

Consolidating local democracy in South East Europe

The opening of a new Local Democracy Agency in Montenegro paves a path to new regional developments in South-East Europe. Thanks to the commitment of the partners and the local authorities and the support of the Irish Government, this project could come to an end and respond to the wish expressed for many years by the local authorities of Montenegro. The same process should soon be noted in Serbia, in the region of Nis, where the first activities launched by the LDA Association met the growing interest of local authorities and the civil society to fully contribute to the management of their local and regional affairs. Further development could be envisaged and the LDA Association has definitively the means to develop an innovative, pilot programme in new areas.

There is still room to improve regional co-operation, which will definitively constitute a new challenge in the coming months. The results of the programme sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Co-operation and Development, which included 8 Agencies in 4 countries, are encouraging and shall be developed further. Enhancing dialogue between the local authorities in South-East Europe will

most certainly contribute to the stabilisation of the region, and LDAs have the possibility to promote and re-inforce these regional links.

The Congress has encouraged local and regional authorities and NGOs to step in and join the network of

LDA partners throughout Europe. The Council of Europe member states have also contributed, to a large extent, to the success of this programme through their financial and political support. The patronage of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the fruitful co-operation established during the past months between the Congress and the LDA Association should facilitate the development and consolidation of new programmes dedicated to local democracy and trans-border co-operation, in line with the priorities set up by the Stability Pact,

by means of exchange of experience and know-how, in partnership with South Eastern European local and regional authorities.



Mr Llibert Cuatrecasas

Llibert Cuatrecasas
President of the Congress

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YOUTH: THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Risan, Montenegro, 20/21st of July 2001

On 20-21 July a very successful Conference for youth was held. Youth from Montenegro as well as youth from Croatia, Bosnia, England, France, and Switzerland attended. At the same time Delegates from all the LDAs held meetings and the Governing Board of the Association was also present and had a meeting on 22 July.

The Conference for youth was started by introductions from Msrs. Locatelli and Casagrande of the Council of Europe. They highlighted the Council of Europe's commitment to youth and provided specific features of CE documents—specifically: the involvement of young people in government



without discrimination, the right to vote at an earlier age, the establishment of youth organizations, cooperation among and exchanges of students and young workers. They gave examples of youth or-

ganizations in other countries and some ideas of forming similar organizations in Montenegro.

After the introduction, Mr. Turniski from the LDA in Osijek led the seminar "Overcoming the Negative Image of Politics Among Youth or "Why I Should Be Involved in Local Government." He highlighted the importance and necessity of politics, its application in everyday life and the importance of being involved in the life of one's community. He presented work in Osijek, specifically the work of the Youth Council in Osijek, the progress they have made and some problems they have faced. He encouraged young people to follow this example, and ask representatives from the Youth Council of Osijek for details of this work.

The seminar was ended with a discussion about the reasons for negative opinion towards politics and ways to overcome such negative attitudes.

Mr. Sljukic from the Montenigrin Liberal party investigated and led discussion about the structural and institutional reasons for the negative image of politics in Montenegro.

The special dinner on the evening of the 20th was well attended by youth, CE representatives and the governing board. Much relationship building, sharing, and discussion took place.

On the morning of the 21st representatives from the Nansen Dialogue Centre conducted active workshops on "Overcoming ethnic and other prejudices." During these session Mr. Charles Brogden provided oversight and guidance.



Mr. Dekovic presented the Nansen Dialogue Centre, their work, members and current projects. Then two work shops were conducted. For the workshops, participants broke up into smaller groups. These were truly “active” workshops with much movement and interaction. Facilitators made sure that everyone participated. Visual aids were used and groups used much flip chart paper to illustrate their findings. The first workshop explored the causes of ethnical and other barriers. The answers were lack of communication, lack of education, fear and occasionally politics. The second workshop demonstrated how prejudices hinder working together. The workshops were followed by an open discussion about how to stop the negative influences of prejudice and how to work together in local government.

For the last morning session, the Youth Parliament from Niksic explained the Youth Parliament and its work. There was discussion about both the successes and difficulties.

After lunch there were sessions on “Concrete ways to be involved in local government” led by Mr. Pio Radovic from the municipality of Niksic. Mr Radovic highlighted the importance of Local Government and referred to The Charter of Council of Europe about local government. He said that one of the main means of being involved in the work of local government is taking part in local public meetings. He finished by facilitating a discussion

about personal involvement in the work of Local government.

Mr. Surbatovich led the final meeting where everyone presented their individual action plan, and then a group declaration was drawn up.

Youth Group Representatives from Montenegro

Vladimir Djurkovic, Youth Parliament, Podgorica

Damir Djurbuzovic, Student Cultural Centre of Montenegro, Podgorica

Sandra Paskovic, Creative Society of the Young, Kotor

Ana Gegaj, Youth Cultural Centre, Podgorica

Elvir Zvrko, Creative Centre Monte Vita, Bijelo Polje

Drazen Vlaovic, Forum 19, Podgorica

Olivera Petrovic, The Lighthouse, Bar

Gordana Radovanic, Youth Council of Berane,

Damir Rasketic, Entrepreneurs Club, Bar

Jovana Radoman, Youth Parliament, Niksic

Mirjana Suskic, Youth Parliament, Niksic

Milos Osmajic, Youth Parliament, Niksic

Pedja Marusic, Youth Parliament, Niksic

Aleksandar Pajevic, Nansen Dialogue Centre, Podgorica

Zarija Pejovic, Social Democratic Party

Samir Hadzic, Democratic Party Socialists

Predrag Vojvodic, Serbian National Party

Boris Misnic, National Party

Mirceta Markovic, Socialist National Party

Radunovic Vojkan, The Lighthouse, Niksic

Boris Raonic, Nansen

Jovanovic Milovan, representative of Tivat

Natasa Knezevic, Legal Assistant, Niksic

Maja Milosevic, Liberal Party

Ivan Ivanisevic, Cetinje

Stanisa Surbatovic

Delegate LDA Montenegro

Governing board of the AADL the 22nd of July 2001

Risan – Montenegro

The AADL held its Governing Board in Risan, Montenegro, on the 22nd of July 2001. The meeting gave the opportunity to the members of the Governing Board to be present during one of the initiative of the LDA in Montenegro, namely the International conference on “Youth and their participation in the decision-making process at the local level”.

The meeting was attended and chaired by the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Mr. Cuatrecasas. Mr Cuatrecasas emphasized that the LDA Association can help the local authorities in South East Europe to get closer to the European Union, notably by enhancing transborder co-operation in the region.

Mrs. Valmorbidia, the Executive Secretary of the AADL, reported about the programme sponsored about all the ongoing programmes. As far as the LDA in Central and Southern Serbia is concerned, it is proposed to organize a meeting of all the potential partners in September for the preparation of the opening in autumn 2001.

For the future activities, she announced the Training of Trainers supported by LGI- Budapest for the delegates and responsible of programmes of the LDAs, in Novigrad, Croatia, from the 2nd to the 7th of September 2001.

Mirijana Lozanoska, reported about the situation in Macedonia. She underlines that the information does not reflect her personal views but constitutes a compendium of different sources of information. The dialogue is currently blocked. In the proposed document, the Albanian language is stated as second official language. One of the most difficult issue is that the discussion are held by experts which are deciding for the rest of the community. Many families are displaced people and they need help. She would like the Congress to undertake an action in this field, as it was done during the crisis in Kosovo.

It is agreed that the Congress Secretariat will submit to the Bureau of 9 October the LDA Association's proposal to give a recognition to the active LDA partners and members of the AADL. The list of partners to be awarded will be given by the partner leaders of each LDA.

The Governing Board approved the proposal to dedicate

the annual seminar of the Association, in December, to the work and the improvement of the activity of the partner leaders : how to be a leader, how to support the LDA, which are the problems and the opportunities.

The participants evaluated the different proposal for the new Agencies, in the future : Kosovo, Albania and Moldova. Mr. Cuatrecasas suggests that the Association submits for discussion its future activities in new countries at the next meeting of the Bureau of the Congress in October 2001. Mr. Locatelli confirmed that Kosovo might be a priority and informs the Governing Board that the provincial elections will be held of 17 November in Kosovo where Mr Master will be operating as Head of the Council of Europe Mission.

Ms. Liliana Sorrentino, Italian Consortium of Solidarity, Chisinau, Moldova, presented the situation in the region and confirms the interest of the local authorities for the work of the Association of the LDAs.

Ms. Annalisa Tomasi reported about the situation in Prijedor and confirms that the main issue is the return process. A big need is expressed for the people who will no more return to their home of origin and are left without help. 20.000 refugees are in this “staying process”. She also expressed the concern concerning the foreseen decrease of the international help in Bosnia. 50% of the interior product is directly connected to international community. Just 4000 people are working in productive field and 10000 in social field.

As far as the dates, here is the calendar:

- **2 – 7 September:** Training Session TOT – LGI in Verteneglio/Brtonigla
- **14th of September:** Meeting of the potential partners of the Nis LDA in Strasbourg
- **6th of October:** Bureau of the Association in Bellinzona
- **End of October/Nov:** Opening of the LDA in Serbia
- **3th of December:** Governing Board
- **4th of December:** Annual seminar dedicated to the role of LDA partners leader
- **5th of December:** General Assembly and continuation of the Governing Board

ROUND TABLE "THE COMMON CULTURAL VALUES IN THE TRADITIONS OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS"

On 5th July 2001 took place the initial activity of the series of activities within the project **"Promoting the multicultural values within the multiethnic democratic society"**, financed by the CBM Programme of the Council of Europe. Twenty participants took active part and nominated working group of ten experts who will have the task to collect materials for ethnic communities around the Lake Ohrid. The members of the working group during the following four months agreed to prepare text, photo and audio materials for Macedonian, Turkish, Albanian, Vlach and Egyptian communities in this region. All collected materials after approval by the Steering committee will be used for designing a CD-Rom.

According to the participants this project is a good opportunity for the inhabitants from this region to start trans-frontier co-operation in the field of culture. From historical point of view ethnology had important peaceful role as a science between different communities. The history gives us examples of friendly relationship among people and cities around Lake Ohrid. This project activity should intensify relations in spiritual and material culture among people living around Lake Ohrid as well as would take care about good traditional relationship while eliminating the prejudice and stereotypes. The essential part of the project is to emphasise material and spiritual culture of the communities.

On 7th August 2001 was organised the first session of the Steering Committee that was attended by the members of the Working group - experts and independent members. The experts - ethnologists gave presentation of the collected and drafted materials for four ethnic

groups. On 14th August 2001 took place the second session of the Steering Committee which was attended by the two experts from the neighbouring city of Pogradec in Albania as well as the members of the Working group - experts. The experts from Albania gave presentation of the collected and drafted materials for the Albanian ethnic group. All members agreed to meet again in September when they would present the prepared materials and exchange some views for the final version.

LDA-OHRID WEB SITE



LDA-Ohrid has published the new re-designed WEB site. The site contains information about LDA activities, news, partners, host city and links with the Association of LDAs site as well as with the Council of Europe site. The site is bilingual English / Macedonian and is accessible on:

www.aldoh.org.mk

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Steering committee of evaluation of the Programme CIVIL SOCIETY sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development

Risan, Montenegro
22nd of July 2001

The 22nd of July 2001, the Delegates of the LDAs participated to the final steering committee of evaluation of the programme CIVILSOCIETY sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development.

The evaluation was based on the results so far obtained with the activities and on the level of network that the LDAs managed to create among themselves.

LDA Prijedor (BiH): School for journalism, report of Annalisa Tommasi - Delegate

Report of the current programme :

The project started with a **campaign of sensibilisation of the community for multiethnic and free information**. In April, it was possible to **select 35 people** for the school from the area (some of them also from Sanski Most). Their average age is 35. They invited also young people of political parties. They carried out **intensive training for them**. The work with the NGOs was also very important. They manage to include also some local experts (from Bihac). They had no problem in the implementation.

At the end of the month there is going to be the **first issue of the newspaper** and the visit of International journalists.

This is also the first activity which includes in particular youth.

They tried to sensiblise the media in particular regarding the return process. There are three newspaper in Republika Srpska, 2 television and 5 radios.

The city of Prijedor took part in the training through the participation of their responsible for public relations and media.

Networking :

They exchanged information about the programme with Zavidovici since they are doing such a project (CBM funds). They are going to invite also some experts from Zavidovici.

LDA Ohrid (Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia): Development of an inclusive participative democracy report of Mirijana Lozanoska - Delegate

Report of the current programme :

They implemented **two webdebates** and organised a **seminar**. The timing - during the crisis - was appropriate for a call for peace full solution. The two first events were broadcasted live on two websites and for three local radios.

It was a positive experience for interethnic relations. The first event had 200 hundreds visitors which followed live the debate. They have archive of both of the debates. The site is still visited. They have produced CD roms of the debate and the narrative part also given to the educational institutions. The second webdebate was visited by 100 visitors.

There is no conflict in the area of Ohrid so far.

The next event - **workshop on media** - will receive a second contribution of the Council of Europe.

Networking :

The colleagues of the LDAs have been invited to attend the programme but they did not manage to be included in the discussion.

We would like to invite some representatives of Zavidovici and Prijedor for the last event.

LDA Tuzla (BiH): Promotion of Roma cultural heritage in the areas of Bijelina and Kalesija in Bosnia and Herzegovina, report of Elvir Saijic, Project Manager

The programme is one of the very few organised for the roma people in BiH. They tried to present the **culture of the roma people and they will produce a booklet on this**. The roma people are in very difficult situation and very little people are taking care of their needs since there are many other emergency in the country so far. In Tuzla, they have a difficult position and they have been displaced in another area of the city where they don't have infrastructures.

In their community, there is no organization for changing the situation. They tried to indicate those questions to the bosniac community who gave us some resources (not financial). The roma people are usually rather ignorant about their rights. They want to change something but they want to delegate to the others the change their situation. They express their goodwill for education. They would like to prove them that there is a future for them. Some of them are willing to join new projects. Through them, the programme will educate others.

Networking :

They did not manage to include other LDAs in their activities.

LDA Verteneglio/Brtonigla (HR): School of Civil Society, report of Tullio Fernetić, Delegate

They work on the development of civil society. The Delegate carried out the programme with his experience of local elected representative and following the current situation (census, administrative elections in May). The census has been realised in a fair way. There are two focuses : national identity and new of local selfgovernment.

The first **seminar was about the political roles and the role of citizens in the local authorities**

It was organised in the centre of Istria with 30 mayors, 20 presidents of city councils, a representative of the Region and Ministry.

The **second seminar was about the opportunities given by the volunteer organisations and the social policy**. They had meeting a) with social operators b) social operators and local authorities. An expert from Tuscany attended the meeting

The **next seminar will discuss the role of the local authorities in the transborder co-operation in order to improve the quality of life, new jobs, local development.**

A lot of people are reaching Istria before entering Slovenia and trying to reach Italy or Austria. They are from Kosovo, Bosnia and from other European States.

A big question is also the one of the general situation of transborder relationships (fiscal and social) and the brain drain from Istria. Many of the most qualified people are leaving our country.

Networking :

No precise activity for networking

LDA Osijek (HR): transborder cooperation in Euro-Region Danube-Drava-Sava, report of Mijlenko Turniški, Delegate

This programme is the follow-up of numbers of activities realised by the LDA in Osijek during this last year. They also worked with the NGO PUT. They included new areas from Serbia, Bosnia and Hungary.

They developed their contact with the Ministry for European Integration and they are members of the programme HJ-ROLINK.

Thanks to their work, the concept of **Euroregion** is more clear to the people. They invited the people to be more active in the realisation of this objective. The big problems they found out in the implementation of the programme is the **visa regime**. They hope that with the Euroregion could promote the exclusion of the visa regime for the Euroregion.

There are a lot of expectations from the citizens regarding the EU programmes. The people are interested to submit concrete projects.

Networking

They were in contact with Subotica and Tuzla (part of the Euroregion) and received from them information about the institutions and other contacts.

LDA Sisak (HR): Women's rights, report of Michela Cavallini, Delegate

They implemented **several seminars and workshops with a very high participation**. In September, they will organise an international conference. They set up the conditions for many women to be involved. At the beginning, it was difficult to involve social operators. A lot of organisations from Zagreb and from the University attended as lecturers. They will organise a **Infopoint of support**. They underlined the violence inside the family.

Networking :

Contact with Zavidovici and Prijedor. They will invite Bosnian women for the conference.

LDA Subotica (FRY-Serbia): developing democratic citizenship and intercultural dialogue at local level, report of the Deputy Delegate, Stanka Parac

They had a very big **conference on decentralisation and regionalism** in March. A **publication** will follow within the end of September.

Networking :

Contacts for the names and for the papers. Contact with Osijek:Vukovar.

LDA Zavidovici (BiH): Ecology campaign in the Zavidovici area

The Delegate, Mr. Andrea ROSSINI, could not attend the session and reported his observation in the final report to be delivered in July.

Enlarging the basis of the Association

Cités Unies de France

A first contact between the AADL and Cités Unies de France was made in the Forum of Skopije, in November 2000. In those last months, Cités Unies de France communicated to the AADL their interest in working together with the future LDA for the implementation of a programme of training and capacity building for local authorities in Central and Southern Serbia.

Cités Unies de France, thanks to the main contribution of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, will organise a programme of support and capacity building in the area. Their programme includes an initial conference, three training for local authorities and different following activities connected. They will work in close co-operation with the Standing Conference of Yugoslavian Towns. Their programme will start from now on and they will work for two years.

Their interest in the LDA in Central and Southern Serbia, based in Nis, is the opportunity of having a tool for the implementation of this programme – in co-operation with local partners.

Cités Unies de France is now member of the AADL.

They will inform the cities of their network interested in working in Southern and Central Serbia.

1. **Rennes (working with Kragujvac)**
2. **Chinon (working with Nis)**
3. **Poitiers (working with Kraljevo)**
4. **Région du Haut Rhin (working with Nis)**

City of Graz (Austria)

On the 30th of July, a meeting in Graz was organised by Mr. Daneil Stojanovic since the city could be interested in the establishment of the LDA in Central and Southern Serbia. They are already working for the bilateral relations among Graz and Nis. Many exchanges have been already taken place between the two cities.

AICCRE Emilia Romagna – Bologna

Mr. Pietro Franesi, responsible of AICCRE Emilia Romagna, received the representative of the AADL in Bologna on the 27th of July 2001.

It will be defined a more stable co-operation between AICCRE Emilia Romagna and the Association of the LDAs for sharing contacts and information.