



# STABILITY PACT

## FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

Local Democracy and Cross Border  
Cooperation in Albania: Enhancing the  
Regional Perspective

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Pact for South East Europe

# What is the Stability Pact?

- ◆ Established by EU leaders on 10 June 1999 in Cologne
- ◆ Framework for assistance coordination to South Eastern Europe of over 40 countries and organisations
- ◆ Instrument for long-term conflict prevention
- ◆ Aiming at strengthening peace, democracy and economic prosperity of South Eastern Europe



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# Basic aims

- Coordinate activities of all actors active in the development of the region
- Assist the region on its path toward Euro-Atlantic integration;
- Develop regional cooperation, prerequisite to EU membership
- Six core objectives



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# Beneficiary Countries

- Albania
- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- FYR of Macedonia
- Moldova
- Romania
- Serbia and Montenegro



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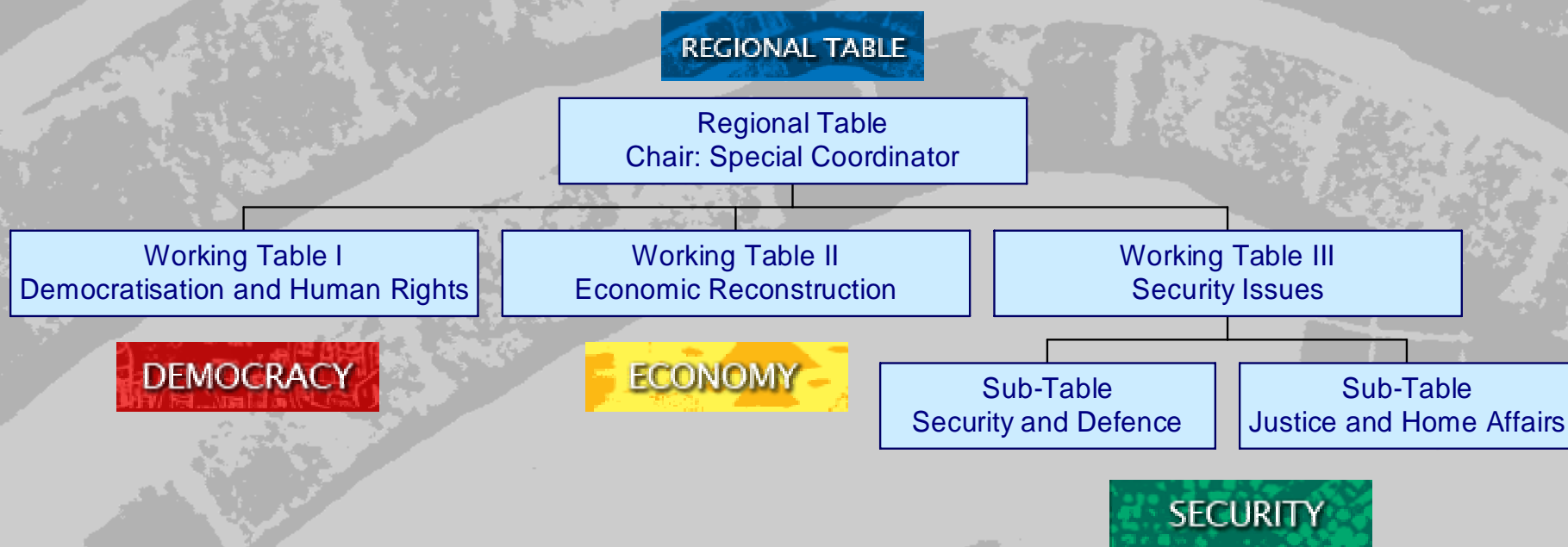
# Who takes part in the SP?

- EU Member States plus G8
- South Eastern European countries
- Non-EU countries like the US, Switzerland and Norway
- International organisations such as OSCE, NATO, OECD and EBRD
- International Financial Institutions
- Regional Initiatives



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# Structure of the SP



# Working Table I Activities

- LODECBC
- Building Human Capital (Education and Youth)
- Parliamentary Cooperation
- Media
- Gender



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# SP SEE, WT I, LODECBC Task Force supported Regional Initiatives and partner international organization initiatives

- Albanian municipalities, towns, non-governmental sector are formally included
- Low Participation
- Why?



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# SP SEE framework initiatives: Council of Europe and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation supported initiative : Network of Associations of Local authorities from SEE (NALAS)

- Member Associations: Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (Serbia); Association of Albanian Municipalities (AKM); Romanian Federation of Local Authorities
- Currently Albania is running the activities of the NALAS secretariat
- NALAS structure: General Assembly meetings; Committee of liaison officers; executive bureau



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# The main goals of NALAS

- Provide services for their members (municipalities) with a view to developing their competences and capacities (i.e. in administrative, legal, fiscal and management questions and social and economic development)
- Develop an efficient co-operation (which should in the medium-term become a partnership) with central government by representing and defending the interests of their members.



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# Local Democracy Agencies and Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA): Council of Europe

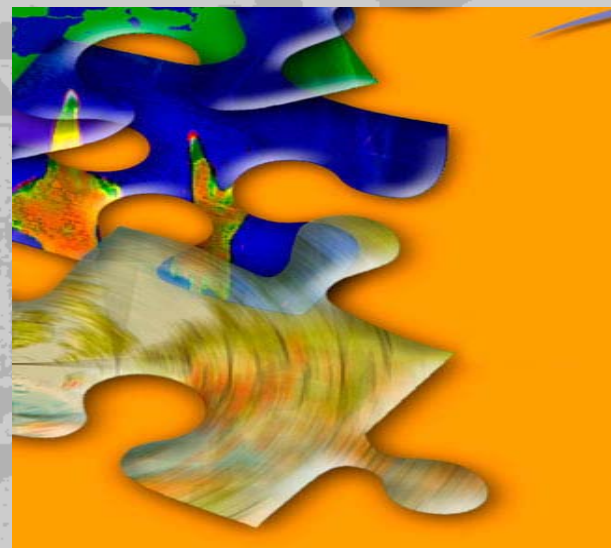
- From emergency to development, funded in 1999 as an umbrella organization
- Member of the Steering Committee on LODECBC (LODECBC Task Force)
- Stress on multilateral decentralized cooperation between Local Authorities and Civil Society
- Town Twinning: EU and the Balkans
- Council of Europe gives ALDA political support, ALDA helps CoE in project implementation



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# ALDA in Albania: future projects

- In November 2005 an ALDA Delegation visited Tirana and Shkodra.
- The aim of the mission were:
- to have a first contact with the possible local partners in Albania
- to draft a report which will be the basis for the future actions to be undertaken by the ALDA
- to identify the needs and the possible actions, understanding of the local situation and possibilities for a future LDA in Albania, identifying and presenting the LDA programme to potential partners, to evaluate the possibilities of the partners and their expectations.
- Based on the report of the mission, the ALDA Governing Board will take the decision to open or not an LDA in Shkodra.
- Some Albanian NGOs are active in the Association



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# Association of Multiethnic cities of Southeast Europe- PHILIA

## ■ Albanian cities which participate in the Association of Multiethnic Cities of SEE:

■ **Tirana**

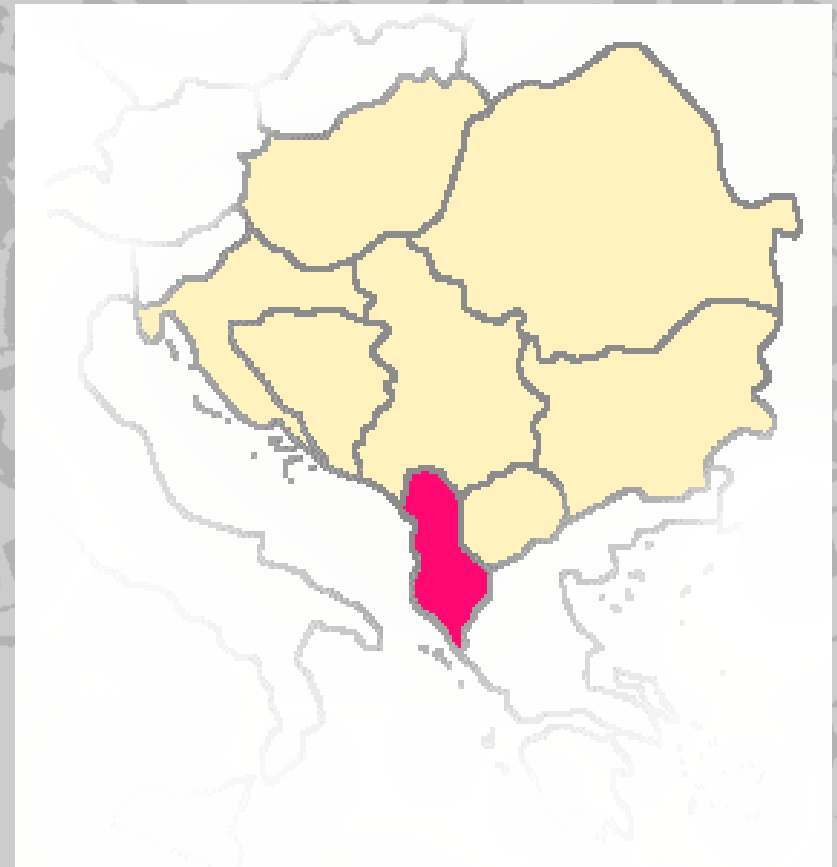
■ **Shkoder** Agreed to join the Association but do not actively participate in its activities

■ **Gjirokaster** was never activated-in project

■ **PHILIA** remains open to other Albanian cities

■ Currently establishing a secretariat in Novi Sad (Serbia)

■ June 2006, Skopje (FYROM)-Planned-First Session of the AMC SEE-PHILIA Assembly



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# Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion

- Formal setting up of this Euroregion postponed in December 2004 for “technical reasons”, pretty much unrelated to Albania (dedicated to the Euroregion)...remains a name problem
- SP SEE Encourages the speedy establishment of this Euroregion



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# Political obstacles to cross border cooperation

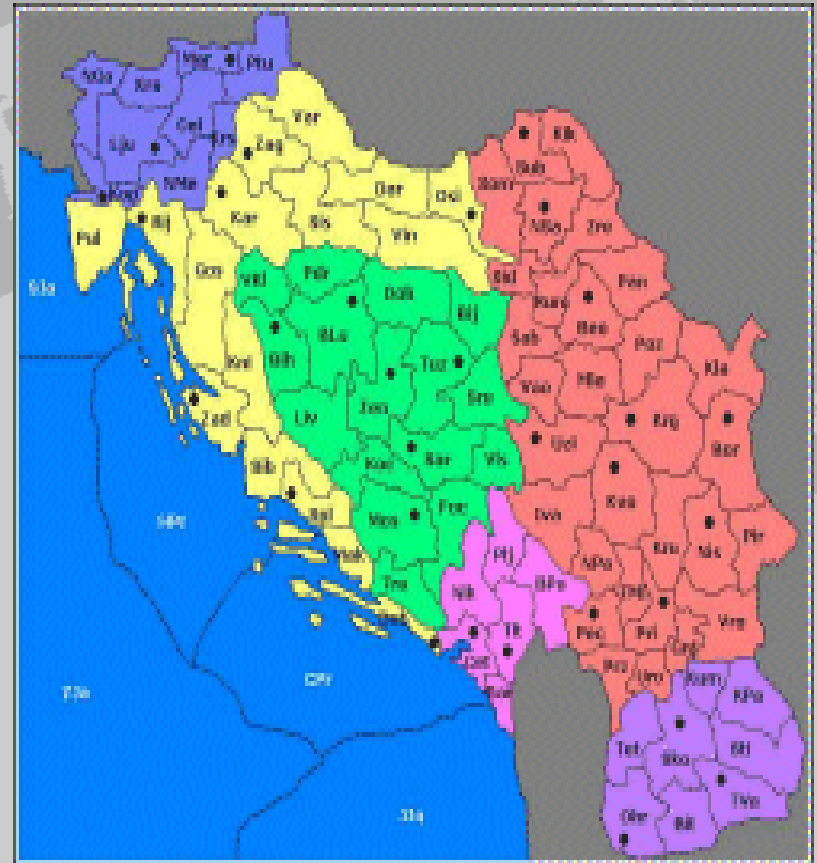
- Sovereignty and symbolical issues hinder CBC:
- Macedonia & Greece: Ohrid-Prespa Euroregion stalemate
- Serbia (Kosovo)-Albania Political considerations dissuade CBC
- Flexibility: CBC is unrelated to sovereignty issues



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# Obstacles to CBC: History and Language

- Albania excluded from the ex-Yugoslav Space
- Serbo-croatian *lingua franca* did not favour Albania
- Negative Perception: General isolation problem from the Cold War Years
- Positive Perception: Outside the war zone did not work in its favour
- Infrastructure



# Regional Cooperation is one of the official conditions for EU membership

- Bridges not Walls
- Is there a region of SEE?
- Bilateral relationship and cooperation with the EU



# Regional Cooperation and the path towards EU membership

- SEE Free Trade Area must be followed by political cooperation in the region to have the voice of the citizens. Local authorities voice in the region must be heard, to control the free trade market that is to be established
- Visa free zone within the countries of the Balkans (e.g. Serbia and Albania) facilitates regional cooperation, the goal of SEE countries is to work on the establishment of such a area of free movement of peoples (to combine with the free movement of goods)
- The EU should do everything to facilitate this process in the best possible manner: Different Speed of EU Integration (different levels of institutionalization of relationship with the EU creates problems in regional cooperation (Romania; Bulgaria; Croatia; Macedonia)
- This is also a challenge for the EU: Manage SEE EU integration as to avoid contradictory policies

# Building Human Capital and LODECBC: Decentralization of education

- LODECBC and Parliamentary Cooperation core objectives of SP SEE
- From May 2006 Belgrade Regional Table: planning to launch a new core objective (building human capital)
- Enhancing cross-table cooperation: Especially important to concentrate on the decentralization of education
- LODECBC & Education Projects: a close link beneficial for the economic development and development of participatory democracy at the local level



Website: [www.stabilitypact.org](http://www.stabilitypact.org)