

APRIL | JUNE 2002

2002: Stability Pact for South and Eastern Europe: the LDAs are among the priorities

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Thanks to the support of the Council of Europe, the Local Democracy Agencies' programme has been involved in the Stability Pact for Southern Eastern Europe process since its very beginning. However, the role of the local authorities in the process of democratisation and stability experienced different levels of interest in the short life of the priorities of the Working Table I :

Democratisation and Human Rights. The good governance seemed to be put aside in the meeting held in Portoroz (Slovenia) in 2001 and the Association of LDAs could be just a passive witness of this approach, which was underlying the priorities especially of refugees and youth.

This year, with the appointment of the new Special Coordinator of the Pact, Dr. Erhard BUSEK, the attention was again on the role of local actors in particular local governments and civil society as stakeholders for a future and participated development in the area. The Association of the LDAs has been indicated, as soon as this new approach was confirmed, as a key actor for the identification of the priorities and the evaluation of the possible strategies. Our work has been especially precious for the long term commitment of cities and NGOs in promoting institution building, community relations and local development. The concrete examples of our successes and failures has been useful for shaping the future vision of the Stability Pact in this field.

The meeting held in Istanbul, on the 12th and 13th of June 2002, of the Working Table I of the Stability Pact, chaired by Alexandros Rondos, approved the new priorities. For the LDAs this is a fundamental step ahead since the local authorities are at the top of the list and our programme is mentioned as such in the final conclusions.

Here is the point dedicated to the LDAs :

"Also, Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) established by the Council of Europe have shown considerable results during the past years in working with local governments and with civil society. LDAs can build upon a wide network of international and local partners and should receive further support."



Meeting ALDA and Dr. Erhard Busek, Novi Sad

The meeting also identified the steps to be undertaken in the next months.

- Local democracy and cross-border cooperation as key features of the democratisation and stabilisation process in Southeastern Europe shall be given priority within the Stability Pact.
- A Steering Committee will be established to coordinate efforts in the field of local democracy and cross-border cooperation.
- The Steering Committee will define priority actions, beginning with the mapping of existing initiatives. This will be completed by September 2002.
- By the same token, a plan of action will be developed for 2003.

The ALDA is member of the Steering Committee here mentioned above.

Other and following priorities are : history teaching, education and Youth, refugee return initiative, media, gender, parliamentary co-operation, human rights and national minorities.

MEETING NOVI SAD .2

18TH OF APRIL 2002

Meeting with the Special coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Mr. Erhard Busek, Novi Sad and first steering committee for the programme of the Swiss Agency for Development

On the 18th of April 2002, at the City Hall of Novi Sad, the Association of the LDAs and the Delegates of the Agencies had a meeting with the Special co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for SEE, Mr. Erhard BUSEK.

This meeting has to be considered as a training and improvement of the skills of our Delegates. This event was of major importance for the programme of the Local Democracy Agencies since it gave a formal recognition of the work that they have been doing in those last years and that opened new path of co-operation with the Pact.

The meeting was attended by the highest representatives of the Stability Pact, Mr. Busek and by the Director of the Working Table I, Democratisation and Human Rights, Mr. Robert ZELDENRUST and by the special adviser, Mrs. Nives MALENICA.

All the delegates of the LDAs (except Mr. LOZANOSKA and Mr. PELLICCIARI) attended this event.



Roland PYTHON, representative of the Swiss Embassy in Bulgaria, on behalf of the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation was also present. The Council of Europe was represented by Nadia CUK (office in Belgrade) and by Sylvie AFFHOLDER (Congress of Local and Regional authorities)

The meeting gave us the opportunity to present the experience of the LDAs and the work realised in those last years and the methodology implemented. We then presented the opportunity for the Pact to use the LDAs as efficient tools for the stability and the development in the area.

Mr. BUSEK expressed his interest in our work and considered fundamental to go ahead with the methodology of the partnership and transborder co-operation. He also stressed the fact that it is highly time to give an effective evaluation of the work realised in the area and the changes, which have been brought by the Agencies. He also focused on the priorities : refugees, Kosovo, subregional co-operation, development of the situation in Albania

The same day, the Association held the first steering committee of the starting activities supported by the Swiss Agency for Development. It was also a good opportunity to make the point on the internal functioning of the Association and LDAs and to stress the different tasks and objectives of everyone.

As far as the co-ordination of the programme it was agreed to use the following tools :

- website / update their own webpage
- newsletter
- involving the other LDAs in the programme
- to complete a Data basis on experts to be circulated among the LDAs
- Common agenda of our activities

3. DONORS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY IN 2002

Thanks to the support of the Council of Europe, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies received the confirmation of the sponsorship of different programmes

Thanks to the support of the Council of Europe, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies received the confirmation of the sponsorship of different programmes, most of them in the framework of the actions implemented under the umbrella of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

In particular, two States have confirmed the support for our programmes after having appreciated the work realised in 2001. The Agencies satisfied their requests in term of quality of the results, coordination and relation with the other stakeholders dealing with local authorities and civil society in the area.

SWITZERLAND, THROUGH THE AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT, WILL CONTRIBUTE WITH 100.000 EURO FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME “Ethnic relations and transborder co-operation”.

THE TITLE OF THE DIFFERENT PROGRAMMES ARE :

Ohrid (Macedonia) : Promoting civil society and transborder co-operation

Tuzla (BiH) : Strengthening of the coordination capacities between the Associations of Municipalities in the two Entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brecko District

Osijek (Croatia) : Transborder cooperation in the Euroregion Danube Drava Sava

Sisak (Croatia) : Integration of women in the Croatian society through the establishment of a centre for support and aggregation

Subotica (Serbia) : Training seminar for young political leaders

Zavidovici (BiH) : Environment, health, development

Prijedor (BiH) : Stage of journalism for a free independent and multiethnic information and school for peace

Verteneglio (Croatia) : Actors of tomorrow's Europe

The co-ordination of the Association is assured with a communication through the newsletter, steering committees, the support of the whole structure to the implementation of the programme, the website.

THIS PROGRAMME RECEIVED ALSO THE SUPPORT OF **LICHTENSTEIN** (25.000 EURO) AND **FINLAND** (20.000 EURO).

The Association is currently fundraising for a completion of the whole programme this year, for 35.000 EURO

THE SECOND COUNTRY, WHICH HAS CONFIRMED THE CONTRIBUTION IS **IRELAND**

Irish Aid contributed substantially to the establishment of the Local Democracy Agency for Montenegro as well as the LDA for Central and Southern Serbia. This year, a very important confirmation arrived for supporting for a three years periode those Agencies and giving the means for the establishment of the LDA in Kosovo, Gjilane (due to be opened within 2002).

THE CONTRIBUTION OF IRELAND IS SUPPORTING IN 2002

- the LDA for Central and Southern Serbia with 93.489 EURO for activities for transborder co-operation, youth, strengthening local development, capacity building for local authorities and civil society groups.
- the LDA for Montenegro with 77.089 EURO for activities for transborder co-operation, youth, strengthening local development, capacity building for local authorities and civil society groups.
- the Future LDA for Kosovo with 49.956 EURO for youth activities, local authorities and the setting up of the Agency.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE – BUDAPEST IS ALSO CONFIRMING THE COMMITMENT WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF THE LDAs THROUGH:

- a) the funding of the manuals of UN Habitat “Local Government Management” translated into Serbian and adapted into Croatian, Bosnian and Macedonian (9200 USD)
- b) The funding of a programme of TOT (for the LDAs) and the training for local authorities for all the LDAs (76.000 USD)

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES (COUNCIL OF EUROPE) IS CONTRIBUTING TO THE WHOLE PROGRAMME WITH 138.000 EURO. IT SUPPORTS TO A LARGER EXTENT TO THE SUPPORT OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE LDAs

THE PROJECT OF THE LDAs ARE :

LDA Central and Southern Serbia : Strengthening the new established Euroregion Nis-Skopje-Sofia, Institution Building for cross-border cooperation in the fields of Education, Youth and Culture

LDA Subotica (Serbia) : New concept of local governance in Serbia : problems and perspective

LDA Ohrid (Macedonia) : Local government competencies and citizens’ participation in the decision-making process

LDA Zavidovici (BiH) : Educating to a pluralistic citizenship: training of teachers in the Zavidovici area

LDA Tuzla (BiH) : Assessment of the local government in Bosnia and Herzegovina

LDA Verteneglio/Brtonigla (Croatia) : The Good Self government

LDA Sisak (Croatia) : To act locally

LDA Prijedor (BiH) : The School for Peace in Prijedor

LDA Osijek (Croatia) : School of civil society

PLENARY OF THE CONGRESS

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*Signature of the convention
between the Council of Europe
and the Association of the
Local Democracy Agency,
June 2002*

After almost 10 years of co-operation, the Local Democracy Agencies, thanks to their Association, have seen officially recognised the link, which is existing with the Council of Europe. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Walter SCHWIMMER, and the President of the Association, Mr. Gianfranco MARTINI, signed a convention during the plenary session of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities, held in June 2002, in Strasbourg.

This event was extremely important for the Association since it opens the way to a long lasting and regulated co-operation. It was recalled that the former Congress President Llibert Cuatrecasas launched an appeal on this occasion to encourage local and regional authorities of Europe to support actively the LDA network and to become an active partner in South East Europe.



*Signature of the
convention between
the ALDA and the
Council of Europe,
June 2002.
Gianfranco
MARTINI,
president ALDA and
Walter
SCHWIMMER,
Secretary General of
the Council of Europe*

The newly elected President Herwig van Staa pledged continued work to even out the "hot spots" of tension in South-East Europe. "In the aftermath of war and violent clashes it is extremely difficult to restore peace. This work presupposes tolerance, and people living side by side. The Congress can help this by fostering work that helps improve peoples day to day lives and brings people together," he said. He also underlined the role of the Association of the Local Democracy Agency in this process.

During the days of the Plenary session, the Association had a stand for presenting the activities of the LDAs. It was visited by many members of the Congress as well as NGOs attending the sessions of the Congress. A lot of attention was dedicated to the strengthening of local authorities. Representatives from Eastern Europe were interested to start pilot activities of LDAs in their countries.

The representative of the Council of Ministers, the Ambassador of Belgium at the Council of Europe, His Excellency, Mr. Benoît CARDON DE LICHTEBUER hosted a dinner in his residence dedicated to the LDAs. The meeting was attended by already friends of the LDA and new ones such as the Mayor of Mostar (Mr. TOMIC), representatives of the Canton of Geneva (Mr. Carlo LAMPRECHT), and Canton of Basel (Mr. Hans Peter TSCHUDI), the president of the association of macedonian local authorities, Mr. ANGELOV, the director of LGIB, Mike Ashley, the President of IULA, Mr. Alan LLOYD, the President of FEDRE, Mr. Claude HAEGI, Mr. Yavuz MILDON, member of the turkish delegation at the Congress, Mr. Miljenko DORIC, member of the croatian delegation at the Congress.

5. GOVERNING BOARD IN KARDISTA (GREECE) 8TH OF JULY 2002

*The second governing board
of the Association was held in
Kartisa (Greece),
member of the ALDA.*

The second governing board of the Association was held in Kartisa (Greece), member of the ALDA. The meeting was introduced by Mr. Vassilis BELLIS, general director of ANKA Karditsa (lead partner LDA in Ohrid), and by Mr. KOSTIS, deputy Mayor of Karditsa.

The Governing Board had the opportunity to recognise the progress made by the Association and the LDA which are now internationally recognised as a tool for the promotion of democracy and human rights in South Eastern Europe. They particularly appreciated the participation of new members of the Association as well as the confirmation of sponsors for the current year.

Among the different new issues, a proposal for a new LDA in Mostar (BiH) has been discussed. While facing the request of enlargement of the activities of the LDAs, the Governing Board wanted to be careful not to overload the structure of co-ordination of the Association which is still very limited. As far as Mostar is concerned, it was decided to organise a mission in November for the evaluation of the following conditions :

- a local context in favour of the principle of the LDAs
- a delegate
- a network of partners disposed to support the future LDA

The work of the Agencies is now paradoxically reaching a turning point. Experiencing the largest extension of the programme and probably its popularity, the Association could soon experience a crisis of growth. It would be soon to be decided to redefine the mandate of the Agencies and to make a new evaluation of the criteria for the LDAs. To this aim, the Secretariat of the ALDA has been requested to prepare a document for the next Assembly to be held in December in Strasbourg. With this document, it will be fixed a new platform for the activities of the LDAs in the next following years.

*Governing
board
Karditsa,
Greece*



The Governing Board has also agreed for tool of evaluation of the programmes of the Agencies. The logical framework analysis, already very often used for the presentation of the programmes would be used also for a comparison between the expected results and the real achievements. The ALDA will organise a specific training for the LDAs on this issue.

In Kartisa, was held also the first meeting of the Scientific Committee. Mr. Francesco JORI and Mr. Djordje BLAZIC had the opportunity to meet the other members of the Governing Board and to agree among them about the following steps.

The Bureau of the ALDA held the 6th of June in Strasbourg, during the plenary session of the Congress, came before the Governing Board. During this meeting were announced the new representatives of the Congress in our Governing Board :

our President:

- Mr. Gianfranco MARTINI
- Mr. Enda NOLAN, Ireland, Carlow County (also lead partner LDA for Central and Southern Serbia)
- Mr. TOMIC, mayor of Mostar, BiH

substitutes :

- Mr. Miljenko DORIC, member of the croatian delegation in the Congress, President of the Primarsko Goranska County
- Mr. Hans Martin TSCHUDI, Minister for Justice, canton Basel, Switzerland
- Mr. Pascal MANGIN, deputy Mayor Strasbourg.

FIRST MEETING
OF THE SCIENTIFIC
COMMITTEE
IN KARDTISA

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When you enter any headquarter of a japanese multinational company, which is articulated in 152 other companies distributed into 23 different countries, you can find on the panels a common sentence, written in different languages : "Release the ideas". The only row material which is really inexhaustible, the one which makes the difference.

If this is true for the production of goods and services, it could be applicable in a more appropriate way to the construction of that unique and unrepeatably thing which is democracy. And, in this slogan, it could be understood the reason for the existence of the Scientific Committee of the Association of the

Local Democracy Agencies: a place which helps to release the ideas, to bring them to concrete actions, to let them circulate, to submit them to a critical examination which could guarantee their quality.

The Agencies have played a strategic role, in a delicate phase for the balance of Europe but also for the whole world. They opened spaces for dialogue. They made possible the understanding of the concept of reconstruction which does not concern only the houses but above all the relationships. They made flourish, and not only physically, devastated territories.

Strengthened by this experience, today, the LDAs can give a substantial contribution for a society obliged

to go to school of living together.

The Scientific Committee which has been established recently would like to be active in this scenario without being an additional structure and even less a structure. But, in a simple way, a light space where ideas can take off and glide in order to make more efficient and targeted the action of the Association.

It is also to accompany the growth of a democracy which is a child in many areas of the world.

The best ideas belong to everyone, wrote Seneca: let's put them together, without customs for anyone.

*Francesco JORI
Member of the Scientific
Committee of ALDA*



7. DIFFERENT CONCATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

SUMMER SCHOOL IN OHRID (26TH TO THE 30TH OF JULY)

The Summer School of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies has the objective to improve the knowledge of the participants related to the process of stability and democratisation in the Balkans. A particular attention will be dedicated to the understanding of the mechanisms of actions of the Agencies, their multilevel approach and the programme for improving the cohabitation of different ethnic groups.

The participants will be given indications of the different systems of local authorities in the different countries of the Balkans and the ways for including civil society in the decision making process.

A particular attention will be given to their understanding of the role and capacities of civil society and local authorities for improving democracy and development in the South and Eastern Europe.

The participants will acquire knowledge for getting involved in activities of decentralised international cooperation developed by the local authorities and by the civil society groups.

The Summer School of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies will be presented to the partner of the Local Democracy Agencies and to all the members of the Association. Nevertheless, everyone is invited to attend the school if interested in the matter.

A particular attention will be dedicated to the application coming from representatives of local authorities, civil servants as well as representatives of NGOs.

The participants will be requested to pay their travel to Ohrid. For the tuition and the accommodation in Ohrid, the cost for the 5 days, full board, is 590 EURO.

CANTON OF GENEVA / FEDRE

Promoted by the FEDRE, the Director, Antonella VALMORBIDA and the President, Gianfranco MARTINI, had a meeting with Mr. Carlo LAMPRECHT elected representative of the canton of Geneva and Mrs. Sylvie COHEN, responsible of the international relations of the Canton.

This meeting was a good opportunity to present the programme "Protection of Environment and Sustainable Development", which has the aim to increase the capacity of the representatives of the host cities of the LDAs these two areas.

Further contacts will be made for a possible sponsorship.

CANTON OF BASEL (BASEL STADT)

The Minister for Justice of the Canton of Basel, Mr. Hans Martin TSCHUDI, has been appointed by the Congress as substitute of the its representatives in the Governing Board of the Association. Following this interest, the Director of the Association paid a visit to Mr. TSCHUDI to introduce the programme of the LDAs. The canton is supporting activities of international co-operation and could also take part in the actions undertaken by the Agencies. Three issues were presented for a possible support a) to co-finance the programme "interethnic dialogue and transborder co-operation" b) to support a website on the decentralised co-operation c) to support a programme for evaluating the need of technology in the local authorities in SEE.

CITY OF LUGANO (SWITZERLAND)

Mrs. VALMORBIDA paid a visit to the representative of the city of Lugano, Mr. Giovanni CANSA- NI. The city continues its support to the Association.

CITY OF STRASBOURG (FRANCE)

Mrs. VALMORBIDA and Mr. CASAGRANDE paid a visit to Mr. Pascal MANGIN, deputy Mayor of the city of Strasbourg. They might be interested in a programme of transborder co-operation.

CAUSES COMMUNES SUISSES

Further contacts have been made with Causes Communes Suisses, which is a swiss NGO supporting the co-operation of the swiss towns in the programme of the LDAs. A future common strategy will be established.

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

Local and Regional Authorities:	
up to 10.000 inhabitants	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

THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCIES

Vojvodina, Subotica (FRY), Mrs. Stanka PARAC	pstanka@EUnet.yu
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PREPARING THE MISSION FOR THE FUTURE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LDA IN KOSOVO

Together with the Association "KOSOVO ENSEMBLE" (President Steve DUCHESNES and Ilir MUSTAFA), the ALDA is organising the first evaluation mission in Kosovo for the future establishment of the Agency in Gjilane. The mission will be held from the 19th to the 20th of July 2002.

The objectives of the mission will be to assess the needs at the local level as well as the potential actors and stakeholders which will be partners of the Agency in the future.

INTERESTED IN THE MISSION ARE :

Potential partners :

- Martin Esteal – Chelmsford – UK, Chief Executive
- Dick Hackett – Walsall – UK, Principal Local Policies Officer, Community Development Unit
- Roger WINTERHALTTER, Honorary Mayor of Lutterbach and founder of the House for a global citizenship.
- Marie Eve RIALLAND, volunteer in Mitrovica (Association Equipe de Paix dans les Balkans)
- Daniel TERCHOUNE, President of the Association Planet Culture
- Stève DUCHENE, President Kosovo Ensemble

Representative of the Council of Europe :

- Yavus MILDON, Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- Alessandro MANCINI, Secretariat of the Congress

The Local Democracy Agency in Kosovo has the aim to work throughout the whole region for the support of local authorities. The situation has substantially improved in this last year. However, the living together of the different ethnic groups remains a problem. The co-habitation with the situation of the administration of the United Nations (UNMIK) introduced an interested pilot programme where the local institutions were basically substituted for a certain time by international appointed civil servants.

Nowadays, the elected representatives like the Mayor (President of the Assembly) have to work closely with the foreign municipal administrators. The responsibilities are shared and some of them are still kept in the UN hands.

The new challenge will be the local elections planned to be held at the end of October. The two years mandate of the elected representative of Kosovo will come to an end. The new mandate will be of four years and with new duties and tasks.

Progressively, the UN administration should withdraw its competencies on the local administration even if it will keep a close control in particular for assuring the representation of minorities.

For the local authorities and the community in general, the economical situation remains a brick wall that hit every day. The population is very often living in extremely poor conditions. It is almost impossible to plan and local fiscal system.

The future LDA which will be based in Gjilane can count on the support of the municipality where the mayor is Lutfi HAZIRI who will be also the President of the Association of Mayors of Kosovo.