

December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022

## Winter Greetings and Happy New Year from the President of ALDA - Mr Oriano Otočan

Dear Members, Friends, and Partners of ALDA,

on behalf of the Governing Board, the LDAs and the whole team of ALDA, I am here today to wish you warm Winter Holidays and a fruitful 2023.

Yet, not everyone will be able to cheer and celebrate peacefully this closing year.

The **unhuman and unjust war**, that the Ukrainian people are now fighting, urges me to further reiterate the endless commitment of ALDA for peace and reconstruction. Ukraine means people, it means home, it means freedom. The very same freedom that the majority of people living in the Union and in the neighbouring countries can benefit from. This war is a constant remind that values and liberties cannot be taken for granted, that the Ukrainian cause is also our cause. There is no peace without freedom, and no freedom without democracy... and democracy is the expression of people's will.

Already on March, the Governing Board and the Secretariat set a dedicated Unit, whose aim is to coordinate actions, while developing new activities with major stakeholders to provide concrete support to Ukraine. By constantly being in touch with delegates from LDA Mariupol and Dnipro, we have been able to maximise our potential and to respond to the emergency promptly and efficiently.

Furthermore, 2022 marked a crucial year for the Association which capitalised on the efforts of the previous year, while stressing its **position as strategic player** in the European and neighbouring area, both in terms of improving social accountability and of fostering citizens' engagement and good governance. Successful examples come from Moldavia, Tunisia, Algeria, Croatia and many other Countries. Besides, we have been selected as valuable and **accredited partner of the Council of Europe in implementing the ELoGE programme**.

ALDA has consolidated its role, it has demonstrated its service to democracy, peace and humanity.

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# alda\*



European Association  
for Local Democracy

In particular, **2023 will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary from the establishment of the first Local Democracy Agency in the Balkans**: a milestone that will invite us to reflect on three decades of work in the Balkan region, in which we have acted tirelessly in support of civil society and towards European enlargement. But above all, it will motivate us to continue with renewed energy and new strategies our work "with" and "for" the ever-widening network of LDAs present today throughout the European neighbourhood.

On this solid milestone we will enter the 2023, with a spirit of collaboration and mutual growth. Looking forward to build and live together new important achievements.

May these Winter Holidays bring a moment of peace and joy, proving support to those in needs, and comfort those in sorrow.

**ALDA President**  
*Mr. Oriano Otočan*

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