Initiative from Budapest, the Association will organise a programme of Training of Trainers for the Delegates and their Local Assistant. This will be followed by a training for local authorities in each LDAs. Our purpose is also to organise a synthesis - a annual conference- with all the participants to this training session. The local authorities of the States of South and Eastern Europe where the

# Z̄ĀV̄ĪD̄ŌV̄ĪC̄Ī

# Š̄ĪŠ̄ĀK̄

## From Skopje to Cremona via Zavidovici

Back from the **Skopje Forum**, I would like to start this brief updating on the activities of the Zavidovici Lda by thanking all of you who helped us in taking part to this important event. The Congress, the Fedre Foundation and the city of Skopje, of course, for inviting us, but also a very special thank to Vlado Ristovski, of the CoE staff in Skopje, and to my colleague Mirijana Lozanoska, for bringing us to **Ohrid** to visit that beautiful city hosting the Lda. I always find it interesting to have a look at other Ldas and watching how other delegates have organised their offices and their work...

For us, taking part to the Skopje Forum meant indeed reinforcing our network, establishing new contacts and being able to promote the Local Democracy Agencies' project overall. I believe that we achieved some good results. For the future, we have to take further into consideration how to consolidate the Agencies, by being able to provide basic means for action to all, those who have a strong partners' support and to those who have not.

Partnership is the basis of our programme, and a strong partnership enables us to promote democracy not only in the Balkan area, but also at home. Indeed, our next activity will not be in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but in Italy, and I would like to use the space of this newsletter for inviting you all to Cremona for the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, to the international conference organized by the Zavidovici Lda, together with the Provincia and the Comune of **Cremona**. The conference, "**Local governments, actors of international relations**", will be focusing on the Local Democracy Agencies project: decentralized cooperation and as a tool for the promotion of human development, democracy and human rights. The conference will take place at the Municipality Hall of Cremona, Salone dei Quadri, P.zza del Comune 1, from 3 to 7 p.m.

**A delegation coming from the Municipality and the Citizen Committee of Zavidovici will be with us in those days, taking part to the conference and to various meetings with schools, youth, trade unions and local associations. In the morning, a roundtable between Italian and Bosnian local elected representatives will take place in the frame of the project financed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe "Local Authorities and Local Democracy". This project enabled us to promote exchanges of knowledge and experience between the different European local governments. After having held two roundtables in Zavidovici, it is now Cremona's turn, and the topic of this meeting will be: "Local Governments: consultation, participation and information".**

Meanwhile in **Zavidovici**, the Citizen Committee has prepared and presented our next **Confidence Building Measures programme**. It will cover a broad range of activities all in the field of the promotion of a truly multiethnic society, from the point of view of woman, youth, returnees and of the relations between Roma and majority groups.

I will keep you informed on this project and on the training for young journalists financed by the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development which was presented on the last issue of our newsletter, as on the many other activities which we are planning for next year...

For the meantime, I wish to all of you a good work!

## Gender issue as the main programme for the next months !

The Local Democracy Agency in Sisak is being implementing from December a "gender issue project" which could benefit from the funds of the Swiss Agency for Development within the Stability Pact framework.

This is really a great opportunity for us to launch a pilot-project in the area of Sisak-Moslavina County, where our work is mainly focused and where the "gender issue" is something still "untouched" and not very dealt with as such both by the local governments and by the civil society.

Actually, many are the international and local NGOs in Croatia which are addressing women in many of their activities, but the area under our concern, which is mainly Sisak and the Banovina area, lacks of such specific interventions.

Our efforts are directed in providing women with a forum where they can get information about the local and international legislation regarding their rights, where social operators can be trained on how improve and implement the protection of women rights, where women can get the tools, the skills and knowledge on how to organise themselves and make their own advocacy.

In this first phase of activities we are working on a need assessment in order to design our training sessions accordingly to the real needs showed by the women we would like to involve.

Finally, our main concern is to set up the conditions for a follow-up of our activities which encompass the establishment of an Info-Point with a "direct phone line" where the people trained in our 8 month project are in the position to carry out their own Centre where women can find help, information and support.

*Michela Cavallini – Delegate*

# PRĪJĒDŌR

The local democracy agency of Prijedor  
in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Srpska

## The challenge of doing decentralised co-operation where the return process is a reality

August 2000. The first mosque in the Republic of Srpska, the Serb entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina is officially opened. Four thousand and five hundred returnees, most of them Bosniacs, are officially returned to Prijedor. They represent around the 10% of the non Serb population that was used to live in the Municipality of Prijedor before the war.

But in Prijedor is living also a significant number of Serbian refugees and dps that are temporarily living in the houses of the population victim of the ethnical cleansing, or in the five collective centres still hosting, in really sub human conditions, 5 years after the end of the war, one thousand people, most of all elders. And the general situation about economy, employment, public services and infrastructures is very hard.

Our LDA is trying to play the role of mediator between the Council of Europe and the Italian, French and Spanish local Governments and associations and the local government and the actors of the civil society of Prijedor promoting the restart of dialog and the rebuilding of the capacities.

A project of decentralised co-operation with targets the members of the local government, the local associations, the National Park of Kozara, citizens with particular attention to the poor, communities of returnees, students, young people and schools and agricultural producers.

The LDA of Prijedor has been opened in February 2000 but the Association Program Prijedor, composed by fourteen towns of the Province of Trento together with local associations, the partner leader, started its activity in this area in 1996. Today also the Deputation of Cordoba in Spain and the Canton de Cote d'Or in France are partners of the LDA of Prijedor.

The recent agreement between the town of Sanski Most, the closest town in the Bosniacs and Croats entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the town of Prijedor, the Association Program Prijedor and the Comunità Montana del Muggello for a co-operation in the fields of infrastructures, return process and support to the economy gave the our LDA another instrument to promote dialogue an living together and to share experiences among the different region of Europe.

And the stage for young journalists about a free, independent an multiethnical information that is going to start next month with the support of the Swiss Agency for co-operation is another good opportunity to be present in this process.

**Annalisa TOMASI- Delegate**

# ŌŠĪJĒĶ

Osijek - Croatia, Tuzla - Bosnia  
and Herzegovina, Subotica -  
Serbia (FRY), Pec - Ungheria

## ON OUR WAY TOWARDS THE TRANSBOARDER CO-OPERATION

The *Transboarder Co-operation* project included so far (from July to December 2000) the organisation of four seminars. Approximately a hundred people attended those events. The participants were shared in two groups. The first was present throughout all the seminars (representatives of municipalities from Tuzla, Osijek, Subotica and Pec and their Chambers of Commerce). The other group was changing according to the topic of each meeting.

The events included the area of Danube-Sava Euroregion (Osijek - Croatia, Tuzla - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pec (Ungheria) / Subotica is not

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Training session for Delegates and Local Assistants.  
Skopje, 15-18th November 2000  
Council of Europe Information Office in Skopje

## OSIJEK

From pag. 5

yet officially part of the Euro-region). The aims of the seminars were to define the existing situation, but also to draw the possibilities of co-operation and development.

We succeeded to gather the representatives of the most important companies, national minorities and NGOs. The final goal of the last seminar will be the establishment of the Common Coordinative Body, which will continue to co-ordinate the activities, collect the projects and represent them and other activities for the Stability Pact or other EU funds, or other European organisations interested in co-operation with Danube-Sava Euroregion.

The LDA Osijek implemented also a *Human Rights Project*. The first activity was a prize-winning competition sent to 50 schools of Osijek and Slavonija-Baranja region, on the subject of human rights. Out of 200 literary and art works were sent. The chosen material were printed in a booklet presented to the public in October.

The second activity was a round table and a workshop on human rights for children and adults, prepared in co-operation with two NGOs.

The LDA distributed also materials on human rights. The third activity will be a batik exhibition of talented children on the topic of human rights which will take place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December (UN Human Rights Day). This exhibition will move to Vukovar, Beli Monastir, Zagreb and hopefully in Strasbourg !

**Mijlenko Turiski**

## OHRID

### Successful and impressive Youth workshop

LDA – Ohrid during this year has implemented various activities aimed at strengthening the local democracy, intercultural communication and trans-border co-operation. All activities envisaged within the projects “The differences – advantage or ‘handicap’ in the development of the contemporary democratic society” and “Capacity Building for Democracy” financed by the CBM Programme and the CLRAE of the Council of Europe, had been completed.

One seminar entitled as “The Media and minority issues”, two TV debates “From exclusion to integration”, two workshops “The role of the local media in the pre-electoral process”, two seminars “The local public services and the rights of their users”, one workshop with youth “How to live and interact with difference creatively”, three double editions of the LDA Newsletter and the LDA-Ohrid WEB site, are entirely implemented in a period of seven months.

The results from the inquires, phone-in surveys and the reactions of the citizens in our every day contacts, show that the aims were achieved successfully and there is a permanent demand for follow up.

Besides the positive results for all activities, it gives me a great pleasure to underline one of the activities that impressed me particularly. It is the Youth workshop, which was attended by fifty pupils with age between 12 and 14 years coming from seventeen different schools from the wider region of the LDA-Ohrid mandate. During three days the smile and happiness were permanently present on their faces. For three days a strong friendship was established among all of them. The workshop ended with a closing game named “Changing place”. All of them were sitting on the chairs placed in a form of cycle, and in the center was staying the expert who asked “All those who are very satisfied from this workshop, and who would like to attend again a similar workshop in organisation of LDA-Ohrid” should change the place”. In a second all of them stood up and run in other direction to change the place. This spontaneous, childish but very frank reaction was the greatest satisfaction for me as an organiser, but at the same time acknowledgement and gratitude from the youngsters for the new knowledge and friendship they have acquired during the workshop.

Working with youngsters is a great pleasure, and I hope that we will have again an opportunity in the near future to satisfy their sincere wish.

**Mirjana Lozanoska**  
Delegate

## TRAINING SESSION OF THE ASSOCIATION IN SKOPIJE 15/18 OF NOVEM-

*The Association organised a training session for the Delegates and their Assistants of the Local Democracy Agencies in Skopje on 15 and 18 November 2000.*

*Thanks to the support of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities and the FEDRE, chaired by Mr. Claude Haegi, the participants to this event attend also the Forum of Cities and Regions of South Eastern Europe.*

*The meeting was organised also thanks to the availability of the Council of Europe Information Office in Skopje. At the training session took part Mr. Max Gilbert of the Confidence Building Measures Programme of the Council of Europe which discussed with the delegates possible programmes and made a presentation of new opportunities given by the programme.*

*Those days in Skopje were extremely fruitful for the Association of the Local Democracy Agency as well as for the single agencies. Numbers of important contacts have been made for the future in terms of new co-operation, sponsorship, membership to the Association and partnership for the LDA. The Delegates met the international actors present in the area with their programmes and discussed possible common actions.*

*Thanks to a stand prepared in the Forum, the Association distributed information to the interested people and answered to the numerous questions about the activities and the role of the Agencies in the process of democratisation in the region.*

*The event in Skopje ended with a visit to the Local Democracy Agency in Ohrid attended by Mr. James Beadle, Mr. Bruno Bravetti, Mr. Andrea Rossini, Ms. Michela Cavolini, Mrs. Mirjana Lo-*

## **A great opportunity for new contacts and for promoting the Association and the work of the Agencies**

**Thanks to FEDRE for the Forum of Cities and Region of Europe and the Congress**

Here are following the main contacts established by the Association for future interests and co-operation :

**Mr Bruno Bravetti** - Municipality of Ancona (I), Head of the Mayor's Cabinet. He expressed interest and will of involving the city of Ancona in the support of a new Lda (Montenegro) and/or in the support of an already established one with a deficit of partners (Ohrid, which he had the occasion to visit and was favorably impressed, see appendix III).

**Mr James Beadle** – Local Government International Bureau (UK), Head of International Links.

**Mr Louis Roppe**, Councillor and former Mayor of Hasselt, Member of the Belgian delegation to the Congress, President of the Flemish Union of Towns and Municipalities.

**Mr Claude Haegi, Mr Francois Saint-Ouen** – Fedre Foundation

**Mr Adrian Ionescu** – Open Society Institute, Local Government and Public Service Reform Institute, Program Director Donor to one of the programmes of our Association

**Ms C. Heuvelman** – Association of Netherland Municipalities, secretary of the Network Municipal Peace Policy in the Netherlands.

**Ms Vera Budway** – East West Institute, Action Network for South Eastern Europe, Director.

**Mr Jerzy Regulski** – Foundation in Support of Local Democracy, Poland, President

**Mr Fatos Hodaj** – National Association of Albanian Municipalities, Executive Director

**Mr. Thomas Buomberger** – Stability Pact

**Mrs. Slaveya Hristova** expressed the willingness for partnership between Balkan Assist and Association of LDAs

**Mr. Dragan Damjanovski** : Exchange of experiences and future co-operation between Phare RESC-Bitola and LDA – Ohrid were discussed (meeting with Mrs. Mirjana Lozanoska)

**Mr Fernando Terry**, manager of the SYNI 2000 project.

**Mr Alessandro Perelli**, Representative of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia county

**Ms Gordana Comic**, Vice-president of the Assembly of the Autonomous Region of Vojvodina, Novi Sad.

**Ms Durica Savkov** – Pusin, Head of the Forum of Banat (part of Vojvodina),

**Mr Milan Milosevic**, President of the European Movement in Serbia, Smederevska Palanka.

**Mr Rolf Gehringer**, Municipality of Vienna, Austrian Association of Regions

**The Association will give a follow-up to all these contacts for further information and future co-operation.**

partner.

This complex, but flexible, action has the aim to change in deep the substance of the life of these communities and among the different groups. Each office changes and updates the actions following the necessity and the development, which are going on the area where they work, with efficiency and rapidity. This gives to the initiatives a particular impact.

The Local Democracy Agencies are implementing units of the Stability Pact mentioned among the other actors of the Table I : Democratisation and Human Rights. programme is today coordinated by the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies, which is reinforcing the work carried out so far by / follows the work which was, in the past, promoted by the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. The network of the Agencies includes today 60 local authorities from 13 European States and 40 associations.

Europe, today, must count on a renewed stability in Southern and Eastern Europe and on the development of the countries, which are promised to enter the EU. This objective can be reached not only with an important investment in infrastructures but it is also necessary to focus on the "good will to live together" of these populations. Without this result, there is no stability, no return of refugees, no peace and no development. This important outcome is possible only with actions of civil society of high relevance, with a long term impact and in a regional context.

**Gianfranco Martini**

*President of the Association of the Lo-*

# TO WORK WITH AN LDA: THE EXPERIENCE OF AN ITALIAN PARTNER

## Mogliano Veneto - Italy (partner leader of the LDA in Sisak - Croatia) since 1996

The involvement of many Italian cities in project of international co-operation with the local communities of the Balkan States started as an extraordinary commitment for humanitarian purposes during the most difficult phases of the war. From this particular experience followed relationships, friendships, contacts, projects and initiatives which brought to the Local Democracy Agencies. The capacity of including all those different forces and the efficiency of this strategic project with a long term impact has been fundamental in the choice of working in this way. This is an action which has the aim to involve concretely the local communities in the process of building a new European citizenship.

It has been incredible to see, in those last years of activities, how it became normal, in our city partners, for local elected people, teachers, associations and groups of volunteers, small and medium companies, cultural groups, to work in co-operation with the same actors of the Sisak area.

Exchanges, meetings, activities for education and training increased very much, in all the people involved, the awareness of a common responsibility of what happened just few hundreds kilometres far from us, beyond the border. Prejudices and difficulties were overcome in the only possible manner to do it in deep: by working together.

The investments that the Local Democracy Agency allowed us to make in the area interested by the project, at the end, have really strengthened the local communities, their capacity of self governance and the level of democracy.

This project gave us the opportunity to be and to feel a little bit more European, and we are proud of it !

**Diego Bottacin**

*Mayor of Mogliano Veneto*

### IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BE MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION !

#### Local and Regional Authorities:

1-10.000 ..... 250 Euros  
10.000 - 50.000..... 500 Euros  
50.000 – 200.000..... 1.000 Euros  
200.000 – 1.000.000.. 2.000 Euros  
1.000.000 or plus..... 4.000 Euros

NGO..... 250 Euros

Actual persons..... 50 Euros

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