



A strategy for a european basis for the Association

The General Assembly of the year 2000 confirmed the role and the importance of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies in the promotion of democracy and civil society in Southern and Eastern Europe. This first Assembly started its work with 40 members which includes cities, regions, non governmental organisations and individuals. This membership is a part of the wider participation of actors which take part in building up each single Agency. The basis of the Association is the mirror of its richness : the capacity of bringing together local authorities which are also supported with the important work of the NGOs on the field. In fact, the work of local authorities is the main character of the process of democratisation.

The basis of the Association is also particularly widespread among Europe. Many members are directly from Southern and Eastern Europe and that gives to our actions a special feature which is based on the development of actions from the bottom, and from the needs of the communities, rather than from the top.

In order to make the Association more and more an instrument for the promotion of stability, democracy and civil society in the area where we work, the main target set by the Association during its General Assembly was the enlargement of the basis of the membership by spreading the message throughout all Europe.



Mr. Gianfranco Martini
President of the LDA Association

The Governing Board and the Bureau adopted a common strategy for an european basis for the Association. Many contacts have started and will be give a follow-up during these next months. In particular, the national Associations of towns and regions of the european states will be approached by our programme. We'll expect to contact as many cities and regions as possible by visiting these groups of local authorities. Moreover, important links have been proposed with the Assembly of European Regions and with the Council of European

Municipalities and Regions . Thanks to them, we'll be able to be in contact with numbers of local authorities interested in being involved in the democratisation of Southern and Eastern Europe.

In the programme 2001, the Association has the goal to organise events for spreading the information about the Association and the LDAs. A meeting has been organised last year in Italy (Marcon, July 2000) and it could be an example for new meetings in other european states.

This strategy will be completed by the commitment of all of us who are working of a daily basis for the promotion of the work of the Local Democracy Agencies since we are absolutely convinced of the value of their actions.

The President
Gianfranco Martini

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GENNAIO 2001

General Assembly of the Association

December 2000. Looking to the future with more strength and enthusiasm!

After one year of activity, the Association organised its first General Assembly in December 2001.

These meeting was useful for making a first evaluation of the outcome of this first period of time and for planning the guidelines for 2001.

The President welcomed the new members and underlined the importance of this meeting for the follow-up and the activities next year, for the Association and for the Local Democracy Agencies and underlined the support of the Council of Europe, through the presence of the Ambassador of Belgium, His Excellence Benoit Cardon de Lichtebuer as representative of the Council of Ministers. The President highlighted also the fact that it will be fundamental to enlarge the basis of the Association with new members from the different member States.

The General Assembly was opened by the speech of Mrs Doris Pack, Member of the European Parliament, Chair of the European Parliament Inter-group - South-Eastern Europe

The Association managed to reach some important goals reported by the Executive Secretary, Mrs. Valmorbidia :

- ✍ The formal and institutional establishment of the Association
- ✍ The promotion of the Association and the Local Democracy Agencies among european cities and Association of cities, other possible partners and sponsors
- ✍ The fundraising for the Association and the Local Democracy Agencies
- ✍ The strengthening and the enlargement of the network of the LDAs
- ✍ The training and support for the work of the LDAs, their Delegates and their Local Assistants

The General Assembly adopted the financial report of the Treasurer for 2000.

From the point of view of the Delegates, as stated by Andrea Rossini - Delegate in Zavidovici (Bosnia and Herzegovina), this meeting represents the end of a com-

mon work and the network of the LDAs will also imply a bigger responsibility of each offices towards the whole network.

The General Assembly accepted the nomination of Tullio Fernetic as new Delegate of the LDA in Verteneglio/Brtonigla in Croatia (proposed by the partner leader,



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Dario Ghisletta - deputy mayor of Bellinzona - Switzerland).

Concerning the guidelines for the Association and LDAs in the future (see the article of this newsletter dedicated to it), Nadia Cuk - delegate of Subotica - suggested to organise meetings of the Association in the host cities of the LDAs in order to include them more in the activities and to give visibility to the LDAs in their area of work.

Mr. Dario Ghisletta presented the opportunity of a co-operation among the LDAs and the Congress of Causes Communes Suisses in Ohrid, in 2001.

Mrs. Laura De Rose presented the possible co-operation with the Assembly of European Region especially concerning the programme CENTURIO, the research of new partnership and the establishment of a new LDA in Montenegro.

The General Assembly of 2000 elected the first **Governing Board** of the Association.

The Governing Board of the Association

Elected members

City of **Bellinzona** (Switzerland),
Deputy Mayor Mr. Dario Ghisletta
 Association **Tuzla/Bologna** (Bosnia and Herzegovina),
Mr. Igor Pellicciari
Mogliano Veneto (Italy), Mayor *Mr. Diego Bottacin*
 Association **Les Parrains de l'Espoir** (France)
Directeur Mr. André Gasser
ANKA (Greece), *Mr. Vassilis Bellis*
 Association **Project for Prijedor** (Italy), *Mrs. Norma Benoni*
Italian Consortium of Solidarity (Italy), *Mrs. Rosita Viola*
 Association **RODA** (Croatia), President *Mr. Julije Katancevic*
 City of **Bellaria** (Italy), Deputy Mayor *Mr. Ugo Baldassari*

Representative members

Representative of the **Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe**, Ambassador of Belgium at the Council of Europe, His Excellence **Mr. Cardon de Lichtbuer**
 Representative of **Secretary General of the Council of Europe**, **Mr. Jean Louis Laurens**
 Representative appointed by the **European Commission** (To be confirmed)
 President of the **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe**, **Mr. Emile Haas**
 Member appointed by the **CLRAE Bureau**, **Mr. Gianfranco Martini**
 Member appointed by the **CLRAE Bureau**, **Mr. Claude Casagrande**
 Member appointed by the **CLRAE Bureau**, **Mr. Zlatko Kramaric** (Mayor of Osijek-HR)

Mrijana Lozanoska, Delegate of the LDA in Ohrid, has been chosen by the other LDAs as representative of LDA's Delegate Advisory Committee. For the crucial aspect of the development of the situation in Serbia, **Mrs. Nadia Cuk** - delegate of Subotica - has been invited to take part in the Governing Board of the Association in 2001, as special guest and advisor. The first Governing Board of the Association, held the 13th of December 2000 elected the **Bureau of the Association**. The Bureau appointed, Executive Secretary of the Association of the LDAs. **Mrs Antonella Valmorbida**

The Bureau of the Association

| | | |
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| Deputy President | Mr. Dario Ghisletta | Deputy Mayor of Bellinzona, Via Belsoggiorno 12, CH-6500 tél +41/91/821 85 11, fax +41/91/821 85 45 Cancelleria@bellinzona.ch (for Dario Ghisletta) |
| Deputy President | Mrs. Norma Benoni | Association Project for Prijedor Via Mattioli 6 - I- 38100 Trento - Tel /Fax 9939-0461-912937 e-mail:casaperlapace.trento@iol.it, Norma.Benoni@ftcoop.it |
| Treasurer | Mrs. Rosita Viola | Italian Consortium of Solidarity, rosita.ics@tin.it , crivioli@tiscalinet.it |
| Appointed member of the Congress | Mr. Claude Casagrande | Member of Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of Europe cl.casagrande@wanadoo.fr |
| Member appointed by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers | <i>His Excellence</i> Mr. Cardon de Lichtbuer | Ambassador of Belgium at the Council of Europe 41, Allée de la Robertsau F- Strasbourg Tel : 0033/3/88766100, fax : 0033/3/88363271 |

The Secretariat of the Association

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Co-operation with the Programme "Working Together" for 2001 ! A great chance for improving our capacities and strengthening our network

Last January 2001, the Executive Secretary of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies attended the 4th Steering Committee of the regional programme "Working Together" organised by Partners Romania.

The Steering Committee intended to present the result of the regional programme in the year 2000 and the perspective for 2001. The meeting was attended by 49 participants of 22 countries. Special guests were the Local Government Initiative/Open Society Institute (sponsor of the programme) and UNCHS.

The programme "Working Together" organises Training of Trainers who are working for the training and the education of local authorities in transitional countries. In the year 2001, the Association of LDA informed the LDAs about the different TOTs organised and offered to our network. Michela Cavallini attended to the TOT for Local Government Management in September 2000. I attended the TOT for Participatory Planning Process and Conflict Resolution in June 2000. This TOT was also attended by a colleague of Nadia Cuk, Delegate of the LDA in Subotica. In September 2000, the Association organised a meeting for all the LDAs (Delegates and Local Assistants) where I presented the TOT that I attended in June. It was also the occasion to present a future co-operation with the programme "Working Together" which includes number of professional trainers who train trainers for local authorities.

Our participation in this programme is extremely important and of high quality. It gives the to the Association to be in contact with NGOs dealing in the promotion of democracy at local level in 22 countries of Eastern and Southern Europe (See the list of participants of the 4th Steering Committee attached). We are also connected to the wide spectrum of NGOs which are included in the network of Partners for Democratical Change. This co-operation was fundamental for the grant that we obtained from LGI of 50'000 USD.

For the year 2001, in accordance with the decision made in the Governing Board of January 2001, the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies proposed the programme "Working Together"

Co-operation with the OSCE First step with the Mission in Croatia for a more efficient work in the field of democratisation

Following a contact that we established in the year 2000, the OSCE mission in Croatia organised a meeting with the three offices of the Local Democracy Agencies in that country the 18th of January 2001. The main objectives was the co-ordination of the activities in the field of democratisation. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Henri Marinx, chief of the democratisation unit of the OSCE in Croatia and was attended by the democratisation officers of the mission in Croatia. The Association of the LDAs was represented by the Executive Secretary, Mrs. Antonella Valmorbidia and the LDAs were represented by Mr. Tullio Fernetić, for the LDA in Vertenglio/Brtonigla, Mr. Miljenko Turniški for the LDA in Osijek, Ms. Michela Cavallini and Mr. Miroslav Levanic for the LDA in Sisak. It was explained the evolution of the programme of the LDAs, the co-ordination of the Association and the role of implementing unit of the Stability Pact played by the Agencies. The new challenges of our programme in Southern and Eastern Europe and the importance of a further co-operation with the OSCE in the whole area were presented. The LDAs presented their activities for the year 2001. The members of the OSCE mission in Croatia explained their programme that did not receive funds yet from the headquarter in Vienna and their are currently fundraising. Nevertheless, the main topic of activity will be training of NGOs and training of trainers for NGOs. They will work on the capacity building, with local NGOs and community based organisations.

The LDAs in Croatia (Sisak and Osijek) received in those last year funds for their activities from the field offices of the OSCE mission.

In terms of co-operation, it was decided that the Association of the LDAs would have communicated to the OSCE mission information about the activities of democratisation of our offices and that the single LDAs would have been requested to be constantly in touch with their offices on the field. In fact, the co-ordination will increase the efficiency of our work on the field and will prevent the overlapping and the waste of resources. It will also possible to organise common programmes with the funds that each of us has at disposal.

Similar meetings will be organised in Bosnia Herzegovina, with the OSCE mission, as soon as possible and contacts are going to be established with the new mission in Serbia.

Framework of activities for the Association in 2001

The General Assembly of December 2000 decided the general guidelines for the Association in 2001. The decision about the programme would have been decided by the first Governing Board to be held in January 2001.

The basis of the action of the Association in 2001 is

1. to strengthen and enlarge the network of the LDAs
2. to strengthen and create opportunities of partnership by contacting cities and regions in Europe
3. to widespread the knowledge about the activities of the Local Democracy Agencies in the field of local democracy and civil society
4. to improve the quality of the programmes of the LDAs in 2001
5. to improve the structure of the work of the LDAs

In order to reach these goals, the Executive Secretary of the Association and the Treasurer, with the support of the Secretariat of the Congress, proposed to the General Assembly activities already financially covered and other programmes to be financed.

The Association would with a Secretariat based on the principal activity of the Executive Secretary, Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida, and the support of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities with the help of Ms. Claudia Montevecchi and the responsible of the Congress for the LDAs, Ms. Sylvie Affholder. The Secretariat will assure the functioning of the Association and will give a follow-up to the decision made by the Bureau and Governing Board.

The Association will have to implement directly activities :

1. Contact with local authorities for promoting new partnership
2. Mailing to potential members of the association and partnership
3. Distribution of material to the LDAs
4. Realisation of a mailing for the association
5. Leaflet of the Association

6. Website
7. 12 newsletter

For the LDAs, the Association will realise several programmes :

1. Training of Delegate and Local Assistant in Zavido-



vici March 2001

2. Seminar on the structure and legal aspects of the LDAs in Subotica, July 2001
3. Training of Trainers in Verteneglio/Brtonigla in September 2001

The Association will manage funds and programmes directly implemented by the LDAs

1. Funds from the Swiss Agency for Development - Civil Society Actions
2. Funds from the Irish Government - LDAs in Nis (Serbia) and Montenegro
3. Funds from the Local Government Initiative (training of local authorities)
4. Funds from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (for actions for local democracy)

The Association will be committed for the fundraising for the next years and for two activities this year

1. brochure on the work of the LDAs during those last years
2. Conference for the local authorities which attended the training supported by LGI.

Annual seminar of the Association “The role of local and regional authorities in the integration of South East Europe”.

The annual seminar of the Association, in December 2000, was dedicated to “The role of local and regional authorities in the integration of South East Europe”. Complementary objectives were to provide information and establish links between the action of the AADL and the one of other international institutions, namely the Coe and the EU. The discussion focused on the partnerships: nature of the partnerships; updating on the situation of the various Ldas; how to keep the partnerships alive and establish new ones; finally the session ended with a general discussion on methodological issues relating to Lda presented projects and guidelines for our future action.

Mr Martini and Mr Casagrande focused on nature and reasons of the Lda programme, stressing that our local communities have and are confronting problems which are similar to the ones faced by the South East Europeans ones in building true democratic citizenship in communities inhabited by different national and ethnic groups. The Lda Association provides a structure and a more global approach to the action of local communities, which are entitled to maintain their own autonomy. The Ambassador of Belgium to the Council of Europe, Mr Cardon De Lichtbuer, Representative of the Committee of Ministers in the Lda Association, regards as fundamental the link between the AADL and the Coe action in South East Europe which is growing both in importance and with respect to new responsibilities undertaken, although there is no growth in the Coe budget. It is important that Ldas develop creativity in establishing new partnerships with actors such as Universities and private companies. The Ambassador De Lichtbuer also stressed the importance of the formation of Lda Delegates and of the coordination between the activity of the AADL and the ones of the Committee of Ministers and of the Congress, also highlighting the importance to present projects which are co-financed and to keep the donors informed on the activities overall. Mr Jean Louis Laurens, Director of the Coe Strategic

Planning, intervening also in his function of Representative of the Secretary General in the AADL, illustrated the Coe action in South East Europe. He highlighted the fact that the visibility of the Coe action is very important to the Secretary General and that Ldas may contribute to this, gaining thus stronger support for their initiative. The meetings of the Council of Europe Secretary General in Belgrade with the FRY authorities, with the important participation of Ms Cuk, and the state of the admission of FRY to the Coe were illustrated to the seminar, adding that the creation of new Ldas in this area would reinforce the Coe action. Concerning the possible cooperation between Ldas and Coe Information Offices, Ms Lozanoska exposed the positive situation existing in FYROM.

The participants to the Seminar agreed that the cooperation between Coe Directorates, the Committee of Ministers, the Crae and the AADL may create positive synergies in this region.

Ms Valmorbidia highlighted the fact that we should focus better on which are our targets as Association also in approaching potential partners, and stresses that our primary goal as Association is of a political nature. The European local communities want to be involved in the democratic transition of local communities in South East Europe. Mr Ghisletta presented the Seminar proposed by Causes Communes Suisse to be implemented in Ohrid in Sept 2001.

The final part of the Seminar focused on methodological aspects relating to Lda-managed projects:

- It is important to dynamize Lda projects instead of duplicating them (e.g.: the action of the Zavidovici Lda directed at establishing a Citizen Committee)
- It is important to integrate evaluation criteria in a guide to the Lda projects, proposed by Ms Valmorbidia.

Developing the LDA network in Southern Serbia: a new challenge for the Association of Local Democracy Agencies

Preliminary, political contacts were established with the Mayors and elected representatives of Nis, Kraljevo, Kragujevac and Leskovac from 15 to 17 January 2001 with a view to extending LDA activities in Southern Serbia. Further contacts with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Yugoslavia and Mrs Nadia Cuk, Delegate of the Local Democracy Agency of Subotica, enabled to identify the main activities which could be implemented in the first semester 2001. On the basis of the conclusions presented at the meeting of the Governing Board of 23 January 2001, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies is now in a position to prepare a programme of activity in the field of local democracy and civil society and draft proposals to be submitted to the four visited cities, which expressed their willingness to take part in this programme.

These activities should also aim at enlarging and consolidating the partnership with European cities, regions and NGOS with a possible view to creating a Local Democracy Agency in Nis. Therefore an appeal is launched to European cities and regions interested in responding to the expectations expressed by the local authorities and the civil society. The LDA Association will conduct this project and rely on the co-operation of already active cities and NGO in the region, like the Italian Consortium of Solidarity or the Committee for Civic Initiatives, but also with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Yugoslavia. This partnership will be strengthened in the course of the implementation of the first activities, which will be sponsored by the Irish Government in the framework of the Stability Pact.

Claude Casagrande

Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and Member of the Bureau of the LDA Association,

The word of Mr Drljevic, Mayor of Niksic: “We are very excited for the LDA to actually start working”

The recent selection of Niksic to be the seat of the LDA in Montenegro will be a great impetus to the furtherance of local democratic reform already underway in Montenegro. We look forward to the agency taking the lead in projects furthering local democracies and in projects furthering communication and understanding between the cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and faiths in Montenegro.

We also hope that the work of the agency will serve to connect local authorities in Montenegro with each other and with local authorities and NGOs in neighboring and in western countries.

I take this opportunity to present some specific ideas and to invite potential partners to consider these and to contact us.

We would like to implement an educational program for local government workers and citizens on how to be directly involved in the work of local government and we would like to develop an information system to connect local authorities and citizens.

The Faculty of Philosophy in Niksic should be involved in the work of the LDA, particularly in the work local authority structure and human rights.

There needs to be a program to help NGOs (local and international) learn about each other, help each other, and interface with local authorities.

Some kind of Montenegro-wide NGO fair hosted in Niksic would be a great start.

We are very excited for the LDA to actually start working. We are already making contacts with many Montenegrin counties and cities, and we look forward to working with new partners.

Miodrag Drljevic
Mayor of Niksic

The Local Democracy Agencies and the Swiss contribution

The Bureau of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies decided, in its first meeting after being established in December 2000, to give me the honour to be the deputy president. I appreciated very much this choice which was certainly due to the big efforts that my country, Switzerland, has been doing, for the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe during those years, especially after the crisis of this last decade.

"Causes Communes Suisses" had a very important role, as NGO, and has involved many cities since the beginning of the experience of the Local Democracy Agencies.

These Agencies have been fundamental elements for the process of democratisation of the authorities and political life in that region.

Which is the swiss contribution that is complementary to the efforts of other european States committed in this field ?

- the Swiss Agency for Development decided to support

the activities of civil society of the Local Democracy Agencies with 159.000 EURO



The Montebello Castle – Bellinzona (CH)

- three cities decided to support three LDAs : the city of Bellinzona for Verteneglio/Brtonigla (Croatia), city of Lausanne for Osijek (Croatia), city of Neuchâtel (Jugoslavia-Montenegro)

- "Causes Communes Suisses" continues to be present among the partners of the LDAs with high participation

The commitment is real and concrete. With one goal : to strengthen our efforts in 2001 in order to have good result for the

promotion of democracy for which

works the Association for the LDAs by acting on the basis of the principles expressed by the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

Dario Ghisletta

Deputy President of the Association of the LDAs

Deputy Mayor of Bellinzona – Switzerland

| IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BE MEMER OF THE ASSOCIATION! | | THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY |
|---|-------------|--|
| Local and Regional Authorities: | | Subotica (FRY), Ms Nadia SENDEROVIC-CUK, e-mai l: nadiac@eunet.yu |
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| 10.000-50.000 | 500 Euros | Sisak (HR), Ms Michela CAVALLINI, E-mai l: Idesk-si@sk.tel.hr |
| 50.000-200.000 | 1.000 Euros | Brtonigla-Verteneglio (HR), Mr U. ADEMOLLO, E-mai l: aldve-brtonigla@pu.hinet.hr |
| 200.000-1.000.000 | 2.000 Euros | Tuzla (BH), Mr Igor PELLICCIARI, E-mail: igorpel@tin.it |
| 1.000.000 or plus | 4.000 Euros | Zavidovici (BH), Mr Andrea ROSSINI, E-mai l: sladjan@bih.net.ba |
| NGO | 250 Euros | Prijedor (BH), Ms Annalisa TOMASI, E-mai l: asspdt@inecco.net |
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