



Local Democracy Agencies

A tool to promote the development of local and regional democracy in South-East Europe in the framework of the Council of Europe's activities

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe is a consultative body of the Council of Europe, composed of local and regional elected representatives from the 43 Council of Europe member States, whose role within the Organisation is to

- promote effective local and regional government structures in all Council of Europe member states
- develop initiatives to enable citizens to participate effectively in local and regional democracy
- encourage transfrontier and interregional co-operation for peace, tolerance, sustainable development and local and regional democracy.

The two-chamber assembly comprises 301 titular members and 301 substitute members, each of whom is an elected representative from one of over 200 000 local and regional authorities in the Council's forty-three member states. The Congress is moreover involved in the assessment of the situation of local and regional democracy in South-East Europe, in the promotion of the legislative reforms in accordance with the Council of Europe legal instruments, in particular the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Framework Convention on Transborder Co-operation and the draft European Charter of Regional Self-Government. The Congress thus provides a forum where local and regional elected representatives can discuss problems, pool their experience and ex-

press their views to governments and to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The Congress puts a special emphasis on the development of intermunicipal and interregional partnership to promote the development of local democracy in South East Europe.

The successful Forum of Cities and Regions held in Skopje in November 2000 was a concrete example of this trend. Local Democracy Agencies are a complementary, useful tool to encourage such partnership and provide tailor-made solutions to local issues. It should be recalled that the Congress launched in 1993 this initiative and supported the creation of ten Agencies in five countries. The setting-up of an

Association of Local Democracy Agencies, promoted in 1999 by the Council of Europe,

is another step forward to strengthen the network of Agencies, especially in the framework of the Stability Pact.

These Agencies benefit from different support of Council of Europe programmes (Confidence-Building Measures, Co-operation activities programmes of the Congress) and from voluntary contributions granted by Council of Europe member States, in particular the Swiss Agency of Development and Co-operation and the Irish Government. The Agencies can help promote the European standards set up by the Council of Europe in the field of human rights,

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The Confidence Building Measures Programme: a tool for the promotion of the rights of minorities

The Confidence-building Measures (CBM) Programme was created following the 1993 Vienna Summit of Heads of State and government of Council of Europe member States. The aim of the Programme is to support civil society projects of which the primary objective is to promote inter-ethnic relations within or between specific countries.

Since the beginning of the Programme, inter-ethnic projects of the following Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) have been supported: Brtonigla/Verteneglio, Maribor, Ohrid, Osijek, Prijedor, Sarajevo, Sisak, Subotica, Tuzla and Zavidovici.

Projects supported have ranged from human and minority rights awareness-raising activities and transfrontier co-operation to the promotion of the integration of refugees and displaced persons and an inter-ethnic school of journalism.

For the year 2001, the CBM Steering Group approved the following 4 LDA projects:

- Promoting multicultural values within multiethnic democratic society (LDA Ohrid)
- Civil society in the multiethnic region of Vojvodina (LDA Subotica)
- Living together in everyday life (Local Citizen Committee c/o Zavidovici LDA)*
- Osijek Novi Sad Transborder Bridge (Osijek LDA)*

(* Subject to obtaining a voluntary contribution from a member State)

It is particularly encouraging to observe that most of these

projects are not limited to the promotion of inter-ethnic relations within their respective countries, but have taken on an additional transfrontier dimension which fits within the philosophy of the Stability Pact and the current priorities of the CBM Programme and the Council of Europe.

The next deadline for the receipt of projects will be 15 May 2001 for projects starting as of November 2001.



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pluralistic democracy and the State of Law. The contribution of the partner cities and regions is of great importance and could help develop local democracy through exchange of information or technical co-operation. Local Democracy Agencies have therefore an important role to play with a view to pooling the resources offered by the international organisations and their political assemblies, the local and regional authorities and the non governmental organisations in order to promote the development of democracy at the very local and regional level and encourage a peaceful, enriching coexistence of different communities at local

level. The establishment of new Agencies in Serbia and Montenegro constitutes a new challenge, which is obviously responding to a need expressed by the local authorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. These new Agencies will undoubtedly make a useful contribution and reinforce the LDA network in South-East Europe and the Congress will follow this initiative with great attention and encourage cities and regions throughout Europe to take an active part in this programme.

Rinaldo LOCATELLI
Head of the Congress Secretariat

Europe, Srebrenica: An interview of the women of Srebrenica

An important aspect of the Local Democracy Agencies' programme is the possibility of raising information on the situation of South East Europe through the permanent delegations of the Ldas working on the ground. This information can then be spread in the different countries belonging to the network, and therefore contribute to mutual knowledge and understanding. Often media focus on certain countries only during periods of extreme crisis, moving rapidly elsewhere once the flashlights are off.

One of the most tragic episodes of the Bosnia war was the fall of the "protected area" of Srebrenica, in July 1995. Some 10.000 persons "disappeared" in those days, after the troops of general Mladic entered the city located in the East part of Bosnia, close to the river Drina.

Five years later, a group of women who survived the siege and fall of Srebrenica, still internally displaced and living in the local community of Vozuca, Zavidovici, decided to involve the Local Democracy Agency operating in that area in the production of a documentary, which could describe what they had gone through, and their present condition of internal refugees. After interviewing dozens of widows, and after having recorded several hours of tape, the documentary "**Europe, Srebrenica**" was produced by the Zavidovici Lda in an Italian studio. In this film lasting 39 minutes, the women tell about their three-year long total isolation from the rest of the world, they blame the behaviour of the United Nations forces for having exploited their community and for not having defended the area, they describe the brutal end of July '95. Fundamental questions such as how to enforce peace and to mediate in situations of conflict are raised, and integrate dramatically this document on human atrocity.

Besides the content, let me just point out one element that regards our work in the Local Democracy Agencies: such a work could never of been achieved by a media troupe. It was only after having established through years of activities and cooperation a sense of trust between the Zavidovici Lda and the Srebrenica women in Vozuca that we were able to tell this story. And this is an important aspect of our everyday work.

For those of you who may be interested in watching this documentary, please contact us at: Ambascia_zav@iol.it or anarinda@libero.it and we will send you a copy.

Andrea Rossini
(Lda Zavidovici, delegate)

Task Force on Good Governance Council of Europe – 2nd of February 2001

The President of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies, Mr. Gianfranco Martini and the Secretary General, Antonella Valmorbida, attended the Co-ordination meeting organised by the Council of Europe to discuss the implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen local democracy and transfrontier co-operation in Southern and Eastern Europe, held the 2nd of February 2001 at the Council of Europe. The Association of Local Democracy Agencies is one of the implementation unit of these voluntary contribution of the States.

The Association presented shortly the development of the activities supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and their implementation within the end of 2001. It was also the opportunity to introduce the further step for the establishment of the LDA in Nis and in Montenegro. We also explained our co-operation with other agencies on the field (see the OSCE) in order to avoid overlapping but strengthening the efficiency of our actions.

The members States focused on the need to involve in the activities Yugoslavia in order to complete the work which has been proposed to be accomplished through the Stability Pact. The meeting, from the point of the view of the Association, brought to the following results :

- Visibility for role and activities of the Association and the LDAs (the material of the Association was distributed in the room)
- Personal contacts with donors
- Opportunities to discuss for a confirmation of new funds in the next years

The event was also extremely important since it allows me to meet our donors. In particular, we have been in touch with:

- Mr Alain-Denis HENCHOZ – Représenant permanent ad-joint de la Suisse auprès du Conseil de l'Europe
- Mr. Patrick Etienne - from the Swiss Agency for Development was not attending the meeting.
- Mr Philip GRANT – Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of Ireland to the

Another donor of the AALD was also attending the meeting Mr Adrian IONESCU – Program Director Local Government & Public Service Reform Initiative.

The Belgian Ambassador, member of our Governing Board and Bureau, took also actively part to the meeting M Benoît CARDON DE LICHTBUER – Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire Représentation de la Belgique auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Important contacts were made with:

- Mr Dionyssion KYVETOS – Expert, Stability Pact, WTI (B – 1050 Brussels)
- Mr Jacek KRÓLIKOWSKI – Director of the Warsaw Division of Foundation in support of Local Democracy (01540 Warsaw, Poland)

Antonella Valmorbida

The role of the regions in the partnership for the Agencies

A strong co-operation with the Assembly of European Regions

The Assembly of European Regions is now member of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies. This co-operation is not formal but, since the very beginning, it is presented as a very concrete possibility of developing the purposes of both organisations. For the Assembly of European Regions, the Agencies can be an important element for the promotion of the role of regions in Southern and Eastern Europe. The question is particularly interesting since all those new States are going through a process of decentralisation of the power towards regions and cities. This trend is difficult and needs a lot of support and help in order to be consolidated.

The Local Democracy Agencies could be excellent instrument in order to reach this goal since they always work with the local communities at the local and decentralised level (none of them is located in a capital). Nevertheless, for each office the work is based on a regional approach. The activities which are carried out by an Agency are usually attended by participants from a whole area and the events are often also organised in different towns. For those reasons and for the strong connection that both the organisation have the Council of Europe – in particular the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities – the co-operation is going to be fruitful.

In the next weeks, the Agencies will be multipliers on the field of the Assembly of European Regions for the promotion of the program CENTURIO which gives the opportunity to train civil servants and local elected officials by offering stages in Western European regions. The LDAs will submit the application forms to their host cities and regions (in Croatia,

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yugoslavia and Macedonia). They also will contact other cities which might be interested in their area of actions. For the first time, the program will be presented in the city of the future LDAs (Nis in Serbia and Niksic in Montenegro). This training which will be made possible also thanks to the connection made by the Agencies will be fundamental for a practical experience of how to run the activities and competencies of a region.

As confirmed by the President of ARE, Mrs. Prokop, the Assembly of European Regions is interested in being involved in the establishment of the Agencies in Nis (Serbia) and Niksic (Montenegro). The Assembly will spread the message among the regions associated to their organisation in order to invite them to be partners of an existing or a new Agency.

The exchange of experience with the experts of ARE is going to be also important and of high quality in



STRASBOURG – Le Palais de L'Europe

Members of the Association

Local authorities

<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	- City of Tulza - City of Zavidovici
<i>Croatia</i>	- City of Prijedor - City of Brtonigla- Verteneglio - Region Istria
<i>Federal Republic of Yugoslavia</i>	- City of Subotica
<i>France</i>	- City of Saint Denis – France
<i>Greece</i>	- City of Antirrio
<i>Italy</i>	- City of Lainate - City of Mogliano Veneto - City of Arese - City of Bellaria - City of Portogruaro - City of Greve in Chianti - City of Borgo Valsugana - City of Preganziol - City of Lavis - Region Friuli Venezia Giulia
<i>Switzerland</i>	- City of Bellizona - City of Neuchâtel - City of Lausanne

Association of local Land regional authorities

<i>France</i>	- Assembly of European Regions
<i>Italy</i>	- Association of the cities of the Province of Treviso – Italy
<i>Moldavia</i>	- Association of the mayors of the district of Chisinau
<i>Switzerland</i>	- Causes Communes Suisses

Non Governmental organisations

<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	- Local Citizens' Committee Zavidovici
<i>Bulgaria</i>	- Balkan Assist Association
<i>Croatia</i>	- ADL Sisak - RODA Sisak
<i>Cyprus</i>	- International Association for the Protection of Human Rights
<i>France</i>	- Association Les Parrains de l'Espoir
<i>Greece</i>	- ANKA Kardica
<i>Italy</i>	- Association for the Zavidovici LDA - Kulturni Centar Tuzla – Bologna - Circolo Arci "I Ponti" - Association Project for Prijedor - International Consortium of Solidarity Genova

Individuals

- Léon Saur	- Ulrich Bohner
- Claude Casagrande	- Nevio Perna
- Paulo Faggian	- Cristina Bertotti
- Contin Agostino	- Valer Claudio
- Aggradi Carla	

The new website of the Association: www.ldaaonline.org

Thanks to this important tool, it would be possible to keep updated the members of the Association and the friends of the Local Democracy Agencies with the latest news about our activities.

The website has been designed by Ms. Mirijana Lozanoska who is also the Delegate of the Local Democracy Agency in Ohrid.

This site – financed by the Swiss Agency for Development - is useful for the LDAs' staff as well as for the public which is interested in the activities of our agencies in Southern and Eastern Europe.

The public will find information about

- a) the mandate and the objectives of the Association
- b) the updated list of members (with references for any contacts)
- c) the names and contacts of the Governing Board and Secretariat
- d) the programs of the Association and activities of the Local Democracy Agencies
- e) the up coming events
- f) the statutes of the Association and resolution of the Congress which establish and define the role of the Agencies
- g) the newsletters of the Association

For the LDAs, the website is a useful tool for downloading material which might be useful for the promotion of their work. It is also an interactive instrument for exchanges opinions and experiences with other delegates and local staff.

The main programme which is so far presented is the on-going activities for civil society that each Local Democracy Agency is implementing in its own area. The programs are co-ordination by the Association and the updated follow-up of each actions is presented in a framework presented on the web.

The website is also a window which open for announcing activities which are related to our activities in Southern and Eastern Europe for a daily information about new events and opportunity.

It is also the task of each of us to bring into it our opinions, experiences and activities by communicating any suggestions and comments.

N E W S

Local Democracy Agencies in Niksic (Montenegro) and Nis (Serbia)

Following the report of the mission which was held in the area of Southern Serbia in January 2001, the program for the establishment for an Agency in Nis will follow new steps. The area of the Agency will be regional (by including activities in Nis, Kragujevac, Kraljevo and Leskovac). The whole region is extremely delicate and important for the contact with Kosovo and Macedonia.

After the proposal of Italian Consortium of Solidarity – and other partners met in Cremona the 9th February 2001 - for the activities of the Agencies until June 2001, the Association decided

- to propose a program of actions for the establishment of an LDA in Nis (Central and Southern Serbia)
- the program includes events – supported by the funds of the Irish Government in the framework of the Quick Start Actions - dedicated to the promotion of human, civil and political rights. The events are supposed to be held in the cities connected to the LDA
- to organise a mission with the potential partners in March 2001 for assessing the availability of the local authorities and local NGOs which will be requested to be part of the actions
- to raise, during the events proposed in the program until June 2001, the priorities and the new ideas for future actions
- to involve during these events the potential partners in order to let them know the situation in the area and to make them actively involved in planning the future programme for the LDA in Central and Southern Serbia

At the end of these preparatory activities, after this activities, the potential partners will organise a conference for the establishment of the Agency and will design a partner leader.

After the mission held in January 2001 and the choice of the city of Niksic as host city for the Agency, Mr. Stanisa Surbatovich has been indicated as responsible for the activities of the future LDA. The partners, until

the establishment of the Agency and the signature of the partner agreement, are co-ordinated by the East Standforshire Council. The network is already established, at the european level and the Association will work – in co-operation of the city of Niksic – for the opening of the Agency within this summer. A first indication of the activities related to this starting-up are

- a) a conference on the European Charter on Local and Regional Authorities, connected to the Partners Meeting
- b) a workshop for Youth and their participation in the decision-making process at the local level.

USEFUL INTERNET LINKS

INTERNET LINK USEFUL FOR THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCIES' STAFF AND FRIENDS OF THE ASSOCIATION INTERESTED IN THE DEMOCRATISATION PROCESS IN SOUTHERN AND EASTERN EUROPE

Site of the European Union for the programmes of co-operation :

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/cgi/frame12.pl>

Studies about ethnic conflicts :

<http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/home/>

News on central Europe :

<http://www.centraleurope.com/>

International Crisis web :

<http://www.crisisweb.org/>

Transitions on line :

<http://www.tol.cz/look/TOLnew/home>.

Institute for Peace&War reporting

http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?home_index.html

Regional programme Working Together

<http://www.dnt.ro/users/fdlsp/>

Stability Pact :

<http://www.seerecon.org>

ISTRIA / CROATIA – member of the Association of the LDA and partner of the Local Democracy Agency in Verteneglio/Brtonigla

Istria – the most western Croatian region – under the blue European flag, sprinkled with golden stars, has recognised its own. In the same way, it is to be hoped that also Europe will recognize this gentle landscape where the Adriatic sea sneaks deeply into the European land, or as we use to say, it is exactly in Istria where European peoples came down to the hot sea. In this “paradisiacal triangle” you can find something more – hospitality of Istrian people, good wine and olive oil, as well as the far known Istrian ham.

Istria Region is a small region for surface and number of inhabitants. It comprises 2820 square kilometres, which is almost 4,98 percent of the entire surface of the Republic of Croatia. It has more than 200.000 inhabitants. After Croatia had become an independent country, Istria became a region, administratively divided in 9 cities and 29 communes, by the new territorial structure in 1993.

Situated in the very closeness to the Western European civilization, on one hand, and on the edge of a different cultural milieu, on the other, Istria has an impressive history, written in the maelstrom of three civilizations – the Slavic, the Roman and the German one. It skilfully knew to reconcile the centuries-old conflicts of different cultural influences and in such a way it ascertained its own maturity, which is the best admission-ticket for united Europe.

Living almost in the heart of Europe, the inhabitants of Istria are mixed with the people around them, more than in any other part of Croatia. The fact that Istria is an unique territory, with multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural basic features, as well as tolerance of ethnic groups, will be the one to determine its status of great lot. The idea of regional development established Istria Region as an incumbent of values by which the advanced world recognised it. Therefore, it was not a coincidence that it became a full

member of the Assembly of European Regions (SER/ARE) in 1994. It was a precedent since Istria Region, as a first member, came from the country which was not a member of the European Council.

Equally, we point out the example of Istria Region as to the establishment of the Local Democracy Agency with its seat in Brtonigla/Verteneglio. The initiative of its establishment was started by the Commune of Verteneglio in 1994 and on 17 October of the same year the Istrian Region Assembly agreed fully the initiative.

In the beginning as a Local Democracy Agency and now as a Local Democracy Agency, it was officially established on the 5th of May 1996, after the partners of three countries – Italy, Switzerland and France, has signed it. The Agency imposed itself on the protection of human rights and liberties, collaboration in the field of economy, culture, education, environmental protection, sport, preschool education, town planning and infrastructural development. Its influence on the local self-government development has to be pointed out in particular, as well as on other questions important to the local authorities. On 14 December 1999 in Strasbourg an Agreement was signed, with which Istria Region became a member of the Local Democracy Agencies Association.

If Istria Region managed to decorate the European regional picture at least to a certain degree, the slogan “Istria Region in Europe of Regions” ascertains itself in the best way in practical life. That’s our way and therefore we’ll continue to develop and promote the regional idea forward on, contributing in such a way to the regionalisation of Europe.

Mr. Stevo Zufic
President of the Istrian Region

The contribution of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe in 2001

The Bureau of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, in its session of the 1st of February, approved the contribution for the Association of Local Democracy Agencies. This year, as it was in 2000, the grant for the activities of the LDAs and their Association is 138.000 EURO – budget heading 50216. This substantial financial help is also completed by contributions in kind which are given like the premises of the offices in Strasbourg, at the *Palais de l'Europe*, the staff of the Congress which is supporting the programme of the Local Democracy Agencies, the rooms for our meetings when they are held at the Council and the other support for the events (translation, material).

The presentation of the programme has been made by Mr. Gianfranco Martini, President of the Association, by Mr. Claude Casagrande, representative of the Congress in the Governing Board of the Association and deputy President of the Congress and by Yavaz Mildon, also representative of the Congress in the Association.

The confirmation of this grant is a sign of the importance that the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities gives to the programme of the LDAs as a tool for the promotion of local democracy and civil society in Southern and Eastern Europe.

This year, the contribution has been given with a special focus on the geographical enlargement of the basis of the Association

towards different European States in order to assure the balance and the international nature of our organisation.

Moreover, the Congress has also repeated that the chore activity of the Association and the LDAs is the promotion and development of local democracy and civil society in towns and regions included in the programme.

In this framework, a strong accent has to be put on the participation of towns and regions. The non governmental organisations are part of this programme by supporting and co-operating with local authorities.

The President of the Congress will also launch a new appeal to the all the members of the Congress for encouraging them to be more involved in the activities of the Local Democracy Agencies.

The contribution to the Local Democracy Agencies for their activities in the promotion of local democracy and civil society are 8.000 EURO for the 8 LDAs existing at the beginning of the year and 4.000 EURO for the new LDAs in Yugoslavia of Nis (Serbia) and Niksic (Montenegro) which are going to be fully operational in the second part of the year.

The Association received, with this contribution of the Congress, a parts of the found for its activities (institutional meetings, training session in Zavidovici, discussion about the Statuts of the LDAs in Subotica, Secretariat, promotion)

Mr. Tullio FERNETIC is the new delegate of Brtonigla-Verteneglio LDA – e-mail: aldve-brtonigla@pu.hinet.hr

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-mail: nadiac@eunet.yu
1-10.000	250 Euros	Osijek/Vukovar (HR), Turniski MIJLENKO, E-mail: milienko.turniski@os.hinet.hr
10.000-50.000	500 Euros	Sisak (HR), Ms Michela CAVALLINI, E-mail: Idesk-si@sk.tel.hr
50.000-200.000	1.000 Euros	Brtonigla-Verteneglio (HR), Mr U. ADEMOLLO, E-mail: 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-mail: sladjan@bih.net.ba
NGO	250 Euros	Prijedor (BH), Ms Annalisa TOMASI, E-mail: asspdt@inecco.net
Actual persons	50 Euros	Ohrid (FRYM), Ms Miriana LOZANOSKA, E-mail: eldoh@mt.net.mk

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