



Become partner of the Local Democracy Agency Edremit

July 2021

ALDA is looking for partners (local/regional authorities and associations) interested in sharing their experience and joining the group of the amazing stakeholders, which will be involved in the launch of the new LDA in Turkey in 2021.

I. [OPENING OF THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY IN TURKEY](#)

[1. WHY OPENING AN LDA IN TURKEY?](#)

Turkey has long been considered the crossroads of two worlds, its territory being partly included in the European continent and partly in Asia, and bordering with extremely diverse countries such as Greece, Bulgaria, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Armenia and Georgia. Its great **cultural richness and diversity**, heritage of its imperial past, constitutes an invaluable resource for not only the rest of the Mediterranean area, but the whole world. Moreover, ALDA's purpose, since its beginnings drawing its attention to countries neighbouring Europe, could not overlook the extremely complex context of Turkey, which also is a member of the Council of Europe since 1949.

The LDA will have the mission to promote good local governance, citizen participation and sustainable development. The activities of the Agency will be held within the framework of a dialogue between citizens, local associations and local authorities, with the aim of achieving the needs of the local population.

The LDA will ensure mediation between the civil society and the local authorities and will try hard to establish a link between these two entities, thus establishing an exercise of democracy and active citizenship.

The LDA will act as a local association and will work as a center of resources and training, with the support of the regulatory authority and the European and international partnerships. The international partners will support the Agency financially, will participate in activities according to their fields of expertise and interest, will encourage their own partners to take part in the work of the LDA and to promote it within their community.



2. THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY EDREMIT

The LDA Edremit will be based in Edremit and will have the following missions:

- To support the participative approach in the decision-making process at the local level, helping the local authorities to work in an open way and encouraging them to take into account the needs for the citizens;
- To widen the field of the possibilities, improving the skills and the capacities of the civil society to commit to the dialogue, to encourage the communication with the local authorities while working on the capacity of the civil society to assert its interests;
- To develop the approaches, strengthening the knowledge and the skills of the citizens at the level of their commitment in the decision-making, and to encourage them to exercise their rights and the capacity to send their complaints to the local authorities;
- To strengthen existing twinning or promote new links between municipalities and other Turkish local and regional authorities with foreign regions;
- To strengthen the information exchange and the development of the network between actors in Turkey, the partners of the LDA and the other countries and the European actors.

Potential action plan:

❖ **Cultural heritage and sustainable tourism**

Turkey's enormous cultural heritage requires a huge work of preservation and valorisation, whose ownership has to be taken by local communities. Culture represents a strong asset in supporting sustainable tourism and positively contributes to local economies.

❖ **Migrants inclusion**

As mentioned, Turkey is one of the countries hosting the largest number of refugees in the world. On one side, this brings an invaluable amount of richness in terms of cultural diversity and enrichment, on the other it needs specific intervention to guarantee safe living conditions for all, including access to the labour market.

❖ **Youth empowerment**

Turkish youth is particularly subjected to limiting conditions such as unemployment and misrecognition of educational certifications. Specific programmes on young NEETs are being financed by the European Union, therefore underlying the need to work on youth empowerment for their full development and enjoyment of rights.



❖ **Trust relationship between local authorities and citizens and accountability**

Municipalities, being the closest level of governance to the citizens, have to maintain a trust relationship with their citizens and prove to be active in the provision of services and international projects but also far from corruption mechanisms. However, this relationship as well as the accountability of local authorities has certainly to be reinforced since there's the need to ensure leadership on the short, while on the other hand the central government is in a really weak position.

❖ **Urban planning and development**

In a decentralisation dynamic, local development and more specifically urban planning are becoming more and more concerns that can be tackled by the community of local actors composed by local authorities, civil society and the citizens. Participatory approach in urban planning therefore is a topic in which both municipalities and NGOs could be highly interested, and the need to ensure sustainability beyond projects and budget is something to work on as well.

❖ **Decentralised cooperation and exchange**

ALDA and the LDA can support international exchanges between local authorities and civil society both at the European-Turkish level, but also in a broader, Mediterranean dimension. The Turkish LDA would become part indeed at the same time of the Mediterranean network of LDA, but also the global network of LDAs present as well in the Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries. These exchanges can create synergies and represent capacity building opportunities for all parts involved.

For those active in Turkey and willing to know more, please contact our team for the future partners' meeting in September and the opening in October.

For more information, please, don't hesitate to contact:

- Ms Giulia Sostero (giulia.sostero@alda-europe.eu)
- or Mr Francesco Pala (francesco.pala@alda-europe.eu)



II. ALDA – THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY

ALDA (European Association for Local Democracy) is an association dedicated to the promotion of good local governance, through the empowerment of civil society and local governments and giving them the opportunity and skills to work together. ALDA is active in Europe (28 EU Member States), in the Balkans' Region, Eastern Partnership, the Middle East & Africa. ALDA coordinates and supports the network of **15 Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs)** in their activities.

ALDA IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

The “revolutions” of 2011 opened the way to the possibility of democratic reforms that nobody had been able to plan. Ten years later, some opportunities were seized, but it is still clear the importance of challenges and difficulties, which are transforming these political and social changes. In a situation, which will lead to the consolidation of a long-lasting democracy, the necessity of answering these challenges with the appropriate means must not be underestimated. It is from this perspective that ALDA, who was - through the Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) - in the front line in supporting the democratic transition in the Balkans and the neighborhood, has decided to develop its presence in Turkey.

III. LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCIES

A Local Democracy Agencies is a permanent platform of a coordinated cooperation among European, Local and International Partners that, signing a Memorandum of Understanding, decide to pull together their effort at the local level for implementing projects and actions that will give the raise to participative processes and good local governance for solving problems.

A study carried out by ALDA in 2013 shows that the overall budget of the LDAs per year constantly increased since 2009 despite the economic context, guaranteeing a sufficient availability of resources for the implementation of the respective action plans. Following the implementation of projects and activities, financial reports are drawn up to ensure transparency and appropriate use of the funds.

Building on ALDA current partners and members in Turkey, other potential collaborations are being explored, both in the local civil society sector and the international community.