



A STRONG SUPPORT TO THE DEMAND FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS RESPECT IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

By Per Vinther, ALDA President

The Association of Local Democracy Agencies strongly supports the demand for democracy and respect for human rights in the Southern Mediterranean countries and condemns in particular the violence in Libya. We are strongly concerned with the fate of migrants who are fleeing the countries in danger either by sea or through long and very risky journeys over land.

We consider that this is our role, as Europeans, supporting the future strengthening of European identity to promote peace and democracy within our borders but today even more so in our Neighbourhood. The unrests and uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya show that the request for citizenship and involvement and respect in the democratic process, at the borders of Europe, is an essential need.

ALDA and the LDAs have an extensive knowledge in post conflict areas, like in Western Balkans and in Southern Caucasus to restore peace and democracy, as well as paving the way for future development. We are convinced that it is possible only through real support to local authorities and civil society working together.

ALDA recommends to the European institutions to respond with one single voice in defence of democracy and human rights in this area of the world in these days and give full support to migrants in needs. It calls for support and commitments from local authorities and their associations as well as European Civil Society to be engaged in giving support and help in this moment and in the future.

We strongly recommend the inclusion of local governance and citizens' participation as a cross cutting element of the European Neighbourhood Policies and programmes.

Being already involved in a programme for migrants in Algeria and initiatives in Morocco, ALDA confirms its interest in supporting local good governance and citizens' participation in the Southern Mediterranean countries, drawing on our experience and commitment from Europe, in particular Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership.



RICHERT: "THE LDAs IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES" IN THE BALKANS AND THE SOUTH-CAUCASUS

The role of Local Democracy Agencies in the process of democratization in the Balkans and in the South Caucasus was underlined by the French Minister for Local Authorities and President of the Alsace Region, Philippe Richert, in his allocation to the 20th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional

Authorities of the Council of Europe.

The 20th session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe was held in Strasbourg in the last February.

At the top of the agenda there was debates on human rights issues at local level, in particular the situation of Roma in Europe. An urgent debate was dedicated to the role of the Congress in the context of the current reform process of the Council of Europe.

Congress members also examined several reports on territorial democracy in Turkey, Romania, Austria and Malta as well as the report on the observation of local elections in Ukraine, held in October 2010. Among the other guest speakers, there were EU Commissioner responsible for Regional Policy, Johannes Hahn, Council of Europe Secretary General, Thorbjorn Jagland, and Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg.



EUROPEAN ASSISES OF DECENTRALISED COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN BRUSSELS

The second edition of the European Assises of decentralised cooperation for development was held in Brussels on March 29-30. Representatives of local and regional authorities from EU and developing countries participated in the

event and exchanged views with each other and representatives of European institutions on development cooperation.

The President of the Committee of the Regions Mercedes Bresso, the European Commissioner for development Andris Piebalgs and the Vice-president of the European Parliament Isabelle Durant participated in the Assises.

The aim of the Assises was to strengthen the effectiveness of development aid and the participation of local and regional authorities in the development cooperation policies and to build a genuine EU partnership between the different actors active in the field of development.

During the Assises, ALDA representatives participated in the panel during the workshop organised by TERRES (Territoires Responsables). Mr. Dobrica Milovanovic, First Vice President of ALDA and Vice Mayor of the City of Kragujevac, Serbia; Mrs. Sabrina Rosati from Reggio nel Mondo, Italy and ALDA Director, Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida spoke in the panel and presented the Local Democracy Agency approach and experience as a tool for successful multilateral decentralised cooperation and partnership building in development work.

ALDA had a stand during the Assises and presented participants with more details about the work of the Local Democracy Agencies and the role of ALDA as an actor for development. A special emphasis was put on ALDA's upcoming Working Together for Development project which is expected to start in early 2011. This multi-annual development project with 21 international partners and associates coming from 16 different countries aims at improving the capacities of local authorities and non state actors to act as efficient development agents



STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK OF LDAS IN SOUTH-CAUCASUS: TWO DECISIVE MEETINGS IN STRASBOURG DURING THE 20TH SESSION OF THE CLRAE

Strengthening and enlarging the network of Local Democracy Agencies in Europe is the first objective of ALDA, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies.

To this end, two important meetings were held in Strasbourg during and following shortly the 20th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

The first one was held on 24th of March at the Council of Europe main building, gathered twenty participants representing ten potential partners from France, Italy, Estonia, Greece as well as Armenia for an LDA in Armenia. Held under the auspices of the Congress, during this meeting was discussed a concrete strategy for the establishment of the Agency.

The second was the LDA Georgia partners' meeting organised by the Municipality of Strasbourg, the new lead partner of the Kutaisi based Agency. The main aims of this event was to update LDA Georgia statute, to reflect upon ways to enlarge LDA partners' network, as well as to agree on an Action plan for 2011-2012.

This meeting was held on 25th of March at the Hotel de Ville premises.

ALDA had a stand during the whole session of the Congress.



MINSK: DELAY IN THE VISA DELIVERING DON'T STOP THE ACTIVITY OF THE MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY FOR EAP (4TH AND 5TH OF APRIL 2011)

With a delay in the delivery of visas the Belarusian authorities tried to stop the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum for Eastern Partnership that was scheduled in Minsk on the 4th and 5th of April 2011.

Unfortunately (see Statement below) the whole Steering Committee could not

meet as expected, because only nine members of the committee were able to arrive in Minsk, while four members did not receive a visa and couldn't arrive.

Despite this difficult situation, the members met to further progress on the different objectives like the activities of the Working Groups and the National Platforms. They also had the opportunity to discuss the important challenge of the future Eastern Partnership Summit in Warsaw in September and also the Third Civil Society Forum in Poznan in November.

The group of participants had the opportunity to meet the National Platform and discuss the possible means of support to Civil Society representatives in Belarus.

Mrs. Antonella Valmorbida, ALDA's Director, elected co-chair of the Steering Committee together with M. UladVialicka, chairman of EuroBelarus, lead part of the debates.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will take place on the 3rd and 4th of May in Brussels.



CO-OPERATION CIVIL SOCIETY - LOCAL AUTHORITIES, IMPORTANT PREREQUISITE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, STABILITY, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The co-operation of civil society with local authorities is an important prerequisite of democratic governance that could contribute to further stability and sustainable development in the Western Balkan region, as demonstrated within the project “participation and intercultural governance at local level in

the Balkans: challenges and European perspectives”.

The leading applicant of the project was the city administration of Subotica; ALDA, the LDAs of Subotica, Mostar and Osijek and the Lighthouse Media centre of Wolverhampton (UK) were the partners of the project, equally involved.

In the opening session of the final conference of the project that was held in Mostar, (30th March - 2nd April 2011) the participants were addressed by Mr. Ljubo Beslic, Mayor of the city of Mostar.

In his welcoming speech, he stressed the importance of the events promoting intercultural governance in the city that has gone through armed clashes and destruction during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and whose remnants are still visible. However, efforts are constantly being made to alleviate and overcome the consequences of the recent past and the city is seeking the solutions in support to development oriented policies that would suit the needs of all the citizens. Mr. Slavko Parac, President of the City Assembly of Subotica, greeted the participants on behalf of the Lead partner, the city with the centuries long history of multicultural coexistence among local national communities in the border area connecting Serbia, Hungary and Croatia. The consequences of the recent conflicts in the region however imposed the need for the local government to open up new space for improving intercultural dialogue, multilingual education and promoting diverse cultural identities that are all incorporated in local development strategy. Mr. Jovo Jelic, greeted the participants on behalf of the Osijek/Baranja county-Croatia. He informed about the efforts aimed at overall economic reconstruction and interethnic confidence building in the war affected zones in the region, reiterating the need for intensified cross-border and regional co-operation links between different local communities. Ms. Suzan Arslan wished a successful work to the conference on behalf of DG Enlargement-Regional Programmes, and informed the participants about the P2P Programme and Civil Society Facility (CSF) developed in order to support the regional co-operation initiatives with the view of overall democratic transformation of the Western Balkan societies aspiring to EU integration. She also noted that the co-operation of civil society with local authorities, as demonstrated within this project, is an important prerequisite of democratic governance that could contribute to further stability and sustainable development in the region.

During the second part of the opening session, an overview of the project activities and some of the key results achieved was made by Ms. Stanka Parac Damjanovic, Project manager. Main project outcomes and publications are available on: www.regionalicc.net.

Thematic panels

The conference gathered more than 80 participants, representing CSO-s and local governments from Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, UK, Italy, Norway, Hungary and Moldova. Mr. Owen Masters, CoE expert was facilitating the Panel 1 on the participation of minorities, during which the case studies presented were from Hungary, Serbia, Moldova. Examples of activities of the Croat minority association in Szeged, efforts of the Roma education centre aimed at inclusion in Subotica, and confidence building measures initiated on both sides of the river Dnjestre in Moldova. Mr. Gunnar Mandt, Director of the European Wergeland Centre, Norway was the facilitator of the panel: From multicultural coexistence to intercultural governance, that provided an overview of innovative mechanisms and institutional structures in support to democratic governance at local level in cultural diverse local communities. Examples from Norway, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia were presented, and comparisons made in regard with local governance models in traditional multicultural communities facing with the post-conflict reconciliation process in the Western Balkan region with cultural diversity as a result of migratory waves to EU member states taking place over the last sixty years. Specific attention in presentations was given to education (both informal and formal) and culture, as the areas falling within the scope of competencies at local tier of governance. The panel 3 facilitated by Ms. Jlenia Destito, Ipres Institute for socio economic researches, Italy, was devoted to municipal service provision with the case studies ranging from participatory planning process, education and public information provision in minority languages, preservation of cultural identities, financing policies and housing for migrants. Presentations included case studies from Devon (UK), Subotica, Kovacica (Serbia), Szeged (Hungary) and the host city Mostar.

During the session 4, which was facilitated by Mr. Vehid Sehic, Citizens' Forum Tuzla (BiH) issues related with the role of civil society in intercultural dialogue and reconciliation process were discussed. The panelists, CSO representatives and experts from the three countries included in the action gave an overview of recent developments as regards the political, social and economic factors relevant for the progress made in regional co-operation initiatives. Specific attention was given to the potential role of civil society as the

catalyst of the democratic change and an actor capable to bring EU integration values closer to the citizens and this way help reduce inter-ethnic distance in post-conflict societies. Therefore, education for democratic citizenship with particular emphasis on youth and opening of a new space for dialogue engaging widest possible actors in regional co-operation programmes could bring more tangible results in the long run.

During the concluding session, facilitated by Stanka Parac Damjanovic, ALDA Regional Programmes Coordinator, an overview of on-going programmes was made on TACSO regional co-operation and technical assistance to CSO-s in Western Balkan and Turkey, the potential role of Hungarian EU presidency in promoting EU enlargement, as well as other regional initiatives of interest for the CSO-s and local governments, such as the Danube strategy, functional Euroregions connecting the countries of the Western Balkans and EU member states (such as DKMT Euro-region).

BE-ME Perspective was designed as a thematic session facilitated by Mr. Frank Challenger and as an opportunity to view the documentaries on the three cities (Subotica, Osijek, Mostar) made during the project as an illustration of efforts made by the local governments to promote cultural heritage of national communities and support their participation in policy decision making process. Personal testimonies and narratives from different sections of local societies constitute the main background of the documentaries thus illustrating the present challenges and everyday problems of ethnic, religious minorities in the Western Balkan region and as a comparison, in the city of Wolverhampton as well.

Round Table in the city hall Mostar, 2nd April 2011

The delegation composed of the representatives of the city of Subotica and Osijek Baranja county paid a visit to the city hall Mostar, where they were addressed by Mr. Murat Coric, President of the City Council. He presented the local elected bodies operating since 2004., and also some of the main local policies in areas of social and economic development, considering the heavy legacy of conflicts and visible remnants of the destruction in the city. The local government is facing with large scale infrastructural works particularly in water supply and sewage system, while also there is an evident need for improvements in housing and agricultural development.

Much has been done in connecting the city with a wide range of international partners, including the cities in Europe and in the Western Balkans, while the good governance, citizen participation, promotion of cultural heritage of the national communities are among the priorities in these co-operation programmes. Good economic links have also been established with a number of cities, including Kragujevac in Serbia. There is certainly an interest to increase the scope of potential partner cities and establish co-operation with Subotica and Osijek. Therefore, as Mr. Coric reiterated, networking among the cities is the future of this region and will certainly contribute to stability, economic prosperity and improved outlooks for EU integration.

Study visit to Mostar, Saturday, 2nd April 2011

After the conference, a group of participants had an opportunity to visit the historic sites and cultural monuments in the downtown area of the city of Mostar.



THE CODE OF GOOD PRACTICES FOR THE CIVIL PARTICIPATION PRESENTED AT THE SWEDISH ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES

The director of ALDA, Mrs. Antonella Valmorbidia, presented the Code of Good Practices for Civil Participation, promoted by the Conference of the INGOs of the Council of Europe, at the Association of Municipalities of Sweden (SALAR) on the 31st of March.

The event was organised among the activities to promote citizens' participation already taking place in Sweden.

Indeed, a framework agreement between the authorities and representatives of civil society working on social matters has been recently agreed and based on the Code of Good Practices. At the meeting, took part about 20 municipalities from Sweden interested to know concrete proposal about how to improve the participation of citizens in the decision making process at the local level.

The Code was also presented by one of its author, Mrs. Ariane Rodert, representative of the Social Forum Sweden and member of the European and Economic Social Committee.

For further information please visit:

http://www.coe.int/T/NGO/code_good_prac_en.asp

<http://english.skl.se/activities>



THE SOUTH EAST EUROPE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ASK THE EU TO BE INVOLVED IN A REALISTIC ROADMAP OF INTEGRATION

The local governments of the South East Europe countries want to be involved in a realistic roadmap of integration.

In a declaration signed on the 10th of March, mayors and elected representatives of the local and regional governments of south-east Europe, meeting in occasion of NEXPO, the NALAS international Municipal Fair, that was held in Sarajevo, ask the EU to include the local government dimension in its strategic and operational planning for EU enlargement, and to involve them, in particular via their national associations, in relevant consultation and dialogue.

“Countries and people of South East Europe –says the declaration- need to take their proper place very soon, within the European Union. This will mark another major step towards unifying our continent and thereby enhancing our common goals of peace, stability and sustainable prosperity”.

But to maintain the prospect of EU membership a credible attractive for the citizens, the EU needs to set out a clear, realistic target timetable and roadmap for each State, taking its situation into due account, also on the basis that the necessary steps must be taken in a timely manner to fulfill the criteria for membership, and each country needs to take all necessary steps with each level of government playing its part, the mayors say.

“At present – the declaration underlines – it seems as if the EU’s institutions are under-estimating the essential role of the region’s local governments in preparing for EU integration”.

On the basis of these considerations, in their document mayors and representatives call on the EU’s Institutions to include the local government dimension in its strategic and operational planning for EU enlargement, to involve them in relevant consultations and dialogue and to ensure that relevant accession-related financing programmes are available to assist local government in preparing for accession and achieving a high quality development.

Mayors and representatives ask their national governments to complete and adequate the processes of decentralisation, with the transfer of the necessary competences, financial and human resources, involving local government associations at all stages in the processes of decentralisation, financial decision-making and preparation for EU membership.



THE MACEDONIAN NETWORK FOR YOUTH INFORMATION STUDIED THE FRENCH MODEL - Study visit in Caen, Lower Normandy

The team of the Youth Information and Counseling Center INFO SEGA, together with the Executive Director of SEGA, Member of the Council of the Local Self-Government Strumica and representative of the Local Self-Government of Shtip participated in study visit for the Network of youth information, Local partnership and its modalities of implementation in Lower Normandy, France.

The aim of this visit was to study the system and functioning of the Youth Information Centers in this part of France, representatives of the municipalities Shtip and Strumica in order to get familiar with the model of Youth Information Center, exchange of experiences and possibilities for further cooperation between Macedonia and Lower Normandy.

This study visit is part of the Project for decentralized cooperation between Macedonia and Lower Normandy – France, supported by the Regional Council of Lower Normandy, the French Ministry for foreign affairs, the European House of Caen and the Coalition of youth organizations SEGA. These organisations cooperate on Component 2 of the project.

The Macedonian delegation had opportunity to visit Youth informative centers, Info points, municipalities and state offices, youth houses and youth cultural centers in Caen, Flers, Saint Lo and Oustreham.

Within this study visit both parties exchanged successful stories for the youth information centers, youth information, local partnership and the modalities of its implementation. Lot of fresh ideas will be implemented in the everyday work of INFO SEGA, and the opening of new youth information centers in Shtip and Strumica will be initiated.

For further information please consult the webpage of the Cooperation <http://crbn-mk.courriers.info/or> contact Katica Janeva: katica.janeva@aldaintranet.org.



MEETING ALDA - UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF MARMARA (TR)

The Union of Municipalities of Marmara, around Istanbul, is certainly one of the most active association of municipalities in Turkey.

They participate actively in the international and European activities, in particular thanks to the commitment and dynamic engagement of the Director, Mr Murat Daoudov, whom Mrs Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA, visited on the 12th of February 2011.

ALDA and the Union of Marmara already cooperate together in the framework of activities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The Union is also member and

Vice President of the network of NALAS, the Network of the Association of Local Authorities from South Eastern Europe.

Recently, the Union of Municipalities participated in the partners' search for LDA Kosovo launched by ALDA, and the city of Yalova, from the Marmara Region, participates actively as partner of the Agency and hosted the partner meeting in February.

Considering that the Union is interested to have activities and twinning initiatives, mostly in the Balkans and Southern Caucasus, there is a great potentiality for cooperation.

The Union of Municipalities of the Region of Marmara is currently following the process for joining ALDA in 2011.



“THE WESTERN BALKANS’ EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE: THE CONTRIBUTION OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES” AFCCRE Conference in Paris, 18th and 19th February

A clear definition and extension of the competences of local authorities, appropriate local and regional financial means and autonomy, improvement of governance through increased transparency and participation and strengthening of capacities for public services.

These are the four central needs of local authorities in the Western Balkans indicated by Keith Withmore, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, in his conclusion speech of the conference on the European perspective of the Western Balkans and the contribution of local and regional authorities that took place in Paris, in the French Senate, on 18th and 19th of February.

Mr Keith Whitmore underlined also the involvement of the Congress in the Balkans (citing explicitly the LDAs and their existence since 1993 and ALDA's work).

The conference united representatives of local authorities and other stakeholders of European decentralised cooperation. It was an excellent occasion for French local authorities and authorities from the Western Balkans to meet and exchange their views on the strategies and priorities of European integration.

A central point of reflection was the role of local authorities' international cooperation in the integration process. Further subjects discussed included the role of good local governance and public local policy for European integration.

The pause of enlargement is a chance to rethink the relationship between the EU and the Western Balkans, underlined the debate, and the governments in the Balkans have to act now, and at the same time, the EU has to speed up the accession procedures and propose viable political solution to problems such as the Kosovo issue. Many participants also demanded a greater implication of local authorities in the accession process.

Per Vinther, President of ALDA, was present at the conference and informed about its activities in decentralised cooperation in one of the workshops. The project of decentralised cooperation between Lower Normandy and the Republic of Macedonia was at the centre of attention.

The conference was organised by the French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AFCCRE) in cooperation with the municipality of Dijon and the Community of Greater Dijon.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN POLICY MAKERS FROM THE CONCLUSION OF THE E-PANELS PROJECT

An Europe closer to its citizens and able to ensure them real opportunities to improve their life.

This is the need stressed by the participants to the project E-Panels, promoted by ALDA.

In all the discussions implemented on the different national forums and on the final conference that was held in Zagreb (HR) is possible to extrapolate some really interesting recommendations for the European policy makers.

First of all, in most of the forums was highlighted the need to bring the EU institutions more close to the citizens through a better dissemination of the

information about EU, European citizen rights and opportunities for its citizens.

Programmes addressing youth and youth unemployment, moving resources from the military expenses to key sectors as education, industry and agriculture, strengthen minorities rights and to respect ethnic and religious groups, more educational and mobility opportunities for youths in order to improve their skill to face the difficult situation of the labour market, protecting the environment, are the main needs expressed.

The project “e-panels: fostering citizens' participation and volunteering in a wider Europe” was designed to address the issue of bridging the gap between citizens and the European Union in an innovative way. Bringing the EU closer to the citizens is one of the biggest challenges the EU is facing today. The need to

promote and explain the "European project" to citizens, but also to involve them in its definition itself, is well understood by the partners of this project.

The project tried to foster citizens' participation and interaction between citizens' and EU institutions through debates about how to improve citizen participation, with a focus on tools or processes such as ICT tools and the process of volunteering. e-panels aimed at producing opinions and recommendations on these issues in order to collect and submit them to EU institutions. The precise aim of creating e-panels was to enable the citizens from EU countries, but also from candidate countries, to be directly involved and to participate.

Partner of this project were Maison de l'Europe (FR), FIB, Fundacion Insula Barataria (SP), AEP, Association for European Partnership (BG), Local Democracy Agency Osijek (HR), Local Democracy Agency Sisak (HR), "Studiorum", Center for Regional Policy Research and Cooperation (MK), "Horizont", NGO (AL).



Announced legal action to recover loans from European associations Asael's partners in many projects. The European Commission investigates.

ASAEL: THE GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS WILL PERSONALLY PAY OFF DEBTS

It's a moral issue that might affect the local and regional elections in Aragon

The members of the Governing Board of Asael, the Association of municipalities of Aragon Region (Spain) that was dissolved in late 2009 swept away by a scandal, former President Jesus Solà in the head, will be liable personally for debts left.

ALDA, with its other partners, decided to take legal action on the basis of the Spanish Law on Associations (the "Ley Orgánica 1 / 2002, de 22 de marzo, reguladora del Derecho de Asociación).

"We are forced to choose the legal way -said Antonella Valmorbida, Director of ALDA- because all our efforts to resolve the issue amicably have not been successful. The Aragon institutions we questioned, as Asael was an association of local authorities,

ignored our calls or answered that the issue does not concern them. A rubber wall has been raised around Asael and its administrators that were all mayors of Aragon towns".

But the Spanish Law on Associations is clear and says that administrators are responsible of debts of their Association debts, caused by malicious reasons, and also for culpable negligence, and that they have to pay with their personal assets.

"It's clear-stated the Director of ALDA, Antonella Valmorbida- that during the Solà management of Asael, in recent years none of the administrators has exercised effective control, to avoid accumulating debts and that European funds were not used for the purpose for which they were assigned to Asael, to support project activities".

The projects were developed in the years 2008-2009 and were Bandair, Emanzipar and Eclau. The other ALDA members, partners of the project managed by Asael, were the province of Reggio Emilia (Italy), the City of Bydgoszcz (Poland), Baltifem (Lithuania), the Local Councils' Association, Association of Municipalities (Malta), the Institute of Entrepreneurship, an NGO (Greece), the Association for the development of mountain communities (Bulgaria).

The credit of ALDA and its partners amounts around to 115.000 € (ALDA 30,180, City of Bydgoszcz 31,000, Baltifem, 24,000, Institute of Entrepreneurship, 9,700, Province of Reggio Emilia 9,000, Association for Development of Mountain Municipalities, 9,000, Local Councils' Association, 1,800).

This is an amount of money that Asael has to pay to its partners for activities under the project, personal taxes, social contributions. Some of them could have lots of serious financial difficulties if they will not be paid.

"We believe that the situation has been largely overlooked by everyone here in Aragon -still says the Director of ALDA, Antonella Valmorbida- by the risk that it may have in relations with the European Community. The Commission's representative office in Madrid is aware of what happened and shares our position. The Commission's anti-fraud office is investigating possible embezzlement of which has been discussed in newspapers in the region. We are willing to go all the way to guarantee our rights, and we believe that it'll be hard that any other European project could have partners entities such as the Aragonese Famcp, one of which vicepresident is the current President of Asael, whose responsibilities, if not for Solà's management facts, is now due to elude any response. "

Asael's former partners do not understand how institutions and political forces in Aragon do not exercise all is in their power to successfully resolve the issue, which also includes former employees of Asael remained without payment.

"We know that the former president of Asael, Jesus Solà, was very close to the President of PAR, José Angel Biel, who is vice president and spokesman of the regional government, and that the majority of members of Municipality member of Asael were led by mayors of the PAR. Can the PAR, which will celebrate its congress in the next days -still says Antonella Valmorbida-ignore the moral issue internally? And do the other parties in government and in the opposition not have the heart to safeguard the image of the region of Aragon in Europe? And how do they believe that, at the upcoming May elections, they can nominate again those outgoing mayors responsible for this failure? "

These are questions which the public of the region should demand answers, because the ethics of elected representatives and the institutions they governed has been called into question.

"We regret being forced to give public evidence of this situation - concluded the Director of ALDA, Antonella Valmorbida- but silence would be complicit in unlawful conduct. And we are even more regretful for the thirty years of history of Asael, its efficient staff and the president himself Solà, who we always had, until these facts have emerged, a very good

account on. Asael was our partner and Solà was a member of our Board. It's a real shame that things have had this outcome."



GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2011 IN BYDGOSZCZ (PL), 8TH AND 9TH OF JULY

ALDA General Assembly 2011 will take place on 8th and 9th of July in Bydgoszcz, Poland.

In forecasting of Poland's upcoming EU presidency activities, an International Conference on "Local governance, volunteering and civic participation: a challenge for local authorities and civil society " will be held in the framework of the Assembly.

All the necessary documentation will be send soon to ALDA members and publish in this website.